

## ***Guidance for Phase 2 in implementing the enhanced throughcare strategy***

### **VOLUNTARY ASSISTANCE – Guidance for Phase 2**

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##### **Introduction**

1. The Scottish Executive, the Scottish Prison Service and ADSW meeting as the Tripartite Group, produced the report<sup>1</sup> that underpinned the 'phase 1' planning process for statutory throughcare services which resulted in the issue of Circular 12/2002. This dealt with the statutory duties of local authority criminal justice social work services and emphasised the importance of partnership working and the development of a nationally consistent standard of throughcare supervision. The new arrangements are based on community based criminal justice social work services engaging with sentenced prisoners early in their sentence and maintaining that engagement as the sentence progresses through pre-release and community supervision phases.

2. The Tripartite Group also considered how to improve the service for prisoners on release where there is no requirement to supervise. Section 71 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 strengthened existing throughcare arrangements to allow the local authority to be proactive in the provision of advice, guidance and assistance prior to release. Phase 2 therefore extends services to some prisoners in this category who need help with resettlement.

3. Given the numbers involved and the resource implications –human and financial–the Tripartite Group considered where priorities should lie once the more rigorous arrangements for prisoners subject to statutory supervision are in place. The group identified 3 groups as priorities for voluntary assistance:

- High risk offenders not at present subject to statutory throughcare
- Young offenders and
- Those who continue to show a commitment to address their offending behaviour or take up and continue with the offer of assistance under SPS's transitional care scheme.

4. The aim of this guidance is to help criminal justice social work services to prepare their plans for Phase 2.

##### **Funding**

5. Additional funding has already been provided to Groupings and unitary authorities for Phase 1 of the Throughcare development strategy. This has been provided to support the enhanced structures necessary for delivering specialist throughcare services in partnership with other agencies and the Scottish Prison Service. These structures provide the foundations for the development of enhanced voluntary assistance. In preparing for this next stage of the work, the allocations for 2004-05 included the extra phase 2 funding for voluntary assistance. This will allow Phase 2 to become operational from August. Full year costs will be provided in 2005-06.

##### **Plans: framework and staffing**

6. In the plans for Phase 2, services should show how Phase 2 will build on the range of services offered previously, supplemented by the additional allocation provided for Phase 1. They should identify, in whole-time equivalents, the staff capacity dedicated to throughcare across the grouping at the end of Phase 1 and the planned increase in staff resources to deliver Phase 2. The plans should show a clear rationale for the use of the additional resources and provide an audit trail which shows how the extra funding results in the additional staff resource. The cost of any service level arrangements with independent sector providers should also be clearly detailed. The planning template accompanying this guidance will help to structure this information.

7. Phase 2 must not 'sit outside' the enhanced arrangements for throughcare taken forward in phase one. They should share a common strategic and managerial oversight.

### **Plans: targeting and numbers**

8. Given the numbers involved, it is important to identify which prisoners in the short-term population will be targeted for a more proactive service. Plans should outline what focus will be adopted in relation to the priority groups of offenders, explain how the target group of offenders will be identified and how the prisoners will be approached during the term of their sentence. For example, this may be assisted by the service being represented at the Links Centres within prisons or by being open to referrals from other sources like local child protection teams, families, police. In any case, the plans should indicate how the service will engage with key partners in identifying and targeting suitable candidates and the means by which they will be engaged prior to release. They should also contain a clear indication of the planned numbers of short-term offenders who can be assisted as a result of Phase 2, each year.

9. When the prisoners to be targeted have been identified, plans should explain the key services to be offered and the anticipated effect. These can cover the most basic types of practical assistance through to the delivery of a sex offender programme for a high-intensity monitoring package. This information will be critical to effective monitoring and evaluation.

### **Formulating and Delivering an Action Plan**

10. Prisoners and ex-prisoners in this group are likely to present a wide range of needs of different types. In the Social Exclusion Unit's publication 'Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners' (2002)<sup>2</sup> a number of important recommendations are made with respect to developing better throughcare services. Central to these is the idea of a '**Going Straight Contract**' between the supervising agency and the offender. Such a contract would operate both during and after custody, and cover the whole range of needs presented by the prisoner. It sets out what will be delivered when, by what organisation and to what proposed effect. This approach offers a mechanism for robust planning of intervention — setting out the roles of each agency and the prisoner as part of the contract.

11. Action planning for a group of offenders who do not have to comply with statutory supervision may initially appear contradictory. Without a statutory basis, initial engagement is critical for assessment and planning. This is where the structure of a 'Going Straight' contract can set out in a formal way the context and content of what will be offered to the offender and the expectations of both the agency and the offender during the contact.

## **Engagement and motivation**

12. Whilst, the approach will be different for each offender (and type of offender), it is clear that certain key elements are critical in successfully engaging and motivating offenders on a 'voluntary' basis. Engaging with offenders who are not subject to statutory supervision is the major challenge in delivering voluntary assistance. The offender may see little gain when what is offered focuses less on practical arrangements for rejoining the community and more on tackling offending and managing risk. Addressing this tension is a critical element in developing voluntary aftercare services.

## **Good practice**

13. During the engagement phase of work, the following principles underpin good practice on engagement and motivation:

- Early contact with the offender while still in custody and creation of an effective working alliance.
- Fast process for the engagement of offenders serving very short sentences with imminent release dates.
- Building on the assessments already undertaken within prison (e.g. SPS's short term needs assessment) to provide a shared assessment of risk and need at the point of release for each offender.
- A clear action plan agreed with the offender setting out what will be delivered during the period of contact, and specific outcomes that will be available for the offender and the public, linked to the assessment of risk and need
- Focus on practical needs to assist resettlement following release
- Partnerships with range of agencies, e.g. through the SPS Links centres where a range of agencies are on-site to work with the offender before release.

## **Social Inclusion**

14. Given the level of social exclusion of this group, services will want to work in partnerships where possible, to address the needs of each individual. The following principles underpin good practice on tackling social exclusion:

- Augmenting offender self-assessment by professional assessment of the social inclusion, risk, and social learning needs of the offender.
- Formulating an action plan for service delivery reflecting the holistic nature of the assessment and setting out clear practical benefits for the offender and the public.
- Building on what (if anything) has been offered during the sentence where structured work is to be undertaken with the offender
- Providing a focus on promotion of social inclusion, lifelong learning and stable family relationships.
- Making structured links where relevant to child protection, youth justice services, community safety and high-risk offenders' structures.
- Delivering programmed work where relevant (with the offender consenting) to address social learning needs associated with crime.
- Giving a clear focus to social inclusion needs as part of the action plan agreed with the offender.

## **Strategic Partnerships**

15. Phase 2 will depend for much of its success on the partnerships which are put in place to support the delivery of individual plans. The nature of these partnerships will affect the way that the pledges in the "going straight contract" can be delivered. These partnerships are likely to include:

- existing strategic partnerships with key statutory partners (many of these links should already be in place as a result of phase one (Circular 12/2002) including<sup>3</sup>
  - the Scottish Prison Service
  - local authority child protection services
  - local authority youth justice services
  - health (including forensic services for offenders with mental health problems)
  - JobCentre Plus, police, Local housing providers and Careers Scotland.
- strategic partnerships with voluntary and independent sector providers targeted on meeting social inclusion needs presented by the offender group.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

16. It is important that monitoring and evaluation of services is incorporated into the normal operation of the service. To do so, it is essential, from the start, to identify the target group, the numbers to be targeted, the key services to be offered, the anticipated outcome. Again, the plans should build on the arrangements already in place for Phase 1 and should set out explicitly:

- The mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation
- The specific processes that will be measured
- The data that will be gathered
- The method by which performance information will be fed back into practice.

17. Where plans buy in services from independent partners as direct service providers, the monitoring and evaluation approach should extend to the delivery of services within these organisations.

18. Further guidance will be issued in due course following consultation with relevant groups, including the Social Work Statistics Liaison Group, on the national data requirements and arrangements for such data collection

### **Timing**

19 The Tripartite Group report gives priority to Phase 1 in terms of the group of offenders to be given support and because the structure created for Phase 1 provides the foundation to support the development of enhanced voluntary assistance. Priority should therefore continue to be given to putting Phase 1 arrangements in place before services move on to Phase 2. Plans should indicate when they will be ready to start to implement Phase 2.

### **Pathway pilots**

20. Two Pathway pilots have been approved by Minister, one for young offenders and one for high risk offenders. The function of the Pathway Pilot is to engage agencies in problem solving and in overcoming challenges to help inform the

national rollout of these services. The lessons and good practice from the pilots will be disseminated so that they feed into Phase 2 services, as they develop.

Justice Department

**PLANNING TEMPLATE**

**THROUGH-CARE: PHASE 2: VOLUNTARY ASSISTANCE: PRO FORMA**

The guidance asks that the following information be submitted to the Executive:

	2004-05	2005-06
Allocation for phase 2	Up to	N/A
A breakdown of the planned increase in staff resources to deliver Phase 2 with grades and costs.		
the planned cost of any service level arrangements with independent sector providers.		
the planned numbers of short-term offenders to be assisted in each of the 3 priority groups and others if planned.		

Please also indicate:

- the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation
- when services will be ready to start to implement Phase 2:
- Please also enclose a copy of the phase 2 plan. These should include information on the following:
  - which prisoners in the short-term population will be targeted for a more proactive service
  - the focus to be adopted in relation to these offenders
  - how the target group of offenders will be identified
  - how the prisoners will be approached during the term of their sentence
  - how the service will engage with key partners in identifying and targeting suitable candidates and the means by which they will be engaged prior to release
  - the key services to be offered and the anticipated effect.

**ANNEX A (REVISED)**

**GOING STRAIGHT CONTRACT**

Engaging prisoners on a voluntary basis is very difficult. It is important that the prisoner can see what is on offer and has confidence that what is promised before release will be delivered afterwards. A **Going Straight Contract** can provide a very clear way to set out both the content and delivery of voluntary assistance after release and allow the prisoner to be a full partner in the process.

The **Going Straight Contract** must be an agreement between the prisoner and the supervisor. If each aim or target in the contract isn't endorsed by both it is obviously less likely to be a success. It is important that the contract is very realistic and very achievable. It is also important that the contract offers real gains for the offender, but in requires them to take responsibility for doing the things that they need to do to reduce their risk to the public and stay out of trouble. The **Going Straight Contract** can't be just a wish-list for either party.

The prisoner and supervisor should sign up to a **Going Straight Contract** following a full assessment of their needs. It can cover a wide range of issues, including:

- education and training;
- help with family issues & parenting
- advocacy — benefits and housing
- participation in offending behaviour programmes;
- participation in drug and alcohol programmes;
- constructive use of leisure time

It is essential that targets in the **Going Straight Contract** follow the S.M.A.R.T. approach. To do this they must be;

**Specific** — targets should be very clear and concise and not at all ambiguous in meaning. Avoid huge targets like 'stop offending', and focus on things that can be clearly understood by both offender and supervisor.

**Measurable** — The target must be amenable to measurement — if something is too woolly or subjective then it is difficult to say with any certainty that it has in fact changed. Having very specific targets helps, but it is important to think through how it can be measured when setting targets.

**Achievable** — The target should not be so ambitious as to be unattainable. It is better to set a greater number of milestone targets rather than one big one that is overwhelming.

**Realistic** — There is no point in setting targets that are too demanding in terms of resources, a third party agency, or of the offender himself.

**Time Limited** — The contract is not an open-ended agreement and it is important that each target set out in it has a clear time scale for delivery.

The Going straight Contract depends on the active participation of mainstream agencies, such as Jobcentre Plus, and local authority housing departments. Voluntary and private sector organisations will also play important roles.

All work delivered via the contract should be based on an ongoing assessment of risk and need. Case managers should work closely with prison staff to ensure that risk assessment is at the heart of key decisions on what is required in the contract. Successful delivery of voluntary assistance will require strategic

partnerships to be built between the service and key partner agencies in the voluntary and statutory sectors; housing, benefits, addictions, training — all will have a critical contribution to make.

**Going Straight Contract**

**1. This contract is between: \_\_\_\_\_ (ex-offender)**

**And**

\_\_\_\_\_ **(Supervisor)**

**2. It starts on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ and ends on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_**

**3 Everybody signing the contract agrees to keep to it as much as possible, and changes to it can only happen if everyone agrees.**

**4. The aims in grid below are what will be done during this contract. Each target must be very specific (avoid things like 'stop offending' and 'get a job'), and should be clear both about who will do it and how it will be done.**

<b>Target (aim)</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>How will it be done?</b>	<b>When by?</b>	<b>Has it been achieved?</b>
<i><b>EXAMPLE:</b> Improve my reading and writing</i>	<i>Me, Literacy Course Tutor</i>	<i>Attend twice a week for the course at X college</i>	<i>End May</i>	<i>Not yet</i>

**Phase 2. Enhanced Throughcare**

**Recommended components for Phase 2. Plan**

1. How will the plan build upon existing services and Phase 1?
2. Detail staff capacity at conclusion of phase 1 implementation
3. Planned increase in staff
4. Clear rationale for (3) above

5. Cost of any service level agreements
6. How will Phase 2 share common strategic and managerial oversight with Phase 1?
7. Plan should focus upon priority groups
8. How will target group be identified?
9. How will these prisoners be approached?
10. How will you engage with key partners?(i.e. SPS, voluntary sector)
11. A clear indication of planned numbers
12. What are the key services to be offered?

### **Footnotes**

1 Throughcare - developing the service: report of the Tripartite Group, Scottish Executive, 2003

2 Available online at

[http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/publications/reports/html/Reducing\\_Re-offending/index.htm](http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/publications/reports/html/Reducing_Re-offending/index.htm)

3 The balance and importance of these partnerships will of course vary depending on the client group.