1. **17-055343-01 PSA discussion guide – Sheriffs – V2**

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| **INTRODUCTION** |

* Introduce self and Ipsos MORI/University of Stirling
* Thanks for taking part
* Duration of interview – around 60 minutes
* As you know, we have been commissioned by the SG to undertake a Review of the Aberdeen Problem Solving Approach. The main aim is to provide useful information on lessons learned and good practice for other courts in Scotland where partners might be considering setting up something similar.
* Confidentiality – – won’t be named. However, when reporting the findings, it would be useful to be report the perspectives of different stakeholders involved with the Approach. Check ok to say comments or quotes from ‘a Sheriff’. This means we can’t guarantee that you would not be identifiable. If there is anything you say that you would not like to be included in the report please say. You will also have a chance to see the report in advance of it being published.
* Recording – will be transcribed for research team’s use only, securely stored and deleted after project.
* CHECK CONSENT TO RECORD
* Any questions?

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| **BACKGROUND (5 MINS)** |

**How did you first become involved in the Aberdeen Problem Solving Approach?**

**What do you see as the main aims of the Approach?**

**What are the key aspects of the Approach which differentiate it from other community sentencing procedures (e.g. CPOs)?**

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| **OVERALL PERSPECTIVE (10 MINS)** |

**Overall, how do feel the Approach has been working so far?**

**We’ll talk in a minute about specific stages, but overall, what aspects are working (particularly) well?**

* + What aspect of the process are working well?
  + What evidence have you seen of positive outcomes?

**And what are the main difficulties with it?**

* + Which aspects of the process could be improved?
  + What are the main barriers to positive outcomes?

**What is the perception of the wider judiciary of the problem solving approach?**

* + Is it well known?
  + How is it received?

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| **PERSPECTIVE ON DIFFERENT STAGES (20 MINS)** |

**And thinking specifically about each of the following stages, what else is working well and what could be improved.**

***As far as you are aware, from Arrest to first calling (screening and admissions)***

* + What’s working well?
  + What could be improved?
  + Is the Approach targeting and reaching the right people?
  + Are the eligibility criteria clear?
  + Would you change the criteria at all?
  + There was a suggestion in the interim review that there should be more flexibility for transferring people into the PSC, particularly those who breach their CPOs and/or are on existing orders (but would otherwise be eligible). Has that happened?

***First calling to 1st problem solving hearing (plea and rapid report)***

* + What’s working well?
  + What could be improved?
  + Have PSA participants been sentenced within a week, as planned?
    - What, if anything, has the impact of this been?

***Problem solving process (sentencing & review hearing)***

* + What’s working well?
  + What could be improved?
  + What’s your view on how well participants have engaged with the Approach?
    - Is this different from other processes, like the CPO process?
  + What motivates participants to engage with the Approach at the beginning?
  + Does this change as they go through the process? Do other things motivate them?
    - Probe around relationship with the Sheriff, support they are receiving etc
  + Is the relationship between yourself and the participants different - compared with people on CPOs for example?
    - What is the impact of this?
  + Is anything else done to encourage participants to engage and comply?
  + What are the barriers to their motivation to engage and comply?
  + Is this different from other processes, like the CPO process?
  + Are the disposals available sufficient? If not, what else would work?

***Addressing non-compliance***

* + How is non-compliance managed under the PSA?
    - PROBE: what are the consequences of non-compliance? And what happens if someone reoffends while under the PSA?
    - PROBE: are there formal mechanisms in place? Is there any flexibility? are participants clear about this?
  + What’s working well?
  + What could be improved?

***Exit***

* + How is exit from the PSA managed?
    - PROBE: are PSA participants able/encouraged to stay in contact with services they’ve been using under the PSA?
  + What’s working well?
  + What could be improved?

**In terms of the wider services and support available to participants, what’s working well and where are there difficulties in availability or access?**

**What do you think about the length of the structured deferred sentences?**

**IF THEY THINK STRUCTURED DEFERRED SENTENCE NEEDS TO BE LONGER THAN THE CURRENT AVERAGE OF X MONTHS, ASK:**

* + What would be the resource implications if they were extended to 12 months?

**Do you think more training or guidance on the process is needed?**

**Do you think everyone involved is clear about the process?**

**Are participants clear about the processes?**

* + are they clear about what will happen if they comply/don’t comply? Do they think this is fair?

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| **OUTCOMES (5 MINS)** |

**I’d now like to talk in a bit more detail about outcomes of the approach. First of all, thinking about outcomes for the PSA participants. What are the main positive outcomes you’ve seen for PSA participants?**

* + Have any of these surprised you?
  + Have they been different for males and females?
  + What do you think are the main factors that have helped to achieve these outcomes?

**What have been the experiences of those who have had more neutral or negative experiences of the PSA?**

* + Has this been different for males and females?
  + Have you seen the same participants back in court after reoffending?
  + Have there been any unintended negative consequences? Is their situation *worse* than before they started?
  + What have been the main barriers to positive outcomes for these participants?
  + Is there anything else you think the PSA could have done to help?

**And have there been any other positive or negative outcomes related to procedural elements?**

* + Probe around things like increase or reduction in court times, more or less admin etc.

**Overall, would you say the PSA is meeting its aims?**

* + What are the main facilitators/barriers?

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| **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE PARTICIPANTS (5 MINS)** |

**Does the Approach work differently for male and female participants?**

**Are there differences in the process?**

**Are there differences in the way they engage with the Approach?**

**Are there changes that could be made to better respond to the needs of male and female participants?**

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| **STRUCTURED DEFERRED SENTENCES (3 MINS)** |

**One of the potential issues we’re thinking about in terms of the Review, is the extent to which differences we identify are about the use of structured deferred sentences, rather than the problem solving approach.**

**What does the problem solving approach add to the structured deferred sentence? Would the approach work with just the structured deferred sentence?**

**What was the rationale behind choosing SDS as the main disposal rather than CPOs?**

**Would the approach work with CPOs rather than SDSs?**

**What are the resource implications of using SDSs?**

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| **COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING (5 MINS)** |

**How has the collaboration and partnership working between the different professionals involved gone?**

**What has worked well in this regard?**

**What have been the challenges?**

**How has the local context in Aberdeen helped or hindered things?**

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| **RESOURCES REQUIRED (10 MINS)** |

**We sent in advance the estimate, from the interim review, of the additional time required for PSA cases as opposed to standard court cases. Does this reflect the time you currently spend? Where else do you spend time (that you wouldn’t spend if it was another type of case)?**

**In terms of resources, what has been the impact of men joining the PSA and the numbers ramping up?**

* + Are the resources still adequate?
  + What has been the impact on the wider court?

**Are there any elements where time could be reduced?**

**Are there aspects where the time or other costs have been more than expected?**

**Is there any other advice would you give other areas in relation to the resources required?**

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| **WRAPPING UP (2 MINS)** |

**Finally, apart from the things you’ve already mentioned, what advice would you give to a Sheriff in another area where they were considering setting up a Problem Solving Court?**

**What would you do differently if you were able to start again?**

* + Probe in relation to the processes, but also the development and implementation of the approach
  + What aspects of implementation were the most challenging?

**Is the model sustainable?**

**Is there a desire to continue it? Adapt /develop it?**

**Is it a model that could be used in other settings?**

* + In other areas? With other groups?