

Report

Report to:	Social Work Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	28 June 2023
Report by:	Director, Health and Social Care Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Reducing Drug Deaths: The South Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Problem Solving Court
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update the Committee on an innovative two year test of change Problem Solving Court Service
- ◆ note the findings of the independent evaluation of the Justice Support Worker pilot and how it has informed that of the Problem Solving Court service presented here and
- ◆ seek approval for the posts as detailed in Section 7 to be added to the establishment on a temporary two-year basis

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the contents of the report are noted;
- (2) note the findings of the independent evaluation of the Justice Support Worker pilot and how it has informed that of the Problem Solving Court service presented here; and
- (3) that the posts are added to the establishment on a two-year basis as detailed in Section 7.

3. Background

- 3.1. Justice Social Work Services (JSW) in partnership with Hamilton Sheriff Court have developed a two-year test of change Alcohol and Problem-Solving Court (SLADPSC).
- 3.2. A funding application was made in November 2022 to the CORRA Foundation who administer funding to support the National Drugs Mission on behalf of The Scottish Government. We received confirmation in May 2023 that our application for funding for two years was successful. Section 7 details the funding and staff costings.
- 3.3. The premise of the project is to adopt a public health approach to support those in conflict with the law whose offending is related to their substance use, with the long-term aim of permanently exiting the justice system.

- 3.4. A Structured Deferred Sentence model would operate whereby there is a period of deferment for sentencing with the premise that if the person engages with services and supports with no further offending, they will be admonished for the offence. This limits further stigmatisation and employability challenges further on in the person's life.
- 3.5. The wider aims of this project are to reduce drug use levels that are harmful to those within the justice system and prevent drug related deaths. Through taking a public health approach to this dedicated court vulnerable people will be supported with housing, financial welfare, employability, and mental health.
- 3.6. This concept is aligned with South Lanarkshire's Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) Public Health Approach to Justice delivery plan (priority area 4), whereby the overarching principles of early intervention and prevention with a public health approach underpin this proposal.
- 3.7. Through this initiative the aim is to primarily reduce drug use levels that are harmful to those in conflict with the law and to divert people from the justice system where possible whilst supporting those who are in it. The Changing Lives (2022) Scottish Drug Death Task Force publication recommends increased alternatives to custody for those who use drugs and a more joined up approach from the start of a person journey through the criminal justice system improving targeted pathways for care.
- 3.8. The national Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) standards have been produced in response to the emergent public health crisis by the Drug Death Task Force on behalf of Scottish Government. The MAT Standards aim to ensure everyone who needs it is offered, and supported, to access a consistent and evidence-based service that delivers safe, high-quality care and treatment. The development of our SLADPSC as described here will contribute to the delivery of MAT Standard 3 (Assertive Outreach and Anticipatory Care) namely that *all people at high risk of drug-related harm are proactively identified and offered support to commence or continue MAT*.
- 3.9. SLADPSC provides an innovative approach to early intervention which has the potential to prevent people's trajectory Community Payback Orders (CPO's).
- 3.10. Embedding Peer mentors within this initiative endorses an assertive outreach approach with lived experience providing practical and persistent support to wider recovery services.
- 3.11. Justice Social work Services has previously received funding for establishing peer mentors from CORRA in 2021. When this funding expired the Social Work Resource Committee approved its permanency within the Justice Social Work establishment in February 2023 committee.
- 3.12. The implementation of peer mentors to the Problem Solving Court is informed through the recent evaluation from Iconic Consultancy (Appendix 1).

4. Evidence of Need

- 4.1. SLADP drug death analysis data has informed the need for this dedicated court approach.

- 4.2. The SLADPSC criteria has been informed through the drug death statistics for South Lanarkshire in 2021/2022.
- 4.3. This mirrored the national statistics of 66% of male deaths between 35 and 54 years old.
- 4.4. Key facts of drug related deaths in South Lanarkshire:
- ◆ 93 people died of drug use in 2021, with 76% relating to polydrug use; and with 73% of these not in treatment or receiving support
 - ◆ 72% of those who died were male
 - ◆ 73% were aged 35 and above
 - ◆ 68% were unemployed at the time of death
 - ◆ 84% of whom were on opiate substitute treatment
 - ◆ 45% had experienced a previous near-fatal overdose
 - ◆ 29% of those who died had a physical health issue implicated in their cause of death
- 4.5. In addition South Lanarkshire Social Work Information System (SWiS) identified 90% of 21 to 25 year olds subject to statutory CPO's have been assessed with alcohol and/or drugs being a significant factor in their offending.
- 4.6. There were 224 CPO cases (out of a total of 573) that had Community Addiction Recovery Services (CAREs) involvement from 31st March 2021 - 1st April 2022. This indicates the ongoing need for a structured and supportive level of supervision with medically assisted intervention. We understand that 165 of these were breached and returned to court. The structure of statutory orders as dictated in the JSW National Standards and Outcomes Guidance in relation to compulsory supervision attendance, warning and breach procedures makes compliance extremely difficult for those with entrenched substance use.

5. Operation of SLADPSC

- 5.1. It is envisaged this court will operate fortnightly with dedicated Sheriffs who will consider those that meet all of the following criteria:
- ◆ between 21-55 years old
 - ◆ have previously been subject to a CPO/custody/diversion from prosecution or at risk of custody
 - ◆ have a drug use dependency or regular use that contributes to offending (this can include alcohol but not solely)
 - ◆ motivated to engage with a structured deferred sentence for between 6-9 months and undertake an appropriate treatment plan (may or may not be medically assisted).
- 5.2. Sheriffs will be able to request a JSW Report which will identify an appropriate treatment and support plan. Once accepted into the SLADPSC, participants will receive support from their Justice Social Worker and CAREs (Community Addictions and Recovery Service statutory substance use treatment services for South Lanarkshire) nursing staff commensurate with their needs.
- 5.3. JSW will provide a welfare approach which will include housing, health and offending behaviour supports. CAREs nursing staff would participate in the delivery of on-going assessments, care planning, treatment and support of people with alcohol and drug issues to promote health, independence and recovery.

- 5.4. Integration into recovery communities will be facilitated by commissioned peer mentors who will also work in collaboration with the recovery oriented services with lived experience specifically Beacons, Liber8, Turning Point (TPS), The GIVIT and My Support Day. Participants will be asked to engage with counselling, treatment, regular supervision and attend monthly review hearings before the Sheriff.
- 5.5. The JSW, in consultation with CARES nurses, will prepare monthly reports for participants on the programme which ensures that the Sheriff is informed about each person's progress, as well as any setbacks or compliance concerns.
- 5.6. It is intended that on successful completion of the Structured Deferred Sentence the person will be admonished and receive a graduation certificate. In the event there is future offending or significant disengagement from the Structured Deferred Sentence, JSW will assess suitability for a CPO.
- 5.7. A key feature is the inclusion of the family members in the programme. As well as the reports provided by the JSW and addiction worker, the Sheriff would have the option of asking family members for updates on how an individual has been progressing between review hearings. This offers motivation for participants and supports family members inclusion in the recovery journey.
- 5.8. Through the inclusion of service user's and families perspective we have an opportunity to change the mind-set of broader workforce/communities and making informed changes to how we support those in conflict with the law.

6. Smart Objectives

- 6.1. The project outcomes align to the national Logic Model for reducing drug deaths and harms. We have identified the following objectives over the 2-year period;
 - ◆ 85% of those who use substances to be provided pathways into wider employment, health and welfare opportunities
 - ◆ 70% of those on Structured Deferred Sentence disposal sustaining and completing their period of support
 - ◆ 90% provided with medically assisted treatment and/or recovery plans in conjunction with access to community oriented recovery networks
 - ◆ 85% of families with lived experience to be provided with advice and support in the recovery journey
- 6.2. Our high level objectives are:
 - ◆ to reduce drug and alcohol related deaths South Lanarkshire
 - ◆ reduce the volume of CPO breaches and non-completion
 - ◆ preventing those in conflict with the law proceeding further into the justice system
 - ◆ reduce remand and short term custodial sentences
 - ◆ provide long term Structured Deferred Sentence options for those with problematic drug and alcohol use

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. To support this initiative, the following temporary posts should be added to the Social Work Resources establishment for a two-year basis. These posts will be recruited to permanent contracts and the staff will redeployed in the service at the end of the pilot if a permanent funding solution is not realised.

Post	Proposed number posts	Grade	SCP Range	Hourly Rate	Annual Salary	Gross cost inc. on costs 30.3%	Total Cost
Social Worker	2	G3 L4	72 -74	£22.07 - £22.53	£40,275 - £41,115	£52,479 - £53,572	£104,958 - £107,144
Justice Social Work Team Leader	0.5	G3 L8	79 – 80	£24.28 - £24.64	£44,309 - £44,966	£57,734 - £58,590	£28,867 - £29,295
	2.5						£133,825 - £136,439

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. The total cost of the proposal is £0.302m per annum which includes the costs of the posts at 7.1 of £0.136m and services commissioned from the 3rd sector and NHS Lanarkshire costing £0.166m.
- 8.2 Funding bids have been submitted to CORRA Improvement fund and South Lanarkshire ADP. The ADP have confirmed funding of £0.134m over the 2 years; and CORRA have confirmed their funding of £0.2m.
- 8.3 The balance of funding will be made available non-recurrently from within the existing Section 27 Justice budget as outlined in the table below:

	Year 1	Year 2
Expenditure	£0.302m	£0.302m
Funding		
ADP	£0.089m	£0.045m
CORRA	£0.100m	£0.100m
SLC S27	£0.113m	£0.157m
Total Funding	£0.302m	£0.302m

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 9.1. There are no Climate Change, Sustainability or environmental implications associated with this report.

10. Other Implications

- 10.1. The proposals outlined in this report help to mitigate key Social Work risks with regards to fulfilling statutory and core duties and workforce availability.
- 10.2. There are no other issues associated with this report.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function, or strategy, or recommend a change to existing policy, function, or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

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17 April 2023

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- ◆ focused on people and their needs

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Changing Lives Drug Death Task Force publication 2022 Final Report
<https://drugdeathstaskforce.scot/news-information/publications/reports/final-report/>

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact: -

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