

ANGUS COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE7 October 1997

**“A POSITIVE PENALTY” - THE REPORT OF AN INSPECTION OF
COMMUNITY SERVICE PLACEMENTS IN ABERDEENSHIRE, DUNDEE
AND FALKIRK.****REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK****ABSTRACT**

This report outlines the Director of Social Work's response to aspects of the Community Service Inspection Report "A Positive Penalty" particularly in relation to SWSG Circular 12/96 issued in April with regards to the marking of clothing, vans and other publicity.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee agrees the content of this report and instructs the Director of Social Work to respond accordingly to the Scottish Office by 31 October 1997.

2 INTRODUCTION

Circular 12/96 - "Community Service by Offenders - Public Awareness, Environmental Work and Hours" was introduced in April 1996 and was the subject of Committee Report 654/96. The report outlined that protective clothing and vans would be marked, where appropriate projects would be identified and media contact to highlight projects would be maintained.

The Community Service Inspection Report - "A Positive Penalty" examined various elements of Community Service schemes within three local authorities. Concern was expressed in all three authorities regarding the policy of marking protective clothing and vans resulting in the Social Work Services Group asking for comments on those areas outlined within the Director's Response.

3 **EXTRACT FROM GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR SWSG 12/96 AND DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE**

The Director of Social Work welcomes the opportunity to review the principal elements of Circular 12/96 and particularly the current policy relating to the following:

Identification of Schemes and Improved Publicity

The Government believes that much more needs to be done to ensure that community service is visible and the projects carried out are known in the local community. Local authorities should therefore take the following **action** to achieve these objectives:

Local Publicity

Authorities should seek every opportunity to publicise the benefits produced by community service schemes in the local media.

The Director of Social Work believes that the benefits of Community Service should continue to be promoted within Angus.

Identification of Projects

Wherever appropriate, authorities should arrange for the identification of projects by means of signs showing that the work is being or has been carried out by a community service scheme.

The Director of Social Work does not feel there are merits in identifying projects, however, successful environmental projects should continue to be promoted through the local media.

Markings on Vehicles/Protective Clothing

Authorities should arrange for vehicles used by community service schemes to be marked to indicate this. Such markings may be permanent or temporary.

Authorities are already required to provide suitable protective clothing. Where protective clothing is worn at a placement, for health and safety reasons or to protect participants' own clothing, authorities should ensure that the clothing is clearly and visibly marked with the wording "Community Service Scheme". (Existing stocks of protective clothing should be adapted where possible.) The requirements to wear this protective clothing when participating in relevant work should be regarded as a normal reasonable requirement of supervision.

The test of whether protective clothing is reasonably required is where protection would be worn whether or not the person was a participant in a community service scheme, and where a claim for compensation

might result in the event of protective clothing not being provided. The same protective clothing should be worn by all participants in the community service project, including supervisory staff. Only in exceptional circumstances (for instance where the offender is placed with an organization which has its own arrangements or requirements for protective clothing) will this not apply.

The Director of Social Work sees no benefit in the marking of vehicles and protective clothing as some offenders have found the wearing of visibly marked clothing humiliating whilst some supervisors fear that it undermines good discipline and can de-motivate offenders.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration and the Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

6 CONCLUSION

This report welcomes the Scottish Office review of several aspects of Circular 12/96 - Community Service by Offenders: Public Awareness, Environmental Work and Hours, and outlines the Director of Social Work's proposed response.

22 September 1996

W B Robertson
Director of Social Work

NOTE

The undernoted background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing this report.

