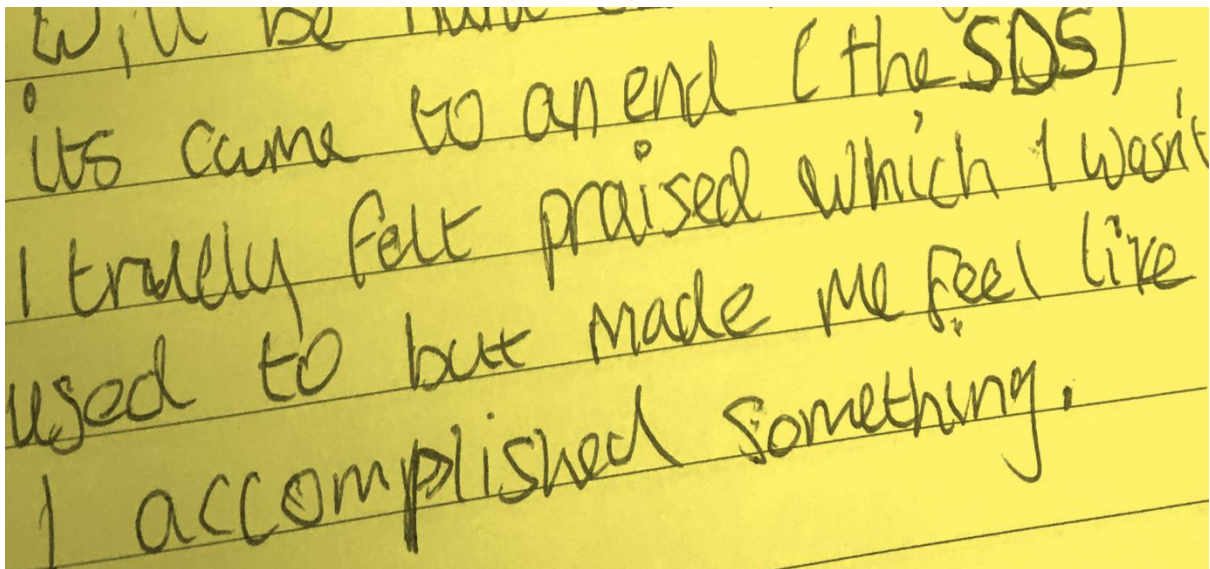


Evaluation of South Lanarkshire Structured Deferred Sentencing for Young People



End of Project Report

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The views and opinions expressed in this document are solely those of the author.

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a structured deferred sentencing (SDS) pilot that ran in South Lanarkshire between March 2018 and March 2019. The purpose of the pilot was to improve sentencing outcomes for young people between the ages of 16-21 years old. It was expected that by deferring sentencing and regular engagement with an intensive social work support package, young people who engaged on the pilot would reduce (re) offending rates, improve their employability and achieve community integration.

The pilot was executed in two summary courts: Lanark and Hamilton. The support package provided was delivered with the needs of the young person at the forefront and could include: housing, mental health, drug and alcohol, employability, relationship and social supports. The sentencing outcomes, re-offending rates and social improvements for young people were overwhelmingly positive.

The methods used to carry out the evaluation included three longitudinal interviews with three young people, one focus group, paired and individual interviews with fourteen young people. Focus groups and interviews were conducted with practitioners including the social work team, the sheriffs and the partner organisations. A documentary analysis of screening documents, update reports and court referral sheets and diaries kept by two practitioners and one young person.

It was determined that a welfare led focus by the social work team and the court team was at the heart of its success. This welfare led focus acted as a bridge between the Children's Hearing System and the adult criminal justice system.

Completion, re-offending and sentencing rates for the pilot were very good compared with other community disposals, resulting in the recommendation that SDS be the first consideration for young people. 84% of young people completed SDS, which compares well against 77% for deferred sentencing and 40% for community payback orders for under 18s.

The re-offending rates were low with 91% of the cohort not re-offending in South Lanarkshire during their engagement with the pilot. Twenty out of twenty-five young people who completed SDS were given admonition. This indicates improved outcomes for young people and highlights the potential that a community based disposal such as SDS can have.

Introduction, Background of, and overview of, SDS in Scotland

Introduction

Structured Deferred Sentencing (SDS) is a community-based intervention given after conviction, but prior to sentencing. There have been various pilots of SDS across Scotland since 2004. SDS aims to divert people from the criminal justice system and reduce short term prison sentences. A person convicted of an offence is provided with a period of time between conviction and sentencing in which they receive structured support to address criminogenic needs and stop offending prior to being sentenced. If during the deferral they commit no further offences then they receive a lowered sentence or complete admonishment.

Background of SDS across Scotland

The SDS model in Scotland was developed due to policy and practitioner perceptions that low-tariff offenders were presenting high levels of need when being sentenced at court. The outcome for these offenders was that they were being 'up-tariffed' to enable them to receive social work support that was unavailable to them (MacDivett, 2008). In 2004, SDS was piloted in three local authorities Angus, Highland and Ayrshire, operating in five sheriff courts. SDS's focus was addressing criminogenic needs and reducing (re) offending rates alongside specific local authority (LA) specific aims. In 2015, Aberdeen introduced a SDS option for women and then young males in 2016, commonly referred to as the Aberdeen Problem Solving Court (APSC) (Eunson et al, 2018).

Each LA targeted a specific group:

- Angus targeted low and high tariff offenders especially women, young offenders and offenders with substance misuse.
- Highland concentrated on women, young offenders, offenders with substance misuse and offenders with learning or mental health issues.
- Ayrshire targeted low tariff offenders with alcohol misuse.
- Aberdeen focused on high tariff offenders (7 convictions or more) females over 16 and males between the ages of 16-25.

Each of the SDS pilots in Scotland were evaluated and the next section will discuss the main findings that were found across the pilot areas.

Take away messages from previous evaluations

The findings displayed across areas were similar regardless of different tariffs, location and groups targeted. This would indicate that these issues are systematic and should be expected in the roll out of the intervention. These are not unique to a specific pilot and were encountered across all sites, including the South Lanarkshire SDS. These were as follows:

- A low take up of lower tariff orders and higher tariff orders than expected, ranging from between 27% to 57% of expected orders assigned. On average each SDS engaged with low numbers of participants.
- A high turnover of staff which affected recruitment, promotional activities and management of the pilots.
- The main needs identified across the three areas were drug and alcohol, employability and social/living needs. These needs were then met through dedicated SDS workers taken from social work services who would signpost service users onto local services.
- In terms of charges that precipitated SDS, breach of the peace, theft and assault were the most common across the sites.

Within each of the evaluations there was not a compulsory element to the SDS. Views on enforcement of the order were mixed from practitioners with many wanting to see a compulsory element to SDS; whilst others believed it being voluntary was a key element in its success. Yet across each of the sites, sanctions were not required, highlighting that compulsion is not required.

All the offenders felt they benefitted in some way from being involved in the SDS, for example, getting support, changing behaviour, and receiving a lesser sentence.

Of the 77 who engaged with SDS in Angus, 25 were high tariff offenders and 52 low tariff offenders. The re-offending rates were low for this local authority: 12 reoffended, 8 from high tariff orders and 4 from the lower tariff offenders (MacDivett, 2008).

In APSC, which also focused on high tariff offenders, of 35 who engaged with SDS, 14 successfully completed the program and 19 were sentenced to custody. Considering APSC focus on high tariff offenders, this is an excellent outcome.

In the Highlands, just over half reported that they did not offend and no data is available for Ayr.

Within the SDS evaluation (MacDivett, 2008) the funding per case averaged at £2,562.00 upper tariff case with a low tariff of £1,559.00 and Ayr presented as being the highest with £4,610.00.

These costs may seem to be high for a six month intervention, but are minimal compared to the cost of custody per year, £38,903.00 (Scottish Prison Service, 2018) or secure care £260,000.00 (Scottish Government, 2011). Taken into consideration with the level of (re)offending that occurs with these disposals; “88% of 16 - 20 year olds released from custody are reconvicted within two years with 45% receiving further custodial sentences.” (Scottish Government, 2011, p10). These programmes may be viewed as good value for money when the costs and outcomes are considered. Further research into the financial breakdown would allow a cost benefit analysis of community interventions to occur. This would be beneficial as it is difficult to assess the cost effectiveness of community interventions across gender and age.

South Lanarkshire SDS Aims & Process

The South Lanarkshire SDS was funded through the Employability, Innovation and Integration fund of the Scottish Government. Its main aims were:

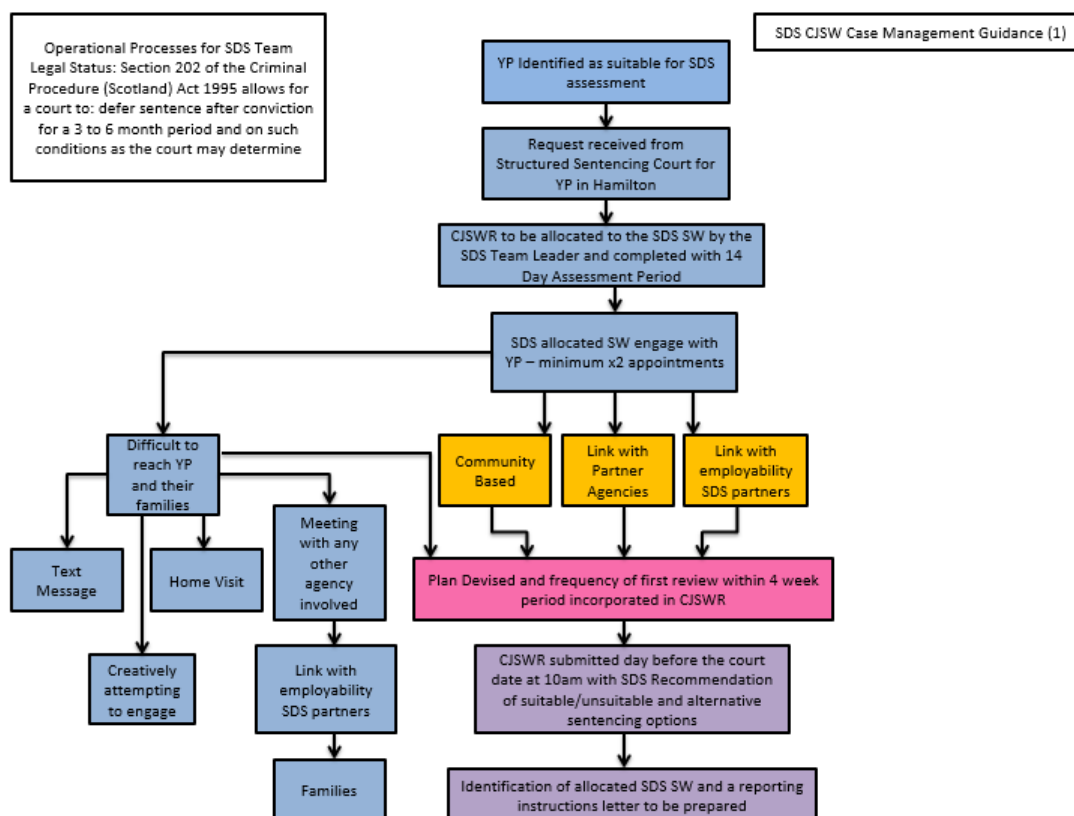
- To provide support through courts and an alternative community disposal (SDS) to sixty 16-21 year olds which includes an individual intensive support package.
- The package will support the individual to progress through the employability pipeline.
- Through a whole systems approach, the package will provide opportunities that allow meaningful re-integration and community involvement in a pro-social manner.
- The intensive support package will improve sentencing outcomes and reduce (re) offending rates.

SDS Process

The purpose of this section is twofold: to highlight how SDS works, and to act as a guide as to how the pilot was delivered.

Within the appendices, there is a full Guidance and Case Management Process Chart and a court referral sheet. These forms were developed by the SDS, Court or Social Work team and are used within the service. Below is a flow chart of SDS which highlights the process of a young person from referral to sentencing.

SDS Process Chart



The above table displays the overall process that a young person goes through once engaged as a suitable candidate for SDS. For a full overview and process map please see Appendix one.

Staff Resourcing

Social Work Team

A dedicated social work team oversees and provides intensive support. The staffing team consisted of:

- One Operations Manager (Strategic Oversight & Implementation).
- One Team Leader (Service Management).
- Two Criminal Justice Social Workers with Children & Families background (Intensive Support Package, Court Support and point of contact for young person).

The social work team were the required dedicated team in the running of SDS. They acted as the linchpin of services and were responsible for the young person's journey, oversight of other organisations and implementing cultural change to welfare-led approaches. To ensure quality of service and implementation of change within local authorities it is suggested these roles require

dedicated funding to enable SDS to be their main priority. As stated in the above SDS programmes delivered elsewhere in Scotland, there are competing priorities and a high turnover of staff that can be detrimental to the delivery and quality of the service.

A monthly steering group was hosted by SDS to update and encourage partnership buy in and assist the cultural change required of the welfare-led approach of SDS. This changed to quarterly once the group was established, this took roughly six months.

The mix of Criminal Justice and Children and Family Social Worker was essential in that it ensured a welfare-led approach whilst navigating the criminal justice system and the consequences of offending. This was recognised by senior management within the project:

They've been children and family social workers, they get the bit about the nurturing and supporting as well as a balance of being a credible disposal for the court and managing a young person coming into the adult system. They're able to blend that. (Senior Practitioner)

Social work were responsible for the initial screening process once they received a referral (Please see Appendix two for Screening Document). Young People were deemed suitable for SDS if:

- They were between 16-21 years, pled guilty at a summary Lanark or Hamilton Court and were residing at a South Lanarkshire postcode.
- Voluntarily agreed to SDS process.
- Displayed Medium-High risk/needs rating using LSCMI or YLS/CMI.

Young people were referred if they met these criteria from either the court referral process or Criminal Justice Social Workers in local offices. The majority of referrals were received from the court referral process described in the section below.

Once a referral was received, the SDS team, alongside the young person, created an intensive support package. This package involved a risk/needs review, regular meetings, weekly phone calls and creating criminal justice social work (CJSW) reports for each update at the court. They are also expected to attend a dedicated SDS court every two weeks.

Court Team

Within SDS South Lanarkshire, a court social worker or social work assistant was present in each court and was responsible for identifying suitable young people to be considered by the sheriff for

SDS. Although SDS court was held in Hamilton and Lanark courts, the Hamilton process is the ideal process to follow, therefore the information below is based on the Hamilton court process.

Every two weeks, a dedicated SDS court is held at ten o'clock on a day in which summary trials are being delivered. Through the use of reports created by the social worker and the two weekly meetings it does not disrupt the sheriffs other duties.

The same sheriffs preside in the SDS court to enable continuity of sentencing and updates. It is essential that it is dedicated SDS sheriffs who are invested and have a welfare-led approach. The court typically takes half an hour to complete as all social work reports and statistics are already prepared. An SDS social worker is present at each of the courts for further information and updates as is required.

Court Team Leader (Oversight of Court Social Workers & screening process, data recording)

Court Social Workers & Court Social Work Assistants (Identifying YP & beginning referral process)

Two dedicated Sheriffs (Sentencing & Progress Updates)

Partnership Team

The partnership team are essential in the creation of an intensive support package and improving outcomes for young people. The partnership team include local, self-funded organisations which have the aim of improving outcomes for young people in terms of offending, employability and social support services. They are to provide additional support in the following areas:

- Education & Employability
- Housing & Community Support
- Social & Wellbeing

The list of organisations that were involved at the steering groups were:

Access to Industry

Action for Children Justice Services

Addaction

Aspire

Routes to Inclusion

Stepek Mindfulness

VASLAN

Loretta Housing Association

Evaluation Aims & Methods

SDS Evaluation Aims

This study aimed to assess both quantitative and qualitative outputs of the project.

The original aims of the quantitative analysis were:

- To ascertain if there was a reduction in the number of, and severity of offending of those who were on SDS.
- Using a comparison group, evaluate the impact of SDS on (re) offending, time spent in custody and sentencing outcome.

Due to the difficulty of data protection, data sharing agreements and the inaccuracy of data on collected offences of the young people on the project, the quantitative analysis was not completed. This is further discussed in the below section Sentencing and re-offending rates.

The only quantitative analysis carried out was the number of offences committed prior to the commencement of SDS compared to the number of offences committed during SDS, to ascertain if there was lowered offending.

A paired samples t-test was conducted to determine any significant differences between the two time-points. There was a significant reduction in the number of offences committed prior to SDS compared to those committed during SDS ($P < 0.001$). These results indicate the positive impact that SDS had on the number of offences committed since the program commenced. Furthermore, those who did offend during SDS ($n = 3$) committed less severe offences and individually committed less offences than those prior to the commencement of SDS.

The qualitative aims were:

- Showcase different journeys into offending, the barriers and catalysts to change and the impact of SDS.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of SDS and what works in improving outcomes for young people.
- Evaluate the impact of the whole system approach within SDS.

The following section will discuss the methods and participants that engaged in the research.

SDS Methods

Interviews and Focus Groups with Young People

To evaluate if, how, and in what ways, SDS affected young people, a variety of qualitative approaches were taken:

- Longitudinal interviews occurred with 3 participants at three stages – implementation of SDS, during SDS, and 3 months after sentencing. A critical incident approach was taken at this stage to identify the barriers and catalysts to change the young people experienced and what support mechanisms at each stage helped or hindered the desistance process.
- Initially, three focus groups were to be held with 4-6 young people at different stages, but due to difficulty recruiting participants, focus groups were replaced with paired and individual interviews.

In total there was one focus group and nine interviews with fourteen young people across the project:

- Three young people took part in three interviews each (nine in total), two boys and one girl.
- One focus group with four participants (three boys and one girl), one paired interview (one girl and one boy), and five individual interviews (all boys).

Interviews and Focus Groups with Practitioners

- Four key senior partners were interviewed once at the beginning to capture the intent and selection process of the new SDS approach and again at the end to see what worked and to capture the different viewpoints of providing support using the whole person approach by multiple organisations. These were comprised of seniors from the courts, social work and sheriffs who were strategic in the project. Due to staff changing it was not always the same person that engaged in the follow-up interview.

- Two social workers responsible for delivering the intensive support packages were interviewed individually, once at the beginning and once at the end of the project and both engaged with a paired interview during the project.

There were two focus groups (one at the beginning and one at the end of the supported SDS trial) with the organisations who provided support to the intensive social work package.

In total, there were two focus groups and thirteen individual interviews with 15 practitioners across the project.

Court Observations

Seven observations of SDS court occurred. Four in Hamilton and three in Lanark. Three dedicated sheriffs and one residing sheriff was observed. A participant observer approach was adopted in which ethnographic notes were taken of the proceedings (Bryman, 2008).

Thematic Analysis of Documents

The young people participating in the longitudinal study were given diaries and encouraged to take reflections of barriers and catalysts to change. Only two of the young people engaged and one of these was sporadic with only two entries, the first day the diary was given and the day they were admonished.

SDS social workers and team leaders were also requested to complete diaries in which they recorded their feelings. The SDS social workers complied with this but, due to the changing management structure diary analysis was not possible with the team leader.

Documentary analysis undertaken of each of the following documents:

- Criminal Justice Social Work Reports completed for each of the young people.
- Steering Group Agenda and Minutes.
- Update Reports of the SDS to the Scottish Government.
- Court Referral Sheets.
- One diary of a young person.
- Two practitioner diaries.

All the following data and findings displayed are anonymised and this research was carried out in accordance with University of the West of Scotland's ethical guidelines.

Findings

Due to consistency in findings with the mid-term report, the following section incorporates the findings from the mid-term evaluation and develops new findings and recommendations. What follows is a comprehensive overview of the project updating on mid-term findings and recommendations that were implemented. The purpose of the findings is to evaluate whether the project was effective and to highlight both the positive and negative aspects to inform recommendations for improvement.

Eligibility and Screening Criteria

Before the mid-term evaluation was conducted, having an active CPO was part of the exclusion criteria at the referral stage. Within the mid-term evaluation it was highlighted that 44% of all those screened for SDS at the court referral stage were not referred due to active or breached CPOs. This finding raised further questions regarding the suitability of CPOs for young people due to the inability of young people to complete them. Only 40% of young people under 18 complete a CPO compared to a 77% success rate of deferred sentences (Scottish Government, 2018). This linked with findings regarding the success of other deferred sentencing initiatives across Scotland and an 82% completion rate of those on South Lanarkshire SDS at mid-term resulted in three recommendations:

SDS should be the first consideration for the sentencing of young people as SDS has the ability to down tariff young people within the Criminal Justice System.

Active CPOs are not criteria of unsuitability for SDS.

For suitable young people, active CPOs should be replaced with SDS.

Following these recommendations having an active CPO was removed as criteria for unsuitability and in one case a CPO was replaced with SDS which had the outcome of down tariffing that young person.

Given the aims of SDS this is the preferred outcome, down tariffing of the young person, yet the once case was the exception to the norm. What was becoming more common practice was that the young person was having SDS run concurrently alongside the CPO. This is problematic as it involves two different levels of engagement for the young person, with one being focused on a welfare-led approach and one on retributive justice.

SDS is a voluntary process with a focus on the welfare of the young person. If the young person does not comply, SDS social work can be flexible in what is considered engagement and are given more time to follow-up with the young person in different locations and at different times. This does not mean more leniency, but more flexibility. Consequently, If a young person does not engage with SDS then they will be removed and a different sentence applied.

Joint sentences appeared to have negative outcomes for those on SDS. Of the three young people who offended during the SDS process, two of them were young people who had SDS and CPOs running concurrently and the additional offences they gathered were secondary offences from breaching their active CPO order. The numbers being discussed here are very small and therefore this is only indicative, but when compared with existing knowledge regarding completion rates and the impact of CPOs on secondary offending, it would appear that having SDS and CPO run concurrently does not help improve outcomes.

The level of flexibility in SDS can only occur due to the voluntary nature of the process. With a compulsory order, such as a CPO, engagement is a fixed process with little flexibility in terms of compliance, and if breached results in secondary offending which is what happened with those cases in SDS. Therefore the above recommendations stand, but it is further recommended that:

CPOs and SDS should not be run concurrently. If a sheriff is able to replace a CPO with SDS then this is the preferred action.

The voluntary element of SDS should be maintained and in instances of non-engagement, a different sentence applied.

Outwith the follow-up on the impact of CPOs being removed as a form of exclusion there have been no other changes within the eligibility and screening criteria. Court screenings still had the highest conversion rate compared to local social work offices, which indicated that the local offices are required to be more stringent when screening young people.

Characteristics of Young People, Completion Rates, Re-Offending Rates & Sentencing Outcomes

Characteristics of Young People on SDS

- 32 young people took part - 27 males (84.4%) and 5 females (15.6%).
- The youngest was 17 years, the oldest 23 years - the average age was 20 years.

- On the LS/CMI risk/needs scale, 12 young people were considered low, 10 medium, 5 high level and for 5 there was no LS/CMI data available as in these cases a CJSW report was not requested for by the Sheriff.
- Prior to SDS, 8 young people were first time offenders, 15 had between one to three offences, 9 had between four to ten offences and 3 young people had between 12 and 22 offences.
- The most common convictions prior to SDS were threatening and abusive behaviour (27) and breaches of CPO, RLO and Bail (20)
- The most common offences that resulted in SDS were threatening and abusive behaviour (17) and carrying an offensive weapon (10).

Within the South Lanarkshire Authority, these 32 young people accounted for a total of 106 offences prior to SDS and 62 offences for which they were given SDS. It is anticipated that the number may be higher as five of the entries were missing data. In total there was a recorded 168 offences for these young people.

Despite the court working within a summary court, the SDS team worked with high risk and needs young people with a range of low, medium and high tariff offenders. This is similar to the APSC which had roughly 32% of its cohort as high tariff offenders (MacDivett, 2008). Removing those with missing data, 17% of the SDS cohort were considered high tariff in relation to the LS/CMI scale.

Typically, working with medium to higher risk offenders lowers successful outcomes in terms of the completion and re-offending rates, due to the complexity of the needs and support required to affect change. This was also seen in the APSC figures, in which out of 77 participants: 12 reoffended, 8 of which were from the high tariff offenders.

Completion Rates

Of the 32 young people:

- Seven are still taking part in their intensive package, three of which were extended due to the high level of needs being presented.
- Four did not complete their SDS - two did not engage and were removed and two removed and given custodial sentences due to further offending.
- Twenty one young people completed SDS.

Minus the seven participants who were still ongoing within SDS, this resulted in a completion rate of 84%, which has risen 2% from the mid-term evaluation. These completion rates are very high, especially in comparison with other sentencing options for young people and strengthen the previous recommendation from the mid-term evaluation that:

SDS be the first consideration for the sentencing for young people as SDS has the ability to down tariff young people within the criminal justice system.

The majority of sentences provided to young people under the age of 21 are CPOs, but this age group has the lowest successful completion of this order. 40% of those 18 and under do not complete this order (Scottish Government, 2018) and breach, which often results in further offences for young people, known as secondary offences. Secondary offending via breaches of CPOs was the second highest offence that participants in this study were recorded as having, further emphasising how these types of orders can result in net-widening as they are not able to complete the sentence.

When this is compared to national deferred sentence statistics, deferred sentencing has a 77% completion rate (Scottish Government, 2018). Statistics on deferred sentences do not provide a breakdown of completion rates via age, but this is something that should be further researched as 33% of all deferred sentences are young people. Young people who are involved in the criminal justice system from an early age are transitioning from the welfare-led approach of youth justice into the more punitive adult system and CPOs are not always the best option for them. Consider Fergus's response to CPOs compared to SDS:

It's much better (SDS). Instead a getting CPOs their pish, do fuck all for you. You're just getting it tight (constant control/supervision). Your social workers that do this job they have never had this life man, how can they turn round and tell us this that n the next thing. (Fergus).

Craig had a similar story in that he was given a curfew, which he breached, feeling that this type of sentence was not appropriate as it does not affect their offending behaviour or the needs that drove it:

Interviewer: How did you breach? Because you reoffended?

Craig: No because they gave me a curfew then I breached my curfew and I got put onto the jail.

Interviewer: Right. Do curfews work?

Craig: No, they're shite. I had mine for 7 months.

Interviewer: And did it stop you doing anything?

Craig: No because if there's bodies in the house and all that, folk would just turn up there.

Considering young people's opinions of CPOs, alongside the lower completion rates and the secondary offending linked to them, strengthens the previous recommendation.

Sentencing Outcomes

Of the 23 who were sentenced:

- One completed SDS and was given a further sentence of a Community Payback Order.
- Two of the three young people who re-offended were removed and given custodial sentences due to the severity of offences.
- Twenty young people were admonished.

Whilst outcomes regarding sentencing were overwhelmingly positive the mid-term evaluation discussed the negative implications if a welfare led approach was not taken, then it could have the outcome of up-tariffing, illustrated through the story of Stuart. Stuart fully engaged in the SDS process and met all conditions asked of him, resulting in his social work report requesting complete admonishment.

Yet due to a residing sheriff that was more punitive in their approach and not aware of the welfare-led ethos, Stuart was given a further sentence of a CPO. This resulted in a net widening process for Stuart, which meant that the time he spent engaged with the criminal justice system was lengthened and resulted in a further sentence. Consequently, it did not improve the sentencing outcome for Stuart. This, is why his is a cautionary tale. Stuart's tale resulted in the recommendation:

All SDS courts have dedicated sheriffs who are invested in the welfare-led ethos of the approach and welfare-led standing sheriffs who are able to step in if required.

This recommendation is essential if SDS is to be applied within other local authorities as the implication of net-widening and prolonged engagement with the criminal justice system is known to increase negative outcomes for young people. This is an established finding within Scotland's justice system as highlighted in the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime (McAra & McVie, 2010). This study found that as the time a young person spends engaged with the CJS increases, outcomes worsen for the young person. Within the Hamilton court, in which there are two sheriffs, this has not presented as a problem, with the shortest time a young person has been on SDS being four weeks. But this is a cautionary tale for other LAs intending to pilot SDS in their own authority and highlights the need for all who are delivering SDS to have a welfare led focus with the needs of the young

person at the forefront, otherwise it will not yield the same results, as in the cautionary tale of Stuart.

Re-Offending Rates

Current findings in relation to the re-offending rates for young people are difficult to report on and highlight difficulties in the reporting processes within SDS. The SDS and court team are unaware if those on SDS re-offend unless the offence results in a court appearance within the local authority in which they received an SDS sentence. If a young person committed an offence and was put through a diversionary tactic, such as a police or fiscal warning, an alternative to prosecution, or offended in a different local authority and presented at a different court, the team would not know of the offence. This raises potential problems for the social work team and the courts. Not just in terms of analysis and recording of information, but more importantly in terms of welfare and support for the young person and in terms of the sentencing practices concerning the young person. Therefore a recommendation is put forward that:

A data sharing agreement is enacted between Police Scotland and social work to inform social work of offences garnered by young people at time of offence.

This would have the potential for the social work team to address any issues that the young person may be experiencing and put support structures in place to help them. If the offence is to go to court and the young person is to be sentenced, it would alert the sheriff who could request to be the sentencing sheriff to maintain consistency (if the offence is in the same local authority) and would allow SDS to measure the effectiveness of the intervention on severity and level of offending.

Therefore the following figures represent the re-offending rates for offences garnered in the South Lanarkshire Local Authority which resulted in a court appearance. Of the 32 young people:

- 29 did not commit an offence within South Lanarkshire.
- 1 young person who had a CPO running concurrently breached their CPO and received a threatening and abusive behaviour conviction. SDS was suspended whilst the custodial sentence was completed and, on release successfully completed SDS.
- 1 young person gathered two offences both related to breaching bail, SDS was revoked and the young person was given a custodial sentence.
- 1 young person was convicted with the offence of having, in a public place, article with blade or point and given a custodial sentence.

Based on these details, 91% of this cohort did not re-offend within the South Lanarkshire Authority to a level which resulted in a court appearance. In total, there were five convictions between March 2018 and March 2019 whilst they were on SDS, which compared to the figures above, in which prior to SDS, and for the offences which garnered SDS there were 168 offences in total. In the period that these young people engaged there were only five offences, which is a remarkable outcome. Further research into the quantitative side of this project is highly recommended, but unless data is made available then this is not possible to achieve.

As discussed earlier, when working with higher risk offenders there is a higher propensity for them to re-offend. Each of the three young people who re-offended were rated as high risk within the LS/CMI. Two of them had ten previous convictions and one had fourteen - there was no relationship between the types of offences except the breaching of previous CPOs. Two of the young people did not engage with SDS and as a result their SDS was revoked. One engaged well with SDS, and on completion of their custodial sentence, returned to the programme and successfully completed it resulting in an admonition for the offences which incurred SDS.

This successful completion raises questions of whether young people should be able to be re-sentenced to SDS on release or due to other offences. The young person who successfully completed SDS, Fergus, was a longitudinal participant and their willingness to engage with SDS after their custodial knew no bounds. It is well established that desistance is a journey which requires a want from the individual to change and environmental change, so it should be expected that high tariff offenders will take longer and have more setbacks.

Fergus highlighted that the time is not always right for change due to competing pressures that are experienced by the young people who are embroiled in offending. Fergus believed that some young people will not be able to engage with SDS straight away and need to experience loss to enable them to change:

You need to know what you've got to lose. You need to have the jail so as you know how lucky you actually are to get a Structured Deferred Sentence. It is sheer luck. That's my personal opinion. Thinking back to when I was 16, if I had to go to court, had never been to jail before and that and they go bail, bail, bail and all that, Structured Deferred Sentence and all that and they let me out, I'd be like that 'yee hah', fucking mental isn't it. Get to fuck and that. I'd laugh at the court like I used to do. You need to be in the jail. See me being in the jail, I've already went like that, right, I'm set, I'm going to be in here for fucking years man; I'm not getting out of here any time soon then I went up to court and they said about the Structured Deferred Sentence and I went, it's a miracle. (Fergus)

Fergus's comments cannot be taken just at face value. The level of victimisation within Fergus's life, his mental health, use of drugs and alcohol to regulate his emotions and his offending history were all

closely linked to abuse he received as a child. Consider Fergus stating how it was a miracle that he was allowed to continue SDS on release, this highlights how SDS should be available as a second opportunity.

If you consider the two other young people who offended probably have similar backgrounds, they will require higher levels of interventions than others. SDS may not have been appropriate at that point, but at a later date may be required to stop them offending and help initiate change. We do not know if SDS will work until the young person engages with it. These young people account for 9% of this entire cohort who require higher levels of intervention indicating that SDS should be available more than once to a young person. Therefore this report recommends:

SDS should be available as a sentence on more than one occasion to support a young person in the desistance process

In conclusion, the completion, sentencing and re-offending rates of this intervention are excellent in comparison to other sentencing options. A completion rate of 84% compared to 40% for young people who receive CPOs, which is the most widely given sentence for this age group, is more than double the success rates. Young people and workers throughout the project continually referred to the impact of CPOs on young people. This finding initiates wider discussion regarding the use of CPOs as a form of sentencing across Scotland and as the presumption against short-term sentences comes into force, it can be anticipated there will be an increase in community disposals. With the improved success rates of deferred sentences and structured deferred sentences it would indicate these are better forms of sentences for young people.

Education, Training & Employment

Education Training and Employment Statistics

The main focus of SDS is to assist young people into education, training or employment. There have been many successes within this area. For those who completed SDS (20), or are still on their journey (7) this was their employment status prior to starting and their progression:

- 21 young people were unemployed from those, 11 were placed on training courses, 2 entered full time employment, 7 are ongoing and data is missing for 1.
- 2 were on training courses, 1 continued their course and 1 progressed to full time employment.
- 1 was in part time employment and sustained this employment.

- 2 were in further education, 1 successfully completed their course and applied for the next level and 1 is still attending their course.
- 3 were in full time employment and sustained this throughout their SDS.

These are excellent outcomes for the young people. All the young people on the intervention were supported to move through the employability pipeline towards training, education or employment. Of particular note are those young people who were able to sustain employment whilst completing their sentences. Young people recognised that employment would help them improve their circumstances and that this was linked with their offending as not having anything meaningful to fill their time was detrimental to their mental health and their offending behaviour:

I just like my life right now, to be honest. Its good...see the routine, the routine's good. I've not had a routine in a long time, so I like having a routine. It's just not a full time routine because on Tuesday are my twilight days, it's like mad. Do you know what I mean? But, I was getting up at 8 this morning thinking 'Oh. This is madness. I should be on a bus to college now but its Tuesday so I wouldn't need to be on a bus to college.' So, I like the routine. I like my sleeping routine. I like my social like now because it's not like one of they ones...because I'm at college right now, I see my pals on those two days that I'm not at college and it's like they actually understand if I don't want to drink because I'd be fucked at college. Whereas, before they'd be like that, 'Oh just drink'. (Ailsa)

The importance of having a routine and meaningful activity that did not need to be paid employment was something that the participants craved and was something that SDS helped supply them with, especially in terms of providing training courses.

Fergus: On a Friday I've got unpaid work with community service. So, Monday to Thursday I'm at a course and Friday I'm doing CPO. So that's a week. That's me got structure. You need it you, you can't be sitting on the shelf. You've got to be out doing daft things and that. You need to have a job; you need to have a purpose.

Interviewer: Boredom's a killer, isn't it?

Fergus: It's a jailer as well. Defo!

All the participants interviewed wanted to move into employment, but found it difficult due to their past histories and lack of previous employment.

Employment & the Impact of Criminal Convictions

People with convictions face many of the same problems as long time, unemployed people such as low levels of educational attainment, low self-esteem and poor work history. Having the stigma of a criminal conviction further removes this group of young people from the labour market.

Andrew, a first time offender highlighted how he thought that admonishment meant he would not receive a criminal conviction and how he nearly lost his job as a result of receiving this on his record.

“I thought admonishment meant it wasn’t on my record, that it was cleared.... I didn’t tell my work I was so anxious about it and I nearly lost my job because of it. I am just lucky that Social Worker called my boss and explained what it meant, as otherwise...”

Ailsa confirmed this in her final follow-up interview three months after successful completion where she was not accepted onto a college course due to her recent admonishment:

“I never got into that social care SVQ2 course because of my new record, I am gutted.”

This was Ailsa’s second offence and Andrew’s first and already the stigma of their offence is blocking future opportunities for them. Aaltonen’s (2016) study suggests that employers’ unwillingness to hire people with convictions could be a main factor in their continued un-employment. As a result of these findings and a focus within SDS on improving employability, within the mid-term evaluation it was recommended that to improve outcomes for young people:

That social work and sheriffs utilise absolute discharge for low tariff offenders who successfully complete their SDS.

Both practitioners within social work and the courts recognised the negative impact of criminal convictions on young people’s lives and how it was contrary to the ethos of SDS:

“The conviction’s there and it can be horrendously debilitating, I know that. And you’re painting a cross on somebody’s back...” (Sheriff)

Yet there was reluctance from sheriffs to use it due to the implications that it had within their field:

“An absolute discharge is an exceptional tool that we use where in exceptional circumstances, where, albeit the essence of a crime has been committed, it’s at the very edge of criminality; it can, honestly, be said to be abrogation of conduct and short term. So, somebody might have committed a crime but there’s exceptional circumstances around it that say that it shouldn’t be recorded as a crime. By definition in reference to the criteria, those that are on structured deferred sentence really don’t come within that.”(Sheriff)

Regardless of reluctance to see change regarding the use of absolute discharge, all sheriffs were keen to see removal of a criminal conviction in appropriate cases, but delivered via new legislation or through the changing of existing legislation regarding admonishment:

So, I think we leave absolute discharge as it is. I don't think, as it stands, it should apply to structured deferred sentences. I do see merit in us being able to, at the end of the day, say that a conviction should not be recorded but I think we need new legislation for that and I think it needs to be specific to something like a structured deferred sentence so that we can make a judgement, not related to the exceptional circumstances of the offence but to the outcome of the intervention which is more like what you're saying. (Sheriff)

Due to the specific use of absolute discharge and the reluctance within the sector to lose its exceptionality, this recommendation regarding more implementation of absolute discharge is no longer put forward. The recently passed the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019, part 2 of the 2019 Act includes reforms to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in Scotland. It will reduce the disclosure period for most sentences, and offences which receive admonishment will be spent immediately. There has not been a date released for when these changes will be implemented. In light of these current changes the use of admonition can have a positive impact on the young person and help reduce the stigma affected with criminal convictions. Their conviction will still be present within a PVG, but they no longer need to disclose on basic and enhanced disclosures.

Promoting Desistance & Improving Outcomes for Young People

The main focus of this pilot was to help young people stop (re)offending. As can be seen from the earlier statistics on completion rates and (re)offending rates, the project is considered a success in this regard. SDS helped young people stop offending by improving outcomes for them. This section will explore what SDS did to help young people begin the process of desistance from offending.

This was not an easy journey for the young people and required them to change both their internal identities and wants, and their external environments and peers. The process of stopping offending is often a complex and chaotic journey that takes time. There is general agreement that moving away from crime or persistent offending is a result of interplay between subjective/cognitive factors and social or environmental factors (LeBel et al, 2008).

Subjective change requires an internal or cognitive decision that the person no longer wants to offend. This is coupled with an ability to envision a new 'pro-social identity' and a belief that this identity can be achieved (Lightowler, 2015). Young people need to agree to the voluntary aspect of SDS and this allows for a young person to begin the process of desistance, as it captures young people who have decided they want help to change and stop offending. The voluntary aspect is crucial in capturing this motivation. Yet desistance is not only an internal change, young people's life chances and environments must improve and the young people recognise that:

You cannie just change like that man, it disnae matter how many workers or jobs yev got it's gonna take a couple of year. So I wud say naw then. (Fergus)

I think it's all about coping mechanisms and trying to keep yourself busy and change. It's all about life, structure and all that, isn't it? (Ailsa)

Subjective change alone cannot achieve desistance; what is also required is social change such as changing environments, employment, marriage or parenthood. It is highly debated as to which factor comes first – cognitive or social factors, and it is argued that for desistance to be long term it requires both (LeBel et al, 2008). SDS helps young people achieve this environmental aspect of change by supporting them towards more stable environments and relationships and helping them to develop self-efficacy. The criminal justice system is not always the site through which desistance can be achieved, other factors must be taken into consideration,

Desistance is about more than criminal justice. Desistance requires engagement with families, communities, civil society and the state itself. All of these parties must be involved if rehabilitation in all of its forms (judicial, social, psychological and moral) is to be possible. (McNeill, 2012, p2).

Young people's backgrounds of trauma, social isolation, and negative experiences resulted in a deep mistrust of people, organisations, and the criminal justice system. SDS recognised this and put the young people at the forefront of the service. The majority of what SDS did was to encourage positive behaviour change, linked to overcoming and overturning negative experiences. The main barriers to change for the young people were related to previous experiences and environments.

The link between young people's victimisation and offending was strong (Smith and Ecob, 2007) and the young people who took part in this research described chaotic lifestyles which the SDS team had to focus on, prior to being able to engage in employability work. Consider Ailsa's first charge related to her belongings being stolen in a homeless unit.

No. I got the charge when I stayed in homeless accommodation. I moved out when I was 16 and I stayed in the high street homeless unit and then I got threw out of there because somebody stole all my stuff off me and I had to kick the door down to get all my stuff back. It wasn't just like stupid stuff, it was my mobile phone and all that. I had moved out of my home at 16 with nothing. (Ailsa)

Her second charge, which resulted in her being placed on SDS, was linked to the sexual victimisation of a friend. Fergus has an array of charges related to anger issues and conduct. Many linked to domestic abuse perpetrated by his father:

I just don't even talk to my dad anymore, tries to get mental wae me Cunt tried to get facial (facially scar him) with me all the time, set about me all the time, get a sair face n that. He's fifty n something, aye so I stopped talking to him, stopped getting chucked oot the house all time, breaching my tag. (Fergus)

Stuart, a first time offender, was charged with carrying an offensive weapon, a knife he would carry to school, for fear of physical attacks in school:

Since I came down from Old Town I was getting bullied every day. So, I thought I needed protection, so I would take a knife to school and that. Then, I got caught with it... I told the teachers, they don't do anything. Last time I told them, they went, 'Oh, we'll speak to him'. Two days later, he was sitting bragging to my face that, 'Oh, the teachers didn't do anything'. So, I gave up with teachers and decided to take it into my own hands. (Stuart)

The link between offending and victimisation has important implications for any future programmes. SDS should focus on the needs of the young person first, as the majority of their offending behaviour is linked to victimisation, their environment and situations that they feel are out of their control, very similar to the ethos in the Children's Hearing System. The intensive support package must be multi-dimensional with the welfare of the young person being paramount. It was previously, and still is recommended:

That employability is not the main focus of SDS, but a secondary focus. Ensuring that the young person's social and well-being needs are addressed and they are in a safe and stable environment should be forefront.

Building meaningful relationships that assist in identity change is an important element in helping young people desist. Workers had to spend considerable time building trusting relationships and providing intense support before other areas could be addressed.

Previous Experiences of the Justice System

Previous negative experiences resulted in a low estimation of the systems and processes meant to help them, but also a low level of self-worth, which resulted in resentment and disengagement from the justice system.

That Sheriff used to set about me man, just about every fucking time they see me. "Yer a fuckin wee imbecile, a vandal and all that". I am like that what are you talking about man as soon as they start

speaking I start shaking and all that. Pure heavy aggressive man. Put the fear of life intae us man.
(Fergus)

Interviewer: What did you think of the justice system before this experience?

Craig: Shite

Interviewer: What do you think of it now?

Craig: It's alright

The police and courts were sites of negative experiences for young people. Prior experiences of courts before SDS are discussed in terms of anxiety and worry. Ailsa talks about how, even though the outcome of court can affect her entire life, she could not pay attention and listen within court as her body shuts down due to her anxiety and the stress of the situation. Paul discusses how the fear of not knowing and the length of time between prosecution and conviction causes anxiety that affected his relationship with others, whilst William discusses the feelings he experienced his first time attending court:

Because I zone out. It's like I'm there but I'm not there. So, I can't even sit and give you it. Aye. See, even sitting trying to sit back and remember, it's nuts. How do I not remember this? But, it's because you don't want to remember it. You're trying to suppress it while you're there and then when you're going away your brain is suppressing it. You just don't want to remember that. (Ailsa)

See all the - when I was working at the time, obviously, I've just not long stopped working, when I was working, it was all the days off work, it was all the fear of what was going to happen, it was the lead up to it and the arguments with people roundabout you when you're under pressure thinking, well, what's going to happen to me? (Paul)

I was absolutely shaking. Half the time I was struggling to get my words out. I was all over the place and I feel with a bit more preparation I would have been able to speak a lot more confidently but at that point my head was in a bad way so be put on the spot wasn't helpful and it made me also think that being on the spot and potentially mucking up what I should have been saying had made things worse for me. I'm not going to lie, it's intimidating, it's horrible. I think it's just because you know they're expecting a certain reaction from you but what you give is up to yourself. (William)

Much of their anxiety comes from not knowing or understanding the process and this creates fear of the unknown. At a paired interview, Arran and Ceilidh discuss how they felt their previous experiences were isolating and dehumanising.

Ceilidh: You're not allowed to speak in other courts. It's just your lawyers and the bench that speaks. You're not allowed to speak. Not unless you're spoken to.

Arran: I've never had a judge just sit and actually directly speak to me. It's always through your lawyer and coming up and whispering in your ear, so I feel as if you are a non-person.

Ceilidh: You're just sitting there. You're just sitting there. It's obvious questions they'll ask your lawyer and it's stupid things they'll ask your lawyer and then pass on to you for you to pass to your lawyer for the lawyer to pass back when they could directly just ask you a question. Whereas in there they do actually speak to you and address you as a person rather than going through a chain.

Arran: It makes you feel like a bit of a spare part, doesn't it?

It felt like they were just trying to follow the rules and like obviously, all judges will, but it felt like they were more, it's just a daily job for them, it's something they have to do. It felt like, I was just another number, but in the SDS, it felt like, no, look, we take this seriously, we give you a chance, we'll tell you why but if you don't let us down, they'll be a positive outcome. The guy actually said, 'As long as you interact with us and keep your head down, stay out of trouble, I'm pretty certain it will get admonished.' (William)

Many of these feelings come from the young person being removed from the process and not being addressed in court, they feel stigmatised:

I hated going to court as it was. I just - see when obviously, they read out what you done, it's just embarrassing, because I don't want people to think that of me and it's not that, it's my family as well, people that know my family will think, such-and-such was there the other day up in court. It's an effect, you have no idea who knows who and it's, that really got me down because when I did have the good job, see the respect that I had from a lot of businessmen that gave me a lot of work and that meant a lot to me. See if they had to hear that, do you know what I mean? (Craig)

This results in lack of belief in the justice system, as young people feel removed from justice process and stigmatised as a result. It is known that if a person who is involved in the justice system believes that they were treated fairly, they are more likely to believe in fair justice systems regardless of sentence. (Kirk and Papachristos, 2011). The role of the SDS courts was essential in overturning negative previous experiences of the criminal justice system.

Overturning experiences of the Criminal Justice System

The sheriffs presiding at the Hamilton court took a welfare-led approach to the young people, which had the outcome of building belief in procedural justice and overturning negative experiences. As discussed earlier, Hamilton court was a closed court that ran once every two weeks and lasted thirty minutes. One of the main ways in which sheriffs built belief in procedural justice was through speaking directly to the young person. This may seem a simple approach, but this had a powerful impact on young people and involved them in the justice process:

The judge actually speaks to you...You feel as if you do come away from it with more because you feel as if you're just not getting spoke at; you're actually getting spoke to. You don't walk away, thinking I'm afraid to go back, I'm going to get sentenced. I'm only going back to see my social worker in a couple of weeks then I'm going to go up and get told the exact same thing, do you know what I mean. (Arran)

Not only does speaking to the young person directly influence them, but the language that the sheriff uses is positive if the young person is doing well but, if required, the sheriff will provide warnings. As the Hamilton court is closed this has a large impact on the young person. They are

absorbing what is being said to other young people, seeing people be praised or seeing them be sentenced appropriately if they do not engage. This encourages the young person to engage with the process:

See, when I got back...I've to go back for my report on Thursday but I've been for 2 reports. See, once you go and start getting pure good reports and the judge is saying this is one of the best ones I've seen. You kind of lock in the court like that, like yaass because you know they're not going to...they've got a different feeling and you know you're going to go in and like...well, the bad stuff is going to get read out and like, the stuff you feel guilty about, whatever. You know what I mean? To going in and getting a good report. (Ailsa)

I was absolutely chalk white but see after they started talking and hearing them talking to other people, by the time I'd actually went up, I felt as if I was just talking to like a family member or a friend. I was so shocked at how normal they were talking to me, and it made me think, wow, these folk are genuinely in this to try and help folk, they're not the type of judges that are like, 'No, you're getting done, that's it.' It showed me it was serious and to engage. They give you a second chance, 100%, and there was people up there that were getting knocked back and stuff saying, 'Your report's not good enough. (William)

Witnessing other interactions with the sheriffs, alongside social work attending the courts with them and allowing them to read their Criminal Justice Social Work Report, helped reduce the anxiety over the fear of the unknown. The dedicated courts and sheriffs were a central element to changing previous negative experiences and building new ones. The dedicated sheriffs in Hamilton are supportive of welfare-led approaches and engage with the young people in a different manner. They encourage them, ask about their welfare and provide positive feedback that strengthens and bolsters the young people's belief in procedural justice, reduces trauma and anxiety and rewards the behaviours that stop re-offending and encourage feelings of citizenship.

Susan: It wasn't like the way that I feel every other time I went to court before, because I think it was like... And I think if I need to go to court in the future, I'll maybe feel a wee bit easier. I don't know.

Interviewer: What was different, do you think?

Susan: Because I was getting pure praised and that.

Interviewer: So, you were different, not them?

Susan: Aye, I think... No, I don't know. Aye, it was them... I don't know. Like, because my lawyer was with me and the judge was actually saying, like, talking to me in-depth as well, it was a weird court. Every other time before that, I've either been in court one and court three, but that's a wee court as well, but the judge has never like, in-depth spoke to you but obviously, this is about you and a Structured Deferred Sentence and it was a new thing. I think it's... I don't think they should take it away anyway, I think it's good.

Discussions with participants and observations of the Lanark court were not as positive, due to small differences that have big outcomes on young people's experiences. These include: the court not

being closed, the young person not being addressed directly and more traditional language being used. The diary extract below is from a first visit to the Lanark court:

After sitting for an hour and a half, this is the first SDS participant, the social worker nudges and whispers in my ear. I perk up and pay close attention wanting to see if body language or tone etc changes here. It started off well with the Sheriff smiling at the boy and saying "First review a good start" But then they begin to address the solicitor again and the conversation is focused purely on these two with only that cursory smile for the lad at the start. The conversation returns to being between the solicitor and the sheriff, the sheriff begins to read out his offences and discusses them with the solicitor and I notice the boy starts to look down. Then the sheriff turns to the jury box where I now notice a man sitting with files. I realise when the sheriff addresses him that he is the social worker for this area and that's when it dawns on me there is no social work support here. No person coming to stand beside them. The sheriff asks the social worker if he agrees with a continuation, he goes through his notes and agrees and then a date fixed for the next review. There is a stark difference in the body language, eye contact and conversation had within the two courts. I wonder if this is due to it not being a closed court, I wonder also if this dilutes the sheriff seeing positive outcomes as a result of the project and then not getting the full impact of it. I also wonder whether this affects young people's belief in procedural justice as it is a very different environment. (Lanark Observation, 1)

Compare this with a first visit to the Hamilton court, which is a closed court:

The young person on my left stands, again he is very smartly dressed with a shirt, jeans and a bomber jacket on. He looks immediately to social worker and social worker stands up behind him and they walk towards the stand. Social Worker goes to the left of the stand and stands holding his hands in front of him. The boy grips the front of the stand making me wonder if it has prints in it from all the people that go up and hold on as if their life depends on it. The sheriff welcomes the boy to the stand and nods at the social worker, this is obviously a referral by the court as Sheriff asks what support does he think will be able to be given to this lad. Substance misuse and addressing his offending behaviour replies the social worker. The boys mum sits nervously looking at her hands constantly worrying each other and pressing that supposed calm spot between thumb and forefinger whilst the boy tightly grips the front of the court stand, the blood slowly draining out of them. All the worry and stress being moved around their hands as if they could improve outcomes for them. I then look around and see two boys sitting on their own, no social work, no parents, just by themselves and it makes me feel bad for them. Then sheriff addresses the boy:

Do you understand what SDS is?

Yes

Have you spoken with social work about what is expected of you? Are you willing to engage and comply with what is asked of you?

Yes

Okay then I will refer you to SDS you have already spoken to SW I have a comprehensive report here regarding plans, if you engage well then you have the opportunity for complete admonishment. Clerk can you please set a date.

This process is not only beneficial for the young people, but also the sheriffs, as it reduces the time they spend per person and allows them to see the direct impact of the SDS without it being diluted via other courts taking place. Therefore a recommendation is put forward that:

The Hamilton Sheriff Court is the ideal court and other courts should follow the processes of this court.

The SDS team also provided new experiences of the criminal justice system that helped over-turn previous negative experiences and build trust in the criminal justice system:

Robert: I got a meeting with the one police officer from Lanark and I got a tour around the police station, and then in a few weeks I'm going back to do stuff with them.
Interviewer: Oh, would you quite like to be a police officer?
Robert: Aye.
Interviewer: Did you have experiences like that before?
Robert: No. Well, when I was in the police car once going to my house because I offended, and I was in a police station for getting robbed at knifepoint.

Having a dedicated social worker was essential in helping the young person. They helped provide social supports, built networks and trust between young people and existing organisations, and provided support that young people did not get elsewhere, but which many others would get from peers or family members. The support provided by the social workers in this pilot was to be commended.

Ailsa: There's the support there if I need it, type of thing. I don't know. Wee things as well, but like, stupid wee things like, I can't get to college, can you take me to college? On like, my half-day or something, the day where I start late and finish late. If she can, she will type of thing and I've not got a bus pass, so she gets me the bus pass. It's wee things like that as well. I don't know.
Interview: Do you have that elsewhere in your life, like anyone else that would do that for you?
Ailsa: No.

Young people reported that having a person who provided intensive support in areas that they cared about helped build autonomy and self-efficacy, which increased their self-confidence and self-worth. They reported more control over their emotions, improved relationships and feeling more in control of their lives as a result of engagement with SDS, and this was an important site through which the desistance journey occurred. Initially, the social workers helped to create spaces where pro-social identities could be envisioned and acted out. They helped young people believe they could change and showed them that their environment could change with support.

What Helped Young People

Providing young people with bus passes for example meant that they could attend appointments, court updates, and social work meetings, go shopping and engage in leisure activities. The social work team helped open-up avenues of trust, provided someone to call when a crisis arose and gave them something to lose, whereas previously they had nothing to lose. This was achieved through

various different ways and occurred at different levels dependent on the need presented by the young person. They helped change negative perceptions of the CJ system, supported them towards more stable environments and helped to improve their relationships. But most importantly they helped them develop hope that change was possible.

Similar to the court, some of these were very simple things such as a weekly phone call or a bus pass:

Like the bus pass. See, getting a bus pass for going to court, I know that's because of my means and education and all that but...I don't know. They got me stuff for college, I didn't expect that. I don't know. I just...the advice they sit down and give, they don't need to do that. Do you know what I mean? They don't need to do that. They could just sit and talk to you about your court stuff and then what they need to do and then just go home, at the end of the day. Going out and getting me a phone. They didn't need to do that, even if it is just that. Do you know what I mean? Things like that. (Ailsa)

Ceilidh: And if they give you, like, gym passes that's like motivating you and keeping your mind occupied you actually go out and do something rather than sit and drink and sit and get full of drugs. It gives you something to motivate you, to get you out to actually socialise.

Interviewer: And is the bus pass big in that? Is that a big part in that?

Ceilidh Yeah, because obviously that helps you to go out socially.

It's like me getting work, do you know what I mean. I was getting the work and being able to go up and pick my daughter up. That was my big thing. (Arran)

Social exclusion is linked with offending and poor physical and mental health. These young people did not have the means to afford items such as bus passes or gym passes and being given these items helped limit social exclusion. It allowed them to go to someone's house for dinner when they had no food or electricity. It provided them with a means to fill their time which is important to avoid offending. As Arran highlighted, it lets him go see his family, it lets Ailsa attend college and allows Ceilidh to socialise. These seemingly small items are linked to a bigger theme that emerged that was central in SDS working: Having someone that cared.

Having someone that cared about them created a buy-in to the project and encouraged young people to invest their time and energy into change as it was not just a tick box exercise for the staff. Young people recognised this buy-in and it made them want to do better. One of the small ways that the social workers showed that they cared which had a large impact on helping young people not offend was receiving a weekly phone call and having the ability to call their social worker when needed:

Arran: If they didn't have that regular thing of phoning me every week and saying, how's things, I'd be doing stupid things. I'd be back up getting sentenced again. So, without them being there I would have went and reoffended.

Ceilidh: Definitely 100%. I can guarantee that.

Interviewer: What's stopped you offending?

Ceilidh: The phone calls. Voluntary Worker used to meet me on a Thursday, she'd phone me on the Monday or Tuesday and ask me how my weekend was and how everything was and if everything was ok. Those phone calls are....

Fucking I wis just going to top myself man, I was like I am just going to end up dead or something man, nae door or anything like that, staying up that end o toon, I wis like that fucking, phone that social worker man. Social Worker sorted me right out got me a foodbank man, got us a house made sure I had electricity n that an all. (Fergus)

Social workers also listened to what the young person wanted and worked with them towards achieving their goals which allows them to open up:

Social Worker is really, really helpful, the man can't do anymore to help you, he's really good. Anything he can do for you, he'll do. He's really good at explaining things, he makes you feel comfortable and he's good to talk to and get it out, he actually listens to what you want. It's not just a tick box exercise. (Connell)

Then the more he was talking about it made me think, he's trying to interact, he's trying to make me open up and that's what it's all about. He needs to know this information and I was fine with giving him it, do you know what I mean? As soon as I realised, this is a beneficial thing, I need to open up, I need to tell him everything to get help at the end of the day. (William)

One of the main areas that young people felt was important was assistance navigating systems, in particular housing associations. Many of the young people were homeless or living in supported or temporary accommodation which they felt was linked with their offending behaviours:

- Three participants were homeless when beginning SDS, of those, two were supported into temporary accommodation and one is still ongoing in the project.
- Two participants were at risk of being homeless, one of which was supported to temporary accommodation.
- Three were in temporary accommodation and twenty three in permanent accommodation, all of which were sustained.

Providing support to help them secure housing facilitated stability and they believe that SDS would help them in areas that mattered to them.

Ceilidh: Sarah pushed my housing officer. She's pushing to try and help me so I can get out to get my house; to get away from all that; to keep me away from all of this and just sat and spoke to me and tried to work something out.

Interviewer: Are you currently in a unit?

Ceilidh: Uhuh.

Interviewer: And will that happen?

Ceilidh: Because she's pushing me for it and the sheriff was pushing for it as well, so it will work in my favour because I've been doing good and I've now got admonished. That will also work in my favour as well.

Arran: I was in the same wae my housing and that, just before I met Ross and then my daughter was born so I had to move up to a 2 bedroom flat. So he fought for me to get that and I,... that's helped that quite a lot.

Interviewer: What about this programme, has it helped you to help change those things (offending behaviour)?

Fergus: It helped change me. Get me a house, try to get me into work and that.

Craig: When I came out I was homeless and the Blue Triangle wouldn't take me again but they got me into Blue Triangle but then I moved out because I felt it would be better so I just stayed with my girlfriend then they got me a house in East Kilbride.

Interviewer: What does that mean to you?

Craig: Made me settle down and just stop it

The majority of the young people that social work provide these supports to typically do not have these supports elsewhere, that others take for granted. So having someone who cares for them helps participants to believe that change can happen and that when they engage they can see physical change in their lives. Each of these areas: having someone care, your wants being listened to and someone helping them achieve them, weekly engagements, support navigating through systems, positive experiences of the criminal justice system, being treated with respect and support networks being put in place, all helped build the young person's feelings of autonomy, self-belief and confidence.

Changing Cultures within Youth Justice

Throughout analysis of the data gathered and the pilot as a whole, it was evident that when dealing with young people who may be transitioning from youth to adult justice that a sector-wide culture and narrative change was required. As the pilot progressed and successes became evident, the buy-in of those across the sector led to the improvements in outcomes for young people.

Although changes within criminal justice so often take time, this transformation has been rapid and that is of huge benefit to the young people involved, as well as the sector as a whole. Through the implementation of a multi-layered support approach to tackle issues of welfare as well as looking at

employment and training goals, SDS has been able to structure the intervention around the young person in a way that the adult justice system often struggles, or fails to do.

It has become apparent throughout discussions with the stakeholders and young people themselves, that this approach has been a success and therefore must be celebrated. I think it's advantageous from the point of view, the input they receive is more intensive. It's tailored to their need, as it should be anyway. However, the ability to build up a rapport with the young person quite quickly, identifying quickly what the risk factors and you're reducing the risk factors. That's obviously the benefit of the work you're doing with them. If you're identifying substance misuse, then you can refer them quickly, there's other workers here from Action for Children, employability. The range of resources on-hand for the team are far better than - or can be accessed quicker perhaps is a better way of putting it than they would in CPOs, because they'd be seen once a week, once a fortnight. It's immediate, they're interviewed here, they get an appointment straightaway, they're linking in quickly with workers" (Social Worker One)

The push for a sector-wide cultural shift has to be a considered approach that is underpinned by the hard work of those driving it, in this case, the social workers and the SDS team. The support and work of the sheriffs has to be commended as without their buy-in, these successes would have been unobtainable.

As the project developed the use and reliance of specific projects such as Access to Industry and Action for Children grew and social work relied more upon their input and this helped improve outcomes for young people and withdrew pressure from social work. This was beneficial as towards the end of the project, with higher caseloads, both sheriffs and social workers were feeling that they were at capacity:

I think the difference has been made here by the communication and knowing who to go to quickly. It's a speedy response for young people as well and I think if we had that in terms of DWP and housing, you've got those stream lines in terms of a quick access and the right people in the right places at the right time for the young person. I think that's something we need to strive for. (Voluntary Practitioner – Focus Group – p.5)

The successes of the pilot are many, but one that is particularly pertinent is that of the improved methods of working with young people and achieving the necessary buy-in from them to drive forward. The abilities to have streamlined methods of communications and working practices between the court team, the social workers, the sheriffs and voluntary organisations is something that has to be noted and commended as having had a huge impact on the successful outcomes for the young people.

The consistency in this approach is one of the major factors as to why this pilot has been a success that can be built on.

I think the whole experience has been extremely beneficial from an organisational point of view, from a service user point of view and how we want to take this forward. I think we're very committed to take it forward and how do we take it forward. I think nothing will give us more pleasure if we have less young people being remanded, and we have our partners working with us to find collective solutions. I suppose, this pilot will embed these kinds of thought processes in the stakeholder's minds as well, because custody is not the answer to everything. Community-based disposals, no-tariff disposals are/can work and this pilot will probably demonstrate in a smaller way that experience. I think that's what I wanted to see. I think I'm really passionate about this pilot and hopefully, we'll see the outcome of it. (Senior Practitioner)

With the support, assistance and understanding of the sheriffs, as well as the court team, the cultural change and development can be continued across the sector. Only working with the commitment and full support of everyone involved can the young people across the sector feel the benefits of having a welfare-led justice system, like the one that is being developed through SDS.

Whole System Approach

The SDS evaluation has highlighted that this pilot significantly feeds into the Whole System Approach (WSA) and is an excellent example of how organisations can improve outcomes for young people via the WSA. The requirement for a consistent WSA was evident from the outset. The need for the SDS team to be on-board with the practice is something that has benefited the pilot, but more importantly, the young people involved. The WSA states that it has a clear focus on the areas displayed in the left hand column of the table below. Table one highlights how and in what ways this pilot has improved outcomes for young people through the WSA. (Scottish Government, 2018).

Table One: WSA & SDS

Whole System Approach	How SDS meets WSA
Early and effective intervention (EEI)	SDS occurs at the stage between convictions and sentencing it appears that it would not have an EEI output. Yet it does have the ability to 'down tariff' young people.
Opportunities to divert young people from prosecution – The Scottish Government has recommended a presumption in favour of diversion from prosecution for appropriate offences for 16 and 17 year olds.	Sheriffs have the ability to 'down tariff' the appropriate young people via the use of complete discharge and replacing unpaid work with SDS. This would result in diversion from prosecution.
Court support	Through the use of an SDS court, welfare informed approaches and support from a dedicated court social worker. SDS has not only improved support for young people in court but made in roads to building trust within the criminal justice system with young people.
Community alternatives to secure care and custody	SDS is a community alternative to secure care and custody. Examples include a young woman being supported out of secure care into her own accommodation and a young man being integrated into the community from custody. It appears to have

	better rates of engagement than other community alternatives.
Managing high risk, including changing behaviours of those in secure care and custody	Many of the young people within SDS are considered high risk young people through their engagement with SDS they have reduced the severity and/or number of offences committed.
Improving reintegration back into the community	<p>SDS has shown it has the potential to assist integration within the community and help foster pro social identities and links within communities.</p> <p>SDS is able to remove young people from the criminal justice system. Improving future life offences due to criminal convictions not being applied. Thereby improving future employment opportunities.</p>

SDS Improvements

One of the main questions that were asked of young people was: what could be done to improve SDS or to help make it better? The majority of young people felt that the service and the intensive support package that they received exceeded their expectations and that all their needs were met. This resulted in many of the answers being that there was nothing that could be done to improve the support they received:

Interviewer - What about the programme hasn't worked for you?

Douglas - Nothing. It's all worked.

Interviewer – What can be done to improve SDS?

Fergus - SDS? I don't know, man. All good enough. Sorted me out helped me couldnae ae gave me any more pointers. It's done everything so far I can't complain.

Through further conversations regarding barriers and challenges that the young people were experiencing some areas for improvement began to emerge around two key areas: mental health supports and maintaining consistency of workers.

Mental Health

Seven of the young people interviewed, without prompts, discussed how they experienced mental health issues in the form of anxiety, depression, difficulty with emotion regulation, thoughts of and attempts of suicide:

That's the main killer. Mental health. It's all your mindset is, isn't it? That's all it is tae dae wae, meantal health wise man. All it is is mental health-wise being fucked. (Craig)

. Fucking I was just going to top myself man, I was like I am just going to end up dead or something man, no door or anything like that, staying up that end o toon (Fergus)

More of the young people could have mental health problems, but did not discuss them:

Oh, massive help. To be honest, the fact that it's been able to pinpoint like, my anxiousness and my stress. I've always thought that my stress was like a common thing and stuff, I thought it was common, but I didn't want to speak about. See anxiety and stuff, I didn't ever... (William)

Considering the backgrounds of the young people within this study are comprised of those who have experienced trauma, bereavement, are looked after or accommodated, this is not surprising. It is known that at least three of those who participated in the interviews were looked after or accommodated young people and as that was less than the cohort it is expected this number may be higher.

Young people who have experience of custody are three times more likely to experience mental health problems and those young people who were looked after or accommodated are six times more likely to experience mental health problems (Hill and Scott, 2016) so this is significant for this cohort.

The most common way of dealing with their mental health was through the use of drink and drugs as they often felt they were not in control, and often for males they did not feel that they could speak to anyone regarding it due to the stigma associated with it:

Drugs that's why I take drugs because of my mental health as well. That's why I take drugs for my mental health and that. I can't say I take drugs to sit with cunts and that because see normal cunts don't need to drink or take drugs to sit with people, sit with their pals and that (Fergus)

He's definitely assured me that I'm not the only person, I'm not the only male anywhere that's got stuff like this, which that's the thing. It's that stigma, isn't it? Not wanting to open up about mental health and it's such a serious thing, and the more you keep quiet about it, I think the more it really affects you in there (points to temple). (William)

Although social work tried to assist the young people and were points of contact for discussion, and in some cases referrals, many of these young people needed specialist psychological care which would be longer than the time that they are with SDS.

Craig: So, mental health, they could help with that. They're good in terms of housing support.

Interviewer: Did they help you with your mental health?

Fergus - No. They just said it's down to my lifestyle; my chaotic lifestyle man. It's a vicious circle, they said. If you're going to be doing the things that you're doing; in and out of the jail all the time, taking drugs and that, your head's going to be fucked, know what I mean that's what they said to us. Fair enough. I can't turn round and go like that 'oh, I've got this and that wrong with me, man, and I'm no fucking helping with it,' know what I mean?

Although there was not specialised psychological supports put in place for everyone, even having someone there to talk with these issues helped young people, and helped minimise thoughts of suicide becoming actions. So although SDS were not able to give specialised care, the supports that they did provide helped young people at crisis points.

Ailsa: Like the social work helped me. I really wouldn't even be here the now probably, if it wasn't for it.

I: What do you mean?

Ailsa: There was times when I just felt alone and that I couldn't even open up to anybody and I got to - I'd phone - I think it only happened two times, I'd phone social worker and I don't know...

I: When you say, 'I wouldn't be here,' do you mean you were going to kill yourself?

Ailsa: No, well, I don't know. But I don't - my mental health would have deteriorated even worse and at the time when I felt like I wanted to do something, I had the support to reach out, whereas before the SDS, I didn't have that support and I don't know, it kind of helped me.

Two participants within this study mentioned how if it were not for engagement with the social workers in SDS then they would have attempted suicide. The seriousness and implications of this highlight the level of need and complexity that is involved in working with the young people.

Following this information two recommendations are put forward:

SDS social work are trained in, and engage in more intensive mental health assessments to better identify and support young people.

SDS senior management create stronger referral services with specialist psychological support services in their local authority for those experiencing mental health problems.

Consistency of Workers

Consistency of workers was very important within the project with the young people as they developed and built trusting relationships with their main point of contact within SDS. One young person reported having as many as 14 services in his life and having one point of contact to help mediate and negotiate these services was a great help. Having one trusting relationship had the outcome of a young people feeling that they were able to engage in levels of support that they had not previously. For young people, being able to access support when they needed it with someone they could trust was essential in helping them to engage in problem solving and stop offending.

This was hampered at times when young people were unable to get a hold of a part-time worker, or were waiting on information being provided whilst someone was off. Not being able to contact or get support when they needed it caused the young person anxiety.

Why did they put part time people on it? Why? I don't get why? There's only three people on it as well, isn't there? Like, three social workers and they're all part-time, are they not? Is there somebody there all the time, aye? (June)

I can remember them saying they were going to get funding to sort my stuff, to get stuff to go to college with and it was the week before, it was a 2 days before college or something, or 3 days before college and nothing had been sorted and nobody had phoned me. I was just stressed and...do you know what I mean? (Ailsa)

Within the SDS project, as was similar in other projects across Scotland, staff turnover was high. This was felt both by staff and users of the service. For staff it was difficult to continue to provide a high quality and consistent service and for young people they were aware of the shortages and some had issues contacting part-time workers when they were in a time of need.

What if they need...maybe...I know they've got their own lives and all that, but I just don't think that part-time thing is going to work because people might not have an actual social worker and need them. Do you know what I mean? Or, there might be something happening and they're like, 'Oh. I need to phone social worker 1 and get hold of social worker 2', 'Oh she's not in. But social workers not in'. So, who do I phone? Do you know what I mean? (Ceilidh)

Therefore it is recommended:

There is one emergency support phone across the service on a rota, the number being given to all young people in cases of emergency.

With social workers and team leaders moving on, pressure and workloads increase across the board and this is something that must be taken into account if implementing this elsewhere in Scotland.

This project was successful due to the high quality support that was given to young people without funding and without adequate staffing, the same outcomes will not be achieved. This was seen with the difference between North Lanarkshire, who were running the same pilot but did not have any additional funding to deliver SDS and South Lanarkshire who had funding:

North Lanarkshire have always struggled to match the level of input but I've absolutely no doubt that their heart is in it and the guys who are working on the scheme wanted to succeed. They just don't have access to the same resources, I think, as South Lanarkshire. If they had access to the same resources, they would be more effective. (Sheriff)

As much as the whole focus at the start was the numbers aren't coming through but we were actually saying how could we actually deal with anymore. (Social Workers)

In light of the successes of the pilot, the implications of CPOs and the improved outcomes for South Lanarkshire due to it receiving funding, ensuring the recommendation from the mid-term evaluation is followed is essential:

For SDS to continue providing a quality level of service that aids those in the desistance journey, it requires national strategic buy-in and budgetary input.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Conclusion

The SDS pilot in South Lanarkshire can be considered a success. The completion, sentencing and re-offending rates of this intervention are excellent in comparison to other community disposals. This is significant in light of the Scottish Government's introduction of presumption against short-term sentencing (PASS) of twelve months or less that will increase the number of community based alternatives.

It is well established that community-based interventions are more effective than short-term custodial sentences. Yet, as this report has highlighted there are variations in how young people engage with specific disposals. The SDS pilot had a completion rate of 84%, when compared to national deferred sentence statistics 77%, or CPOs 40% of those under 18 (Scottish Government, 2018) highlighting how young people engage with some disposals better than others. Since introducing SDS in South Lanarkshire the numbers on CPOs has dropped.

This finding initiates wider discussion regarding the use of CPOs as a form of sentencing across Scotland as the presumption against short-term sentences comes into force, it can be anticipated there will be an increase in community disposals. With the improved success rates of deferred sentences and structured deferred sentences it would indicate these are better forms of sentences for young people as they don't involve secondary offending. In light of PASS the government has ring fenced £100 million for justice social work in 2019/20, investing £9.5 million more for community disposals and electronic tagging than 2015/16 (Scottish Government, 2019). This targeted funding could be directed towards SDS as a community disposal in light of its successes when compared with other disposals.

Although data analysis on re-offending rates were difficult to achieve there was a significant result on reduction of offending for those who took part with 91% of young people not offending within South Lanarkshire during their involvement with the project. These successes were in part due to young people requiring more welfare-led approaches to help them begin to desist. The welfare-led support structures that underpinned the intensive support package and court appearances acted as a bridge between the Children's Hearing System and the adult justice system.

The link between young people's victimisation and offending was strong (Smith and Ecob, 2007) and the young people who took part in this research described chaotic lifestyles which the SDS team had to focus on prior to being able to engage in employability work. Young people's backgrounds of

trauma, social isolation and negative experiences resulted in a deep mistrust of people, organisations, and the criminal justice system.

This focus on welfarism was the central underpinning of the success for SDS. A welfare-led approach that concentrated less on the offence of the young person and more on the needs underpinning their offending behaviour resulted in improved completion rates, re-offending rates and outcomes for young people.

Young people had to agree to SDS and this voluntary element captures young people who have decided they want help to change and stop offending. The voluntary aspect is crucial in capturing this motivation and helping young people begin the process of desistance.

The intensive support package that was delivered by the social work team was multi-dimensional with the welfare and needs of the young person being paramount. Social workers built meaningful relationships with young people that helped identity change and improved their social circumstances.

The journey of stopping offending is often a complex journey with general agreement that for desistance to occur there must be internal cognitive changes and external environmental changes. Internal changes result from a recognition of the negative consequences of their offending behaviour alongside an internally developed new pro-social identity that they believed they could achieve and an environment allowed them to enact this new pro-social identity. The SDS package and the court reviews acted as a 'hook for change' (Giordano et al, 2002) capturing young people at a moment when they had an openness to change. This is why the voluntary element of SDS is essential as it captures young people at a time when they are open to change.

The courts played an important role both in helping the young person recognise the negative consequences of their offending behaviour, but also in helping over-turn negative experiences of the justice system. The closed court, the direct conversations, the regular meetings and praise when doing well meant that young people became an active agent in their journey of desistance. This process was not only beneficial for the young people, but also the sheriffs as it reduced their workload and allowed them to see the direct impact of the SDS without it being diluted via other courts taking place.

The intensive package then begins to address the young people's needs improving their external environment by providing housing, social and employability support via the social work team and the voluntary organisations. The relationships built between social work and the support organisations

helped young people build hope and self-efficacy which allowed them to imagine a new pro-social identity.

The quality of this service could not have been provided without a WSA and working multi-agency. The strategic buy-in across the sector in South Lanarkshire was excellent. From the outset there were clear aims and strategies put in place that were delivered through strategic planning meetings and were communicated outwards through operational meetings between the SDS team and the partner organisations.

The partner organisations were essential in building links between the community and providing follow on support for young people. More links with intensive support is required in terms of the mental health of young people as the level of need and complexity of support required by young people in this project is high.

The SDS pilot has shown that it has real potential to down tariff young people in Scotland and improve their life chances via community sentencing. Through a welfare-led approach, it has improved outcomes and opportunities for the young people that have engaged with it. The success of the pilot has been based upon the welfare-led approach and culture applied from strategic implementation to front line staff.

The need for a society-wide, cultural shift is evident with this age group and will require governmental funding and support. In the interim, we must ensure the support and training of more judges and those across the legal sector and look to widen their understanding of the multitude of benefits in developing and extending this welfare-led pilot. In order to achieve this, additional training on the importance of welfare-led approaches to criminal justice must be offered across the sector, and South Lanarkshire used as an example of best practice. This welfare-led community intervention has shown it can support young people in desisting from criminality.

Recommendations

This evaluation mirrors that of the mid-term report and many of the first set of recommendations still apply. Further findings have provided below detailing an additional set of recommendations.

First set of recommendations:

- SDS should be the first consideration for the sentencing of young people as SDS has the ability to down tariff young people within the Criminal Justice System.
- Consistency of approach, both in terms of the welfare-led approach and fixed staffing is essential in engaging with young people and ensuring the quality of the service.

- All SDS courts have dedicated sheriffs who are invested in the welfare-led ethos of the approach and welfare-led standing sheriffs who are able to step in if required.
- Active CPOs are not criteria of unsuitability for SDS and for suitable young people, active CPOs should be replaced with SDS
- For SDS to continue providing a quality level of service which aids young people in the desistance journey it requires national strategic buy in and budgetary input.
- That employability is not the main focus of SDS, but a secondary focus. Ensuring that the young person's social and well-being needs are addressed and they are in a safe and stable environment should be forefront.
- Further research is required on the cost benefit analysis of deferred and structured deferred sentencing to allow for comparative data.

New Recommendations:

- CPOs and SDS should not to be ran concurrently. Instead, if a sheriff is able to replace a CPO with SDS then this is the preferred action.
- Access to SDS should be available on more than one occasion to support a young person in the desistance process.
- The voluntary element of SDS should be upheld and in the instance of non-engagement, a different sentence should be applied that does not result in secondary offending.
- A data sharing agreement is enacted between Police Scotland and social work to inform social work of offences garnered by young people at the time of the offence.
- That Hamilton Sheriff Court is considered the ideal court to implement the SDS process that other courts should follow.
- SDS social work are trained in, and engage in more intensive mental health assessments to better identify and support young people.
- SDS senior management create stronger referral services with specialist psychological support services in their local authority for those experiencing mental health problems.
- There is one emergency support phone across the service on a rota and this number should be given to all young people in cases of emergency.

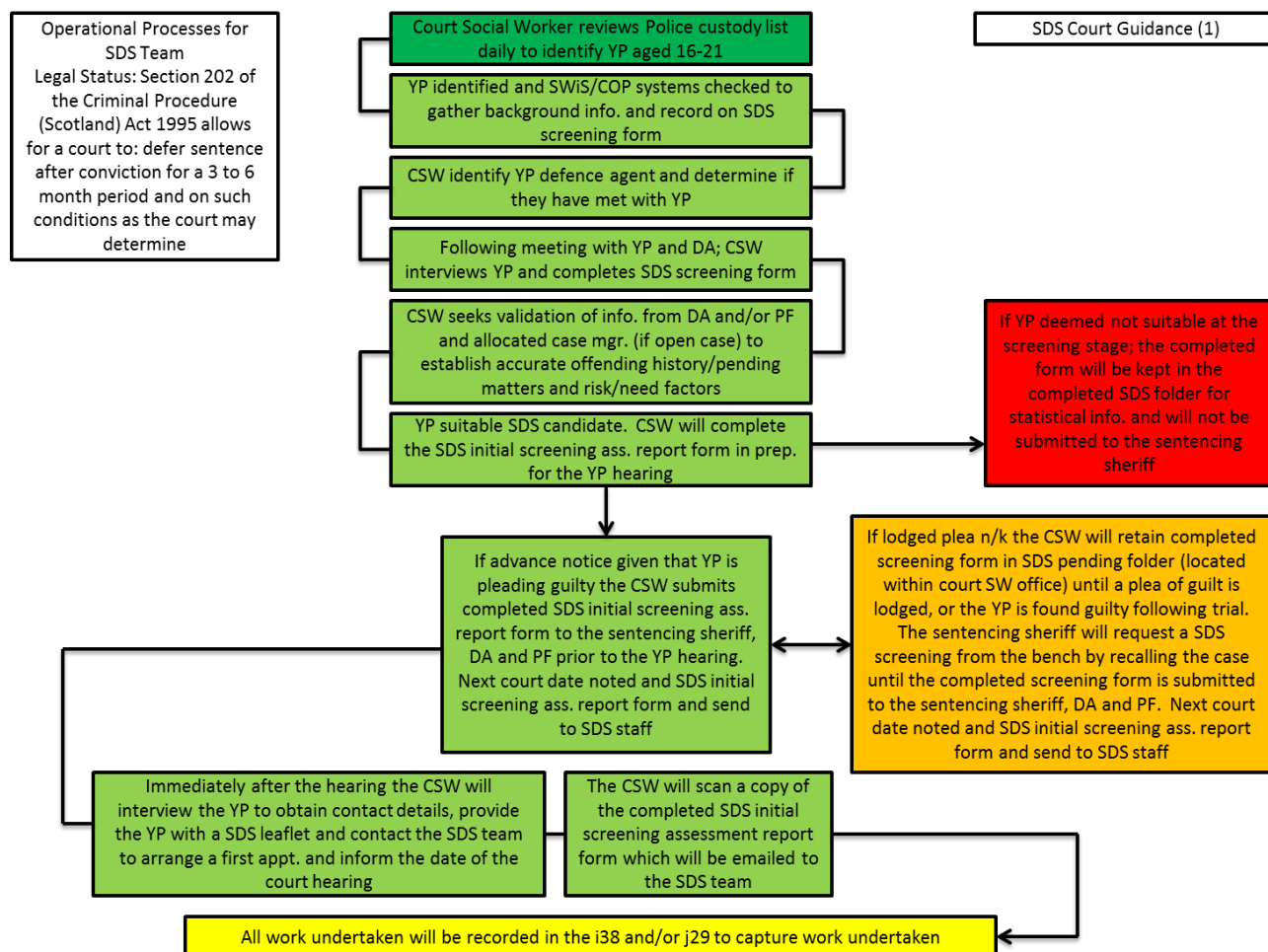
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Appendices

Appendix One: Process Chart for SDS

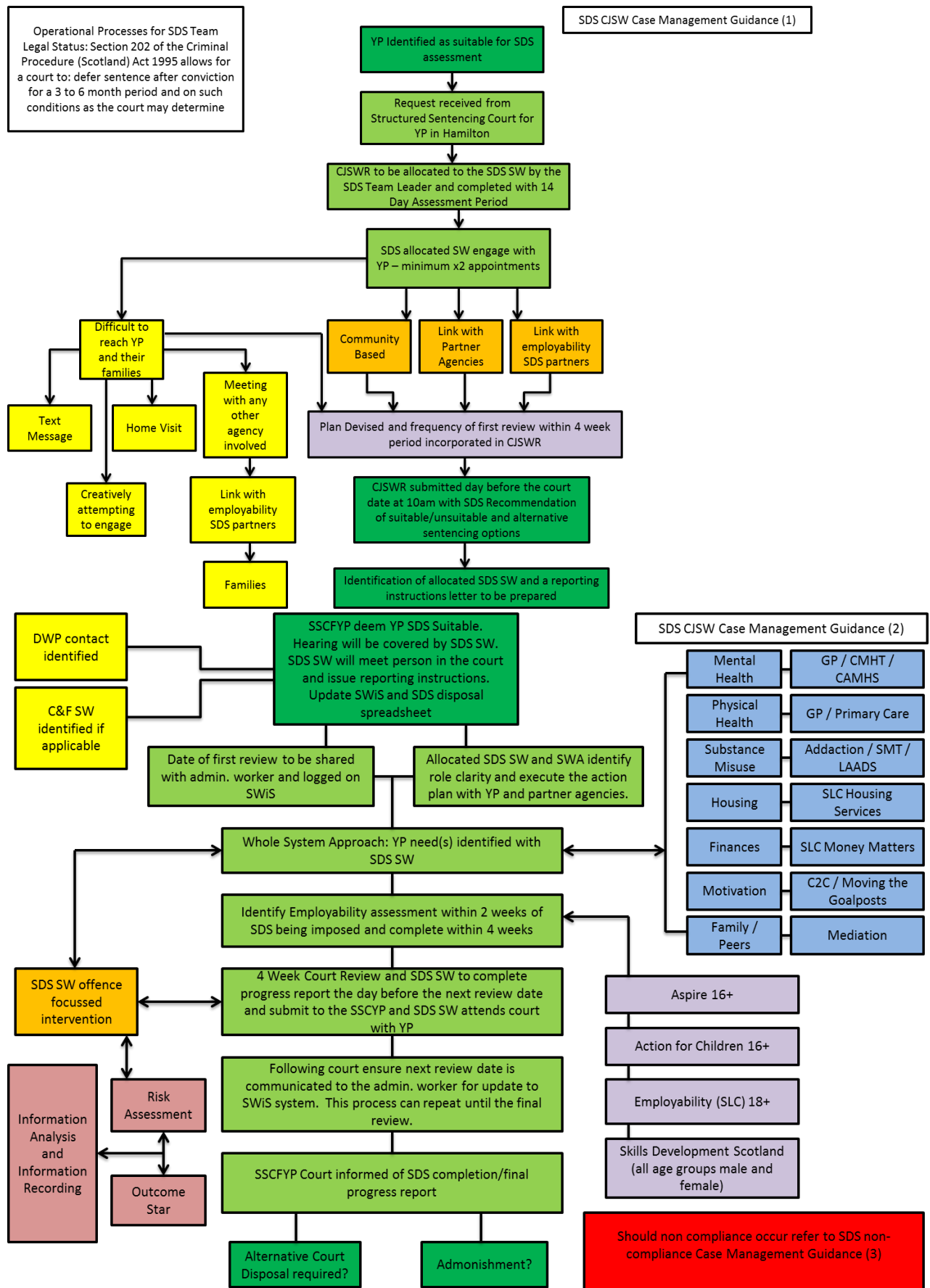
SDS Process Chart 1: Court Guidance



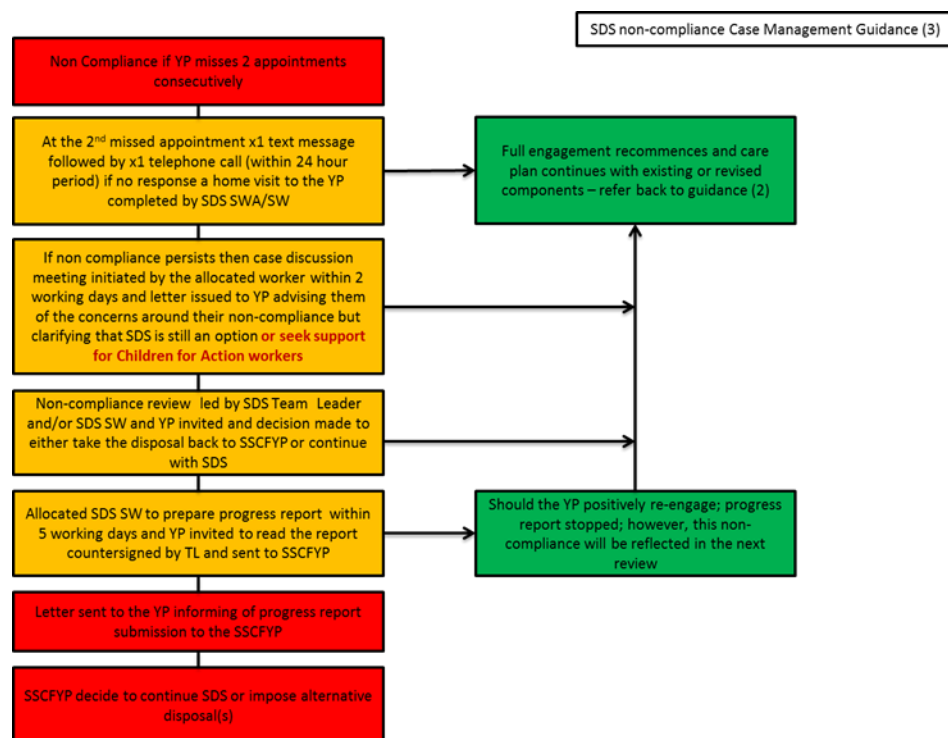
Undertakings and Trial outcomes: In such cases the CSW will complete the SDS screening form following the sheriff's directive, if requested. Following the completion of system checks as outlined, the CSW will provide the sheriff, DA and PF with a completed SDS initial screening assessment report from identifying suitability or unsuitability. All paperwork and interventions will be recorded as outlined.

SDS review cover: If the CSW is informed by the SDS team within SLC or the allocated worker in NLC that there will be no worker available to attend a YP review then the CSW will attend in their absence to cover the review and feedback the findings to the SDS team/allocated worker in NLC and next court appearance date and time will be communicated to the SDS staff/allocated worker

SDS Process Chart 2: Criminal Justice Social Work Case Management



SDS Process Chart 3: Non Compliance Case Management Guidance



Appendix Two: Court Screening Document



Structured Deferred Sentence Screening Form

Admin Screening Number:	
-------------------------	--

Name:		Date of Birth:	
Address:		Employee Status:	
		Ethnicity:	
Phone Number:			
Court:		Date of Court:	
Offence:			
CJ Social Worker:		Area Team:	

Recommendation for Structured Deferred Sentence (SDS)

Suitable ☐ Unsuitable ☐

Reasons:

-
-
-

Key Criteria - Is offender:

1. Aged 16-21 years of age? (That are not suitable for remittance back to Children's Hearing System) Yes ☐ No ☐

2. A permanent resident within South Lanarkshire? Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Attending Hamilton or Lanark Sheriff Courts? Yes ☐ No ☐

4. No active Community Payback Order or outstanding breach pending Yes ☐ No ☐

Requirements: Yes ☐ No ☐

1. The offender should have Medium-High risk/needs rating using LSCMI or YLS/CMI Score:

2. Individual understands the expectation of SDS and is willing to comply. Yes ☐ No ☐

Additional considerations: (affecting ability to attend/participate):

N.B Please note that these considerations do not preclude the service user from inclusion in SDS

1. Severe and Enduring mental health problems? Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Contact difficulties for example, homeless or hostel accommodation? Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Any current alcohol or drug issues (average use alcohol/drugs?)

4. Any other factors that may affect ability to engage for example, literacy issues, familial responsibilities, employment etc.?

5. History of previous offending behaviour?

Is service user currently receiving a service from any other agencies?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, state where

--

Contact with Social Services (Children and Families/Criminal Justice)

Past/Present involvement with Social Services?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, what is the status of that current involvement and which Team provide this?

--

Past/present involvement with Criminal Justice Services, that is, Statutory Order?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, outcome

--

Based upon initial findings and preliminary discussions what would be the four main key points for focussed interventions and support during a proposed SDS period (consider focus for future training/employability options)?

1.
2.
3.
4.

Screening Completed by:

Date:

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the young people who engaged with this project and continued to meet with me to share their stories. You are courageous, honest and strong people who taught me a lot, thank you for sharing your journey with me. This could not have been done without you and I hope that you continue to do well. It is yourselves that has made this project a success, so be proud of your achievements, as one of you repeatedly said: “pressure makes diamonds” this is how I view you all.

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