



LETTER SENT BY E-MAIL ONLY

24 September 2024

2024/25-055

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

Request

Please find below our response to your correspondence dated 26 August, in which you made the following request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

"DMWS has in place a contract for services to Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services. Please provide the following:

- Any, and all, reports, including interim reports (for example 1 year into psychological supervision project) submitted to Forensic Services. I am aware this may include anonymised data of participants and am aware that this will be supplied anonymously or partially redacted.
- Please supply any contracts and service agreements held between DMWS and Forensic Services.
- Please supply and extensions to scope, business proposals, or draft proposals received by DMWS from Forensic Services.
- If any concerns or complaints have been made by DMWS staff to Forensic Services, please provide these also.

As a way of delivery, please provide these in digital form where possible, using this email address for return communication. If this is not possible a physical mail address can be supplied on request."

Response

Your request for information has been considered and the Scottish Police Authority is able to provide the following response:

You requested "Any, and all, reports, including interim reports (for example 1 year into psychological supervision project) submitted to Forensic Services. I am aware this may include

anonymised data of participants and am aware that this will be supplied anonymously or partially redacted.”

An End of Year Report to Forensic Services by DMWS is provided as Appendix 1.

Third party personal data has been redacted as this is considered exempt in terms of the Act.¹ This includes data broken down by age and site, where on its own or combined, may allow individuals to be identified. This exemption is absolute and does not require application of the public interest test. While you may have a legitimate interest in disclosure of this information, it is our view that those interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subjects.

You requested “any contracts and service agreements held between DMWS and Forensic Services.”

The contract notice for the [Pilot of Psychological Supervision for Forensic Science Staff](#) is otherwise accessible on the Public Contracts Scotland website.²

You requested any “extensions to scope, business proposals, or draft proposals received by DMWS from Forensic Services.”

Forensic Services holds no information sent to DMWS regarding extensions to contract scope.³

You requested “If any concerns or complaints have been made by DMWS staff to Forensic Services, please provide these also.”

Forensic Services holds no information in relation to concerns or complaints made by DMWS staff.⁴

Right to Review

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your request you can ask for a review within 40 working days. You must specify the reason for your

¹ This is a notice in terms of Section 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 – Third party data. Disclosure would contravene the data protection principle in Article 5(1)(a) of the General Data Protection Regulation: personal data shall be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject.

² This represents a notice in terms of Section 25 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - where information is already available, there is no need to provide an alternative right of access to it through FOISA.

³ This represents a notice in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - Information not held.

⁴ This represents a notice in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - Information not held.

dissatisfaction and submit your request by email to foi@spa.police.uk or by letter to Scottish Police Authority, 1 Pacific Quay, Glasgow, G51 1DZ.

If you remain dissatisfied after review, you can appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months. You can apply [online](#), by email to enquiries@foi.scot or by letter to Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS.

Should you wish to appeal against the Commissioner's decision, you can appeal to the Court of Session, only if you think the law has not been applied correctly.

This response will be posted to our [Disclosure Log](#) in seven days' time.

Yours faithfully

SPA Corporate Management





Scottish Police Authority

End of Year Report Psychological Supervision Forensic Scene Examiners

DMWS
11/07/2024
V 2 Final

SPA project - Evaluation Report year 1

Project Leads

SPA Project Lead: [REDACTED], Forensic Services.

Senior DMWS Lead: [REDACTED], Scotland and Overseas

Lead DMWS Counsellor, Psychological Support [REDACTED]

Project Heading

“There is much greater focus on the importance of understanding and supporting psychological wellbeing within the work environment, particularly emergency responder staff: police, fire, ambulance and other volunteer services that are exposed to traumatic incidents. Forensic Services Scene Examiners are a unique group, with limited research and data currently available, to assess the impact of the role on their mental wellbeing.

A survey carried out by the project group indicated the current organisation-wide wellbeing provision has had varying degrees of success and could be more tailored to the specific requirements of the pilot group.

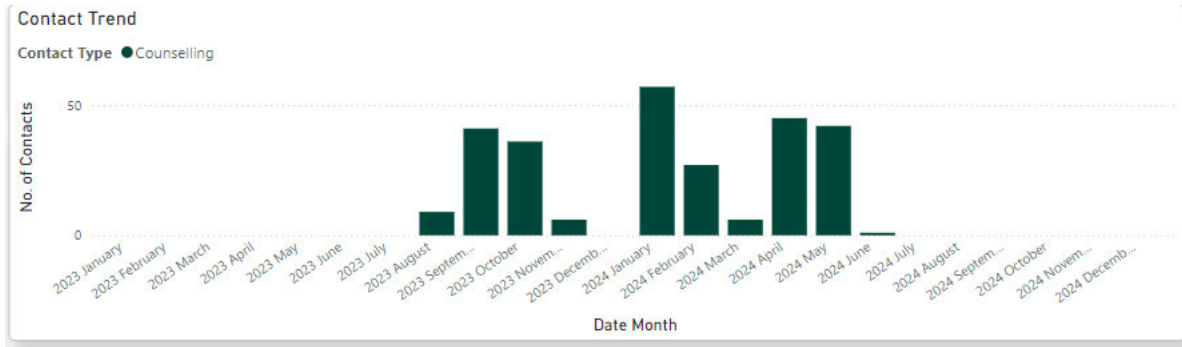
A new approach is to be tested over a three-year pilot programme that will incorporate psychological supervision into professional practice including regular meetings with specific, suitably trained counsellors over the full duration of the pilot.”

Project Pre-Engagement

A total of 3 locations (Edinburgh, Dundee & Gartosh) were visited in July 2023 by the SPA Project Lead, the DMWS Regional Manager and the Lead Counsellor prior to the project fully commencing. These “Roadshow” type events allowed the opportunity for questions from potential participants to be raised and addressed. This opportunity further allowed the value of the project to be explained in a direct and helpful manner to those present.

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The profile of Counselling sessions over the period are shared below



Geographical locations

All 12 locations were visited by the Lead Counsellor during year 1 of the project, the majority on multiple occasions: Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee, Glenrothes, Paisley, Maryhill, Gartosh, Govan, Livingston, Edinburgh, Stirling & Kilmarnock. The only exception was Dumfries which currently is unmanned.

Engagement

A total of 94 Scene Examiners across these locations participated in the project during Year 1 which allowed for 270 sessions to be completed. All 94 participants were met with individually; a total of 5 Scene Examiners have withdrawn from the project after engaging in the initial sessions.

All participants are aware that their continued engagement is voluntary and not compulsory. In addition, The Lead Counsellor also met with many relevant managers during the engagement process with the participants.

The breakdown of basic statistics of the cohort are below

Contract Location	No. of SUs	Beneficiaries Family	Staff Supported	Total Beneficiaries
SPA Forensic Examiners - PR077	94	0	0	94
Total	94	0	0	94

Gender	No. of SUs	% of Total
Female	53	56%
Male	41	44%
Total	94	100%

Age	No of SUs	% of Total
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Total	94	100%

Risk

We are currently using 2 types of questionnaires to gather the required data to support the project, CORE-34 and CORE-10. These questionnaires contain a total of 44 questions which have all been completed timeously and without issue.

A total of 7 questions are classed as identification of risk questions. Understandably, given the large number of participants, a number of risk questions have been answered positively.

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Risk is managed differently to the other responses in that it has an additional ethical element which requires careful management and a more immediate response depending on the level of severity highlighted. Identification of external resources i.e NHS / GP or the available Police Scotland EAP (VIVUP) which all staff have access to and have been signposted to together with other available suitable resources.

CORE-34 Data Analysis across the full year

The average CORE-34 score for the 270 sessions has **reduced positively from a score of 29 (block 1) to 27 (block 2) and then finally to 26 (block 3)**. This is within the severity range of “low level” (21-33). The lowest range is classed as “healthy” (0-20). The highest score from block 3 was 90 (severe) with the lowest being 0 (healthy).

The highest 3 scoring questions over the 270 sessions were as follows: -

Q8 – (average 2.27) - *I have been troubled by aches, pains or other physical problems*. This physical question was scored slightly more highly by male staff.

Q5 – (average 1.83) – *I have felt totally lacking in energy and enthusiasm*. This depression question was scored equally between male and female staff but more so by [REDACTED] staff.

Q2 – (average 1.77) – *I have felt tense, anxious or nervous*. This anxiety question was scored more highly by female staff.

To Note: A total of 12 staff members have currently scored on the severity indicator level of either moderate, moderate/severe or severe. Of these 12 staff members, a total of 10 have increased their level of severity from block 2.

Core 34 Averages

CORE-34 improvements across 10 of the sites with only Edinburgh & Aberdeen showing a higher average which is negative

Block 1 Core 34			
Location	Staff	CORE-34 site total	Average
Kilmarnock			
Inverness			
Aberdeen			
Glenrothes			
Govan			
Paisley			
Maryhill			
Livingston			
Dundee			
Gartcosh			
Edinburgh			
Stirling			
Totals	92	2635	28.6

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Block 2 Core 34			
Location	Staff	CORE-34 site total	Average
Kilmarnock			
Inverness			
Glenrothes			
Maryhill			
Paisley			
Aberdeen			
Govan			
Livingston			
Dundee			
Gartcosh			
Stirling			
Edinburgh			
Totals	90	2436	27

Block 3			
Location	Staff	Core-34 site total	average
Inverness			
Kilmarnock			
Aberdeen			
Govan			
Dundee			
Maryhill			
Glenrothes			
Gartcosh			
Paisley			
Livingston			
Edinburgh			
Stirling			
Totals	88	2246	26

Summary of Block Data

Summary highlights of Block 1

CORE-34 Overview

- Overall average is 29 points (M/F - 28/29) [REDACTED].
- High scoring negatives answers were explored in sessions to develop more conversation as relevant

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- Risk areas -any negative answers to these were fully explored with each Scene Examiner and with sessions only being completed once satisfied that the risk was manageable, and the Scene Examiner was ultimately safe at that point.
- Risks raised with SPA

Summary of Block 2 highlights

- Overall average is 27 points (M/F – 28/26) [REDACTED].

Reasons for improvement noted

- Used resources available – GPs CBT
- Challenging negative perceptions
- Improved communication at home
- SE taking their own responsibility

Overall theme

- Risk reduced
- As themes emerge support can become more targeted
- No strong patterns
- Also need to be aware personal circumstances can affect scores naturally

To note

- Still in early stages
- People feeling more comfortable to reach out for support is an aim
- Individuals at risk – reached out to those and ask what support is needed – targeted support in response to red flags. Someone did ask what if they raised a risk. Those who were identified have contact details to reach out. Have had meaningful conversations to make sure ok

Summary of Block 3 highlights

- Overall average is 26 points (M/F – 27/25) [REDACTED].

Reasons for improvement noted

- Continuing use of resources available – GPs CBT
- Increased numbers of staff using Castlebrae Treatment Centre
- Improved wellbeing communication within the office
- SE taking their own responsibility

Overall theme

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- Overall CORE-34 reduction over year 1 (block 1 M/F – 28/29) – (block 3 M/F - 27/25)

Recommendations

The overall recommendation is the need to increase both internal and external support resources for project participants: -

1. Counselling provision – Using the data from 270 sessions which were mainly in-person over 3 blocks of work, **it is recommended that targeted support to those who have identified through the data as high scoring** and therefore requiring further additional inputs to reduce these high scoring (and negative) outcomes.

This would mean targeting those in the highest scoring categories of severe, moderate/severe or moderate. **As stated earlier, of the current 12 highest scoring participants, 10 participants have increased their score negatively from the previous block 2 of work which is concerning.**

The new Police Scotland EAP provider (VIVUP) provides fortnightly sessions via the telephone or an on-line platform such as Teams. No in-person intensive solution focussed provision is currently available which is the clear participant preference, additionally there is a lack of specific trauma focussed counselling available to participants.

2. Given the generally unavailable or unsuitable workplace office space across the 12 current locations, it is recommended that consideration should be given to the possibility of allocating designated spaces or 'pod' type confidential areas where counselling sessions could be more easily facilitated. The provision of additional sessions would be particularly useful for the identified high risk groups, additional provision recommended by DMWS to ensure consistency of approach and a more nuanced service provision where a female counsellor could be incorporated into the team to continue the face-to-face provision and developing and improving the trust which has already been built which is of particularly significant importance in the most complex circumstances.
3. In addition DMWS, would recommend enhancement to the current service provision which would allow us to add a psychoeducational approach within the counselling sessions which are currently delivered, including a particular emphasis on the strategies required to improved mental health outcomes thus empowering staff with the additional knowledge and tools to reduce the risk of developing symptoms associated with work related PTSD. The appropriate delivery of psychoeducation would also provide the resources and tools to help participants manage PTSD symptoms were they to develop. This development and prevention strategy could be used as a progressive element of service design.
4. Castlebrae Police Treatment Centre, Auchterarder – It is recommended that consideration be given to encourage the periodic and more structured use of this residential resource to provide both physical and emotional rehabilitation. It has now been used by an increasing number of participants and feedback suggests a very positive experience. The referral process is typically via a GP letter which can incur a cost to the participant. This is an

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unhelpful barrier which, if removed, would be encouraging and further beneficial to those in need of residential support.

5. DMWS also recommended, as discussed that we add an additional qualified person to the contract to support resilience for our existing counsellor as well to allow a choice of counsellor. Considerable time and dedication has been invested to develop trust and engagement in the process and it is imperative that we maintain this but we see benefits of two roles providing support.
6. DMWS would also recommend a package of training (which we are also delivering to Northamptonshire Police) for line managers to support their effective management and optimisation of staff engagement particularly when dealing with mental health issues, fatigue, stress and cyclical forms of burnout.

Summary

Strong engagement, increasing levels of trust in the counselling process together with a wider understanding of the work of DMWS has supported a process which has led to positively decreasing overall CORE-34 average scoring over the period. The significant level of work to date has now created a firm foundation from which to build further and provide more targeted supports for project participants.

It is strongly recommended that this Year 1 Report be shared in full with all the 94 participants who have all contributed openly and meaningfully with the project, their immediate line managers and others who have been supportive of the overall project to date. In doing so, this transparency will further help to build trust and help to provide the reassurance that continued voluntary participation will indeed provide the benefits as originally set out during the pre-engagement process. Clearly, this will also strengthen participant commitment and more widely support DMWS staff as the project now moves forward to Year 2 and beyond.