

## **Project outline – High Risk Offender follow up**

### **Introduction**

ADSW, Scottish Government and SWIA, recognising the improvement actions necessary in the wake of the recent thematic inspection of high risk offenders, have considered various options as to what actions criminal justice social work services need to take to improve practice in the areas where there were deficits.

Following discussion there was an agreement that the best solution did not lie in the further use of scrutiny powers by SWIA to follow up the inspection. We agreed that an approach of self-evaluation would better fit with the overall national policy agenda of building local accountability and capacity for self evaluation. This also fits well with the SWIA strategy to support the development of more robust self evaluation and link this activity to more proportionate and risk based approaches to scrutiny. We will link this activity to the ISLA process.

The self evaluation exercise will take place in 2010/2011, and will consist of 8 local initiatives, overseen by 8 individual workgroups, coterminous with the community justice authority boundaries. The project will be led by a national steering group with representation from ADSW, SWIA, CJAs, RMA and the Scottish Government.

This will be an iterative process, with scheduled local workgroups at key stages punctuating a sustained effort to assess, plan and deliver local improvements by the local authority criminal justice social work services.

### **General Approach**

ADSW, Scottish Government and SWIA have agreed the general approach to the project. It is based on a shared and agreed understanding that the activity is:

- Focused on the HRO findings/recommendations
- Wholly owned by ADSW – SWIA input by invitation and partnership
- Focused on better outcomes for public safety

## **ADSW Inputs**

- Leadership
- Chair and attendance at national steering group meetings
- Co-facilitation of local workgroups

## **SWIA Inputs**

SWIA will offer significant input to assist ADSW in taking this forward:

- Practical arrangements of the workshops and administration
- External and internal inputs to the workshops in partnership with ADSW via the national steering group
- Facilitation and co-facilitation of the workgroups
- Analysis and accurate feedback of evidence of progress at key stages through the period of the working group process
- Local support with self evaluation

## **RMA Inputs**

- Co-facilitation of workgroups

## **Scottish Government inputs?**

- Co-facilitation of workgroups

## **Desirable Outcomes**

ADSW, Scottish Government and SWIA are agreed that there must be identifiable outcomes from this exercise closely linked to the recommendations of the high risk offender inspection report. Although local authorities will take primary responsibility for assessing the extent to which they are achieving these outcomes SWIA will provide an element of external verification.

These outcomes are as follows:

- All sex offenders and serious violent offenders on supervision have a full and current risk of harm assessment that is regularly reviewed, to ensure that practice planned is the practice that actually occurs

- All sex offenders and serious violent offenders have an effective risk management plan tailored to their risk and needs
- Social workers preparing HBRs interview the prisoner, visit the prospective release address and include a risk assessment in the report
- All criminal justice social work staff working with high risk of harm offenders receive the appropriate range of support, training and professional advice

## Outline methodology

### Self Evaluation

Social work services need to be able to show that they are doing the right things to deliver excellent outcomes. Self-evaluation has a part to play in identifying and disseminating good practice across individual agencies and nationally. Components of self-evaluation for this exercise are likely to involve a review of key documents, including performance information, and a quality assurance exercise (file reading).

### Local Workgroups

We propose that each CJA<sup>1</sup> area convenes a workgroup to oversee the self-evaluation and direct the activities in each local authority. This group should contain representatives from:

- each of the area's constituent local authorities
- a representative of the local area CJA
- a SWIA representative

The criminal justice social work members of this group will be the champions for the self evaluation and improvement activity that will take place in their own authority.

This means that each criminal justice service will require some set-aside capacity to undertake the local self evaluation and improvement process.

### Workgroup activity

The purpose of the local workgroup will be to sponsor the self evaluation activity that will take place in each of the authorities. This will consist of each local authority in the relevant area attending **Workshop 1** (1 day - June 2010) at which they would discuss key themes from the report and scope and agree a self-evaluation exercise to take place across all the authorities in the CJA area using an agreed methodology. SWIA could offer inputs to the initial workshops on the HRO report and on how to carry out a self-evaluation. The RMA might also provide an input on FRAME developments.

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<sup>1</sup> There will be eight local workgroups coterminous with the member local authorities of the eight Community Justice Authorities.

After the first workshop in June SWIA could continue to offer support to authorities to carry out the self-evaluation, providing both a challenge and support role. This could include two inputs:

Firstly, SWIA could contribute to the quality assurance exercise by working alongside local file readers and verifying their findings (a 1 day **file reading** exercise taking place between July and October 2010). To ensure consistency and to allow the findings to contribute to the ISLA process (thereby reducing the burden on local authorities) we suggest that all local authorities use the SWIA ISLA file-reading template for this purpose.

A verified quality assurance exercise will have taken place in those local authorities already involved in the ISLA process. Any self-evaluation activity in the remaining authorities will be taken into account in the scope of the ISLAs that have yet to take place.

Secondly, SWIA could assist local authorities to begin populating a **self-evaluation template** (a further 1 day event taking place between July and October 2010). To ensure consistency we suggest that local authorities use a bespoke self-evaluation tool developed by SWIA for this purpose. This activity would include assisting local authorities to identify and evaluate key documents that provide evidence for their evaluation.

**Workshop 2** (1 day - November 2010) where local authorities could present the evaluation conclusions (the completed bespoke self evaluation tool) to their local workgroups. Peer challenge would be a key element of this workshop. The day could also focus on each local authority working up a draft SMART action plan to make improvements based on the evaluation. Input to these workgroups could include further updates on the FRAME process by the RMA.

SWIA could support an **Interim Review** (February 2011) to ascertain progress in each of the councils towards the improvement points in the plan. SWIA inspectors could analyse this information in advance and give further support to the local workgroups to continue to meet the objectives of the local authority action plans.

The final meeting – **Workshop 3** (1 day - April 2011) could involve authorities reporting on their progress. Having had the opportunity to consider the information in advance, SWIA inspectors could give further feedback. The day could also focus on work still to do and the next steps.

Following this final workshop SWIA's link inspectors for each of the constituent authorities could continue to offer support to progress any outstanding tasks.

SWIA has committed administrative support for the national steering group and will support the local working groups, but local support will also be likely to be required.