

**DRAFT MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE
LOTHIAN AND BORDERS COMMUNITY JUSTICE AUTHORITY**

Newbattle Abbey College, Dalkeith
Thursday 19th November 2015

Present: Councillor Donald Grant (ELC) (**Chair**), Councillor Tony Boyle (WLC), Councillor Kelly Parry (MLC), Councillor Donald Moffat (SBC)

In Attendance: Fiona Young (Chief Officer), Craig Fraser (Finance Officer), Harry Robertson (CEC), John Fyfe (SBC), Margaret Brewer (MLC), Tim Ward (WLC), Steve Cairns (MLC), Andrea McLachlan (CJA), Nicola McCloskey (Sacro), Angus MacInnes (Police Scotland), Michael Murphy (ELC), David McConnell (Audit Scotland)

Presenting: Kirsty Pate, Rona Fraser and Angie Cross from Willow

Apologies: Councillor Catherine Johnstone (MLC), Councillor Ricky Henderson (ELC), Laura Baxter (Victim Support Scotland), Jim Dustan (SPS), Fiona Duncan (ELC), Cristina Ayala (CJA), Allister Perston (Audit Scotland), Paolo Mazzoncini (Sacro), Julie Murray (NHS Borders), Nancy Loucks (Families Outside), Fiona Allen (Families Outside)

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and handed over to Willow for their presentation

Willow delivers their service to any woman who has had contact with the criminal justice system. These women often come from a background with poverty, social exclusion, health inequalities and intergenerational unemployment.

Angie told her story of how she started at Willow and moved on from there. Angie lost her children and her home from drug use after she lost her partner to drugs. She also spent time in prison. After prison Angie joined the Willow programme. Following successful completion of Willow, Angie was able to see her children away from supervised visits, and eventually have her son living with her again. She is now a peer supporter for Willow and is proud of her achievements,

Willow provides a wide range of professional services to address the social, health and welfare needs of women in the criminal justice system. With the aim to improve women's health, wellbeing and safety, enhance women's access to services and community involvement, and reduce offending behavior.

Willow is funded by City of Edinburgh Council, NHS Lothian, Scottish Government Justice division and Scottish Government Mental Health division.

The issues facing women supported by Willow are quite stark. The figures below show some of them.

84% have drug and/or alcohol problems

82% of women with children under 16 do not have them in their care.

68% are homeless or in temporary/unsafe accommodation

Only 32% live in stable and safe accommodation

96% of women reported repeated experiences of abuse in childhood and adulthood

91% of women experience mental illness

82% have severe financial problems

1 in 4 women in the population experience domestic abuse, 4 in 5 of the women at Willow experience it.

Rona Fraser told the story of Louise.

Louise was in a volatile relationship and was referred to Willow as part of a diversion from prosecution, and she did not want to attend. She was leading a chaotic lifestyle and Willow helped to build confidence and self-esteem.

There is a lot of support in one environment at Willow, all of the services and help you may need are there in one place.

Louise now Chairs a service user led group at Willow, and has learnt lots of transferable skills.

Willow provides bespoke, tailored, person centred interventions for each individual woman. It is also highly integrated and a safe environment for women. There are a broad range of services in one place, helping women get the support they need. The women feel a shift in power over their own lives after being at Willow.

The improvements seen by women include

67% have an improved sense of identity

Women experience a significant reduction in symptoms related to trauma

Self-harming reduces

44% of women have an improved pattern of drug and alcohol use after 6 months.

53% experience improvements in mental health

Willow allows women to become contributing citizens.

Mr Robertson added a comment that the outcomes are impressive, and when funding is on such an ad hoc basis the information is good to show how well the service works.

The Chief Officer asked about the number of women seen at Willow, and if there is a wait list that impacts on service.

Ms Pate informed the meeting that some women can take two years to complete the service. Currently the capacity is around 144 women. If funding was more secure there would be the option of having extra staff to see more people.

The Vice Convenor thanked Ms Pate, Ms Fraser and Ms Cross for their presentation, and noted that Willow is a great example of best practice.

3. PREVIOUS MINUTE

The Chair advised that the draft minute of the previous meeting of August 2015 had been circulated for approval. No amendments were put forward therefore the Chair moved that this Minute be accepted as the approved Minute from this meeting and as such be posted on the CJA website.

Decision

The Members agreed to:

1. Approve the Minute and for it to be added to the CJA website.

3.1 Note of the previous Learning and Innovation Workshop

The workshop on Housing was well attended and showed the housing issues of people leaving custody. There was feedback given on the Housing Protocol and it had now been updated and disseminated widely. Some partners are looking at how to use the protocol locally.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 The Families Framework has been disseminated as a national document. Additionally Scottish Borders are working with Families Outside to test the framework.

4.2 We have now had feedback from Scottish Government on the Annual Report. They are happy with it, but asked about statistical information for some of the outcomes. This may be something we can include in the final Annual Report.

5. CJA GOVERNANCE, PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE (Priorities and Statutory Functions)

5.1 Preparing for the Annual Action Plan 2016-17

The criminal justice service managers are expecting an information request to inform the Action Plan in mid-December.

5.2 Performance Report

The safer lives figures for quarter one of 2015-16 shows a slight increase on the previous year. On the strategic risk for lack of partner engagement, we have continued support from partners for CJA planning and local transition planning.

The Young People Protocol currently has 21 live cases. HMYOI Polmont has recruited a housing expert for the next two years.

Decision

The Members agreed to:

1. Note the content of the report.

5.3 MAPPA Annual Report

The report is very similar to last year. Much of the information is restricted, leaving only some facts and figures on reconviction information. Overall the figures are up as more people join the sex offender register. People are more likely to join the register than be removed, so that will always show an upward trend. The reoffending figures are good. Very

few people are managed at level 3, with only 10% at level 2 and the majority at level 1. The reconviction rates for sex offenders are very low.

The Vice Convenor asked about the MAPPAs roll out to violent offenders and when it may happen. He was informed that it will most likely go ahead on April and the impact would not be large as the numbers of people will be very small.

Decision

The Members agreed to:

1. Note the content of the report

5.4 Redesign Update

(a) Response to the Community Justice (Scotland) Bill, first stage

The Stage 1 report has now been published and is available on the Scottish Government website and the CJA website. The Justice Committee are looking for the role of Community Justice Scotland to be stronger. They had some doubts that the Bill would simplify the landscape. There has also been a request for a clear and agreed definition of Community Justice. They also recommended that CPP's are named in the Bill.

(b) Redesign highlight report

The debate on 19th November completes stage 1, and stage 2 will go forward in January. Scottish Government would like the legislation completed before parliament breaks for the elections.

(c) Consultations on National Strategy for Community Justice

The final consultation is being held in Edinburgh on 24th November. There is still a lot of work to be done on the outcomes framework, as there is an expectation that a suite of indicators will be produced by the end of December.

(d) SPS update on transition

SPS have published a letter to say how they plan to move forward and work with CPP's. Partners fed back that networking events had local partners present but in general there was a lack of presence from national partners.

5.5 Women – Diversion and future funding

The Board had already agreed the allocation of the additional funding from Scottish Government of £107,000 for diversion work. Scottish Government has asked for feedback by March 2016. Discussions are continuing on how to allocate the £1.5 million pounds next year.

5.6 Edinburgh Domestic Abuse Court Evaluation

A previous evaluation had been carried out on the pilot year of the court. The current evaluation will focus on the extent to which the aims and objectives of the court continue to be achieved, in particular whether the process is effective from the complainers point of view.

Decision

The Members agreed to:

1. Note the content of the report

5.7 Young People's Reintegration Protocol

This was covered under the Performance Report.

6. FINANCE

6.1 Annual Accounts 2014-15

The accounts were submitted to Scottish Government in October. There was a very small underspend of £5000 overall. The admin grant also had a small underspend.

Decision

The Members agreed to:

1. Note the content of the report.

6.2 Quarter 2 report

There is currently a forecast overspend of £29,000, this is an improvement on Quarter1, and will hopefully even out over the year.

Decision

The Members agreed to:

1. Note the content of the report.

6.3 Section 27 Allocation

We will not receive notification of our allocations until late February 2016. There is an indication that it will be at the same level as previously, but we won't know for certain until the UK comprehensive spending review is complete.

6.4 Audit Scotland – Annual Audit Report

The report is a positive report and the process of producing the report went well. The financial details are satisfactory. The main point in the report is the challenge of disestablishment. There are also two action points in terms of asset transfer and governance arrangements.

7. POLICY ROUND UP

7.1. Ministerial Report on Offender Reintegration

The main notes of this report are that it is an ongoing process. There is an ambition that there will be a single multi-agency plan for each prisoner.

7.2. Consultation on Proposals to strengthen the presumption against short sentences

There is a suggestion that CJA's respond collectively, and that we would support the presumption against short sentences being extended to 12 months. COSLA also supports this.

All of the service managers had drafted responses which supported no sentences less than 12 months. Although it was noted that there could be implications of possible increased use of electronic monitoring. The Chief Officer agreed to discuss this further at the next strategic officers group meeting in January.

Decision

The Members agreed to:

1. Support a joint CJA response

8. AOB

Councillor Moffat noted that a recent court case he had needed to attend as a witness highlighted issues with the efficiency of the court process. Councillor Moffat had arrived only to be told the case had been held over. It was noted that this is sadly not an unusual experience.

The Chief Officer also noted that Families Outside had published their annual report, which is very positive and shows the huge amount of work they do. The report is available on the CJA website [here](#).

Mr MacInnes also noted that due to recent events in Paris, there are a number services and training packages for all partners under CONTEST.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at Newbattle Abbey College, Dalkeith, on Thursday 18th February 2016.