



COMMUNITY JUSTICE ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

Report to Scottish Government Justice Department

May 2008

1 Background

- 1.1 The National Strategy for the Management of Offenders requires each CJA to conduct an audit of supported accommodation for offenders and ex-offenders.
- 1.2 The purpose of the audit is to update an earlier national review completed in 2001 to look at opportunities to reshape services.
- 1.3 In the context of the audit, supported accommodation means *'the provision of appropriate accommodation and housing resources available in the community able to meet the assessed needs and risks of accused on bail, offenders subject to community disposals and ex-prisoners on statutory supervision or receiving voluntary assistance'*.
- 1.4 *'Appropriate'* is defined as accommodation which the offender can live in, manage successfully and sustain and which makes maximum possible contribution to the reduction of re-offending and risks posed to the community.
- 1.5 The audit posed a number of questions for CJAs. These are:
 - **What type of accommodation might be required, specifically:**
 - The need for a specialist 24hour staffed residential unit
 - A cluster of supported accommodation
 - Access to a range of social housing arrangements
 - Attention to the needs of young offenders and women offenders
 - Provision for exceptionally high risk offenders
 - **The joint assessment processes and tools in place**
 - **The use of protocols**
 - **How the CJA plans to take this work forward**

2 CJA Response

Types of Accommodation Required

- 2.1 It is the considered view of partners that our aspiration would be to utilise as far as possible mainstream housing provision and we are unconvinced of the benefits of a dedicated residential facility or core/cluster provision for high risk offenders. Both of these options are difficult to locate and can pose management problems when used for high risk individuals, including sex offenders. Glasgow instead supports the use, wherever possible, of mainstream housing provision with any necessary monitoring /supervision and support provided on the assessed risk or need of the individual.
- 2.2 We recognise the need to look at the use of specialist accommodation provision and ensure this is targeted only at those who require it.
- 2.3 In line with the research and government recommendations, criminal justice supported accommodation provision is targeted only at those who have needs related to offending and it should not be used to simply provide housing for offenders in the absence of mainstream options¹. We do recognise the ongoing issues in accessing more mainstream options for offenders and are working with the RSL sector to ensure that offenders are able to access these options where appropriate.
- 2.4 There are three specialist Criminal Justice projects providing supported accommodation to offenders. These are the Dick Stewart Project, a 13 bed supported accommodation unit; The 218 Project, which has the capacity to accommodate 12 women in the residential unit, and up to 60 Temporary Furnished Flats (TFFs) with a floating support service provided by SACRO.
- 2.5 We recognise the potential for growth of supported accommodation for this group and will consider this as part of the future work of the CJA.
- 2.6 We must continue to look at accommodation and support issues together rather than the provision of accommodation in isolation.
- 2.7 We recognise the need to look at how support for those with alcohol misuse issues is improved and developed. The CJA will engage with partners to access new funding streams to develop alcohol services. A new service being developed by Glasgow Addiction Service and Turning Point will shortly provide a residential alcohol detox facility for young men and women with an emphasis on Criminal Justice clients. We will look at how this service is meeting needs and any requirement for additional specialist services.

¹ Criminal Justice Accommodation Services, A review and consultation paper, Scottish Executive (2001)

- 2.8 Structural issues including funding through Housing Benefit pose a barrier to securing accommodation for those offenders before they leave prison and through work outlined in the Area Plan 2008-11, the CJA is committed to costing the shortfall in Housing Benefit.
- 2.9 Provision of appropriate accommodation for young people remains a significant concern and work is ongoing to develop better options for this group.

Joint Assessment

- 2.10 We recognise the multiple assessment tools and ways of assessing accommodation needs that exist between partners. We plan to develop a shared tool or toolkit that can be utilised and understood across agencies. This will be part of the work of the Accommodation Working Group detailed below.

Protocols

A joint protocol for accommodating offenders is in place. The City Council, Social Work Services, in conjunction with the GHA, has commissioned a consultant to review this protocol and to include participation by RSLs across the city. This is on target to be completed by June, when a new document will go out to RSLs for consultation and agreement. The CJA will continue to monitor the operation of this protocol through the working group to ensure it is fit for purpose.

How the CJA will take this work forward

- 2.11 The GCJA Area Plan 2008 -11 identifies housing and accommodation as a key priority. The aspiration is to ensure that no-one, with an identified housing need, leaves prison homeless, by;
- Developing a joint assessment tool to identify the housing needs of offenders in custody and the community,
 - Costing the shortfall in housing benefit for those leaving custody and looking at ways of bridging this gap,
 - Supporting the ongoing dialogue with RSLs around housing and accommodation issues for offenders; and
 - Putting in place appropriate housing partnership arrangements between the CJA and Glasgow Housing Sector.
- 2.12 The CJA has set up an Accommodation Working Group (See Annex 1 for details of remit and membership).
- 2.13 An inaugural meeting of this Group was held in February 2008 and information has been collated or provided by partners in relation to:

- Numbers of those involved in the criminal justice system who may be in need of accommodation support
 - The use of Criminal Justice Supported Accommodation Projects
 - Inspection Reports on these projects
 - MAPPA developments
 - Homelessness presentations
- 2.14 Data is still limited on the actual numbers requiring accommodation support and their access to this beyond specific criminal justice services. Next steps for the group will be to come together to look at the processes an individual offender may go through, particularly in the transition from prison to the community. This will identify practical areas for improvement and highlight any areas for enhancing current data collection.
- 2.15 The Governor of Barlinnie Prison has offered to host a workshop that will bring together practitioners in order to 'walk through' the processes experienced by a prisoner on release. This level of engagement will promote a problem solving approach to any gaps or barriers to provision and we anticipate a practical action plan for services will be a product of this event.
- 2.16 This report, as far as possible, highlights the issues we feel need to be addressed nationally in order to improve offender accommodation outcomes and reports on the local actions we plan to take to achieve our area plan objectives. It should be seen as a work in progress as we recognise that we need to invest significant attention in this area of work.

3 National Action

- 3.1 One of the most significant issues facing us in improving supported accommodation for offenders is the barriers to maintaining and securing tenancies due to Housing Benefit funding rules. We would argue that investment in keeping tenancies open for those entering prison and ensuring that ex-prisoners have secured, identified accommodation to go to on release would be a significant step forward in both offender rehabilitation and community safety.
- 3.2 The most recent exploratory work on this issue puts the costs at around £375,000 per annum. This is likely to be a conservative estimate. In addition, any proposed expansion of offender supported accommodation as suggested above would need to be accompanied by specific funding commitments, given the limitations on both S27 and supporting people funding streams.
- 3.3 The responsibilities on partners for the risk management of offenders are increasing through initiatives like MAPPA and ICM. Accommodation is a vital component of any management plan and is recognised as a need in

the profile of those coming through MAPPA processes. Any expansion of these processes (e.g. inclusion of violent offenders) without a corresponding level of funding would put pressure on agencies delivering these services.



ANNEX 1

GCJA Accommodation Working Group Membership and Remit

Housing and Accommodation Working Group Remit Agreed by CJA Board 27 November 2007

Purpose of Report:

To seek the Authority's agreement on the membership and remit of an officers' Housing and Accommodation Working Group to progress the Area Plan commitments and establish stronger links to the housing sector.

The Area Plan 2008 -11 identifies housing and accommodation as a key priority. The intended outcome is to ensure that no-one, with an identified housing need, leaves prison homeless, by;

- Developing a joint assessment tool to identify the housing needs of offenders in custody and the community,
- Costing the shortfall in housing benefit for those leaving custody and looking at ways of bridging this gap,
- Reviewing supported accommodation provision, by April 2008
- Supporting the ongoing dialogue with RSLs around housing and accommodation issues for offenders; and
- Putting in place appropriate housing partnership arrangements between the CJA and Glasgow Housing Sector.

It is proposed that an officers' working group is set up to take forward the work of the CJA in relation to accommodation issues. This would include representatives from:

- Glasgow Community Justice Authority
- GCC, Criminal Justice Social Work
- Scottish Prison Service
- Glasgow Homelessness Partnership
- Glasgow Housing Association
- Registered Social Landlord sector
- SACRO
- Crossreach
- Victim Support

It is anticipated that the group will meet 6 weekly from December 2007 and be responsible for planning and executing the work for the audit and for timetabling and developing the work to deliver the Area Plan commitments from April 2008. The CJA agreed the remit and membership.