

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Community Safety Committee****5 November 2014****Support Services for Women at Risk of Offending in Perth City****Report by Executive Director (Housing and Community Care)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the work achieved following the implementation of the One-stop (previously known as Offending) Women's Learning Service and mentoring service for female offenders in the criminal justice system in Perth and Kinross.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The One-stop Women's Learning Service (OWLS) was set up in response to a recommendation within the report from the Commission on Women Offenders chaired by Dame Elish Angiolini. The report recommended the establishment of a Community Justice Centre staffed by a criminal justice social worker, nurse and addictions worker to reduce re-offending and bring about behavioural change. This was supported by other national developments and research which highlighted the need for a different approach to be taken when working with vulnerable women offenders.
- 1.2 The Angiolini report also recommended that the work delivered by the Community Justice Centre should be complemented by intensive monitoring of women offenders to support their compliance with court orders.
- 1.3 Funding for both OWLS and women's mentoring was secured from Tayside Fire and Rescue requisition monies. This amounted to a commitment of £180,000 over a three year period for mentoring and befriending services. An additional £90,000 was provided over three years to fund GP input to the Central Health Care Team to support its wider work and secure an initial base for the development of OWLS.
- 1.4 OWLS was set up in consultation with NHS Tayside, Drug and Alcohol, Housing and Criminal Justice Services who formed the core group for service design and development. The service was planned around women convicted of offences and although the aim was to integrate women into their local communities, it was the women themselves who expressed the preference for a centralised service. This is because they wanted anonymity and not feel stigmatised because of their offending.

OWLS SERVICE

- 1.5 OWLS initially focused on women subject to a Community Payback Order (CPO), those who had served a short term prison sentence, and those subject to a Supervision Licence after release from custody. In part this was aimed at addressing the nationally recognised concern of the 'revolving door' of those subject to short term prison sentences and their propensity to re-offend and return to custody.
- 1.6 OWLS initially operated every Thursday and specific rooms at Drumhar Health Centre were utilised both for appointments and as a drop-in facility. The service has since expanded to three days across three sites which includes utilising the offices at Tayside Council on Alcohol (TCA) and Mindspace Limited (previously PAMH) for group work. The involvement of other agencies has also increased and includes the following:
- Criminal Justice Social Worker (services the CPO/Licence, group work delivery and individual programmes of work, e.g. anger management; managing violence and aggression)
 - Criminal Justice Assistants (mentoring if required and practical interventions including group work delivery)
 - Drug and Alcohol Team Social Worker (substance misuse interventions, Blood Borne Viruses and Naloxone awareness as well as participation in group work delivery)
 - Tayside Substance Misuse Service
 - Housing Options Support Worker (including benefit maximisation)
 - General Nurse (holistic health check including sexual health)
 - Community Psychiatric Nurse (assess to mental health allowing access to community mental health services)
 - Podiatrist
 - Dentist
 - Optician (when required)
 - Tayside Council on Alcohol (mentoring service)
 - Churches Action for the Homeless (Facing Change Befriending Project)
 - Barnardos (Change Is a Must) (group work delivery on parenting skills and positive relationships)
 - Cornerstone (literacy and numeracy work)
 - Soroptomists (group work delivery and volunteering)
 - Police Scotland
- 1.7 There are currently 54 women attending OWLS with ages ranging from 19 to 58 years. The women have committed offences including misuse of drugs, dishonesty, assault and offences against children, i.e. neglect and physical abuse. The work at OWLS involves both individual appointments with services and group work.
- 1.8 The group work activities have covered a wide range of topics including advice and support to stop substance misuse; enhancing and improving women's mental wellbeing; safe guarding and promoting their physical and

sexual health; learning to improve their interpersonal and family relationships as well as their everyday life skills for example, cooking and budgeting. Principally all group work activity is aimed at promoting women's self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth. The activities have involved a broad range of services that have creatively utilised their skills both personal and professional in adapting their way of working to collectively meet the needs of the women in OWLS.

- 1.9 It has been important to give women a say in determining some of the group work activities. This has helped promote group cohesion and ownership as well as the participant's self-confidence and communication skills. Women are given the opportunity to make suggestions about any activities or changes they think would be appropriate. This was evidenced by the group's desire to develop a video diary facility, a portable Library and a 'Thought Tree' often used in recovery with those who misuse substances or for those with mental health problems. The women find these activities helpful in articulating their current thoughts and feelings as well as their future hopes, desires and aspirations.
- 1.10 There are now opportunities through group work to enhance the women's educational and vocational skills as well as their employability. This includes access to agencies including the third sector as well as further education and employment through work with the Shaw Trust and Perth College.
- 1.11 To date, there has been full engagement from the women attending OWLS. Feedback is obtained after each group work session which is analysed and used to develop and improve the service. The feedback allows staff to modify and tailor the service ensuring the women's needs are met and they feel empowered to take control of their lives. The group sessions also provide a safe place for women to express themselves and develop new skills.

OUTCOMES

- 1.12 OWLS' endeavours to demonstrate the following long term outcomes for those attending the service:
 - Reduce reoffending
 - Promote ownership of and improve personal health and wellbeing
 - Promote ownership of and improve financial and housing issues
 - Enhanced employability and education opportunities
 - Sustain positive personal and family relationships
- 1.13 A performance and evaluation framework has been developed to enable the services involved to collectively identify short, medium and long term outcomes. The framework utilises a number of different measurement tools to allow progress to be monitored. These tools include the Rickter multi-sensory and evaluation tool, a readiness to change assessment tool, client feedback questionnaires and groupwork activity assessment and evaluation tools.

1.14 Interim analysis shows that positive progress has been made towards achieving a range of short term and medium term outcomes. To date the analysis of short term outcomes has evidenced the following:

- 88% have maintained or improved their positive working relationships developed through the key worker system
- 81% are showing good progress towards improving their self-confidence, self-worth and motivation
- 88% are attending regularly and participating through positive engagement
- 81% have stabilised or improved their addiction issues
- 94% have stabilised or increased their harm reduction, knowledge and skills

The analysis of medium term outcomes has evidenced the following:

- 100% are making positive progress towards developing an understanding of their offending behaviour leading to change
- 100% think that their leisure interests have improved either through involvement in group activity or the mentoring service
- 90% think that their personal health and wellbeing has improved both physical and mental health through direct access to specific services

1.15 The measurement of long term outcomes will be undertaken as the service matures but, at this early stage, progress towards achieving the long term outcomes shows positive signs which includes the following:

- 90% consider they have improved their employability of which some have already achieved their goal
- 80% think their accommodation has improved or is now satisfactory
- 80% think they are in control of and better able to manage their finances

1.16 The positive results achieved by the project to date are supported by comments made by the women. These comments include... 'I realise I have qualities that are needed by others'...'I've learnt more about the skills I have and to recognise them more',...'everybody was able to express their opinions',...'everyone is involved',...'being in a group made me realise other people are similar to me'.

1.17 The funding provided for the mentoring and befriending service has successfully supported the training for 2 women to become peer mentors for OWLS. This is an ongoing process and will contribute to the sustainability of OWLS. The service actively encourages women to support each other which will hopefully ensure we have a continued cohort of mentors for the future.

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 Although the service has only been operational for 20 months, the plan by the end of 2014 is to expand the remit to work with women at risk of offending.

The intention is to make links with women known to wider services, including drug and alcohol and housing services which will open up the OWLS approach to a wider and more diverse group of vulnerable women. . To achieve this, the longer term funding proposals for supporting the work of OWLS will reflect the wider benefits beyond reducing re-offending for women subject to CPOs. Presently there is a collective exercise being undertaken charting examples of a women's journey through the service in comparison to their previous experience prior to OWLS. In addition, there will be analysis undertaken post completion of a woman's CPO to measure their reconviction and re-offending rate. However, qualitative data will not be available until there is a reasonable sized cohort who have completed their Orders and who can be followed-up after a designated period of time.

- 2.2 Although the resource demand for OWLS from criminal justice services has been met within existing resources, this demand in part has been accommodated through the flexible use of three temporary criminal justice assistant posts. A Business case has been submitted to try and secure the longer term funding for these posts. This is necessary to ensure the service can continue to accommodate the demands from OWLS and support the planned expansion of the service to women at risk of offending.
- 2.3 In response to what has proved higher than projected demand for this service, larger permanent premises have now been secured in central Perth at West Mill Street and work is underway to re-model practical aspects of the accommodation to make it fit for purpose. It is planned that the service can transfer to the new premises in early 2015. The benefit of this accommodation is that it will allow the service not only to expand its remit but to provide a more flexible service to women across five days and potentially outwith office hours when the majority of crises occur. This proposal is in the planning stage and will enable staff to respond flexibly to the diverse and complex needs of vulnerable women.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The establishment of the One-stop Women's Learning Service was the response by Perth and Kinross to a number of recommendations in the report by the Commission on Women Offenders published in April 2012. The report clearly stated that the lives of women offenders are characterised by multiple complexities and their potential to offend and re-offend links directly to their chaotic lives and lack of social supports.
- 3.2 The Commission endorsed a holistic approach to working with women across services by delivering interventions which address their immediate needs and bring about behavioural change to improve the quality of their lives. A fundamental part of this is the practical support and guidance provided through the mentoring service, progressing to social support via befriending. This should allow women to build their self confidence and self-esteem and to live more productive and fulfilling lives as valued members of their families and communities.

- 3.3 The presenting challenge is the expansion of the service to women who are vulnerable and at risk of offending. Through the use of the performance and evaluation framework it is hoped that this will help garner the necessary evidence to illustrate the cost benefit of OWLS not only to criminal justice and community safety but to the wider group of core services. This information should provide the evidence to enable them to commit to investing the required level of resources to support the expansion of the service.
- 3.4 It is recommended that Committee:
- note the contents of this report
 - Endorse the proposal to extend the remit of the service
 - Instruct the Executive Director to bring a further report within the next 6 months.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1. The delivery of a service to women offenders and those at risk of re-offending and the extension of the capacity at Drumhar Medical Centre assists in the delivery of both the Perth and Kinross Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement in respect of the following local outcomes:
 - (i) People in vulnerable circumstances are protected
 - (ii) Resilient, responsible and safe communities
 - (iii) Longer healthier lives for all
 - (iv) People are ready for life and work
 - (v) Nurtured and supported families

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 The Councils Corporate Plan 2013 – 2018 lays out five strategic objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. The relevant strategic objectives in respect of this report are as follows:
 - (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
 - (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;

- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 While funding for this service has already been secured from Tayside Fire and Rescue requisition monies to support the GP service at Central Health Care and the development of a peer mentoring service, sustainable funding requirements will form part of the ongoing evaluation as currently three temporary criminal justice assistant posts are being used to support delivery of this service and the plans to expand the service to vulnerable women at risk of offending. The funding for these posts ends on 31 March 2015 and a Business case has been submitted for continued funding beyond this date to support the expansion of the service.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no workforce implications arising from this report. The current work force has been found within existing resources to deliver the service.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no direct land and property implications arising from this report. The new site for OWLS at West Mill Street in Perth was sourced through consultation and support from Contracts and Commissioning. It is planned that OWLS will move into these premises in early 2015 once appropriate renovations have been completed.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Act, however, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

Sustainability

- 3.3 There are no issues in respect of sustainability.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 This report contains no issues which would have a legal or governance impact on the Council.

Risk

- 3.5 There are no issues of risk arising from the proposals in this report.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Finance and the Head of Legal Services were consulted in the preparation of this report.

External

- 4.2 NHS Tayside and Tayside Council on Alcohol were consulted in the preparation of this report.

5. Communication

- 5.1 A Communication Plan is currently being prepared in relation to the OWLS move to the property at West Mill Street in Perth.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Support Services for Women at Risk of Offending in Perth City and Extension of Capacity at Drumhar Medical Centre to Support Vulnerable City Centre Residents (7 November 2012) – Community Safety Report No: 12/500, (22 August 2013) – Community Safety Report No: 13/425 and 27 August 2014 – Housing and Health Report No: 14-354.

7. APPENDICES

- 7.1 There are no appendices attached to this report.

