

Appendix 1

Aberdeen City Council

Review of Supported Accommodation for Offenders

Introduction

In April 2008 a working group was established to carry out a Rapid Review of Supported Accommodation for Offenders. Immediate issues were identified relating to funding, as the supported accommodation budget was overcommitted. This was not a new situation. Overspends in this part of the service had historically been met from within the NCJA or Aberdeen City Council, or by virement of funds from elsewhere in the Criminal Justice Service. This however was no longer seen as an option. There were additional pressures on funding relating to the introduction of waking night staff at St Fittick's House and the impact of EPM. Changes to the payment of Supporting People monies have also contributed to the deficit.

In November 2008 residents of St Fittick's House were awarded Housing Benefit. This has improved the financial position but the Supported Accommodation budget remains in deficit.

In addition, from 2010/11, changes in the funding arrangements from the NCJA will severely reduce the available budget for the provision of supported accommodation services to offenders in future years.

Building on the work undertaken in 2008/09 by the Review Group, a number of options have been outlined for continuing to deliver supported accommodation services for offenders in Aberdeen City. This is in the context of achieving best value both in terms of effective practice and budgetary constraints.

For each option a number of potential advantages/ disadvantages have been identified.

A NCJA review concluded that "Offenders should have access to mainstream housing wherever possible. Criminal Justice Social Work has a locus in providing support to offenders as part of a supervision action plan. However it is the role of housing services to provide or source the accommodation".

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The option appraisal has also taken in to account further principles agreed by the NCJA in respect of funding of Supported Accommodation Services for Offenders:

- o Services require to be **financially viable**
- o Services require to be **financially sustainable**
- o **Best value** principles will apply to the commissioning of services

Option Appraisal

1 Definition

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 defines 'offender accommodation services' as:

'a service which consists of giving advice, guidance or assistance to persons who have been provided with accommodation under subsection (1)(b) or (c) of section 27 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 (c. 49) (supervision and care of persons put on probation or released from prison etc.)

2 Purpose of Supported Accommodation for Offenders

Kirkwood and Richley (2008) ***Supported Accommodation Services for Offenders: A Research Literature Review*** (CJSW Briefing Paper 11: April 2008) state that most homeless offenders and ex-prisoners are in need of mainstream accommodation and only a minority require supported accommodation, with even fewer requiring intensive support in addition to accommodation. The main findings and conclusions of this research are:

- The relationship between homelessness, offending and imprisonment is complex, with homelessness potentially increasing the chances of offending and/or being imprisoned, and imprisonment increasing the likelihood of becoming homeless
- Preventing the loss of accommodation upon imprisonment could be more cost-effective than rehousing upon release
- The provision of suitable, stable accommodation may reduce the chances of further offending among homeless ex-offenders
- Services that address multiple needs, and focus on attitudes and motivation as well as practical issues, are likely to be more effective than those that focus on a single issue
- Homeless ex-offenders are likely to have a variety of complex needs and may be distrustful of institutions and organisations ostensibly seeking to provide help and support
- There is some evidence that supported accommodation services can assist ex-offenders to address some of the issues in their lives that are related to offending, to gain stability in their lives and to desist from offending
- More research is needed to establish the short and long-term roles that supported accommodation services play in terms of assisting homeless ex-offenders to desist from crime.

There is general consensus that accommodation/housing is a basic need but that a range of supports is required both to reduce offenders' risk of reoffending and to support desistance (the term used to describe the process by which offenders stop offending). Available supports should range in nature and intensity from basic housing support to high level criminal justice interventions. Most recent practice is towards earlier intervention by housing services to help people maintain tenancies.

3 Purpose and Aims of the Option Appraisal

The purpose of the review is two-fold. The first relates to achieving best value within financial constraints. Aberdeen City Council does not receive sufficient income to maintain the level and type of service currently offered. The option appraisal therefore seeks to identify a solution within budget.

The second is to identify better means of achieving the objective of delivering high quality effective supported accommodation for offender services aimed at reducing reoffending and promoting community safety, in accordance with the principles of the Green Book:

(http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/data_greenbook_index.htm)

The aims of the option appraisal are:

- To examine realistic options for service reconfiguration
- To perform an assessment of the costs and benefits of options, where possible
- To make sure that supported accommodation services for offenders in Aberdeen City are delivered safely, efficiently and effectively
- To make sure that services are delivered within the available budget
- To continue to meet need
- To make sure that supported accommodation services are appropriately targeted
- To identify a preferred option

The option appraisal will seek to identify other possible approaches which may achieve similar results and, where possible, will attribute monetary values to the potential impacts of proposed change.

4 National Care Standards

National Care Standards for Supported Accommodation for Offenders identify a number of different types of criminal justice accommodation. National Standards state:

‘The distinguishing feature of services to people in criminal justice supported accommodation is the arrangement of accommodation as part of a package of support, supervision and/or surveillance, according to individual needs. The service helps to achieve the overall aims of the statutory order or licence’.

And

‘.....the time spent in supported accommodation is intended to be a period of transition, that is, it allows the person to be supervised in the community and to make the progress needed to move to more independent living arrangements’.

National Standards set out a number of specific principles which should apply to services for people in criminal justice accommodation. These include:

- equal access where supported accommodation is needed
- targeting resources to specific groups and areas of greatest risk or need
- providing flexible services to meet individual needs and circumstances, including those of the highest-risk offenders
- value for money, by delivering services effectively and efficiently
- getting offenders involved in the community again
- securing the confidence of the public, the courts and Parole Board in the supported accommodation options available for offenders.

5 Legislative Background

Section 27 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 places a duty on local authorities to supervise individuals on a court order, released from prison on licence or order, or to assist those who request voluntary assistance within 12 months of release from prison or detention.

Specific legislation relevant to different forms of supervision of offenders and ex-prisoners includes:

- Prisoners and Criminal Proceedings (Scotland) Act 1993
- Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Management of Offenders Act 2005

General legal reference:

- Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation) Order 2000
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- European Convention on Human Rights
- Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 (as amended)
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 2000
- Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Police Act 1997
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975

5.1 Duty to Promote Social Welfare

The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 imposes obligations on local authorities to assess and provide social work and social care services. It is a statutory requirement (Section 12) that local authorities promote social welfare by making available advice, guidance and assistance. This continues to apply outwith normal working hours.

6 Current Provision

There are currently two main providers of supported accommodation for offenders in Aberdeen City: St Fittick's House and Sacro.

6.1 St Fitticks House

St Fittick's House is an Aberdeen City Council establishment, which is registered with the Care Commission as a resource for the provision of supported accommodation for offenders. It is open to referrals for offenders aged 16 and upwards.

St Fittick's is a two storey 14 bed residential unit. The accommodation consists of single rooms, with wash hand basin. The building is designed so that bathrooms are shared by up to four residents. Living space, including dining room/ lounge/ activity room, is shared. Meals are prepared on site by a cook. Laundry facilities are available on site. Office space and staff room are included.

The unit currently operates on the following basis: (2009 – 10)

- Ratio of men to women referred was approximately 87.5%/ 12.5%
- Average stay 119.5 days
- Number of referrals was 152
- Number of referrals assessed as suitable was 56
- Number admitted was 44
- Lowest occupancy rate was 64%
- Average occupancy rate is 86%
- 7 progressed to a Sacro tenancy
- A minimum of 3 full time outreach clients are seen on a regular basis, with a further three seen on an as and when basis
- No referrals taken from outwith Criminal Justice system
- Costs increased £50K per year as a result of EPM.

The statutory basis of the residents on 4th May 2010 was;

- 2 - Probation
- 1 – Non Parole Licence
- 1 – Supervised Release Order
- 1 – Drug Treatment & Testing Order
- 7 – Voluntary Aftercare
- 1 – completed HDC

6.2 SACRO

Sacro currently manages 25 tenancies on the Council's behalf with an average stay of approximately 40 weeks per tenant. The time spent in Sacro accommodation reflects the support needs of service users (assessed and reviewed through HOMES Matrix) together with the time taken to progress the transfer of the tenancy from Sacro to the service user. In the past, such transfers have been delayed due to a number of factors including rent arrears and difficulties in accessing replacement properties. Analysis from other services where service users have similar needs but are in non-Sacro managed tenancies has shown the average length of support to be around 16 weeks. It is therefore likely that the support needs for the majority of service users within Sacro tenancies could be met within a period of around 20 weeks, on average.

- 78 referrals in 2009/10
- 85% male, 15% female
- 63 referred by community based criminal justice social work, 10 from prison social work units
- 34% subject to Probation, 8% post release supervision, 45% voluntary aftercare, 13% (DTTO, Restriction of Liberty Order, deferred sentence)
- 80% had a positive planned exit from the service
- 83.5% occupancy during the year
- Median stay 277 days tenancies managed by Sacro ('Sacro tenancies')
- Median stay 110 days non-Sacro tenancies (offenders hold the tenancy)

7 Resources

The grant allocation to Aberdeen City from the NCJA is decreasing as follows;

2009/10 - £454,286

2010/11 - £373,285

2011/12 - £292,288

In addition, Housing Benefit income for St Fittick's is less than originally anticipated and funding of approximately £94,000 (previously 'Supporting People') is unlikely to be awarded year on year in the future.

8 Option Appraisal

The current model of service delivery is not sustainable as there is insufficient funding to continue to deliver services in their current form. The challenge is therefore to develop a service that is responsive to offender needs as well as to community safety concerns, which achieves Best Value within budget.

1. maintain status quo
2. divert all available resources to St Fittick's House
3. divert all available resources to Sacro service
4. service redesign

8.1 Status Quo

Advantages	<i>Disadvantages</i>
those who are able to access services generally give positive feedback on quality	service design makes it difficult to target resources based on individual risk
	considerable unmet need – often at the higher end of risk, the most vulnerable and/or most chaotic
	would lead to considerable financial deficit year on year - not sustainable
	S27 grant is most appropriately spent on providing support rather than accommodation/property management costs

8.2 Divert all resources to St Fittick’s House

Advantages	Disadvantages
those who are able to access the service generally give positive feedback	running costs are greater than the sum of total available resources
	service is difficult to target at priority groups – often the higher risk, most chaotic and/or most vulnerable can not access
	maximum of 14 places
	occupancy rate below target
	limited options re physical reconfiguration without significant capital costs and reducing capacity

8.3 Divert all available resources to Sacro service

Advantages	Disadvantages
those who are able to access the service generally give positive feedback	open to challenge if no procurement exercise
	significant spend is on property management function rather than direct client support
	turnover of tenancies is slow
	fixed support period rather than flexible based on risk and need
	maximum of 25 receiving support at any one time

8.4 Service redesign (as per attached draft summary specification)

Advantages	Disadvantages
would allow resources to be targeted based on individual risk and need	redeployment position for staff
deliverable within budget	potential increase in referrals to Homeless Service
funds targeted at support rather than accommodation provision	
potential to reach a larger number of clients	
variable levels of support available based on individual assessment	
allows for minimum intervention principle based on risk assessment	
greater flexibility	
more responsive service	