



Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Time and Date

10.00 am on Wednesday, 8th October, 2014

Place

Committee Rooms 2 and 3 - Council House

Public Business**1. Apologies and Substitutions****2. Declarations of Interest****3. Minutes**

(a) To agree the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd September, 2014 (Pages 5 - 8)

(b) Matters Arising

4. Overview and Scrutiny Management

The following matter is reported to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, in accordance with Part 2D, paragraph 1.6 of the City Council's Constitution, it being responsible for the overall management of the Scrutiny and Overview function and for dealing with call-ins.

Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) Item of Urgent Public Business**[Draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment \(SHLAA\) – Technical Evidence Paper](#)**

The Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) considered the above report at his meeting on 11th September, 2014. Councillor Skipper, Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, attended the meeting and agreed that the decision was urgent and call-in should not apply.

In accordance with Part 3E, paragraph 19.4 of the Council's Constitution, the report is presented to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to inform them of the reason for urgency. The reason for urgency was that the publication of the draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) update forms an integral part of the Local Plan public engagement process, which commenced on 12th September, 2014. This is particularly in relation to the Duty to Cooperate and the Council's on-going engagement with its neighbouring authorities in relation to housing need and supply. The SHLAA is also a technical evidence paper, which will help inform local communities and stakeholders about the Council's housing land supply and allow for consultation feedback to be collected and used to help inform the final version of the document. As such, it was urgent that the draft SHLAA was made available alongside the Local Plan paper to support the public engagement process.

10.10 a.m.

5. **Welfare Reform - The Impact of Benefit Sanctions on People in Coventry**
(Pages 9 - 46)

Briefing note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator and presentation from the Working Together on Welfare Reform Group

The following representatives have been invited to the meeting for the consideration of this matter:

Sue Bent, Coventry Law Centre
Martin Buxcey, Department for Work and Pensions
Janet Gurney, Coventry Law Centre
Daksha Piparia, Citizens Advice Bureau
Gaynor Smith, Department for Work and Pensions
Mary-Ann Stephenson, Warwick University

11.10 a.m.

6. **Female Genital Mutilation** (Pages 47 - 70)

Report of the Cabinet Member (Health and Adult Services) who has been invited to the meeting for the consideration of this item

Presentation by the Director of Public Health

11.55 a.m.

7. **Outside Bodies - Reporting Arrangements 2014/15** (Pages 71 - 76)

Briefing note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator

8. **Civic Visit to Kiel Germany for 132nd Kieler Woche** (Pages 77 - 80)

Report of the Lord Mayor, Councillor Noonan

9. **Outstanding Issues**

All outstanding issues have been included in the work programme below

12.15 p.m.

10. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2014/2015** (Pages 81 - 84)

Report of the Members and Elections Team Manager

11. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Private Business

Nil

Chris West, Executive Director, Resources, Council House Coventry

Tuesday, 30 September 2014

- Notes: 1) The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Liz Knight, Democratic Services, Council House, Coventry, telephone 7683 3065, alternatively E-mail: liz.knight@coventry.gov.uk
- 2) Council Members who are not able to attend the meeting should notify Liz Knight no later than 9.00 a.m. on the day of the meeting, giving their reasons for absence and the name of the Council Member (if any) who will be attending the meeting as their substitute.
- 3) Scrutiny Board Members who have an interest in any report referred to this meeting, but who are not Members of this Committee, have been invited to notify the Chair by 12 noon on the day before the meeting that they wish to speak on a particular item. The Member must indicate to the Chair their reason for wishing to speak and the issue(s) they wish to raise.

Membership: Councillors J Blundell, J Clifford (Deputy Chair), G Duggins, J Innes, R Sandy, B Singh, T Skipper (Chair), K Taylor and S Thomas

By invitation Councillor A Gingell

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting
OR if you would like this information in another format or
language please contact us.

Liz Knight, Governance Services - Telephone: 024 7683 3073
E-mail: liz.knight@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 3 September 2014

Present:

Members: Councillor T Skipper (Chair)
 Councillor J Clifford (Deputy Chair)
 Councillor J Blundell
 Councillor J Clifford
 Councillor G Duggins
 Councillor R Sandy
 Councillor B Singh
 Councillor K Taylor
 Councillor S Thomas

Employees (by Directorate):

G Holmes, Resources Directorate
L Knight, Resources Directorate
S C Lam, People Directorate
S Nagra, Chief Executive's Directorate
J Venn, Chief Executive's Directorate
A West, Resources Directorate

Apologies: Councillors J Innes and Townshend (for minute number 12)

Public Business

10. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

11. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2014 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

12. Equality Strategy Progress Report - 2013/14

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive, along with a presentation, on progress against the Council's Equality Strategy.

It was noted that the current Equality Strategy was approved in March 2013 and set out how the Council complied with the Equality Act 2010 along with the Council's equality objectives, which were linked to the priorities of the Council Plan 2011-2014.

The progress against the plan was reported under the key headings of Globally Connected, Locally Committed and Delivering our Priorities. Within these key

headings, the Committee received information in relation to employment rates, Job Seekers Allowance claimants, reducing the impact of poverty, the living wage, housing and arts and culture, reducing crime, supporting the most vulnerable, improving health and wellbeing and giving children the best start in life. With regard to delivering priorities, the report outlined the Council's workforce profile in respect of ethnicity, disability, gender and pay levels in order to ascertain whether the Council's employees were reflective of the local population.

Having considered the data provided and seeking clarification on some matters, the Committee requested that the Corporate Policy Team provide additional information in relation to the following:-

- The average earning figures and distribution;
- The living wage and its impact;
- Female employment rates, in particular the differential between male and female employment in the context of the West Midlands Region and Nationally;
- Under 5 development figures for Asian and Bangladeshi children;
- Falls prevention.

In addition, the Committee requested that the Chairs of the Scrutiny Boards indicated, be recommended to consider the following issues for inclusion on their work programme:-

- Scrutiny Board 1
 - Workforce Profile
 - Purchasing
- Scrutiny Board 2
 - Early Years Development figures, including Gypsy/Roma children
- Scrutiny Board 3
 - Herbert Art Gallery and its cultural programme
- Scrutiny Board 5
 - Increase in smoking in pregnant mothers

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. The progress made on the equality measures set out in the Council Plan be noted and the Committee place on record their thanks to the Corporate Performance Team for all their work in producing this informative report.**
- 2. The Chairs of the relevant Scrutiny Boards be requested to consider the addition of the matters indicated above in their work programmes.**
- 3. No specific recommendations be made to the Cabinet Member (Policing and Equalities) in relation to the progress made.**

13. **Outside Bodies Reports Back**

The Committee considered two reports outlining the work of the following organisations over the preceding twelve months, together with details of attendance by the City Council's representatives on those organisations:-

- a) The Coventry Law Centre
- b) Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company Limited Shareholders Panel

RESOLVED that the City Council at their Annual General Meeting continue to nominate representatives to the following Outside Bodies:-

- a) **The Coventry Law Centre**
- b) **Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company Limited Shareholders Panel**

14. **Outstanding Issues**

The Committee noted that all outstanding issues had been included in the work programme for the year.

15. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2014/2015**

The Committee considered a briefing note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator, appended to which was the 2014/15 work programme.

It was recommended that the items on Tourism/Heritage and Air Quality be scheduled for November and December 2014 respectively and that Child Sexual Exploitation be added to the list of matters to be scheduled for future consideration.

RESOLVED that the work programme be updated as indicated.

16. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.30 am)

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Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Date: 8th October 2014

Subject: Welfare Reform – The Impact of Benefit Sanctions on People in Coventry

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To introduce a report and presentation from the Working Together on Welfare Reform Group

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to:
- 1) Consider the content of the report and presentation.
 - 2) Support the continued work of the Working Together on Welfare Reform Group
 - 3) Receive further updates on progress of the Working Together on Welfare Reform Group as part of the work programme
 - 4) Identify any further recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The Government has introduced wide scale changes to the welfare system. Through the Coventry Partnership, the Working Together on Welfare Reform group brings together partners including Advice Services Coventry, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Coventry City Council, Coventry Law Centre, Department for Work and Pensions, Midland Heart and Whitefriars Housing. Monthly meetings discuss common issues, share knowledge and work together to tackle emerging problems.
- 3.2 At their meeting on 11th December 2013, Scrutiny Co-ordination dedicated the whole of their meeting to the subject of welfare reform. Areas covered at the meeting were:
- The latest information on the implications of the Welfare Reform changes on local people, communities and the City
 - The way services and support to local people are being co-ordinated in the City
 - The impact on the City Council and how the authority is discharging its responsibilities
- Scruco requested further updates on progress of the group.
- 3.3 Several of the organisations involved in the Working Together on Welfare Reform have undertaken research on the impact of sanctions and how to address some of the issues. The report can be found at Appendix 1, a presentation on the work of the Working Together on Welfare Reform and their strategy and key priorities can be found at Appendix 2 and 3.

Gennie Holmes
Scrutiny Co-ordinator
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The impact of benefit sanctions on people in Coventry

**Coventry Law Centre, Coventry Citizen's Advice
Bureau, Coventry Women's Voices, Centre for
Human Rights in Practice at the University of
Warwick.**

September 2014

About the report

This is the report of a research project into the impact of welfare benefit sanctions on people in Coventry carried out by Coventry Law Centre, Coventry Citizen's Advice Bureau, Coventry Women's Voices and the Centre for Human Rights in Practice at the University of Warwick.

The research project consisted of a short survey of people who had experienced sanctions and in depth interviews of people who had been sanctioned. The survey was circulated via agencies providing advice and other services to people who may have been sanctioned. This included welfare advice organisations as well as organisations providing other advice but whose clients may have experienced sanction (for example Coventry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre). In addition a number of people were interviewed for the survey outside the Job Centre in Coventry City centre. A total of 104 people filled in the survey and nine people took part in in-depth interviews.

This report also draws on information collected by both Coventry Law Centre and Coventry CAB about their clients' experience of sanctions. Coventry Law Centre runs a sanctions hotline for three hours a day, five days a week and has taken on 40 sanction appeal cases and 52 Mandatory Reconsiderations for people who have sanctions. Of the 52 Mandatory reconsiderations that have been sent in 22 have had the decision changed and the sanction removed, 9 have had the DWP decision upheld and 21 are outstanding. Of the 31 cases where the outcome is known 29% have been refused and 71% have been successful. The 40 appeals mentioned above are recent cases which have yet to be heard and of these 6 have been settled before the hearing and the rest are ongoing. In addition we have had 10 sanctions appeals heard of which 7 were won, 2 lost and one settled in the client's favour just before the hearing. The success rate at appeals has therefore been 80%. It should be noted that none of the cases which has been heard at appeal to date has also been through the mandatory reconsideration process.

Although the sample size for both the survey and the in depth interviews is relatively small the findings are in line with other national research in this area. We have summarized this research where relevant to show how the experience of people in Coventry is in line with wider national evidence.

This report was written by Mary-Ann Stephenson and edited by Sue Bent.

We would like to thank the Insight Team at Coventry City Council for their help and advice in compiling this report.

Coventry Citizen's Advice Bureau Coventry Citizen's Advice Bureau is part of a national network that provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice. Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau helps around 14,000 people deal with more than 24,000 issues a year. Primarily, the role of the bureau is to advise people on their rights – this can include employment, consumer, housing or relationship, but in the current climate, is largely

dominated by debt and benefits-related enquiries. Our twin aim is to gather evidence and to lobby for changes in policy in order to benefit the wider community.

Coventry Law Centre is an independent specialist legal advice agency employing solicitors. It offers free advice and representation in Debt, Discrimination, Employment Family, Health and Community Care, Housing, Immigration and Asylum, Public Law and Welfare Benefits. Each year it represents over 500 people at Welfare Benefits tribunals. During this last year that number rose to over 1200 appeals

www.covlaw.org.uk .

Coventry Women's Voices is an independent network of women's organisations, trade unions, organisations providing services to women and individual women who have come together to make sure women's voices are heard when policy is made in Coventry.

www.coventrywomensvoices.wordpress.com

The Centre for Human Rights in Practice is situated in the School of Law at the University of Warwick. It provides a focus for academics, students, practitioners and activists who wish to advance the study and promotion of human rights at local, national and international levels.

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/chrp/>

National research

Our findings echo two national reports:

'Welfare Sanctions and Conditionality in the UK' published by Joseph Rowntree Foundation in September 2014¹. This report is a 'Round-up' and synthesises evidence collected during the initial stages of a five-year research study focusing on two key questions:

- How effective is welfare conditionality in promoting and sustaining behaviour change amongst welfare recipients?
- To what extent, and on what grounds, can welfare conditionality be morally justified?

Key points regarding benefits sanctions from this report are

- Sanctions are now used much more frequently within the welfare benefits system. The severity of sanctions has also increased and conditionality is now applied to previously exempt groups (e.g. lone parents, disabled people).
- Benefit sanctions are having a strongly disproportionate effect on young people under 25, and there is also evidence of severe impacts on homeless people and other vulnerable groups.
- International evidence indicates that benefit sanctions (especially severe sanctions) substantially raise exits from benefits, and may also increase short-term job entry; but the longer-term outcomes for earnings, job quality and employment retention appear unfavourable.

¹ <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/Welfare-conditionality-UK-Summary.pdf>

- Concerns that welfare conditionality leads to a range of unintended effects, including: distancing people from support; causing hardship and even destitution; displacing rather than resolving issues such as street homelessness and anti-social behaviour; and negative impacts on ‘third parties’, particularly children.

Our research reveals evidence of such unintended effects and in particular the effect of distancing people from support.

The Independent Review of JSA Sanctions headed by Matthew Oakley which reported in July 2014 set out five recommendations for an effective benefit sanctions system. The system should:

- Increase compliance with labour market requirements, particularly attending meetings with advisers;
- Be clear and easy to understand;
- Be fair, timely, and consistent in the way it is imposed;
- Be proportionate and not create excessive hardship.
- Claimants who are sanctioned should have easily accessible and understandable recourse to appeal, and potential redress, where they believe they have been unfairly treated and decisions are subsequently overturned in their favour²

Our research concludes that in too many cases in Coventry the application of sanctions is failing to meet some or all of these principles.

Key findings

Issues arising before sanction

- Too many vulnerable people are being sanctioned without account being taken of their difficulties.
- Some claimants are being given appointment times or required to take part in training or work placements that take no account of caring responsibilities, health appointments or trauma following domestic or sexual violence or abuse.
- Some claimants are being set requirements for job search that are not possible for them to complete due to learning difficulties or difficulties with written or spoken English.

Problems with the process of applying sanctions.

These include:

- Sanctions that have been wrongly applied or applied for very minor errors,

²https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335144/jsa-sanctions-independent-review.pdf

- Sanctions that have been applied with no warning, with people sometimes only realising that they had been sanctioned because there was no money in their bank account
- Confusing, contradictory or non-existent information given about the reason for sanction, the length of the sanction and rights of appeal
- Difficulty for participants in communicating with the job centre, particularly the requirement to use the telephone rather than speak to someone in person at a time when they cannot afford credit on their mobile phone

Problems with the relationship between sanctions and other benefits

These include:

- People not being told about hardship payments or wrongly told that they cannot claim hardship payments
- People not being told about the need to inform housing benefit about the sanction so having their housing benefit stopped

Perception among in depth interview participants that the Job Centre does not offer support with job search

- Job centre requirements seen as a ‘game’ or ‘ticking boxes’ rather than about finding work
- Several participants reported that they had requested help with specific training courses that had not been forthcoming
- The sanctions process had undermined participants trust in the Job Centre

Negative impact of sanctions on claimants

These included:

- Financial problems, being left with no money for rent, food or utilities
- Increased debt
- Increased mental health problems
- Negative impact on relationships with family and friends

Impact of sanctions on job seeking behaviour

- In many cases sanctions appear to make it harder for claimants to look for work as a result of lack of money for telephone or travel costs, lack of access to a computer, and reduced time for job search because of focus on finding money or increased stress and mental health problems.
- 85% of those sanctioned reported that they understood what was required of them to look for work. However the in depth interviews suggest that any change of behaviour is focussed more on meeting the requirements of the job centre rather than a change in behaviour that will realistically increase their chance of finding work.

Commitment to finding work

- Most of the participants in the in depth interviewed discussed their commitment to finding work.

Background to the project

This research project developed following concerns raised by a large number of groups in Coventry about the impact that welfare benefit sanctions were having on people in the city. The Centre for Human Rights in Practice and Coventry Women's Voices held a round table meeting with advice agencies in in November 2013 which highlighted a number of problems with sanctions including:

- Examples of sanctions that appeared particularly severe, including one person sanctioned for six weeks for being five minutes late to sign on, who as a result may become homeless, and another sanctioned for accidentally putting the date of a job application and the job applied for in the wrong boxes on a form.
- Examples of stress, depression and other mental health problems, including increased suicide risk among clients as a result of sanctions, particularly among female victims of domestic or sexual violence.
- In some cases people only found out that they had been sanctioned when their benefits were stopped and did not know what they had done wrong, or that they had a right to appeal.
- Families with children being left with no income to buy food or pay bills and at increased risk of homelessness because of rent arrears.

As a result of concerns raised at this meeting it was agreed to set up a working group to research the impact of sanctions on people in Coventry and carry forward work in this area. This report summarises the findings of that working group.

DWP data on sanctions in Coventry

Sanctions affect Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA) for claimants in the work related activity group (WRAG) and are applied when DWP consider that the claimant has not taken sufficient steps to look for work or to prepare themselves for work.

New **JSA sanctions** were introduced in October 2012:

- The highest sanction will see Jobseeker's Allowance withdrawn for 13 weeks. This rises to 26 weeks for a second "failure" and 156 weeks for a third
- An intermediate sanction for failures such as not actively seeking a job or being available for work which result in a claim being terminated. If the claimant makes a new claim a sanction of 4 weeks initially or 13 weeks for subsequently breaking the rules is imposed
- A lower level sanction, resulting in loss of benefit for up to 13 weeks, for failures such as not attending an interview with a jobcentre adviser. Unlike an intermediate sanction, the benefit restarts automatically

A new sanctions regime for **ESA claimants in the WRAG** was introduced in December 2012.

- claimants in the WRAG who fail to comply with the conditions for receiving benefit receive an open ended sanction, followed by a fixed period sanction when they re-comply
- the sanctionable amount is the prescribed amount for a single claimant (£72.40)
- a hardship regime for ESA claimants was introduced

Impact in Coventry

Recently published data from DWP shows the number of JSA sanctions imposed in Coventry between October 2012 and March 2014 was 9,107 (4,353 low level sanctions, 4,103 intermediate level sanctions and 653 high level sanctions). In addition to the 9,107 adverse sanctions imposed, an additional 12,121 sanctions have either been not applied (non-adverse), reserved or cancelled.

Since the introduction of the new sanction regime on the 22nd October 2012, as of March 2014 there have been 221 ESA sanctions imposed (adverse) in Coventry, 130 of which have been imposed in the last two months of data (February and March 2014). 196 of those ESA sanctions imposed are due to failure to participate in work related activity.

Research findings

The Independent Review of JSA Sanctions headed by Matthew Oakley which reported in July 2014 set out five recommendations for an effective benefit sanctions system. The system should:

- Increase compliance with labour market requirements, particularly attending meetings with advisers;
- Be clear and easy to understand;
- Be fair, timely, and consistent in the way it is imposed;
- Be proportionate and not create excessive hardship.
- Claimants who are sanctioned should have easily accessible and understandable recourse to appeal, and potential redress, where they believe they have been unfairly treated and decisions are subsequently overturned in their favour³

Our research concludes that in too many cases in Coventry the application of sanctions is failing to meet some or all of these principles and the interviews we have conducted reveal evidence of the unintended consequences highlighted in the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report ‘Welfare Sanctions and Conditionality in the UK’, September 2014⁴. .

All too often claimants do not know why they have been sanctioned, what they have been sanctioned for or what they can do about it. Sanctions are leading to significant problems with debt, increased risk of homelessness and having a major impact on mental and sometimes physical health. In many cases the impact of sanctions is to make it harder for claimants to look for work. In some cases vulnerable people are being set job search requirements that it is impossible for them to comply with and then being sanctioned when they fail to comply. In the light of the PCS⁵ national survey of Job Centre staff which reported that over a third had been placed on or threatened with a Personal Improvement Plan for not applying enough sanctions, this raises worrying concerns that in some cases Job Centre staff may be focussing on vulnerable claimants in order to meet targets.

Issues arising pre sanction

From the case load of both Coventry Law Centre and Coventry Citizen’s Advice Bureau it seems that too many vulnerable people are being sanctioned without taking any account of their difficulties. For example people who can’t attend interviews at certain times as a result of health problems, childcare or other commitments are repeatedly given the same time for their interviews. Other examples are people with dyslexia or limited English who are

³https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335144/jsa-sanctions-independent-review.pdf

⁴ <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/Welfare-conditionality-UK-Summary.pdf>

⁵ Public and Commercial Services Union – representing civil service staff

sanctioned for incorrect completion of their job search or people with learning difficulties who cannot tell the time being sanctioned for being late for appointments..

In their decision making it appears that DWP lack insight into the difficulties that people are experiencing and also appear to have no flexibility to take account of them, or are not using that flexibility.

Evidence: Coventry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre with Rape Crisis England and Wales has raised concerns about the treatment of women who are vulnerable following sexual assault or rape. These included sanctions or threat of sanctions against women for not applying for jobs that would put them at risk, for example near the perpetrator's home or place of work. In addition there is a failure to recognise the impact of post-traumatic stress as a result of sexual assault that can lead to panic attacks and flashbacks if a woman is required to take part in work placements or training programmes in environments where she does not feel safe.⁶

A survey by the PCS union of their members working in Job Centres in April this year showed that: 61.8% experienced pressure to refer claimants for sanctions which they thought might be inappropriate. 81.9% said that they had been told that there was an expectation of referrals for sanction to Decision Maker and Appeals and 23.3% said that they had been given a target for such referrals. 36.1% had been placed on or threatened with being placed on a Performance Improvement Plan for not making enough referrals. This suggests that, although DWP say there is not a formal policy to set targets for sanctions, in practice many DWP staff do feel under pressure to sanction.

Problems with the process of applying sanctions

Reasons for sanction

Several participants reported sanctions that appeared to have been imposed because of failures to communicate what was required, or because information from participants was not recorded or passed on. This is in line with the conclusions of the Independent Review of JSA Sanctions which concluded that 'some claimants lacked a detailed understanding of the requirements being placed on them and the processes surrounding sanctions. This was particularly found to be the case for some more vulnerable groups and claimants with specific barriers to work'.⁷

A particular problem arises when claimants are unable to attend a back to work scheme. In these circumstances the back to work scheme provider is obliged to inform the DWP that the person has not attended, even if they have given good reason for non-attendance. The CAB nationally has reported sanctions being wrongfully imposed because claimants who are unable to attend a back to work scheme (for example because of illness or a job interview) inform the provider but are not aware that the provider is obliged to report them for non-

⁶ Rape Crisis England and Wales and CRASAC evidence to the Fawcett enquiry into women and the welfare benefit system.

⁷https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335144/jsa-sanctions-independent-review.pdf

attendance and are then sanctioned by the DWP.⁸ This problem was highlighted by the Independent Review of JSA sanctions which recommended that back to work schemes should be allowed to accept 'good reason' justification for non attendance without having to make a referral to the DWP. The Government has accepted this in principle but the change would require new legislation. In the meantime the Government says that it has 'ensured that providers are given the maximum amount of discretion within the boundaries of existing legislation'.⁹ This is a welcome development; however we remain concerned about how this policy will be implemented in practice, particularly in the light of the survey of DWP staff by the PCS union (see below)

Cases from Coventry included:

Case 1 A Coventry Law Centre client was sanctioned for 3 months for failing to attend at a work programme placement and for not having a good reason for not attending. The work placement was at a charity shop and on the first day of the work placement the claimant was unwell with a sickness bug. He phoned the number for the Employment and Skills group he had been given in the letter for this eventuality and also phoned his employment advisor at the jobcentre. The next day he felt better so went to the charity shop. The manager advised him to go home and said she would get someone from Employment and Skills group to ring him. 2 days later when no one had called him the client again contacted the jobcentre. In each of these 4 contacts he made he explained he was ill on the first day. About 10 days later he received the sanction decision. The Law Centre assisted with a mandatory reconsideration of this decision and the decision was overturned as the decision maker then accepted he had good cause for not attending the work programme. It is assumed that despite these 4 contacts no record was made or passed to the decision maker of the claimant's ill health on the day, Had this claimant not had assistance to overturn this decision he would have lost 13 weeks benefit for being ill on one day. .

Case 2 Participant carried out job search at Sensia but did not speak to her advisor there as she -was told that her advisor was too busy to speak to her and she would be send details of another appointment. She was then sanctioned for not attending because she was not aware that she needed to sign in and as she had not seen her advisor there was no proof she had attended. Participant did not realise she needed to sign in as no one had explained the process to her. The job centre told her she would be sanctioned but did not tell her what for. Participants claim was a joint claim with her partner. The sanction should only have applied to her benefit but benefit was stopped for both of them. Nobody from the job centre spoke to the participant to find out her side of the story before the sanction was imposed. This claimant is being assisted with a mandatory reconsideration by the Law Centre. The decision has been amended in that the correct rate of sanction has now been applied but the mandatory reconsideration remains outstanding 3 months after being requested

⁸http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/policy/policy_publications/er_benefitsandtaxcredits/cr_benefitsandtaxcredits/review_jsa.htm

⁹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/332137/jsa-sanctions-independent-review-government-response.pdf

Confusion/lack of information about sanction process

All of the participants appeared to find the sanctions process confusing. Sometimes they received no information about the sanction until they discovered there was no money in their bank account. Some were not clear what they had been sanctioned for, how long the sanction would last and were not told their right to appeal.

Examples include:

Case 3 The Law Centre are assisting a 20 year old young man who had 2 sanctions one for 4 weeks and one for 13 weeks for failure to attend appointments with Groundforce his work programme provider. On both occasions he had not received any letter stating that he had to attend and appointment. He had always attended regularly before these incidents. Before the second appointment he had taken a phone call to let him know that an appointment would be arranged and he would get a letter to confirm this. No letter was received. The lack of income led to firstly an estrangement from his own family who could not afford to support him. The client then moved to Birmingham to stay with his girlfriend's family but the financial pressures led to a further breakdown and he was rehoused in a hostel in Coventry. The claimant also needed to claim Hardship Payments, discretionary Housing Payments, and use foodbanks in order to manage for this long without benefits. The Law Centre assisted with mandatory reconsideration letters and the decisions were overturned although not all of the benefit owed was reimbursed due to him being considered to not have a continuous claim when he moved from Birmingham back to Coventry. In addition some further payment was withheld because the claimant was alleged to have an outstanding overpayment. However the claimant had received information 6 months previously from DWP to confirm that the overpayment had been recovered in full. A further letter has been sent in about these sums which have been withheld and this remains outstanding at the time of writing.

Case 4 A Law Centre claimant believes she has had no letters to tell her she was going to get a sanction. She has been homeless but can have letters sent to her mother's address. The participant was confused about the length of the sanction and when it would finish and has found it difficult to find information about the sanction and what she can do about it. The claimant was sanctioned after attending her work programme appointment late. Her reasons for lateness were that she had been sleeping rough the previous night, had had to pawn her phone and had no means of telling the time. As a consequence she attended an hour late. The Law Centre attended an appointment with her at Cofa Court to make the mandatory reconsideration. The officer conducting this meeting was unable to confirm when the sanction decision had been issued. The Law Centre assisted her to obtain hardship payments and food vouchers. The Mandatory reconsideration was successful and benefit has been reimbursed

Difficulty in communicating with the Job Centre

The confusion among participants was made worse by the fact that they were often required to contact the Job Centre by telephone rather than speaking to an advisor. This was particularly difficult when they had no money to pay for telephone calls.

Case 5 Participant complained about the cost of calling the job centre on her mobile to discuss her sanction – she was struggling to afford credit on her mobile as a result of the sanction

Case 6 Participant had to go to a women’s refuge to use the phone to contact the job centre as she had no credit on her mobile and no money for transport.

Problems with the relationship between sanctions and other benefits

Housing benefit

When a claimant is no longer entitled to JSA (for example if they have found a job) the Job Centre automatically informs the Housing Benefit office. However this also includes cases where a claimant has been sanctioned. In order to prevent Housing Benefit being stopped claimants have to contact their Housing Benefit office to inform that they have been sanctioned but still need Housing Benefit

A number of participants in our study had their housing benefit stopped when they were sanctioned because they were not aware that they had to contact housing benefit to inform them of the sanction and their financial situation.

Case 7 A Law Centre client who lived in Holbrooks was given a 4 week sanction for not starting a temporary part time agency job in Willenhall. The start time for the job was 7.30 am and the claimant had advised the Job centre at the time she was told of the job that she could not take up the job because the buses would not get her to work until 8 am. The claimant was sanctioned as it was considered she did not have a good reason for not taking up the work. The claimant’s Housing Benefit and Council tax Support were both stopped and she was given no information by the Jobcentre of what to do about this. The Law Centre assisted with a mandatory reconsideration which was successful and also advised her to notify Housing Benefit of her change of circumstances, The Mandatory Reconsideration was successful and the claimant’s benefit was reimbursed. This problem was raised in the Independent Review of JSA sanctions and the Government has committed to finding an IT solution by autumn 2014. In the short term Job Centres should inform claimants of the need to contact their Housing Benefit office.

Hardship payments

Only 38% of claimants we surveyed were told about the possibility of claiming a Hardship payment. In one case in an in depth interview a claimant was wrongly told that they were not entitled to a Hardship payment.

Case 8 The Law Centre has assisted a young man with learning difficulties and dyslexia which the Job Centre was aware of. The claimant's learning difficulties meant that he could not This young man was required to attend a work programme with Sarina Russo. He had 5 sanctions although it took a number of phone calls to establish this. The sanctions were for not actively seeking work and not attending appointments on time. The client was becoming increasingly stressed by his position. He was refused a hardship payment incorrectly because he had not provided sufficiently up to date documents to support his application. He had no written decision for this refusal. The Law Centre assisted also with a mandatory reconsideration of this decision and accompanied him to an interview about this. The claimant had been asked to provide a copy of his tenancy agreement to support the mandatory reconsideration although this document does not need to be provided to make a decision on a mandatory reconsideration. The mandatory reconsideration of the hardship payment refusal was successful. Four of the five other mandatory reconsiderations have also been decided to date in the claimant's favour with one remaining outstanding. The stress the claimant had suffered due to the impact of the sanction and his inability to resolve it himself have meant that the claimant's health has deteriorated to the point where he is no longer fit for work and he is now claiming Employment and Support Allowance

Perception among participants that Job Centre does not offer support with job search

Most participants complained about the level of support they received from the Job Centre in finding work. One described the job search process as a 'game', which was about meeting requirements that didn't have much to do with finding work. Others described feeling punished, bullied or hit with a stick: This is in line with the findings of other organisations. For example Centrepoint reported that 'Many of the young people Centrepoint works with report poor relationships with advisers and cases of negative treatment.'¹⁰

- Case 9 Participant does not feel like she gets any support from the Job Centre, stated that she hates them. Any support comes from other organisations
- Case 10 Participant does not think the Job centre provide support for you to find work, instead they look for ways to punish or bully you into work and look for faults and reasons to sanction in your job search activity rather than offering guidance. He feels that limited computer time at the job shop is a barrier to finding work
- Case 11 The participant was threatened with sanction by a job centre advisor because she couldn't read his handwriting. He felt that this was not fair because he had been applying for jobs and had filled the form in.

There were three participants who had asked for support with specific training courses that had not been forthcoming:

¹⁰http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/centrepoint_submission_to_jobseekers_allowance_sanctions_call_for_information.pdf

- Case 12 Participant had been told by a subcontractor for BT that he could get a job with them if he could drive. He had found an intensive driving course at a reasonable price and spoken to the job centre about it. The Job Centre had agreed that he should be given the money to do the driving course, but he waited three months and did not receive the money to go on a driving course, without which he couldn't do the job
- Case 13 Participant feels like the job centre are messing him around and that they make things more difficult to do such as refusing to let him inform them of a change of bank details in person and insisting he do it over the phone. He has asked for help with training courses and for a CSCS card (a construction qualification) but hasn't heard anything back.
- Case 14 Participant asked if the job centre could fund training for an SIA licence to work in security but they would not do this. He says that the job centre does not like him. He has not heard from his new advisor and feels that the job centre does not provide the support he needs to find work. He feels that this lack of support and limited computer time at the job shop is the biggest barrier to finding work

Mandatory reconsideration and appeals

In 2013 a new stage of Mandatory Reconsideration was introduced for people who wanted to appeal against a sanction decision. Now if someone who is sanctioned wishes to dispute the sanction they must apply to the DWP for a 'mandatory reconsideration' before they can appeal to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS).

The DWP has circulated guidance to their staff which advises that claimants must have a verbal explanation of the decision if they wish to dispute it. If they remain unhappy, they must next be provided with a detailed verbal explanation and then finally a written statement of reasons before they can request mandatory reconsideration – even though legally mandatory reconsideration is the first stage in the dispute procedure. The guidance states that “in order to reduce mandatory reconsideration and appeal requests, this is the preferred method and you must encourage the claimant to follow this option initially”

This makes the process of appeal very lengthy and difficult to navigate. This situation is compounded by the fact that Decision Makers are based in a variety of locations around the country, each specialising in different reasons for a sanction being applied.

This spread of Decision Makers also means that where somebody has been sanctioned a number of times then there may be a large number of offices involved.

The complexity of these internal processes means lengthy delays in the mandatory reconsideration process, and it also causes advice workers to spend significant time following the process through. .

Impacts

Sanctions are having a significant financial impact on those sanctioned and their families. In our survey 40% of respondents had had to cut back on food, 33% had had trouble paying

other bills, 16% had had to rely on family and friends for support, 16% were in rent arrears, 14% were in increased debt and 17% mentioned other general financial impacts.

The negative impact of sanctions on claimants has been widely reported.

Financial impacts

All the participants reported negative financial impacts as a result of the sanction. These included lack of money for basic necessities (food, rent, utilities) and increased debt.

Case 15 During sanction participant was living on £28.50 a week and paying £15 a week rent to a friend which left very little money for other necessities:

‘It’s not just like clothes wise, it’s like... you know, like your deodorant and things that you need to get’

Case 16 Sanction left participant with no money and has had to sell personal belongings

Case 17 Sanction left the client with £30 a week less than previously he is struggling to pay household bills

Case 18 Participant couldn’t pay for food, rent (not covered by housing benefit because of the bedroom tax), or fuel

Case 19 Participant had been left with no money

Case 20 Participant was living on about £70 a fortnight in hardship payments. He paid £20 on gas, £20 on electricity and £10 on water leaving him £20 for everything else for the fortnight.

Case 21 Participant had no electricity or gas as it was on a meter and he could not afford to top it up. It was winter so very cold but he had no money to go out anywhere

Case 22 Participant was unable to buy winter clothes for her children when the weather was cold.

In some cases participants were going without food as a result of sanctions:

Case 23 Participant had no access to food and found it difficult to find something to eat. He has diabetes which makes going without regular meals an even greater problem

Case 24 The participant has found it difficult to get money for food and clean clothes. She sometimes eats at her mother’s house

Case 25 Participant could not afford to pay for laundry or buy food

Case 26 Participant did get food from the foodbank, but he couldn’t use a lot of it because he had no means of cooking or heating it. He did sometimes take it to friend’s houses to cook however this meant he had to share his limited food with the other people who were there.

Debt

Most participants were in debt as a result of the sanction

Case 27 Participant is in debt to various family members including her mother and grandmother. She has 'had to sell everything I owned to Cash generators'

Case 28 Participant is in debt and the situation is getting worse because of interest owed.

Case 29 Participant now has had bank charges of over £500 for going overdrawn without an overdraft and bounced direct debits. She has had to borrow roughly £200 from friends for utilities and fuel

Case 30 Participant owed a lot of money to other people

Case 31 Participant had been borrowing from friends, which left him short when his money came in because he first had to pay off the money he had borrowed.

Case 32 Participant is in rent arrears as his housing benefit was stopped due to the sanction.

Case 33 Participant has rent arrears and an overdraft in order to pay bills.

Health impacts

All participants reported increased stress, depression and anxiety. Several reported suicidal thoughts

Case 34 Participant felt trapped inside, down and depressed as a result of the sanction

Case 35 Participant suffered from stress as a result of the sanction. He is prone to manic depression and has been suicidal

Case 36 Both the benefit sanction and the previous loss of his job caused emotional stress to the participant. He has had difficulty sleeping at night and feels anxious. He felt very pessimistic about changing his situation

Case 37 Participant was really shocked and worried by the sanction. She has suffered from stress and anxiety and has had to see her doctor because of problems sleeping. She has a history of depression and the sanction has been a trigger

Case 38 Participant felt disrupted and jumbled. He doesn't know what to do and feels that there are a lot of things that could stop him in life and he is worried about this.

Case 39 Participant reported serious health effects due to the sanction. He felt himself getting seriously ill and very very low. He felt suicidal.

Case 40 Participant suffered serious health effects as a result of the sanction (low mood and depression). He was having trouble sleeping. He thought the situation was bleak and was suicidal at points. The timing of the sanction (around Christmas) made it particularly hard to deal with. While his depression has improved since the lifting of the sanction he is still suffering from its effects.

Case 41 Participant had found the whole situation very stressful and became frustrated and depressed. Her oldest child (aged 9) was also affected as she became aware of the situation and began to take on some of these stresses

Case 42 One participant also reported physical health problems

Participant had a nervous skin condition covering her body which she believes was brought about by the stress of the sanction

Strain on relationships

Sanctions had had a negative impact on participants' relationships with family and friends, particularly when they had had to borrow money:

Case 43 Participant felt guilt in having to rely on her friend and borrow money and was unable to pay him her share of bills. She felt about relying on him for financial support

Case 44 Participant lost contact with some friends during the sanction because she could not go out

Case 45 Participant said the sanction had affected her relationship with her children as they didn't understand why she couldn't give them pocket money.

Case 46 Participant has had offers of money from his father but so far has refused help. He wishes to stay independent as possible

Case 47 Participant has borrowed money from friends but this has caused stress and concern because she does not know when she will be able to pay them back.

Case 48 Participant reported that the sanction had caused strain in his relationships. He was living with his girlfriend but lack of money caused strain so he moved back in with his mother. This relationship broke down and he is now living in a hostel.

Case 49 The sanction put a lot of strain on the participants' relationships with friends and family. He had to ask people for money or favours. It was difficult because a lot of his friends did not have money to spare. It was even worse because it was Christmas time. He notes that people now see him as always needing things or favours

Effectiveness of sanctions

The aim of sanctions is to increase claimants' likelihood of taking paid work or taking part in programmes designed to increase their chances of finding paid work. However our research found that in practice the impact of sanctions can make it harder not easier for claimants to look for work

The majority of participants in the in depth interviews complained that being sanctioned made it harder for them to look for work. The loss of income meant that they had less (or no) money for phone calls or travel costs for interview and they had reduced time for job search because of the need to focus on finding money for food and rent and the stress and mental health problems caused by sanctions. In addition most had little faith in the Job Centre to help them look for work, which means that they may be less likely to access such support as is available.

These findings are in line with research in other parts of the UK. The Scottish Parliament's Welfare Reform Committee carried out research into the impact of work conditionality and sanctions concluding that 'Benefit sanctions can lead to a spiral of decline and potentially destitution, often getting in the way of people getting back to work.'¹¹ A 2010 review of the international evidence of the effectiveness of sanctions for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that while sanctions are effective in getting people off benefits they can have a negative impact on their chances of actually getting a job, and negative long term social impacts including increased criminality.¹² More recent reports by Citizen's Advice Scotland and Manchester Citizen's Advice Bureaux had similar findings; sanctions had a negative impact on claimants' ability to look for work.¹³

Cases from our in depth interviews in Coventry included:

- Case 50 The sanction meant that the participant had no money to travel to the work programme in Hinkley but he was told if he missed meetings there could be further sanctions He had no credit on his phone or money to travel which affected his ability to find jobs. He believed the sanction made it very difficult to satisfy the JSA search requirements
- Case 51 She is studying at college and volunteering to try to increase skills and experience. Both of these were disrupted because of the stress of the sanction and because she could not afford the travel cost. The sanction made it harder for her to look for job and complete her job search as she had to worry about how she was going to live.
- Case 52 Participant struggled to afford money to travel to look for work. He had had to sell his computer to make money making job searches more difficult.
- Case 53 Participant said that the sanction made it harder to carry out job search activity as he had to worry about where food or money was coming from before he could look for work. He needed a qualification to work in security that the job centre would not fund. He had funded this himself at the cost of £450 once the sanction had ended. He felt that if he had not been sanctioned he would have been able to get this badge sooner and might have had more chance of being in work.
- Case 54 Participant was now claiming ESA rather than JSA because of illness caused by the sanction. The sanction had made it harder for him to look for work – before he could even think of job search he had to worry about how he was going to eat and live. He could not afford phone credit so could not phone employers for work
- Case 55 The participant has a mistrust of the job centre as a result of the sanction and the correspondence surrounding it.

¹¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/323919/ssac_occasional_paper_9.pdf

¹²Griggs, J. and Evans, M. (2010)Sanctions within conditional benefit systems: a review of evidence, JRF <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jfr/conditional-benefit-systems-full.pdf>

¹³<http://www.cas.org.uk/news/new-report-exposes-full-impact-benefit-sanctions> and http://www.socialpublishingproject.com/uploads/9/6/1/1/9611868/punishing_poverty_-_sanctions_and_their_impacts.pdf

- Case 56 Participant felt that every time he went to the job centre he didn't know whether he was going to be sanctioned or not - leading to a negative attitude to the job centre 'the people that need to most help were being smacked'
- Case 57 Participant is anxious about possibility of future sanctions and talks about the job centre in terms of uncertainty and lack of clarity

Sanctions have little impact on realistic job search

In our survey 85% of claimants said that they now knew what was required of them to seek work. However the findings of the in depth interviews suggest that this may represent a greater understanding of what is required by the Job Centre rather than a change in activity that would be likely to lead to a job. Participants were asked if the sanction they experienced had had any impact on their job search behaviour. Most of them said that their behaviour hadn't changed as a result of being sanctioned. Where behaviour had changed it was to avoid sanction rather than increase realistic job search (for example by making sure to sign in at a work programme provider or filling in a job search form in more detail)

Case 58 Participant said that her behaviour hadn't changed as a result of the sanction because she was already complying with the Job Centre requirements and the sanction had been imposed in error

Case 59 Participant felt sanctions do not help people find a job 'it just puts more hardship on people'. She can't work anyway due to illness

Case 60 Participant does not think she will be sanctioned again (she was sanctioned for being late to sign on as she was sleeping on the streets and had no access to an alarm clock or phone)

Case 61 The sanction made the participant change his behaviour in that he was applying for more jobs, but these are jobs that he had no intention of taking or expectation of being offered just to satisfy the JSA job search requirements. He can apply for 30-40 jobs per week using websites that hold his CV

Case 62 Participant work related and job search activities have not changed as a result of the sanction, but she now knows to sign in at Senica

Case 63 Participant's job search behaviour hasn't changed much since the sanction but it makes sure he fills out the form in as much detail as possible. However he feels that it is up to the job centre to decide what is sufficient and he can do little about this.

Importance of food banks

In our survey 46% of respondents had used or been referred to the food bank. All participants in the in depth interviews reported having used food banks as a result of sanction. Of the people referred to food banks by Coventry CAB 15% were as the result of a benefit sanction As well as providing food, food banks appeared important in signposting people to other sources of help.

Case 64 Participant is a volunteer at City Mission Food bank and they advised her to go to Coventry Law Centre for help with her sanction She has also used the foodbank for fuel She has also used the women's refuge to use the phone

Case 65 Participant had to use Foleshill Baptist Church food bank three times and describes them as 'really helpful'. they told him to contact the Law Centre to challenge his sanction Participant has sought help from a number of voluntary agencies as a result of being homeless. They recommended that he went to the council. Eventually he found a place in a YMCA hostel

Case 66 Participant had used the foodbank twice; he was reluctant to use his third voucher because he knew he could only have three vouchers a year. He knew a person at a foodbank who helped him access food without a voucher and thinks he must have used food banks 10 times during the sanction although he had to travel to different food banks so that staff did not recognise him. He has not received support from any other organisations

Case 67 Participant used the foodbank but could not use all the food because he had no way to cook it. He said that the amount of food given varied between food banks from between six bags of food to one or two. He also used the Salvation Army to get a hot meal and shelter

Case 68 Participant had been referred to a food bank on at least five occasions

Commitment to finding work

Most of those interviewed discussed their commitment to finding work. Two participants had health problems that might have made them eligible for ESA rather than JSA but had chosen not to claim ESA because they were anxious to find work:

Case 69 One participant used to be on ESA (he has a history of heart problems, including heart attacks and is diabetic and suffers from hypoglycaemia) but elected to go onto JSA voluntarily because he wished to find work. He ended up feeling 'battered' and 'being taught with a big stick'

Case 70 Another participant is recovering from an operation to remove a cancer and has also recently been in hospital for a thyroid problem. However she does not wish to claim ESA as she really wants to find work

Three participants mentioned training courses that they wished to undertake in order to increase their chances of finding work. Two mentioned that they volunteered in order to increase their skills and experience.

Conclusions and recommendations

Our research findings strongly support the findings of national research and research conducted locally elsewhere in the UK.

More extensive studies than ours are beginning to unearth unintended consequences of the conditionality approach.

We recommend that Government policy is reviewed in light of these findings

Locally, our surveys and casework identify opportunities for improvements in the process of applying sanctions. A meeting of the Welfare Reform Working Together Group with Martin Buxcey, DWP District Operations Manager, took place on 1st September 2014.

At this meeting it was agreed:

- To develop a local protocol that can be used to escalate to DWP concerns about individual cases
- A single point of contact to be identified at DWP
- Specific case examples would be forwarded to DWP to allow specific issues to be addressed with staff
- Joint training between DWP and partners to focus on early intervention and prevention so consistent advice and support is given to people to avoid sanctions
- DWP will explore the possibility of work coaches attending appeal hearings

Further reviews are recommended by the Welfare Reform Working Together Group of the numbers and types of sanctions and appeals lodged against these to establish whether the steps agreed are effective in achieving the principles of an effective benefits sanction scheme as recommended by the Oakley Report.

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Partnership working to give better outcomes for local people

Tim Savill

Head of Revenues and Benefits

Coventry City Council

October 2014

Agenda

- The 'working together' group
 - Who we are
 - What we do
 - How we do it
 - What difference has it made
- Questions



Our partnership approach

Monthly meetings held to discuss common issues with the following partners...



Department for Work and Pensions



Challenges we faced...

- Cuts to Local Housing Allowance
- Under occupation charges in social sector
- Council Tax Support
- The Benefit Cap
- Disability benefit changes
- Other benefit changes
- Recession/economic climate
- Cuts to our services



Monthly meetings

- Well attended (and growing)
- Share information
- Problem solving – action focussed
- Structured and built on trust
- A focus is maintained on the outcomes of welfare reform

Positive outcomes

- Shared communication, casework, pop-up shops
- Maximise resources to help local people
 - CAB award (best local partnership) for DHP campaign
 - Full DHP allocation spent
- Joint work on other initiatives
 - Direct payments

Partnership work has also included

- Joint strategy and action plan
- Shared communication
- Sharing data between CCC and Housing Associations
- Shared publicity
- Early advice and support
- Case conferences
- Joint bids – Local Support Services



And on sanctions.....

- Part of action plan
- Draft report on sanctions was circulated and discussed
- Constructive local meetings with DWP
- A process agreed to resolve issues more quickly
- A need to understand the issues around national policy and local implementation

QUESTIONS

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www.coventry.gov.uk/benefits

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Working Together on Welfare Reform Group

Strategy and key priorities

At the “Working Together” meetings on Welfare Reform we have discussed our strategic role in the City and what our key priorities should be. Following discussions in the Group these are the agreed roles we will work to. We will share with the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and the Local Public Service Board so that our remit is shared and agreed.

7 key roles

1. **A forum.** A regular forum for reporting news, raising and discussing issues and exchanging knowledge and learning with partners. Also a forum for the discussion of problems and the identification of solutions.
2. **Communications.** To agree and affect a Communication strategy and plan that delivers information on the changes occurring through national and local policy and suggesting actions so that those affected are better able to respond.
3. **Actions.** To agree actions across partners that will lead to mitigation of any negative effects and accentuates any positives. The intention will be that decisions and actions agreed collaboratively will have more impact than organisations working separately.
4. **Research.** To coordinate work/analysis on the impacts of welfare reform and to evaluate findings with discussion and agreement on how this should affect our plans going forward.
5. **Local Support Services Framework.** To influence the work on the development of the framework, ensuring that the City has a robust framework going forward and we are well placed with the introduction of Universal Credit.
6. **Support into work.** To recognise that supporting people into work is a key part of the Government’s agenda and forms a key plank of our priority in getting people out of poverty.
7. **Making links.** To link with other agendas being pursued separately. Key links are with the agenda about helping people into work, being led through the Coventry Partnership ELSE group and through the Financial Inclusion agenda led through the Coventry Partnership Financial Inclusion Forum.

There is an action plan for the year ahead that is being developed, with lead officers and timescales for the actions.

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Coventry City Council

Report

To: Scrutiny Coordination Committee

Date: 8 October 2014

From: Councillor Alison Gingell, Cabinet Member Health and Adult Services

Subject: Female Genital Mutilation

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to brief the Scrutiny Coordination Committee on the issue of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Coventry. The paper provides an outline of what FGM is, the legislation in relation to FGM, implications of the practice on women and outcomes for survivors, prevalence of FGM and local actions so far. This briefing seeks to inform Councillors of National recommendations to eliminate the practice of FGM and requests their views and endorsement of the local recommendations provided.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to:
- 1) Consider the proposals for action contained in section 4 of the report
 - 2) Identify any further areas for discussion or consideration
 - 3) Identify any recommendations for the Cabinet Member and the Health and Well-being Board.

3 Information/Background

The issue of FGM in Coventry was raised by Councillor Gingell at Council in December 2013 where a motion to condemn the practice was supported. Council requested further work on FGM and the establishment of a Task & Finish Group. The purpose of the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Task and Finish Group is to gather knowledge and intelligence on the extent of the problem in Coventry, how it is been addressed by various partners and the barriers in dealing with FGM. An initial briefing paper was presented by the Director of Public Health at the Health & Wellbeing Board on 24th February 2014.

- 3.1 At the request of Council and the Health & Wellbeing Board, the Councils Public Health Department have developed this detailed report which includes actions recommended by the task and finish group which are needed to eradicate FGM in Coventry. These are discussed in further detail later in this report.

3.2 FGM Prevalence

- 3.2.1 It is important to note that data for FGM both locally and nationally is not good, much of which is based on the 2011 census. This issue is being tackled nationally with the introduction of mandatory requirements for Healthcare Professionals to record FGM implemented from April 2014.

3.3 National Prevalence

- It is estimated that 125 million women and girls worldwide have undergone FGM.

- It is estimated that 3 million girls are subjected to FGM every year.
- It is estimated that 170,000 women and girls are living with FGM in the UK.
- It is estimated that 65,000 girls aged 13 and under are at risk of FGM in the UK.
- Over 200 FGM-related cases investigated by the police nationally in the last five years.
- It has taken 29 years since the criminalisation of FGM for the first prosecutions to be brought.

Further information on national prevalence can be found in appendix 2.

3.4 Prevalence of FGM in Coventry

Since 1 April 2014 Acute NHS Trusts (Foundation and non-Foundation) must provide returns to the Department of Health on a monthly basis of the prevalence of FGM within their treated population. Between April and August 2014 there have been 29 women accessing UHCW midwifery services that have been affected by FGM. Evidence suggests that for these women there may be an increased risk of childbirth complications and newborn deaths. For those mothers who have undergone FGM there is also the potential risk that their female children will also undergo the procedure.

Police data for the West Midlands shows FGM referrals to West Midlands Police (WMP):

Year	Total referrals to WMP	Coventry Referrals	Percentage
2013	41	16	39%
2014 (to date)	84	48	40%

These figures may be due to the well-established referral processes and reporting procedures established in Coventry or it may indicate that we have a high incidence of FGM amongst the communities that reside here.

To try to gain an understanding on the prevalence of FGM in Coventry, Public Health have compared the countries with the highest prevalence to local communities in Coventry. Table one, describes the female population aged 0-49 who are living in Coventry but were born in regions where there is a high prevalence of FGM.

According to the 2011 Census data 3% (868) children aged 0-15 and 7% (5,422) women aged 16-49 living in Coventry were born in regions likely to be affected by FGM.

Country of birth of the Female population aged 0-15 and 16-49 in Coventry. Census 2011				
Country of Birth	Age 0 to 15		Age 16-49	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total Numbers of women in Coventry	31,065		78,219	
Africa: North Africa e.g. Egypt	68	0.2	247	0.3
Africa: Central and Western Africa e.g. Mali, Sierra Leone, Guinea	228	0.7	1651	2.1
Africa: South and Eastern Africa e.g. Northern Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia	454	1.5	2854	3.6
Africa: Africa not otherwise specified	4	0.0	58	0.1
Middle East and Asia: Middle East e.g. Yemen	114	0.4	612	0.8
Total	868	3%	5,422	7%

*The age range has been split to capture the numbers of potential victims of FGM (aged 0-15 years) and those who may have already had the procedure.

3.11 What is happening locally?

Intelligence gathered from a small number of statutory and voluntary agencies, has found that many agencies are not identifying FGM as an issue within their services. There are many potential reasons for this for example; not working with populations most affected, lack of professional knowledge around the law and FGM, or a lack of awareness of the symptoms and signs of FGM. For some agencies that have identified cases of FGM there appears to be no systematic way for them to record or code it appropriately. Although there is not a true picture of need, a number of local agencies have been working hard to raise awareness of FGM.

- The Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) has been working in partnership to address FGM locally since 2009 and offers training, has developed a safeguarding procedure and a website:
 - Training:
 - Multi-agency safeguarding children training aimed at anyone working with children in Coventry or parents/carers who may be from practising communities. This training has been running for 6 years, initially there were a large number of sessions per year due to demand, demand has decreased resulting in the amount of training reducing over the last two to three years to two session per year being delivered.
 - The training consists of a 3 hour course delivered by local professionals. The content includes background, history and origins, reasons which sustain it, when it takes place (age), how it takes place, types, physical and mental health and sexual implications, practising countries, UK issues, law, indications that it might be going to take place / has taken place, safeguarding and how to respond including terms to use/not use & resources. The course is continuously reviewed to include additional "new" relevant information that we are aware of e.g. prosecutions, new helplines etc.
 - Safeguarding Children Procedure
 - There is a child protection procedure in place for all agencies working with children. The procedure covers when it is suspected a child may be going to have FGM or has undergone FGM, this procedure is reviewed periodically to ensure the information is up to date.
 - A link to the procedure on the Safeguarding Children Board website http://coventryscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_fe_gen_mut.html
 - Website page on FGM
 - Resources include (http://www.coventrylscb.org.uk/prof_fgm.html)
 - Along with information about the helpline operated by NSPCC
 - Higher Risk of FGM
 - Post Summer Notice
 - Female Genital Mutilation Factsheet
 - Professionals Factsheet

- Female Genital Mutilation Leaflet
 - Female Genital Mutilation Poster
- Meridian General Practice routinely asks new patients whether they have been affected by FGM. If they see female clients who have undergone FGM who have female children they will inform them of the legal aspect of FGM and if they have concerns they will refer them to Safeguarding.
- West Midlands Police have launched Operation Sentinel. It is a force wide initiative aimed at protecting the most vulnerable members of society in the West Midlands particularly those who are victims or are at risk of child sexual exploitation, honour-based violence, human trafficking, female genital mutilation and domestic abuse. There have also been a number of joint visits carried out with the Police and Social Care in regards to FGM.
- Coventry University are currently a partner in the REPLACE 2 project. REPLACE 2 aims to implement and evaluate community-based behaviour change intervention frameworks to tackle female genital mutilation in the EU. This project marks a significant shift in the 'approach' to ending FGM. REPLACE 2 represents a radical change to the way female genital mutilation (FGM) is tackled in the EU, by developing a new approach that integrates individual behaviour change within a community-based approach.
- A conference on FGM in Coventry will be held on Thursday 13th November at the Welcome Centre. The conference will aim to raise awareness of FGM amongst relevant professionals and communities and provide opportunities to educate delegates on specific aspects of FGM including the consequences and impacts on women affected by FGM, health outcomes, the law on FGM and community engagement.

4. Discussion and actions

Whilst it has been well documented that there has been some intensive work in Coventry focused on raising awareness of FGM, it is still practised. Coventry's FGM Task & Finish Group recommends that Coventry adopt a zero tolerance approach to FGM and strive to eliminate it entirely from society.

To achieve this vision a number of actions need to be implemented;

4.1 Prevention

4.1.1 Awareness Raising

The Home Affairs Committee consulted with key stakeholders including the Intercollegiate Group, 28 Too Many, the Tackling FGM Initiative, FORWARD, and ACPO and concluded that 'there is need for a comprehensive and on-going national awareness campaign that is multifaceted targeting health, education, social care and other frontline professionals, practising communities, and the wider general public.' The Task & Finish Group has also discussed the need for greater awareness raising; consultation with representatives from the voluntary sector, BME males and females and migrant communities found that communities who do not practice FGM are unaware that it exists. In communities that do practice FGM it is often hidden, therefore those affected are often unaware of the implications, support available and the legal position of FGM.

It is therefore recommended that a multi-faceted awareness campaign is implemented targeting health, education, social care, voluntary sector, practising communities and other relevant professionals. The campaign should seek to raise awareness of FGM, inform practitioners of the illegality of the practice and the health risks

associated with it, provide information to practitioners seeking advice on making a referral and signposting women who have undergone FGM to the services that are available to them. This awareness raising should also include the education and engagement of GP's about the legal position of FGM, what to look for and how to proceed in terms of recording or reporting instances.

The campaign should also include awareness raising targeted at communities who practice FGM, this should be developed in partnership with influential community members to ensure it is culturally sensitive and ultimately effective at stopping FGM.

Such a campaign would need to use a range of media, including social media. This should include the use of leaflets and posters in GP practices, A&E, nurseries, schools, community centres, youth clubs, churches, mosques and electronic resources such as Facebook and twitter.

4.1.2 Community Engagement

Through consultation with key stakeholders and individuals who have been affected by FGM, the need for effective community engagement has been highlighted.

Coventry Public Health Department, in partnership with Voluntary Action Coventry and Coventry University have held two very successful community engagement events to discuss FGM in August and September 2014, with one being specifically aimed at men. Both events were attended by 40 people from a range of health & social care professionals, voluntary sector staff and community members & leaders from minority populations. Both sessions involved in depth discussions as to how we can work together to tackle the issue of FGM and feedback included;

- There is a real lack of awareness of FGM amongst many communities and whether it is happening in their community.
- Communities and Professionals need educating on FGM, a standardized training programme needs to be implemented to ensure that everyone has the same knowledge of the area.
- The training should cover FGM prevalence, impacts, those at risk of FGM and spotting the signs that someone may be at risk, how to raise the issue with communities, cultural aspects, care pathways, how to raise a concern, legalities and law around FGM

Specific feedback from the Men Only event included:

- Whilst some individuals will quote religion in trying to justify FGM, Islam does not in fact promote or justify FGM – it is a cultural practice, not a religious practice. Many non-Muslim countries practice FGM; many Muslim countries do not.
- There is strong support in migrant communities for stopping FGM. Informal events can be very effective.

This report recommends further partnership work between the Council, Coventry University and the Voluntary Sector to effectively engage with communities to ensure the FGM campaign is successful. Support to these organisation to empower communities to tackle FGM in their own localities through the development of good

relationships, training and capacity building through staff and financial resource and identifying community champions to influence behaviour change amongst their peers. Particular focus should be placed on effective engagement with males from practising communities. This should include working with communities identified as practising FGM to ascertain their views on FGM, their readiness to change and the best ways for organisations to engage on the topic – each community may respond differently to key messages. With this kind of insight Coventry will be in a strong position to undertake an awareness campaign that is successful in supporting a reduction in instances of FGM.

4.1.3 Training & Empowerment

FGM training is currently included in the multi-agency safeguarding children training for all professionals and agencies that work with children and families. Work is needed to ensure that all agencies ensure that all employees that have contact with children and families access this training.

In addition through consultation with professionals and the voluntary sector the Task & Finish Group have concluded that high-quality training provided by specialist organisations is necessary to ensure all practitioners are capable of recognising the risks of FGM, understand when it has taken place, how to respond and the subsequent referral pathways. Support for professionals to develop the confidence to approach the subject of FGM in a culturally sensitive way is also vital.

GPs and other Health Professionals should be vigilant and aware of the symptoms, legal protocols and support networks for patients to help secure better support for affected young girls and women. The home office currently offers training for professionals which should be attended by a Coventry Health Professional to identify if it addresses the issues we are experiencing in Coventry. If deemed as an appropriate training programme primary care professionals should be encouraged to complete home office training as it is free training, accredited and can be used as evidence of level 3 child protection training.

It is important that everyone who is affected by FGM is educated about the implications and legalities. Therefore access to training for community members and other front line professionals that may come into contact with community groups or families and friends that may be affected by FGM is essential. The charity FORWARD has been at the forefront of training professionals and voluntary and community organisations in the UK on the issue of FGM and Child Protection. Based on the premise that professionals and community groups must play an important role in the campaign against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and in the provision of good quality services and support for women that have undergone FGM, FORWARD offers a range of FGM training sessions. FORWARD continues to deliver this training to professionals from the statutory sector - including health, education, social services and the police, as well as to organisations from FGM practicing communities, and to the voluntary sector at large. **Therefore this report recommends the implementation of training programmes across Coventry for professionals and communities.**

Training should aim to;

- Empower frontline professionals: Develop the competence, knowledge and awareness of frontline health professionals to ensure prevention and protection of girls at risk of FGM. Ensure that health professionals know how to provide quality care for girls and women who suffer complications of FGM.

- Empower and support affected girls and young women (both those at risk and survivors). This should be a priority public health consideration; health and education professionals should work together to integrate FGM into prevention messages and better education to support girls to resist FGM, boys to oppose this and to empower communities to confront it.

4.1.5 Health Focus on preventing FGM: There is a lack of clarity as to what professionals should do when they have explored risk with parents / families and have been assured that FGM is not going to be performed as it is unlikely that families will disclose their intention. Practice guidance should be developed for all professionals. There is no available risk assessment tool to support practitioners in determining level of risk; a multi-agency risk assessment tool should be developed in Coventry.

4.2 Law Enforcement

4.2.1 Prosecution

FGM was first made a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. This was repealed and replaced by the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005. Both Acts extended the offence of FGM to cover acts committed outside the UK by UK nationals or permanent UK residents. They also increased the maximum penalty on conviction from five to 14 years' imprisonment. The failure to achieve any prosecutions under existing legislation has caused many to question the effectiveness of the 2003 Act. **This report recommends that Coventry should strive to prevent FGM through Law Enforcement. Professionals and Communities need to continue to support the Police to enforce the law against parents / guardians who permit FGM and the practitioners who carry it out and prevent women and girls being taken out of UK legal jurisdiction with the intention of carrying out FGM.** Continued partnership work with West Midlands Police and a multi-agency approach to support and uphold law enforcement is vital.

4.3. Safeguarding, Reporting & Recording

The Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) has been working in partnership to address FGM locally since 2009. There is a child protection procedure in place for all agencies working with children. The procedure covers when it is suspected a child may be going to have FGM take place or have undergone FGM; this procedure is reviewed periodically to ensure the information is up to date. **It is recommended that all suspected cases should continue to be referred as part of existing child safeguarding obligations. Information and support should be given to families to protect girls at risk. Better awareness of FGM and the law amongst professionals should be implemented as part of a specialised training programme.** If FGM is diagnosed but there are no safeguarding implications (if the woman does not have children for example) then this should be recorded for information gathering purposes.

4.4 Life course Approach to Treatment, Services & Support

As discussed earlier in this report the physical implications for a girl who has undergone FGM can be severe, however girls and women who have been subjected to FGM also suffer serious psychological damage (See appendix 4). Research carried out in practising African communities found that women who had undergone FGM suffered the same levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as adults who had experienced early childhood abuse. 80% of the women in the study suffered from mood and/or anxiety disorders (Behrendt et al, 2005; HM Government, 2011).

This report recommends that if a child has already undergone FGM she should be offered medical help, psychological support and counselling. Action should be taken to protect any female relatives who are at risk and to investigate possible risk to other children in the practicing community.

The report also recommends that key stakeholders support UHCW in their work to offer women access to a specialist FGM midwife or consultant through the provision of dedicated clinic time.

4.4 Information Gathering & Data Sharing

It is widely accepted that data concerning FGM is limited owing to the secretive nature of the practice and community reluctance to disclose any issues relating to FGM due to the illegality of the practice. There is currently a project happening nationally to gather data on FGM from Obstetrics and Gynaecology departments, current data 4 months in to the project shows 29 women affected by FGM accessed UHCW midwifery services. This will enable Coventry to more accurately determine the prevalence of FGM across Coventry. However community based services and primary and secondary care professionals are often ideally placed to ask questions regarding FGM, enabling data recording. The Task & Finish Group currently includes Health Professionals who are in a position to influence other professionals in community based services and primary & secondary care to ask the question regarding FGM.

As of 1 April 2014, the 'Female Genital Mutilation Prevalence Dataset' was published. Within it are rules for healthcare professionals. This includes General Practitioners and other primary healthcare staff.

- All clinical staff **MUST** record in-patient healthcare records when it is identified that a patient has had FGM
- If it can be determined what type of FGM the patient has, (according to the WHO classifications) this **MUST** be recorded.
- Where it is not possible to determine the type of FGM, then 'Female Genital Mutilation' **MUST** still be recorded within the clinical notes.

(DH, 2014)

The full requirements also mean that Acute NHS Trusts (Foundation and non-Foundation) must provide returns to the Department of Health on a monthly basis of the prevalence of FGM within their treated population. GPs are not required to provide information to the prevalence dataset however if local GPs wish to contribute to the dataset the facility to do this is in place and the guidelines for recording / reporting have been circulated to all local GPs. The requirement to submit the FGM Prevalence Dataset is mandatory for all Acute (Foundation and non-Foundation) Trusts, including A&E departments. Coventry & Rugby CCG has confirmed that this requirement is to be written into contracts by CCGs for acute providers as of the 1 September 2014.

The Home Affairs Committee state 'the low level of reporting by frontline practitioners who have a responsibility for child safeguarding is in part because of a lack of awareness of the indicators of a girl who might be at risk or has undergone the procedure. Even when they are aware, professionals may be reluctant to intervene because of cultural sensitivity and a fear of being seen as racist, or because they are unsure how to make a referral.' Therefore the training for front line staff will also support professionals to enable them to develop the skills and confidence needed to tackle the subject of FGM.

This report recommends that community based clinics and primary and secondary care professionals should ask individuals if they have undergone FGM or if themselves or members of their families are at risk.

The Royal College of Midwives recommend that 'Health and social care professionals have a pivotal role to play in identifying, sharing information and reporting cases of FGM. It is through identifying women who have already gone through this barbaric and painful procedure that we can better help to prevent potential victims in the future – their female babies – from having to undergo the same practice. By reporting and sharing information, the necessary safeguarding strategies can be put in place and, when there are concerns that a child is at risk, the right action can be taken'. **Data gathered should be shared across all agencies to ensure Coventry has a clear as possible picture of the prevalence of FGM in Coventry. Share that information systematically: Develop protocols for sharing information about girls at risk of – or girls who have already undergone FGM with other health and social care agencies, education and the police.**

Midwives, nurses, doctors, teachers and others are bound by professional standards to work to make the care of children their first concern. Information sharing is a crucial part of early intervention and prevention. In the case of FGM, the focus should be on information sharing between health services, primary care and schools, to ensure a comprehensive preventative response at times when girls are at higher risk of FGM.

4.5 Implementation of a Project Manager

The subject of FGM and how to eliminate the practice is complicated and culturally sensitive. It needs effective engagement from community members and a number of statutory agencies and voluntary organisations. It is proposed that any future work is led by a project manager that is based within the voluntary sector, to ensure success in this area.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Background Information

What is Female Genital Mutilation?

Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female circumcision or female genital cutting, is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons".

The World Health Organisation (WHO) have classified Female Genital Mutilation into four types:

- Type 1 - excision of the prepuce, with or without excision of part or all of the clitoris;
- Type 2 - excision (Clitoridectomy) of the clitoris with partial or total excision of the labia minora (small lips which cover and protect the opening of the vagina and the urinary opening). After the healing process has taken place, scar tissue forms to cover the upper part of the vulva region;
- Type 3 - Infibulation - This is the most severe form of female genital mutilation. Infibulation often (but not always) involves the complete removal of the clitoris, together with the labia minora and at least the anterior two-thirds and often the whole of the medial part of the labia majora (the outer lips of the genitals). The two sides of the vulva are then sewn together with silk, catgut sutures, or thorns leaving only a very small opening to allow for the passage of urine and menstrual flow. This opening can be preserved during healing by insertion of a foreign body;
- Type 4 - Unclassified - pricking, piercing or incising of the clitoris and/or labia; stretching of the clitoris and/or labia; cauterization by burning of the clitoris and surrounding tissue; scraping of tissue surrounding the vaginal orifice (angurya cuts) or cutting of the vagina (gishiri cuts); introduction of corrosive substances or herbs into the vagina to cause bleeding or for the purpose of tightening or narrowing it; and any other procedure that falls under the definition given above.

The practice is mostly carried out by traditional circumcisers, who often play other central roles in communities, such as attending childbirths.

Procedures are mostly carried out on young girls sometime between infancy and aged 15, and occasionally on adult women.

FGM and the Law

Since 1985 it has been a serious criminal offence under the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act to perform FGM or to assist a girl to perform FGM on herself. In 2003, the Female Genital Mutilation Act tightened this law to criminalise FGM being carried out on UK citizens overseas. Anyone found guilty of the offence faces a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison. Female Genital Mutilation has been illegal in the UK since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 came into force in March 2004.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it a criminal offence for a person to excise, infibulate or otherwise mutilate the whole or any part of a girl's labia majora, labia minora or clitoris, except:

- In the case of a surgical operation which is considered necessary for the girl's physical or mental health if carried out by a registered medical practitioner; or

- For purposes connected with labour or birth, and which is carried out by a registered medical practitioner or registered midwife (or a person training to become a registered medical practitioner or midwife); or
- Where the surgical operation is performed outside the UK by someone exercising the same functions as an approved person.

The Act also makes it an offence for UK nationals and those with permanent UK residence to be taken overseas for the purpose of female circumcision, to aid and abet, counsel, or procure the carrying out of Female Genital Mutilation.

In addition to the offence of female genital mutilation the Act also makes it an offence to assist a girl to mutilate her own genitalia, and /or for any non-UK person to mutilate overseas a girl's genitalia.

The Act makes it illegal for anyone to mutilate girls and women for non-medical reasons, including traditional and cultural requirements used to justify a mental need for the operation

The Act also increases the maximum penalty for committing or aiding the offence to 14 years imprisonment and/or a fine.

In addition there are two international conventions, which contain articles, which can be applied to FGM. Signatory states, including the UK, have an obligation under these standards to take legal action against FGM:

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

These conventions have been strengthened by two world conferences: the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, Cairo, September 1994) and the World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995).

What are the implications of FGM?

Immediate complications can include severe pain, shock, haemorrhage, tetanus, gangrene or sepsis, urine retention, open sores in the genital region and injury to nearby genital tissue, wound infections, as well as blood-borne viruses such as HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C and in some cases death.

Long-term consequences can include recurrent bladder and urinary tract infections, abnormal periods, cysts, infertility, an increased risk of childbirth complications and new-born deaths, chronic vaginal and pelvic infections, kidney impairment and possible kidney failure and the need for later surgeries.

Psychological and mental health problems include depression and anxiety, and flashbacks during pregnancy and childbirth.

Cultural underpinnings and motives

Although FGM is practised by secular communities, it is most often claimed to be carried out in accordance with religious beliefs. However, FGM predates Christianity, Islam and Judaism, and the Bible, Koran, Torah and other religious texts do not advocate or justify FGM. In most societies, FGM is considered a cultural tradition, which is often used as an argument for its continuation. Religious leaders take varying positions with regard to FGM: some promote it, some consider it irrelevant to religion, and others oppose it and contribute to its elimination.

Local structures of power and authority, such as community leaders, religious leaders, circumcisers, and even some medical personnel can contribute to upholding the practice.

Reasons given for practising FGM:

- It brings status and respect to the girl.
- It preserves a girl's virginity/chastity.
- It is part of being a woman.
- It is a rite of passage.
- It gives a girl social acceptance, especially for marriage.
- It upholds the family honour.
- It cleanses and purifies the girl.
- It gives the girl and her family a sense of belonging to the community.
- It fulfils a religious requirement believed to exist.
- It perpetuates a custom/tradition.
- It helps girls and women to be clean and hygienic.
- It is cosmetically desirable.
- It is mistakenly believed to make childbirth safer for the infant

Appendix 2 – National prevalence

City University London have recently published an interim report containing provisional estimates of the numbers of women with female genital mutilation (FGM) living in England and Wales, the numbers of women with FGM giving birth and the numbers of girls born to women with FGM. These are headline figures for England and Wales as a whole. Further work is under way to provide estimates at a local authority level and to refine these national analyses.

Table 1. Comparison of numbers of women aged 15-49 born in FGM practising countries, England and Wales Censuses, 2001 and 2011

Country	Enumerated number of women aged 15-49, 2001	Enumerated number of women aged 15-49, 2011	Difference 2011 - 2001 Group
Djibouti	93	204	111
Eritrea	2,804	7,071	4,267
Somalia	15,744	43,558	27,814
Sudan	3,200	5,412	2,212
Total	21,841	56,245	34,404
Burkina Faso	33	81	48
Egypt	3,698	4,463	765
Ethiopia	3,421	6,930	3,509
Gambia	1,387	4,236	2,849
Guinea	101	911	810
Mali	41 140 99	140	99
Sierra Leone	6,625	8,903	2,278
Total	15,306	25,664	10,358
Central African Republic	163	75	-88
Chad	44	121	77
Guinea Bissau	155	970	815
Iraq	7,546	18,344	10,798
Ivory Coast	1,082	3,625	2,543
Kenya	45,396	31,740	-13,656
Liberia	555	1,234	679
Mauritania	13	64	51
Nigeria	33,485	68,727	35,242
Senegal	264	701	437
Total	89,795	130,663	40,868
Benin	99	242	143
Cameroon	1,353	4,227	2,874
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1,199	8,783	7,584
Ghana	22,116	33,059	10,943
Niger	39	76	37

Tanzania	10,512	7,729	-2,783
Togo	174	586	412
Uganda	19,640	15,715	-3,925
Total	55,132	70,417	15,285
Total	182,074	282,989	100,915

The report also found that nationally:

An estimated 103,000 women aged 15-49 born in countries in which FGM is practised were living in England and Wales in 2011, compared with the estimated 66,000 in 2001. Nearly 10,000 girls aged 0-14 born in FGM practising countries who have undergone or are likely to undergo FGM currently reside in the UK.

It was estimated that, since 2008, women with FGM have made up about 1.5 per cent of all women delivering in England and Wales each year. About three fifths of them were born in the group of countries in the Horn of Africa where FGM is almost universal and Type III is commonly practised.

From 1996 to 2010, 144,000 girls were born in England and Wales to mothers from FGM practising countries. It was estimated that 60,000 of these girls aged 0-14 in 2011 were born to mothers with FGM. In both cases, well over half of the mothers came from the countries in the Horn of Africa where FGM is almost universal and Type III is practised and slightly under a fifth came from the countries in West and East Africa where Types I and II are highly prevalent.

Appendix 3 - National Policy & Guidance

Home Affairs Committee Report

The Home Affairs Committee published its report 'Female genital mutilation: the case for a national action plan' on 3 July 2014. The Committee recommends the immediate implementation of a national action plan and specific steps to respond to this growing crisis.

The Committee stated that:

'The failure to respond adequately to the growing prevalence of FGM in the UK over recent years has likely resulted in the preventable mutilation of thousands of girls to whom the state owed a duty of care. This is a national scandal for which successive governments, politicians, the police, health, education and social care sectors all share responsibility.'

The report noted that the Government has started to take action, and welcomed the commitment to end FGM in a generation. The report recommends that the Government 'must now implement a comprehensive and fully-resourced national action plan for tackling FGM. The plan should provide clear leadership and objectives, setting out the standards expected of all relevant bodies, and to which they will be held accountable.'

The Home Committee recommended that the National plan should incorporate a number of interlinked aspects, including:

- the achievement of successful prosecutions for FGM
- working with professionals in the health, education, social care and other sectors to ensure the safeguarding of at-risk girls
- changes to the law on FGM
- improved working with communities to abandon FGM
- Better services for women and girls living with FGM

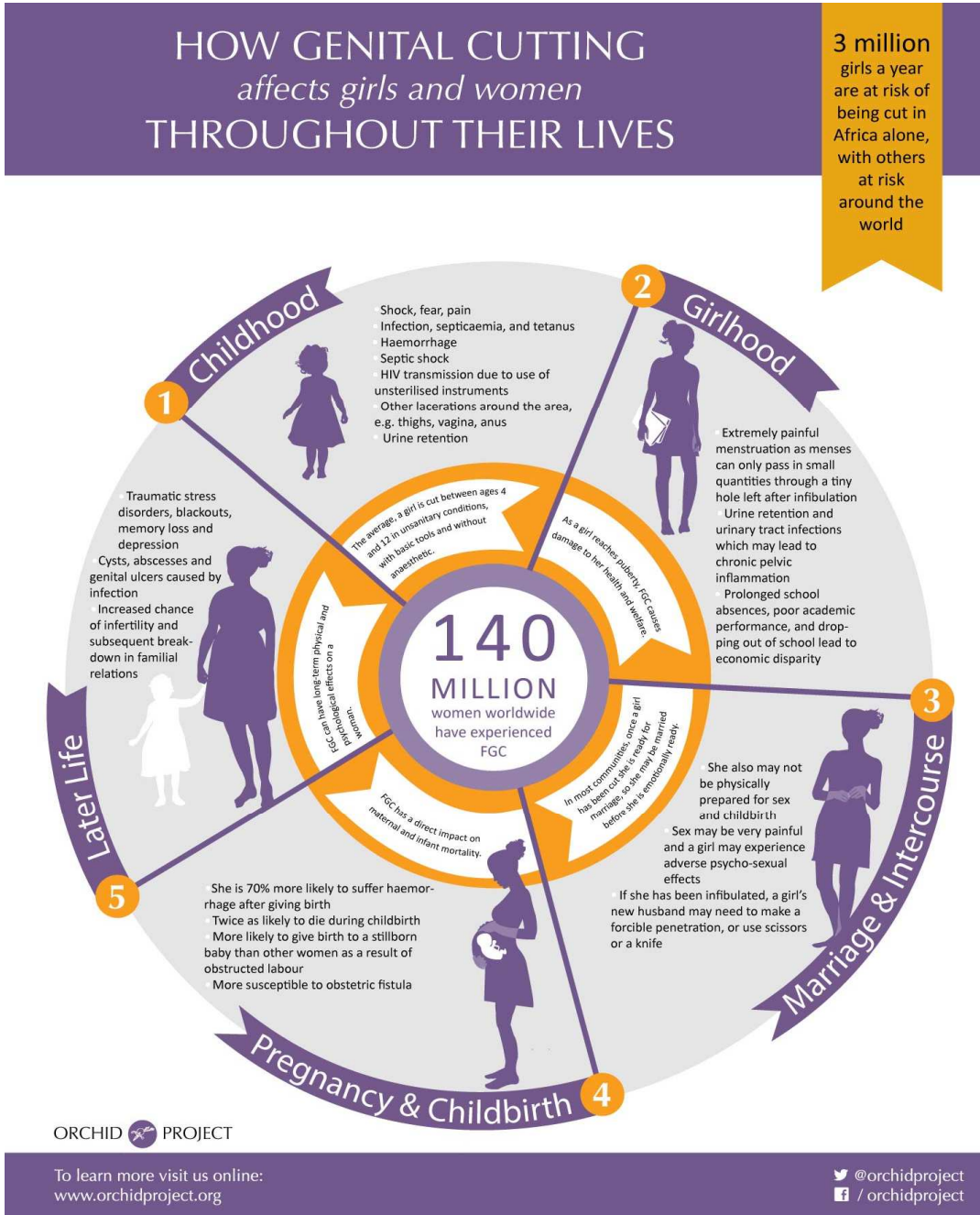
Girl Summit 2014

The Girl Summit 2014 hosted by the government and UNICEF, was aimed at mobilising domestic and international efforts to end female genital mutilation and child & forced marriage (CFM) within a generation. It brought together domestic and international work to accelerate the work of campaigners, governments and charities around the world to bring an end to these practices.

Major steps to stamp out these practices include:

- a £1.4 million FGM Prevention Programme, launched in partnership with NHS England to help care for survivors and safeguard those at risk
- new police guidance from the College of Policing and an inspection programme by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) that will look at how the police handle cases of FGM
- a consultation on proposals to introduce new civil orders designed to protect girls identified as being at risk of FGM
- new legislation that will mean parents can be prosecuted if they fail to prevent their daughter being cut
- new legislation to grant victims of FGM lifelong anonymity from the time an allegation is made
- a new specialist FGM service which will include social services, to proactively identify and respond to FGM
- new programmes to prevent child and forced marriage in 12 developing countries
- an international charter calling for the eradication of these practices within a generation

Appendix 4 FGM & the life course impacts



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Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Coventry: A Presentation to Scrutiny Coordination Committee

by

Councillor Alison Gingell

Wednesday 8 October 2014

Purpose of Presentation

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to:

- **Consider the proposals contained in the report**
- **Identify any further areas for discussion or consideration**
- **Identify any recommendations for the Cabinet Member and the Health and Well-being Board.**

Prevalence of FGM in Coventry

- UHCW Midwifery - 29 women affected by FGM between April – August 2014

- Police data -

Year	Total referrals to West Mids Police	Coventry Referrals	Percentage
2013	41	16	39%
2014 (to date)	84	48	40%

- Coventry (2011 census)
 - 868 children aged 0-15 years & 5,422 women aged 16-49 years living in Coventry were born in regions likely to be affected by FGM

What is currently happening in Coventry?

- FGM Task and Finish Group - gathers knowledge and intelligence on FGM, how it is been addressed and barriers in dealing with it
- LSCB - FGM training, safeguarding procedures and website
- Meridian General Practice - routinely asks new patients whether they have been affected by FGM
- West Midlands Police - Operation Sentinel
- Coventry University - REPLACE 2 project; evaluates community-based behaviour change interventions to tackle female genital mutilation in the EU
- FGM Conference for Coventry - Thursday 13th November 2014.

Recommendations

- **Prevention** - Awareness raising & community engagement
- **Training & empowerment** - specialist training programmes across Coventry tailored to professionals and communities.
- **Prosecution** – continued support to Law enforcement officers
- **Safeguarding, reporting & recording** - ensure that professionals access the LSCB multi-agency safeguarding training. Professionals identifying girls at risk and referring them as part of child safeguarding.
- **Life course approach to treatment, services & support** - To support UHCW in their work to offer women access to a specialist FGM midwife
- **Data collection & sharing** - Agencies including health, social care, safeguarding, police and midwifery should collect data where appropriate
- **Implementation of a project manager (based within the voluntary sector)** for a period of 6 - 12 months to implement the recommended outcomes of this report and effectively tackle FGM in Coventry

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Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Date: 8th October 2014

Subject: Outside Bodies – Reporting Arrangements 2014/15

1 Purpose of the Note

1.1 To consider the reporting arrangements for outside bodies to Scrutiny during 2014/15.

2 Recommendations

2.1 The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to:

- 1) agree the amended list of outside bodies that report to Scrutiny Boards (Appendix 1)
- 2) consider the content and requirements of the reporting template (Appendix 2)
- 3) request officers to timetable the required outside bodies reports on the appropriate work programmes.

3 Information/Background

3.1 The terms of reference for Scrutiny includes a role in receiving reports on outside bodies to which the Council makes appointments at the annual meeting. The Constitution states that at the start of the municipal year, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee will decide for which outside bodies it wishes to receive reports.

3.2 The Council appointed to 67 bodies at its AGM in 2014. To help manage Scrutiny business and ensure that the time spent preparing and considering reports reflects council priorities, the following criteria is applied to those outside bodies that report to Scruco:

- The Council funds the organisation through a grant of some sort.
- The Council has a financial interest in the organisation
- The organisation has a strategic role beneficial to the Council and supports the delivery of the Council Plan.

3.3 If the outside body is of relevance to the work of the Council, but sits very clearly under the remit of a specific Scrutiny Board, the outside body report is referred to the relevant Scrutiny Board and the list of outside bodies has been sorted into the following headings:

- Report to Scruco
- Report to a specific Scrutiny Board
- No report required

3.4 The group recommended that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee use these criteria at the start of each year to review which bodies should be asked to report to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.

- 3.5 The proposed reporting arrangements for 2014/15 are shown in Appendix 1. The following changes are proposed:
- a number of outside bodies were not included in the appointments list considered at the annual meeting and these should be removed, while additional bodies have been added
 - the approach to secondary school governing bodies, trusts and foundations was inconsistent with some being required to report to the relevant Scrutiny Board and others not. It is recommended that these do not report to Scrutiny, unless the Chair of the Education and Children's Board (2) requests it.

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Scrutiny Co-ordinator
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024 7683 1122

Appendix 1- Proposed reporting routes for outside bodies

A) Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

ORGANISATION	Reason	Anticipated 2014/15 Grant Funding
Albany Theatre Trust	Funded	£38,774
Belgrade Theatre Trust (Coventry) Limited	Funded	£817,478
Birmingham International Airport Holdings Limited – Board of Directors	Financial interest	No
Council of Governors of the Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust	Financial interest	No
Coventry Ambassadors Social Enterprise Board	Funded	£20,250
Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company Limited - Shareholders' Panel	Financial interest	No
Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board and Local Transport Body (sub group)	Strategic interest	No
Coventry Association for International Friendship	Strategic interest	No
Coventry Citizens' Advice Bureau Management Board	Funded	£431,194
Coventry Law Centre Limited	Funded	£513,729
Coventry Partnership (including Coventry Learning Disabilities Partnership and Older People's Partnership)	Strategic interest	No
Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre	Strategic interest	£578,155
Coventry Venture Capital Fund	Financial interest	No
Culture Coventry	Funded	£2,729,798
Local Government Association – General Assembly	Strategic interest	No
University of Warwick Science Park Business Innovation Centre Limited	Financial interest	No
University of Warwick Science Park Foundation Limited	Financial interest	No
Voluntary Action Coventry	Funded	£220,000
West Midlands Employers (formerly West Midlands Councils – including sub-groups)	Strategic interest	No
West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority	Strategic interest	No
West Midlands Joint Committee	Strategic interest	No
West Midlands Pensions Committee	Financial interest	No

B) Specific Scrutiny Board

Scruco	Police and Crime Panel	Strategic interest	No
SB2	Coventry Schools Admissions Forum	Strategic interest	No
SB3	West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority	Strategic interest	No
SB3	West Midlands Joint Committee – Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee	Strategic interest	No
SB3	Whitefriars Housing Group	Strategic interest	No
SB4	Regional Flood and Coastal Committee	Strategic interest	No

C) Proposed - Not required to report

Foxford School Trust
Governing Body of Blue Coat Academy

Governing Body of Sidney Stringer Academy
Governing Body of Tile Hill Academy
Governing Body of Woodlands Academy
Grace Academy

D) Outside Bodies previously agreed no report necessary¹ (updated to remove those organisations where no appointment is made)

Adoption Panel
Annie Bettmann Foundation
Barr's Hill School Trust
Birmingham International Airport Consultative Committee
Blue Coat School Foundation
Bond's Hospital Estate Charity Trustees
Bus Lane Adjudication Service Joint Committee (BLASJC)
Children and Young People's Commissioning Board
Coventry Airport Consultative Committee
Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company Advisory Forum
Coventry Church (Municipal) Charities Trustees
Coventry Fairtrade City Steering Group
Coventry General Charity Trustees
Coventry Learning Disabilities Partnership Board
Daimler Green Recreational Trust
Fostering Panel
Governing Body of City College
John Friends Memorial Fund Management Committee
Lyng Hall Trust Limited
Martha Flint and Emma Osmond Educational Foundation
Older People's Partnership Board
Parking and Traffic Regulation Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee (PATROLAJC)
SIGOMA (Special Interest Groups of Municipal Authorities)
Sir Charles Barratt Memorial Foundation
Soothern and Craner Educational Foundation
Stoke Park School Trust
Swillington's Charity Trustees
Tansley Charity Trustees
Tom Mann Centre Trust Management Committee - No routine report required but Committee requested a report on the winding up of the Charity
University of Warwick - Advisory Board of the Institute of Education
William Proffitt's Charity

¹ These were agreed by Scruco on 11th November 2009 and 10th July 2013



Coventry City Council



Public report

Report to

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

[date]

Report of

[Lead Member]

Title

Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies - *[insert name of organisation]*

4 Purpose of the Report

4.1 This report sets out details of the work of *[insert name of organisation]* over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

5 Recommendations

5.1 *[Lead Member (in consultation with other members appointed if appropriate) to insert recommendation as to whether appointment should continue to be made to the organisation and any other recommendations felt appropriate]*

6 Information on Work of Outside Body

6.1 *[Brief report on the work of the Outside Body in question – this can be extracted from the organisation's annual report]*

6.2

6.3

7 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment

7.1 *[Brief details of the benefit to the City Council from the appointment]*

8 What Financial Contribution Does the Council Make to this Organisation

8.1 *[Brief details of any contribution that the City Council makes to the organisation]*

9 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

9.1 *[Details to be obtained directly from organisation by Committee Officer and inserted here.]*

List of background papers

Proper officer:

Author:
Councillor,
(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Telephone:

Other contributors:

Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper

Location: CH59

Schedule of City Council Appointments to Outside Bodies



Coventry City Council

Public report

REPORT BACK ON CONFERENCE/SEMINAR

REPORT TO: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
REPORT OF: Lord Mayor, Cllr Hazel Noonan
TITLE: Civic Visit to Kiel, Germany for 132nd Kieler Woche
DATE: 20th – 23rd June 2014
VENUE: Kiel, Germany

1. Recommendation

1.1 The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to endorse the report of the Lord Mayor's civic visit to Kiel and the associated Kieler Woche (Kiel Week) celebrations.

2. Background

2.1 As Lord Mayor of the City of Coventry, I was invited to attend and take part in a programme of events hosted by Kiel City Council to mark the formal opening of Kieler Woche. Kiel is a twin city of Coventry and as such we receive an invitation to this event each year.

2.2 Kieler Woche is the largest summer festival in northern Europe and the largest sailing sports event in the World. This year the event was held from 21st – 29th June 2014 and comprised both sailing and cultural events, the majority of which are free of charge.

2.3 The city centre plays host to numerous events such as the International City Forum, Kiel Week Opening Ceremony and the International market. Market stalls are placed in and around the main square and offer food, gifts and music from all over the world.

2.4 The largest event attended was the Kieler Woche Opening Ceremony which takes place in the Town Hall Square on the first Saturday. The event this year was broadcast live from the Town Hall Square on the local TV station and was attended by a large crowd.

2.5 As part of the proceedings, the Coventry delegation was invited to attend and participate in the International City Forum on youth unemployment. A paper was prepared and presented by the Economy and Jobs Manager, Rebecca Young from the Place Directorate.

2.6 Participation in the Forum fosters an exchange of information and best practice with 16 of Kiel's twin and partner cities. Over 100 people were in attendance and the excellent work

that is undertaken by the City Council and its partners was highlighted. Following the Forum meeting, there was considerable interest from many of the delegates in what Coventry is doing to tackle youth unemployment. A number of cities were keen to explore opportunities for further dialogue in the future.

- 2.7 Being present at this event gave me the opportunity to raise the profile and represent the City Council and Coventry at a European and International level. I met a number of senior representatives from Kiel and other cities and spoke about the importance of our twinning links as well as promoting the City more generally.
- 2.8 It is interesting to note that a large proportion of the cost of Kiel Week is borne by a number of very generous sponsors including Audi and several other large companies.
- 2.9 The Lord Mayor's Consort and the City Council's Economy and Jobs Manager accompanied me on the visit.

3. Cost of attending

	Costs Approved by Cabinet/Cabinet Member	Total of Actual Costs
Conference Fees	N/A	N/A
Flights [Lord Mayor and officer only]	£652.00	£715.98
Additional Travel Expenses	£0	£49.01
Accommodation	£0	£0
Subsistence	£200	£12.10
Total	£852.00	£777.09

4. Benefits

- 4.1 During my visit as Lord Mayor, I met with a number of senior politicians and officers from Kiel City Council and their other partners' cities such as Brest (France) and to continue to promote peace and reconciliation in a modern world. Kiel was the first city to respond to the Coventry Cross of Nails concept and we were very pleased to be able to visit the Church of St Nikolai in Kiel where the Cross of Nails is on display and to meet the Priest of the Church.
- 4.2 As the Lord Mayor of Coventry, I was regarded as an honoured guest at the various civic functions attended over the weekend. The first official reception to start the event on the first evening involved all of the twin and partner cities. Civic gifts were exchanged between ourselves and Kiel. This event was hosted by Mr Hans-Werner Tovar, Stadtpresident of Kiel. I wrote a message of greetings from the Citizens of the City of Coventry to the Citizens of Kiel via the Visitors' Book.
- 4.3 At the official dinner, held at the end of the reception, we sat with invited guests including the Turkish Ambassador for Germany and Dr Lisa Homrich of the British-German Society and Councillor Erika Diehr, a member of Kiel City Council.

4.4 Karen Thomsen was the official interpreter for our delegation and accompanied us throughout the visit. Karen lives and works in Kiel and has wide-ranging knowledge of the area and was able to impart local information about many aspects of the region. Karen is a teacher in a local vocational college. She is particularly keen to promote cultural exchanges between Coventry and Kiel. The City Council's Economy and Jobs Manager, Rebecca Young who accompanied me had several discussions with her about how the City Council can use its influence to support her. For example by making contact with Coventry schools who may be interested in exchanges for their students and exploring opportunities for young people working for Kiel and Coventry companies to have exchange opportunities.

4.5 As preparation for the International City Forum a number questions had been circulated in advance to each local authority represented at the City Forum relevant to the topic to be discussed on youth unemployment. A response to these questions was returned to Kiel by Coventry City Council in advance of the City Forum, thus enabling our response and those of other local authorities represented being included in the literature circulated at the Forum.

4.6 I was keen for Coventry to promote to other cities the approach we take to dealing with youth unemployment and some of the successful initiatives, such as the City Centre Job Shop. I therefore asked my office to make contact with the organisers to offer that Coventry would formally present at the Forum. That invitation was accepted and the presentation was delivered by the Economy and Jobs Manager, who accompanied me on the visit.

5. Other Issues

One of the issues arising from the visit was about ensuring active twinning links between the two cities, which would in particular benefit the young people of both Coventry and Kiel. For example, facilitating exchange experiences for school aged young people as well as looking at developing an exchange experience for young people who are in work / on apprenticeships.

List of background papers

Proper Officer: Executive Director, Resources

Author: Cllr Hazel Noonan

Tel Number: 024 76831121

(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Other contributors: Rebecca Young
024 76833776

(all enquiries should be directed to the above)

Papers open to public inspection

Description of paper: Report Back on Conference/Seminar

Location: CH60

Approved by Cabinet/Cabinet Member on: Cabinet Meeting on 17th June 2014

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Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Work Programme 2013/14

For more details on items, please see pages 2 onwards

16 July 2014

- Dog Control Orders
- Council Plan – Performance Report 2013/14
- Scrutiny Work Programme

3 September 2014

- Equalities

8 October 2014

- Female Genital Mutilation
- Welfare Reform
- Outside Bodies reports back

5 November 2014

- Public Safety Services
- Tourism/Heritage

10 December 2014

- Air Quality Action Plan

7 January 2015

4 February 2015

4 March 2014

1 April 2014

Dates to be determined

- Welfare Reform
- Review of Coventry Police and Crime Board
- Commissioning of Domestic Violence and Abuse services
- Community Safety Partnership
- Child Sexual Exploitation

Meeting Date	Work programme item	Lead Officer	Brief Summary of the issue	Source
16 July 2014	Dog Control Orders	Craig Hickin	During the last twelve months the Council has received complaints concerning dogs in public places which are not adequately supervised by their owners. The City Council can adopt Dog Control Orders to assist in dealing with this issue and most neighbouring local authorities have taken this route. The Cabinet Member has asked scrutiny to contribute to the review and proposed consultation prior to a Cabinet Member report.	Referred by the Cabinet Member Community Safety and Equalities
	Council Plan – Performance Report 2013/14	Jenni Venn / Si Chun Lam	This performance report summarises progress in 2013/14 in relation to the plans priorities and a set of key headline indicators. The Council's equality objectives have also been revised in light of the new Council Plan; the headline equality indicators have been included in this report. Reviewing the plan provides an opportunity to identify any issues of concern for inclusion in the Scrutiny work programme for the coming year.	Annual report
	Scrutiny Work Programme	Adrian West	Review of the draft scrutiny work programme for the coming year.	Scrutiny management
3 September 2014	Equalities	Jenni Venn/ Surindar Nagra	To review the Council's annual equalities report and identify any priorities or concerns for future action or review.	Annual review
8 October 2014	Female Genital Mutilation	Tanya Richardson	Following discussion at full Council, the 24 th February meeting of The Health and Well-being Board commissioned some work with partners to develop an action plan specific for Coventry which includes gathering knowledge and intelligence on the extent of the problem in Coventry, how it is been addressed by various partners and the barriers in dealing with Female Genital Mutilation locally. After reviewing the most recent evidence, the group will make recommendations for consideration by Scrutiny prior to being presented to the Health and Wellbeing board.	Council 03/12/13, and Scrucoc 11/12/13

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2014/15

Meeting Date	Work programme item	Lead Officer	Brief Summary of the issue	Source
	Welfare Reform	Scrutiny Co-ordinator	To review the outcomes of work being undertaken by Coventry Law Centre and local partners on appeals against sanctions. This is part of the Committee's wider oversight of the impacts of the Welfare Reform.	Scruco 11/12/13 and 19/03/14
	Outside Bodies reports back	Scrutiny Co-ordinator	To identify which outside bodies appointed to by the Council at their annual general meeting report to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and other Scrutiny Boards.	Annual review
5 November 2014	Public Safety Services	Sara Roach	At its January meeting, Scruco considered a pilot approach to reviewing risk levels and thresholds for intervention and how this could affect the way the service operates and engages with local people. It was agreed that the outcomes of the pilot and proposals for rolling this approach out be considered at a future meeting early in the 2014/15 municipal year.	Informal Scruco meeting 10/06/13 and Scruco 22/01/14
	Tourism/Heritage	David Nuttall	To look in more detail at what is being done to address poor performance in visitor numbers in 2012 and to follow up the recommendations made to CM at the meeting on 19 th March 2014.	Scruco 3/9/14
10 December 2014	Air Quality Action Plan	Hamish Simmonds	To review progress on the development of a city-wide plan involving other services and external partners to address identified problem areas. To include the impact of road transport and the effects on public health.	Informal meeting 23/06/14
7 January 2015				
4 February 2015				
4 March 2014				
1 April 2014				
Dates to be determined	Welfare Reform	Scrutiny Co-ordinator	To review approach the Council and partners are taking to co-ordinate services and support for those people affected by Welfare Reform. Issues identified at previous meetings which the Committee wanted to scrutinise included:	Scruco 11/12/13 and 19/03/14

Meeting Date	Work programme item	Lead Officer	Brief Summary of the issue	Source
			progress with implementation of Universal Credit; the development of the Local Support Service Framework; concerns relating to the impact of single payments to households; impacts on disabled people; impacts of welfare reforms and the economic downturn on health and well-being; the outcomes of work being undertaken by Coventry Law Centre and local partners on appeals against sanctions. The partnership group Working Together on Welfare Reform would like to bring their plan for the year.	
	Review of Coventry Police and Crime Board	Sara Roach/ Simon Brake	To review the impact of changes to the Community Partnership requested by the Police and Crime Commissioner and implemented in September 2013	Scruco 16/04/14
	Commissioning of Domestic Violence and Abuse services	Sara Roach/ Mandie Watson	To review progress on the implementation and delivery of better outcomes by the re-shaped services, following discussion at the Committee on 6 November 2013.	Scruco 06/11/13
	Community Safety Partnership	Sara Roach/ Mandie Watson	To receive a progress report on crime and community safety issues relating to the Community Safety Partnership/ Police and Crime Board including progress against Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan priorities; the strategic assessment; and annual performance on crime and nuisance.	Annual Review
	Child Sexual Exploitation		A response from Coventry following the report into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham.	Scruco 3/9/14

In addition the following dates are available if required: 22 October, 19 November, 21 January 2015, 18 February, 18 March, 22 April