



South West Scotland
Community
Justice
Authority

Consultation Workshops

**Scotland's Reducing Re-offending Programme:
What Do You Think?**

The John Pollock Centre, Ayr, Thursday 10 November 2011



**REDUCING
REOFFENDING**
WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SAFER SCOTLAND

Introduction

The Scottish Government held a series of regional consultation workshops hosted by Community Justice Authorities across Scotland covering all CJA areas, to assist with the development of Scotland's next Reducing Reoffending Programme. The workshops aimed for everyone with an interest in reducing reoffending to provide their input into what the next Programme should aim to improve, and how.

The consultation event for the South West Scotland CJA (SWSCJA) area took place on Thursday, 10 November 2011 in Ayr. It was attended by approximately 60 individuals representing a broad range of SWS CJA partners and wider agencies, including:

- Local Authorities including Elected Members, and representatives from:
 - Criminal Justice Social Work Services
 - Children & Families Services
 - Youth Justice Services
 - Community Safety Partnerships
- Scottish Prison Service
- Serco (HMP Kilmarnock)
- Scottish Court Service
- Strathclyde Police
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran
- Skills Development Scotland
- Victim Support Scotland
- Alcohol and Drug Partnerships
- Sacro
- Action for Children
- Aspire2gether
- Ayrshire Council on Alcohol
- Cornerstone
- Ingeus
- The Lighthouse Foundation
- The Violence Reduction Unit

Programme

The half-day event commenced with a short presentation from Joe Griffin, Acting Deputy Director, Community Justice, Scottish Government on the current thinking on the Programme, and was followed by some group work sessions on the programme's possible vision and priority reforms.

Responses from Group Work Sessions

Delegates formed small work groups and considered the following three questions:

Q1 If you could make one thing better over the next three years, what would it be?

Q2 What's the one thing you would stop doing?

Q3 How would you use the Reducing Re-offending Change Fund to fund the changes you want to see?

Responses were given as follows:-

Q1 If you could make one thing better over the next three years, what would it be?

- Early intervention with children in schools
- More diversion: Fiscals need information and change practice
- Employment of sponsored apprenticeships
- More mentoring
- More work options
- Fast track to work programme – building links to local employers
- Sort out welfare benefits before release
- Systems – Organisations have the information and are not sharing
- Equal opportunities – non criminal justice agencies treat offenders with respect
- Build stronger family ties
- NHS links between Criminal Justice and Community have developed
- Include communities in the political and decision-making process through real empowerment, eg the Community Planning process
- Increased/improved employment opportunities – manufacturing
- Parenting skills, especially for dads
- A more coherent approach to working with perpetrators
- A joined up rehabilitation system
- Offenders as citizens –
 - better joined-up services
 - better access to services
- Joined up information systems – communication and responsibility (not just across the criminal justice system)
- Individuals need to be motivated to change
 - How do we build motivation?
 - How do we work better with those who are motivated
- Drugs and alcohol
- Involve the judiciary – debate around sentencing
- Single shared aim
- Family involvement in risk management, strategy and planning
- Re-branding “education” to less formal approach to recognise every aspect of learning
- More information sharing between agencies with clarify around purpose of sharing
- A nation-wide reduction in alcohol consumption
- Reduction in disorder, violence and subsequent convictions/prison population
- Develop a more comprehensively coherent approach to provide community based supports to short sentence prisoners
 - Mentoring by former prisoners
 - Statutory/Voluntary ??
 - Employability support pre release
 - Addiction Support
 - Family Support/Involvement

Q2 What’s the one thing you would stop doing?

- Reduce the use of custody (reduce the prison population/reduce re-offending)
- How?
 - Presumption against custody increased to 6 months
 - Take 16/17 year olds out of prison system/diversion from court (short to long term strategy)
 - Develop intensive supports for women offenders

- Re-visit bail supervision as a statutory measure (bail hostel?)
- Stop spending money on fragmented IT systems
- Stop not using a common-sense approach to sharing data
- Stop custodial sentences for non public safety offences
- Stop issuing means enquiry warrants for people on state benefits (take from source)
- Stop putting low level, low risk offenders through statutory criminal justice process, eg use diversions and flexibility
- More individual approach to sentencing and timescale
- Long length of time between offence and sentencing by which time could have made real progress in life
- No automatic stopping of benefits, e g housing benefit when in prison
- Stop funding perverse incentives
- Stop working in isolation
 - We need all partners
 - We need all communities
- Stop competing priorities/policies
- Stop intervening late in the process – rebalance
- Current system of fiscal fines
- Take less time in reports – eg stand-down reports
- Admin work
- Stop creating new criminal offences
- Stop “silo” working
 - Share information
 - Work in partnership with other agencies
 - “red tape” – legislation

Q3 How would you use the Reducing Re-offending Change Fund to fund the changes you want to see?

- Multi-agency, early and effective intervention
- Services that are proven to work and deliver downstream savings
- Third Sector driven voluntary throughcare service (involving /employing ex-offenders)
- Support that meets the needs of the individual (desistance approach)
- Community ownership/representation
- Better understanding of cost benefits of third section social return for investment
- Tackle attitude towards alcohol
- Prisoner mentoring system
- Secure funding for projects that are working
- Use to reduce waiting time for vital services
- Sheriff to spend time visiting services in other areas to better understand the lives of people they would be sentencing
- Better tie-in with services delivered in prison and those outside prison
- Local neighbourhood community facilitators in the 100 most deprived areas, all working towards a national standard
- Social education programmes in schools – early intervention (alcohol/drugs, court procedures, custody)
- Apprenticeships
- Mentoring (prisoners and families)
- Community Courts –
 - Mediation
 - Reparation/restorative justice
- Funding sustainability for external agencies and projects
- Funding for new third sector proe3jcts

- Train and support mentors for offenders

Next Steps

The findings of this event are being taken forward by the Community Justice Division of the Scottish Government in formalising the Reducing Re-offending Programme 2.

Useful Links & Contacts

Reducing Reoffending Programme

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/public-safety/offender-management>

South West Scotland CJA

www.swscja.org.uk