



Community  
Justice  
Accommodation  
Services  
Report

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28/3/2008

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## **1. Introduction**

Criminal justice social work supported accommodation services should build on the “what works” approach by drawing on research evidence when working with offenders to reduce the likelihood or scale of further re-offending. There is a body of evidence which concludes that settled accommodation can be a significant factor in reducing the risk of re-offending. It also shows that the availability of settled accommodation is required if the courts are to be able to use community sentencing options to their full extent, and if offenders are to be able to participate most effectively in such programmes. The research evidence confirms that a substantial proportion of offenders have housing needs, but that in most cases these housing needs can be fulfilled by providing places in ordinary housing. Only a relatively few offenders require the extra support, which is provided by criminal justice accommodation services.<sup>1</sup>

## **2. Background**

The SEJD, in their letter dated 27 February 2007, asked that the CJAs initiate an audit “of the offender accommodation services within (the) CJA area, as well as practices relating to the wider provision of accommodation for offenders.”

The completed audit and the proposal for the future reshaping of the service was to be submitted to the Executive no later than March 2008, with a Progress Report by the end of July 2007.

Following discussions between the SEJD and Chief Officers of the CJAs on 18 May 2007 it was clarified that the audit was required only in relation to supported accommodation for offenders.

At a further meeting with the SEJD, on the 17 July 2007, the Chief Officers were advised that the Progress Report should indicate what future requirements might be, in order that this information could be considered within the current Spending Review.

## **3. Aims**

- To audit what supported accommodation is available within North Strathclyde CJA e.g. hostel and non-hostel supported environments.
- To explore local Housing Strategies and Homelessness Strategies to ensure clarity as to the ‘offender pathway’ within these strategies, this to include the local authorities’ duty to provide housing support in relation to Short Scottish Secure Tenancies.
- To ensure equality of access to housing provision for offenders.
- To explore opportunities for closer working within the CJA, based on sharing good practice, and opportunities for sharing resources.

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<sup>1</sup> Criminal Justice Accommodation Services : a review and consultation paper Scottish Executive July 2001

## **4. Methodology**

There were a number of approaches to this piece of work:

The six constituent local authorities were electronically surveyed using a standard template. The responses informed the current position across NSCJA (Appendix 1)

The Homelessness Strategies of the six constituent local authorities were scrutinised.

Individual interviews with local authority Homelessness Unit managers were conducted.

A half day thematic event was facilitated involving local authority Homeless Unit Managers; Housing Officers; CJSW practitioners and representatives from the Voluntary sector. A number of set questions were presented for consideration (Appendix 2).

## **5. Current Position**

The position across all constituent authorities within North Strathclyde CJA is that:

- Offenders have the same access to accommodation as any other member of the community.
- There is no specific dedicated 'hostel accommodation' for offenders.
- SACRO Intensive Support and Monitoring Service are procured to provide support for high risk offenders when required.

There is no specialist offender supported accommodation services within the boundary of North Strathclyde CJA.

In the absence of such services existing, criminal justice social work locally has focused on developing strong partnership relationships with colleagues in Housing who have facilitated access to Hostel, Bed and Breakfast and in some instances temporary furnished flats. These services are generic i.e. not restricted to offenders and while best efforts are always made they are not always the most appropriate resource. The support packages that surround these vary from area to area depending on the services that exist locally e.g. alcohol, mental health and young peoples support services. These services can be very good however they tend to be very local and not available in every area.

On occasion access to offender Hostel / Supported Accommodation in other areas is secured but this requires offenders being removed from areas they know and possible support networks. This has additional resource implications for local authorities.

The present position currently across the six constituent local authorities is outlined below.

### **5.1 Argyll & Bute**

There is no specific supported accommodation for offenders in Argyll & Bute.

### **5.2 East Dunbartonshire**

There is no specific supported accommodation for offenders in East Dunbartonshire. All accommodation is mainstream and extremely limited. There is no perceived requirement for offender supported accommodation in this local authority area as it is considered that the numbers do not justify such a service. Historically needs have been for specific tailored resources for very high risk offenders.

### **5.3 East Renfrewshire**

There is no specialist offender accommodation services located within East Renfrewshire. If such a service is required, other local authority areas are relied on. e.g. the Dick Stewart Hostel in Glasgow.

There is a 24 hour staffed temporary homeless accommodation.

### **5.4 Inverclyde**

There are no specialist offender supported accommodation services in Inverclyde. When required Intensive Support is bought in from SACRO Intensive Support and Monitoring Service.

Homeless offenders receive support from Inverclyde Council Homeless Service, which can take the form of:

- Hostel accommodation at the Inverclyde Centre
- Bed and Breakfast accommodation
- Temporary furnished flats.

This service is mainstream and not offender specific. If required clients will be allocated resettlement and support officers.

### **5.5 Renfrewshire**

Temporary Supported Accommodation (Appendix 3) is accessible for offenders, who are being dealt with through Homeless Legislation, but not offenders specific. This service cuts across all issues e.g. mental health; addictions and homelessness. Some of the accommodation is managed by a Support Provider, while a few are managed by council staff. Each referral to the accommodation is made via the Housing Advice and Homeless Service. Funding via Supporting People varies for each project.

## **5.6 West Dunbartonshire**

There is no specific supported accommodation for offenders in West Dunbartonshire. All accommodation is mainstream.

## **6. Service Gaps**

The thematic event highlighted a number of areas for concern in the current level of service and system.

- Inflexibility of timescales in temporary supported accommodation, linked to supporting people funding.
- Planning obstacles in establishing new projects.
- Sustainability with clients with substance misuse and behavioural issues.
- Cost implications associated with those clients with complex and demanding needs.
- Different types of accommodation settings required for short term and long term offenders
- Who should manage any supported accommodation project?
- Cost implications.

Not a cheap option

Smaller supported accommodation proven more likely to work

Comparison with costs of tenancy failure/eviction

- Links to employability, and how this can be funded e.g. housing benefit issues; poverty/benefit trap.

## **7. Turnaround Service**

Turning Point Scotland has recently identified two potential sites in the North Strathclyde CJA area to establish short term residential accommodation. This service will target young men in the criminal justice system, aged between 16 and 30, who are failing in other community based alternatives or who have had multiple remand or short term sentences

## **8. Homelessness Strategies**

Of the six constituent local authorities only three take cognisance of offenders as a specific group with particular needs in their Homelessness Strategy.

Whilst it is understood that priority cannot be given to a particular group, recognition must be given to the offender pathway through the housing system as research has shown that settled accommodation can be a significant factor in reducing the risk of

re-offending. This area will be addressed through the North Strathclyde Offender Accommodation Group.

## 9. Finance

Historically the Section 27 grant allocation for supported accommodation has been under utilised (see Table 1 below).

In the past new applications for an Intensive Support Package (ISP) were 100% funded by Scottish Government. However since July 2007 the Scottish Government will cover up to 90% of the cost of any new ISP, with CJAs having to evidence that they cannot meet more than 10% of the cost.

As an illustration, during 2007-2008 one ISP in North Strathclyde CJA cost £205855. The Scottish Government provided funding of £177821 the remaining cost was taken from Renfrewshire Supported Accommodation grant allocation.

In the future NSCJA would be required to find a minimum of 10 % (£20586) to resource one ISP of this level. This minimum amount may account for a major percentage of local authority allocations.

Given the introduction of MAPPA and the close monitoring and risk management of those high risk offenders the number of future ISPs will be difficult to predict. Given how expensive these services are, it is envisaged that the supported accommodation grant allocation will contribute to funding ISPs as well as standard supported accommodation packages.

	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008
<b>Argyll &amp; Bute &amp; Dunbartonshires</b>			
Grant	£67678	£67678	£67678
Spend	0	0	?
<b>East Renfrewshire</b>			
Grant	£25303	£25455	£25454
Spend	£2721	0	?
<b>Inverclyde</b>			
Grant	£39319	£ 39555	£ 39554
Spend	£4711	0	?
<b>Renfrewshire</b>			
Grant	£27978	£ 28146	£ 28146
Spend	£3000	£ 11826	£28034
<b>North Strathclyde CJA</b>			
Total Grant	£ 160278	£ 160834	£160832
Total Spend	£ 10432	£ 11826	?
Percentage	6.5%	7.3%	

**Table 1: Supported Accommodation Grant Allocation**

## **10. Future Requirements**

Given the broad range of offender needs in relation to accommodation it is difficult to identify sufficient groups of offenders who would consistently require specialist accommodation at a local level. The option of accessing these over a broader geographical area would seem more appropriate. It would be hoped that there would be a more even spread of these resources. Similarly it would be helpful for geographical restrictions on accessing services to be removed as this can present a barrier to accessing services currently.

Clearly high risk offenders, particularly sexual offenders present a significant challenge in identifying appropriate accommodation. Local Authority housing services have been very supportive in assisting partners however in areas where there is limited social housing this can be problematic. Protocols between areas are needed to ensure victims concerns can be addressed. Resources to support specific short stay flats for offenders in local areas may go some way to addressing the issue with the flexibility to access the necessary support services to begin to meet the specific needs of individual offenders.

Given that the outcome is to integrate offenders back into the community and sustainable accommodation, it would be preferable to use mainstream housing rather than stigmatised offender accommodation.

There is no perceived requirement for offender supported accommodation in North Strathclyde CJA as it is considered that the numbers do not justify such a service.

## Appendix 1 Electronic Survey Template

Please indicate if any of the following services exist in your area. Where they are present please provide contact details of the appropriate person who will be able to provide greater details about the service.

Completed by:

Date:

Local Authority Area:

<b>Specialist Accommodation Service</b>	<b>Name and address of Accommodation</b>	<b>Name, Tel, E-mail details of contact</b>
24 hour staffed hostel		
Supported Tenancies		
Supported Landlady / Caretaker scheme		
Specialist Facilities		
Specialist Intensive Services		
Core and cluster facilities		
Other		

Please return this form to Vicky Shields, North Strathclyde CJA at [vicky.shields@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:vicky.shields@renfrewshire.gov.uk).

## **Appendix 2 Thematic Event Set Questions**

### **Supported Accommodation Event 20/2/08 NSCJA Office, Mile End Mill**

#### **Thematic Questions**

1. Current types of Accommodation Available
2. Current Practices in relation to Offender Accommodation.
3. Number of clients accessing service.
4. Indicative Costs of services.
5. Existing protocols between CJSW & Housing Providers.
6. Current Gaps in Service provision.
7. Current Cross-Authority Issues.
8. Areas of Best Practice.
9. Is current provision adequate for offender population?

## **Appendix 3 Renfrewshire Supported Accommodation**

### **Blue Triangle, Renfrew**

This accommodation consists of 13- 2apartment, 4 – 3apartment properties, one of which is a staff flat. The property is owned by Williamsburgh Housing Association and managed by Blue Triangle. Criteria for referral is aged over 25 with low to medium support needs. The accommodation can accommodate both single people and families.

### **Blue Triangle, Paisley**

Accommodation comprises of 12 self contained, single person flats. The property is owned by Renfrewshire Council and managed by Blue Triangle. Criteria for this accommodation 16 – 25 years old, with level of support determined by assessment of need.

### **YMCA, Paisley**

This project has a core and cluster set up. There are 7 core flats and 4 cluster flats. The properties are owned by Paisley South Housing Association and the project is managed by YMCA. Criteria for this accommodation 16 – 25 years old, with level of support determined by assessment of need.

### **Thrushcraigs Complex Paisley**

The complex comprises 17 family flats within a council owned tenement property. The site is manned 24hours per day with a minimal level of support supplied. Housing Support will be offered to all clients who are accommodated in the complex. This support is provided by Housing Advice and Homeless Service officers.

### **Fitzallan Complex, Paisley**

This complex is primarily for single people over the age of 16. The level of support is minimal at the complex, however additional support can be provided by support workers from the Housing Advice and Homeless Services. The complex is made up of 16 – 2 apartment council owned flats. Couples without children can be accommodated at the complex.

### **Abercorn Street, Paisley**

This site is owned by Sanctuary Housing Association. The property will be the relocation site for the Housing and Homeless Service which will be located on the ground floor of the building with supported accommodation on the floors above. The accommodation has been identified with clients with complex needs. The accommodation consists of 13-2 apartment flats plus one staff flat, and will be managed by a specialized support provider. The specification for this provider has been drawn up.

## **Brewery Street, Johnstone**

This accommodation is expected to be operational from July 2008. It has been identified to accommodate people with mild to moderate mental health issues. A support provider has yet to be identified to manage this project. The property itself is owned by Loretto Housing Association and is made up of 10- 2 apartment flats, one of which is a staff flat