

Northern Community Justice Authority: Community Sentencing Information Event

Introduction

With the release of the Scottish Government's '**Supporting Guidance on Community Service**', the NCJA hosted two Community Sentencing events at the AECC in Aberdeen and Drumossie Hotel, Inverness.

The events were open to all staff working within the CS spectrum including Task Supervisors, Managers, Social Work staff with CS responsibility and partner agencies from the voluntary sector.

Each event involved presentations from Brian Cole and Yvonne Robson, providing Government and ADSW perspectives. There was also input from Fiona Westland who was involved in the production of the guidance.

These informative presentations were followed by two structured workshops, promoting discussion and feedback on the impact of the new guidelines on staff working with offenders within the CS environment. To compliment the events, there were also a number of display stands including: APEX Scotland, Learning Network North, Northern Horizons and SACRO.

Both days were very well attended and generated much dialogue, discussion and debate, centred around taking CS forward and overcoming future challenges. All workshop feedback along with course evaluations are included in this report and a copy has been sent to Brian and Yvonne.

- **Aberdeen event - see page 2**
- **Inverness event - see page 13**

Aberdeen Event on 6th April 2009 at AECC

Section 1: Attendance

Forty-two staff attended the Aberdeen event. The breakdown was as follows:

	Aberdeen City	Aberdeenshire
Projects Officer	1	2
Task Supervisor	-	5
Order Supervisor	6	-
Placement Officer	1	-
Manager	1	2
Social Worker	2	7
Strategic Development Officer	-	1
Trainee Social Worker	1	1
Job title not identified	3	3

Staff also attended from:

Northern Horizons	2
SACRO	2
Apex Scotland	1
Learning Network North	1

Questions and Responses from Workshop 1

The new Criminal Justice Bill proposes to limit the use of prison sentences of less than 6 months, with greater use of Community Sentences.

Question 1) Visibility

What messages do you want CS to give?

- CS is doing a good job.
- CS is not easy.
- CS is not a soft option.
- Effective.
- Good service.
- It works!
- Different messages to different staff.
- Reparation.
- CS benefits the community.
- Positive alternative to custody.
- CS is about self-responsibility.
- Productive.

Who would you aim these messages at?

- Need to influence the media, both locally and nationally.
- Other offenders.
- Locally show projects 'before and after'.
- Voluntary and Charitable groups.
- Sheriffs.
- Local Authorities.
- Judiciary.
- Victims and their families.
- Government.

How would you get these messages across?

- Use of City and Shire banners and DVD.
- Community groups and local newsletters.
- Positive advertising, both locally and nationally.
- Celebrate completed projects using the press and plaques.
- Local business and word of mouth.
- All staff advocating CS.
- Encouraging the public to get involved e.g. online voting.
- Nationally recognised logo.
- Feedback from offenders on how the project has benefitted them.

Who would you involve?

- Community groups.
- Social Work.
- Sheriffs.
- Voluntary Services.
- Local Authority Public Relations.
- Offenders.
- Local Business.

What challenges do you anticipate?

- Competing against unemployed and being sensitive to not taking jobs away from unemployed.
- Meeting national expectations when local resources cannot hope to match these expectations.
- Sheriffs being ignorant of CS roles and requirements.
- Dealing with breaches and getting offenders to understand the need to comply.
- Competition for placements from other agencies.
- Finding tasks/ supervision.

What challenges do you anticipate/ continued

- Communities do not understand that CS is a credible order.
- Individual placements – lack of support from other agencies.
- New Standards are not backed up by legislation e.g. activities other than unpaid work.
- Changing public opinion.
- Overall co-ordination of Orders.
- Groups already over-allocated.
- Large geographic area.
- Lack of appropriate placements.
- Lack of knowledge in Courts.
- Staff support.
- Lack of communication with Courts.
- Inappropriate work.
- Lack of resources.
- Inconsistent Sheriffs and practices.

How would you solve these challenges?

- Need to have staff in court every day. At present, not enough staff to cover every day.
- Sherriff needs to reinforce that Order starts from when the Offender leaves court.
- Re-think what a 'placement' is and define role of 'Task Supervisors'.
- All agencies to take responsibility for offering individual placements, including NHS, Education and Voluntary Agencies.
- Better access to drug and alcohol treatment and resources.
- More cross-working across agencies, including City and Shire. This is not just a CJSW responsibility.
- National logo so that everyone can immediately identify what work has been carried out by CS.
- Getting across what can or cannot be done safely.
- Maximising resources via joint working with bordering authorities.
- More realistic measures of performance.
- Access to appropriate and relevant training.
- Improve relationship with Press, dedicated websites, local newsletters, DVDs, etc, supported by Scottish Government.
- Pool resources between City and Shire.
- Relocate some SPS resources to CS!
- Better networking and sharing of experiences.

Question 2) Bird's Eye View of the Road

Examine your current CS arrangements and identify what needs to be done differently, to be 'fit for purpose' and to deliver on immediacy; speed & flexibility. You may want to consider the profile of your service in terms of getting the best out of your staff and placements.

Identify two changes in your service that would make a difference in each of the following areas:

a) Staff - all grades

- Need greater awareness of what is available in the community and restrictions.
- Immediacy.
- More staff in court.
- Improved internal advertising, appropriate training and man-power.
- In the Shire, recruit Case Managers i.e. not Social Work Qualified.
- Review current use of staff to ensure optimum delivery of service in relation to Court and CS.
- Review skills mix to include Support Workers and Paraprofessionals.

b) Offenders

- Individual assessments, tailored to suit skills.
- Follow their needs.
- Increase self-worth with certificates and appraisal.
- Make it 'personal' value.

c) Placements

- Flexibility.
- Educational.
- Availability.
- Increased opportunities.
- More specific placements.
- Incentives for good behaviour, attendance and compliance.
- Not cast adrift at end of placement.

d) Beneficiaries

- Community.
- Voluntary Sector
- Those serving CS.
- Council/ community projects.

e) Local Community

- Change public opinion through advertising, training, public relations, awareness and Press relations.

Question 3) Communication

Do we communicate well within CS and with the wider public?

- No! Not good enough at self-appraisal.

Could we do it better?

- Yes!
- Increased awareness, multi-agency involvement, appropriate training.
- Better use of media.
- Demonstrations of what CS can do.
- Public consultation on what they want prioritised.
- Encourage feedback after project has been completed.
- Greater involvement and communication with those identified in question 2d).

How will we know if we have improved communication?

- More referrals and more completed Orders.
- Greater awareness of completed projects.

Questions and Responses from Workshop 2a

Question 1) Compliance

The new National Outcomes and Standards emphasise the importance of Criminal Justice staff promoting compliance. What can you do to improve compliance?

- More interesting projects.
- Offenders completing projects within time.
- Sheriffs taking a tougher stance.
- Clearer SERs for offenders who do not comply.
- Praise for offenders who do well.
- Better routines.
- Ensure placements are appropriate.
- Consistency on applying standards – guidelines are open to interpretation, so sending offenders and staff mixed messages.

Question 1) Compliance/ continued

- Courts can influence greater compliance.
- Ensure staff have appropriate training e.g. pro-social modelling.
- Different start times for Methadone programmes.
- Consistency across services for non-attendance and breaches.
- More spaces on work parties.
- Text messages.
- Courts need to operate faster from offence to sentence.
- Time off for good behaviour/ attendance.
- Time off for offenders who act as mentors.

Question 2) Flexibility

It is proposed that a percentage of the Order hours could be used in other activities. What activities would you consider and what would you hope to achieve?

- Utilise offender's skills.
- Adult education.
- Linking with recreational activities.
- Anger management.
- Activities linked to offending behaviour e.g. alcohol education.
- College courses specifically linked to CS.

Question 3) CS Orders

Community Service Orders increased by 4% last year, with S229s up 22%. If these trends continue, how will your service manage this increase?

- Forestry Commission has a large numbers of spaces.

Questions and Responses from Workshop 2b

Question 1) Offenders

Using your experience, devise a profile of a typical offender on CS.

- Truanted from school and poor educational achievement.
- History of alcohol/ substance misuse.
- Possibly a father (may or may not have contact with child).
- Problems with finances and relationships.

- Under 30.
- Male.
- Unemployed.
- Poor attachments.
- Council housing.
- Known to CJ system.

- Belligerent attitude to CS.
- Turns day into night.
- Experience of CJS.
- Poor employment record.
- No permanent father figure.

Now agree a profile of the 'Ideal Work Supervisor' to manage the 'typical offender'.

- Good understanding of issues in community.
- Background skills in a trade e.g. painter, joiner, etc.
- Gives praise, but keeps firm boundaries.

- Realistic.
- Hands on.
- Good listener.
- Non- judgemental.
- Motivated.
- Aware of offender's needs.
- Positive thinking.
- Supports and encourages.
- A saint!

- Firm, but fair.
- Optimistic.
- Confident.
- Good sense of humour.
- Uses initiative.
- Good communication skills.
- Patient.
- Positive role model.

Give some examples of offenders who are not typical and how might they be managed?

- Employed offenders.
- White collar workers
- Very young, 16 and 17 year olds.

- Single parents.
- First time offenders.
- Pensioners.

Non-typical offenders/ continued

- People with disabilities or mental health problems.
- Older clients.
- Non-English speaking.
- Offshore or fishing workers.
- Female.
- Sex offenders.
- Female offenders: can go on individual placements, or work parties.
- Sex offenders: can go on individual placements, but need to be risk assessed first.
- White collar workers: work party, but can be moved to a different area if location may cause a problem.
- Non-English speaking offenders: interpreter required for Induction and also there may be health and safety considerations.

Question 2) Getting the Best

Identify 5 ways of getting the best out of individual offenders and the group they work with?

- Good relationship with Task Supervisors.
 - Use clients who are already skilled to empower others.
 - Regular reviews to encourage and provide positive feedback.
 - Help offenders to feel as though they are getting something out of CS.
-
- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ■ Flexible. | ■ Firm boundaries. |
| ■ Honesty. | ■ Consistent discipline. |
| ■ Pro-social modelling. | ■ Addressing individual needs. |
| ■ Recognising good work. | ■ Dialogue with other workers. |
| ■ Develop team skills/ spirit. | ■ Sharing information. |
| ■ Transferable skills. | ■ Make offenders feel valued. |
| ■ Right work group. | ■ Match placement to their needs. |
| ■ Consistent group. | ■ Ability to move into alternatives. |
| ■ Instil responsibility. | |

Question 3) Challenges

From your experience, please list three key challenges working with offenders on Community Service.

- Courts.
- Substance misuse.
- Consistency.
- Dynamics of the group.
- Substance misuse.
- Chaotic lifestyles.
- Mental health problems.
- Getting placements and Orders finished on time.
- Working time directives.
- Lack of back up from Courts.
- Resistance from offenders.

How might you deal with these challenges?

- Sharing information.
- More resources.
- Closer working with courts including liaison meetings.
- Doing 'what we can with what we have', but feeding back challenges to senior management.
- Better communication with regards to attendance, participation, etc.
- Better communication with Sheriffs.
- Honesty in SERs.
- Feedback to Sheriffs if offender unable to complete CS in time.

Section 3: Event Evaluation

A total of 31 evaluation forms were completed and returned.

Objectives

a) What did you hope to gain from this event?

- Clarification of legislation and new objectives.
- Better understanding of changes to community service and how it will affect workers.
- Government's perspective on the way forward for CS.
- Information on local provision and new community payback sentences.
- Knowledge of the changes happening within the Criminal Justice Service, regarding CS and the impact on service users and workers.
- Strategies to meet new standards.
- Practical knowledge of how to meet new requirements.
- Information on the way CS is going.

b) To what extent do you feel these objectives were achieved?

Fully	Partially	Not at all
15	15	1

About the Event:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	DNA
Structure	10	18	2	1	-
Content	8	19	3	1	-
Speakers	8	16	6	1	-
Environment	17	13	1	-	-
Administration	16	13	1	-	1

Additional Comments:

- Helpful and informative.
- Comfortable environment.
- Valuable information.
- Well organised and run.
- Great networking opportunity.
- Very interesting course.
- Very well presented.
- Limited focus on resource implications and appropriate training for CS staff.
- Scottish Government needs to engage more with media and public.
- Helped develop team spirit.

Additional Comments/ continued

- **Good discussions.**
- **Excellent way of promoting local services.**
- **Great promotion of multi-agency working.**
- **Helps to build better relationships.**
- **Could have shortened day by omitting tea breaks.**
- **Left with the impression that timescales could be managed, but we do not have the resources required to do this.**

Inverness Event on 7th April 2009 at Drumossie Hotel

Section 1: Attendance

Forty-one participants attended the Inverness event. The breakdown was as follows:

	Highland	Moray	Orkney	Shetland	W. Isles
CS Supervisor	12	2	-	-	1
CS Officer	4	1	-	-	-
Project Officer	3	-	-	-	-
Team Manager	3	2	-	-	-
CJ Officer (Work Orders)	1	-	-	-	-
Social Worker	1	1	-	-	1
CJ Service Manager	-	-	1	1	-
Principal Officer	1	-	-	-	-
Supervised Attendance Officer	1	-	-	-	-
Job title not identified	2	-	-	-	-

Staff also attended from:

Action for Children	2
SACRO	1

Questions and Responses from Workshop 1

The new Criminal Justice Bill proposes to limit the use of prison sentences of less than 6 months, with greater use of Community Sentences.

Question 1) Visibility

What messages do you want CS to give?

- Public perception.
- Punishment and skills rehabilitation.
- 'Payback' is about offenders giving back to communities.
- What really happens on CS including process, work, breach and restorative justice.
- Different messages to different groups e.g. clients, courts, etc.
- Robust, not 'soft option'.
- Promote benefits from CS.

Who would you aim these messages at?

- Community Councils.
- Local Councillors.
- Local Authority Press Officer.

How would you get these messages across?

- Local Authority/ NCJA website.
- A4 plaque for work done.
- Publicise events.

Who would you involve?

- PR – know what we want to say.
- Make victims aware, so they know what happens to offenders.

What challenges do you anticipate?

- Employment.
- Increase in unemployment has an impact on work.
- Increase in numbers leads to a greater demand for places.
- Greater demand, but fewer resources.
- Consistencies of supervision during Order, as offenders don't pick and choose.
- Media/ public/ Court perceptions of CS.
- Non-compliance.
- Courts not complying with breaches.
- Dealing with difficult clients – need to feel confident in sending away if necessary.
- No work history or work ethic.

How would you solve these challenges?

- Courts: orders/ breaches/ laws.
- Possible incentives i.e. reduction of hours for good behaviour.
- Attempt to influence media and sentencers.
- Activities linked to offending behaviour e.g. alcohol or drugs education.

Question 2) Bird's Eye View of the Road

Examine your current CS arrangements and identify what needs to be done differently, to be 'fit for purpose' and to deliver on immediacy; speed & flexibility. You may want to consider the profile of your service in terms of getting the best out of your staff and placements.

Identify two changes in your service that would make a difference in each of the following areas:

a) Staff - all grades

- More work supervisors.
- Clarity of roles.
- All staff need to know new standards and then implement them.
- Adequately trained staff.
- More vehicles.
- Single status.

b) Offenders

- After care or voluntary work when CS finishes.
- Follow up on absences.
- Offenders with special needs.
- Remote geographical locations.
- Involve employers to take on offenders.

c) Placements

- Doesn't work for everyone.
- Not suitable for some 16-17 year olds.
- Health and Safety issues.
- Improve communication.

d) Local Community

- More feedback.
- Consultation.
- Better PR.

Question 3) Communication

Do we communicate well within CS and with the wider public?

- Room for improvement.
- Need to communicate with wider public in a structured and strategic way.

Could we do it better?

- Local papers – weekly CS column.
- Corporate Communications Dept.
- Local Community Council.
- Police.
- Victim Support.
- Need a national voice through ADSW, CJSW, SACRO, APEX.
- Need one voice!

How will we know if we have improved communication?

- Feedback.

Questions and Responses from Workshop 2a

Question 1) Compliance

The new National Outcomes and Standards emphasise the importance of Criminal Justice staff promoting compliance. What can you do to improve compliance?

- More interesting projects.
- Offenders completing projects within time.
- Sheriffs taking a tougher stance.
- Clearer SERs for offenders who do not comply.
- Praise for offenders who do well.
- Better routines.
- Make placement more meaningful/ interesting/ rewarding for offenders.
- Safe.
- Part punishment, part choice.
- Consistency across the board.
- Flexible.
- Better SER writing – is this offender fit for CS?)
- Provide food and hot drinks.
- Better transport links.
- Make offender part of decision making process.
- Different start times for Methadone programmes.
- Consistency across services for non-attendance and breaches.
- More spaces on work parties.

Question 1) Compliance/ continued

- Text messages.
- Courts need to operate faster from offence to sentence.
- Time off for good behaviour/ attendance.
- Time off for offenders who act as mentors.

Question 2) Flexibility

It is proposed that a percentage of the Order hours could be used in other activities. What activities would you consider and what would you hope to achieve?

- Adult education.
- Linking with recreational activities.
- Anger management.
- College courses specifically linked to CS.
- Open to all – identified need at SER or thereafter.
- Change public misconception.
- Utilise offender's skills.
- Better assessment of needs.
- Offender to get benefits not available otherwise.
- Closer links with other agencies; drug and alcohol, training, employment, etc.

Question 3) CS Orders

Community Service Orders increased by 4% last year, with S229s up 22%. If these trends continue, how will your service manage this increase?

- In the above question, delete 'how' and replace with 'no!'

Questions and Responses from Workshop 2b

Question 1) Offenders

Using your experience, devise a profile of a typical offender on CS.

- Literacy and numeracy problems.
- Know how to play the system.
- Lack of consequential thinking.
- Negative experiences to education.
- Long term impact of criminal record.
- No such thing as a typical offender. Each offender is a unique individual.
- History of short term offences.
- Addictions – drugs/ alcohol.
- 2nd/ 3rd generation offender.
- Poverty.
- Male.
- Drink and drive offence.
- Under 25.
- Pregnant or single parent.
- Chaotic lifestyle/ relationship.
- Cultural differences.
- Low achiever.
- No ambition to work.
- Pro-criminal.
- Health issues.
- Unemployed.

Now agree a profile of the 'Ideal Work Supervisor' to manage the 'typical offender'.

- Promotes pro-social modelling skills.
- Has received appropriate training.
- Good listening and communication skills.
- Good relationship builder.
- Able to work alone and as part of a team.
- Can manage difficult situations.
- Not easily manipulated.
- Streetwise.
- Provides continuity.
- Being deaf helps!
- Resilient.
- Tolerant.
- Firm and fair.
- Flexible.
- Leadership qualities.
- Adaptable.

'Ideal Work Supervisor'/ continued

- Good teacher.
- Reliable.
- Common sense.
- Mature.
- Know local services.
- Non-judgemental.
- Approachable.
- Good at record keeping.
- Good time management.
- Able to assess risk.
- Observant.

Give some examples of offenders who are not typical and how might they be managed?

- White collar workers.
- Offended on placement.
- Disabled.
- OAP.
- Fraud offender.
- Female.
- 16 - 17 year olds.
- Dependants.
- Foreign nationals.
- Migrant workers.
- Full-time college courses.
- Sex offenders.
- It was also suggested that a 'non-typical' offender is someone who turns up on time, does not miss a session, is enthusiastic and completes their Order with no warnings!

Question 2) Getting the Best

Identify 5 ways of getting the best out of individual offenders and the group they work with?

- Use the individual's skills in the right way.
- Put deterrents in place for non-attendance and incentives for attendance.
- More resources for evening and weekend work.
- Listen and respect.
- Positive manipulation and persuasion.
- Good role model/ positive reinforcement.
- Appropriate praise/ chastisement.
- Appropriate choice of team/ work composition.
- Firm, fair and consistent.
- Encouragement of strengths.
- Build on personal interests/ experience.
- Instil a sense of purpose and achievement.

Question 3) Challenges

From your experience, please list three key challenges working with offenders on Community Service.

- Numbers and resources.
- Motivation and work ethic.
- Travel – large geographical area to cover.
- Communication.
- Attendance.
- Attitude – anti-authority.
- Lack of basic skills (both practical and social).
- Small communities – offenders likely to know each other.
- Pro-criminal role models in family.

How might you deal with these challenges?

- Better communication.
- Using life skills.
- Clear instructions prior to start of Order (Induction).
- Clear warning system.
- Fair and firm.
- Keep informed of progress.
- Refer problems upwards.
- Using all answers from 'Getting the Best'.

Section 3: Event Evaluation

A total of 26 evaluation forms were completed and returned.

Objectives

a) What did you hope to gain from this event?

- A better idea of the changes and requirements of CS.
- Increase knowledge and other's views of new guidance.
- Knowledge of payback orders.
- A clearer view of how CS will affect me.
- Future direction of CS.
- Insight and clarity into Payback Orders.
- Knowledge and enlightenment.
- How changes in CS will be implemented.
- Information about the future of CS and Payback.
- Shared understanding of what's to come.

b) To what extent do you feel these objectives were achieved?

Fully	Partially	Not at all
12	14	-

About the Event:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	DNA
Structure	5	21	-	-	-
Content	4	20	2	-	-
Speakers	4	19	3	-	-
Environment	15	11	-	-	-
Administration	8	15	-	-	3

Additional Comments:

- Very good day.
- Hope for similarly valuable follow-ups.
- Kept to the point and no duplication of information.
- Very well run workshops – numbers on back of badges good idea!
- Unsure how the new Community Payback orders will fit in with Constructs, DTTOs, etc.
- Felt venue and food excessive to needs, in this climate of no resources for services.
- Good in identifying future requirements, but very poor in identifying how it will be done in terms of resources.
- Hope that information gathered, will be taken on board and acted upon.
- Given the 'credit crunch', environment, venue and catering were extravagant.
- Nice venue and good facilities.