

Circular 12/2002 – Referral Allocation CJ SW Team

1.2 Applying the Extended Sentence model to all statutory throughcare prisoners

1.2.1 Arrangements for Extended Sentence prisoners introduced important differences. Key practice differences include:

- (a) designation of both the supervising authority and a supervising officer **from the point of sentence;**
- (b) an enhanced role for the supervising officer throughout the sentence including prison visits, family contact work, an increased emphasis on co-ordination and case management; and
- (c) greater attention to the importance of information and assessment exchange between the prison and the supervising authority.

1.2.2 Guidance on the arrangements for prisoners subject to Extended Sentences can be found in Scottish Office Circular No: SWSG 14/1998.

2.4 Role of the Supervising Officer

2.4.1 There are several distinctive components to the role of the Supervising Officer. These include:

- Scheduled visits with the prisoner
- Home Background Report for parole purposes to be informed by such an assessment visit
- Increased contact where appropriate with the offender's family
- Community based social work participation in the sentence management of the prisoner. This is aimed at ensuring that work done following release is built more solidly upon work already undertaken with the offender while he/she is in custody. (This should be a reciprocal arrangement with work in prison building on work which may have already been started in the community prior to sentence.)

3. Importance of information exchange

3.1.1 In order for these new throughcare arrangements to be effective, all agencies and professionals involved will need to communicate effectively with each other. These will include:

- Social workers in the community (supervising officers)
- Prison-based social workers
- Prison psychologists
- Personal officers
- Other prison-based specialist staff

This communication 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 change 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

4.5 The Supervising Authority

4.5.1 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, the reply to the Governor should be copied to the social work unit in the prison at the same time.

5. Role of the Supervising Officer

5.1 General

5.1.1 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 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.

5.1.2 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

5.1.3 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 the sentence and supervision period 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 promoting the social

inclusion of the offender, assisting the achievement of the above aims and objectives.

5.2 Initial Tasks

5.2.1 On allocation of a case, the Supervising Officer must:

- Notify the prison Governor, **within 7 days**, of the identity and location of the Supervising Officer, with copy to the prison social work unit:
- Liase, **within 14 days**, with the social work unit in prison to obtain relevant information passed from the sentencing court

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