

ANGUS COUNCIL**SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE 14 January 1997****REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK****CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES - RESEARCH INTO HOME
LEAVE PREPARATION FOR PRISONERS****ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this report is to outline a research proposal evaluating the effectiveness of the Home Leave Group initiative at HMP Noranside which is part of the preparation for release of medium and long term prisoners, and recommends the approval for this research to be carried out.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that: the Social Work committee:-

- (i) Agrees to Peter Flanagan of the Council's Social Work Department Criminal Justice Services carrying out the research outlined in this report.
- (ii) Instructs the Director of Social Work to produce at a later date, a report on the research findings.

2. INTRODUCTION

As part of the Universities of Edinburgh and Stirling Masters degree course on Advanced Social Work studies in Criminal Justice Services, Peter Flanagan, an employee of the council, is required to carry out a research project on an area of Social Work within the Criminal Justice system. The period of the proposed research will be February to July 1997.

3. BACKGROUND

HMP Noranside is an open prison which accommodates medium to long-term prisoners at the latter stages of their confinement. The prisoners, assessed as suitable for open conditions, can receive weekend home leaves on a monthly basis as a part of a rehabilitation programme leading to eventual release.

Angus Council social workers based in HMP Noranside have developed an innovative Home Leave Preparation group to assist prisoners in a practical way, in making the most of their home leave to minimise problems which are known to effect the risk of offending on release. The proposed research will evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of the Home Leave Group to prisoners.

The principal means of carrying out the research will be through the use of a self completion questionnaire provided to all prisoners participating in the group during February - April 1997 - anticipated number, 40. It is also intended to interview a sub sample of respondents. The results will be analysed against both the aims and objectives of the programme, and the little research on effectiveness of release preparation in minimising recidivism.

The Scottish Prison Service have agreed to support the research proposal as outlined.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report for Angus Council.

5. CONSULTATION

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

6. CONCLUSION

This proposed research project will be a valuable means to examine the effectiveness of the Social Work Department's Criminal Justice Services innovative work within the prison setting.

W B Robertson
Director of Social Work

AB/AC

Note: No 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 any material extent in preparing this report.

