

Referral Allocation CJ SW Team – Circ 14/98

' 2.3 Allocation of Supervising Officer:

2.3.1 The allocation of a Supervising Officer from the **outset of the prison sentence** is unique to the Extended Sentence prisoner. It is important to establish the role effectively and maintain it over the prison sentence and beyond. For that reason the initial tasks following sentence are as described later in this guidance. Inevitably, particularly with long term prisoners subject to extended supervision, there will be changes of Supervising Officer due to staff turnover or workload management issues. Where there are changes of personnel, it must be ensured that there is continuity of involvement from the local authority and that schedules of contact with the prisoner and his family are maintained.

2.5 Role of the Supervising Officer

2.5.1 Given the unique nature of the Extended Sentence provision, there are several distinctive features to the role of the Supervising Officer. These include:

- < regular visits to the prisoner on a 6 or 12 monthly basis, according to sentence length
- < any Home Background Report for parole purposes to be informed by such an assessment visit
- < increased contact where appropriate with the offender's family
- < particularly in cases involving long periods of supervision, an increased emphasis on the role of co-ordination and case management, especially those involving specialist input to personal change programmes.

3. Importance of information exchange

3.1.1 The Extended Sentence, in order to be effective, requires a significant level of exchange of assessment and other information between social workers in the community, their colleagues in prison units and equally, personal officers, psychologists and other specialists in prisons. This will be a particularly important feature at the following stages:

- < following admission and during the initial stages of the custodial sentence
- < in the context of visits of Supervising Officers
- < at points of significant changes in the prisoner's circumstances, including completion of prison programmes or risk assessments
- < in preparation of reports for referral to the Parole Board or other pre-release planning
- < on recall or other return to custody while on post-release supervision

5.5 The Supervising Authority

5.5.1 On receipt of the initial notification and request from the prison Governor, the local authority must assign a Supervising Officer to the case and inform the Governor within 7 days. Where the request has not been made direct from the social work unit in prison, intimation of the identity of the Supervising Officer should be copied simultaneously to the unit when replying to the Governor.

6. Role of the Supervising Officer 6.1

General

6.1.1 National Standards for Throughcare state, at paragraph 30, that "effective throughcare for prisoners and their families requires contact to be established between the

prospective client(s) and the local authority as soon as possible". Supervising officers in Extended Sentence cases have an important early role to play in establishing that contact and sustaining productive links, wherever possible, throughout the custodial term and period of extended supervision.

6.1.2 The overall aims and objectives of the work of the Supervising Officer throughout the period of custody and after release are:

- < the rehabilitation and re-settlement of the offender
- < the prevention or reduction of further offending
- < the protection of the public from harm from the offender

6.1.3 During the custodial term, contact by the Supervising Officer with the offender's family may provide them with access to relevant services (including practical assistance), a clearer understanding of the nature and consequence of an Extended Sentence and assist in developing a more receptive attitude towards the value of supervision on the part of the prisoner. This activity has clear and positive potential in assisting the achievement of the above aims and objectives.

6.2 Initial Tasks

6.2.1 On allocation of an Extended Sentence case, the Supervising Officer must:

- < notify the prison Governor of the identity and location of the Supervising Officer, with copy to the prison social work unit as necessary (**within 7 days**)
- < liaise with the social work unit in prison to obtain relevant information passed from the sentencing court (**within 14 days**)
- < write to the prisoner explaining the role of the Supervising Officer and the nature of Extended Sentence itself, indicating the initial level of contact with the prisoner and his family (**within 21 days**)

unless it is clearly inappropriate from the SER, arrange to visit the family of the **prisoner (within 28 days**