Finance Committee

Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Bill’s Financial Memorandum

Submission from South Lanarkshire Council

Consultation

1. Did you take part in any consultation exercise preceding the Bill and, if so, did you comment on the financial assumptions made?

No

2. If applicable, do you believe your comments on the financial assumptions have been accurately reflected in the FM?

n/a

3. Did you have sufficient time to contribute to the consultation exercise?

n/a

Costs

4. If the Bill has any financial implications for your organisation, do you believe that they have been accurately reflected in the FM? If not, please provide details.

The only area anticipated to have a financial impact on the Council is the consequences of the specific offence for non-consensual sharing of intimate images. This is estimated as £2,000 per community sentence (for example) a Community Payback Order) and seems roughly in line with expected costs incurred.

In terms of the cost of this element of the Bill, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in referral levels and as such, an increased cost to the Council. As the Community Justice Grant is based on previous year spend/activity, it is suggested that additional budget is allocated to councils and that this should be monitored moving forward.

5. Do you consider that the estimated costs and savings set out in the FM are reasonable and accurate?

Agree – apart from the need to monitor the impact as noted in section 4. above and to look at any extra one-off costs – as noted in section 8.
6. If applicable, are you content that your organisation can meet any financial costs that it might incur as a result of the Bill? If not, how do you think these costs should be met?

No – the Council should not be liable for any increased costs as a result of the Bill, again, as noted in section 4. above.

7. Does the FM accurately reflect the margins of uncertainty associated with the Bill’s estimated costs and with the timescales over which they would be expected to arise?

The range of figures quoted are relatively small nationally (£0.020m), however, the scope of variation in estimated numbers is great – between 16 and 26. Any margin of error in estimates would have a financial impact, but can be captured if the figures are monitored as noted in section 4. above, in order to address the costs in the same timeframe as they arise.

Wider Issues

8. Do you believe that the FM reasonably captures any costs associated with the Bill? If not, which other costs might be incurred and by whom?

There is no mention of any ‘hidden costs’ associated with the Bill in respect of training staff in an understanding of the new policies/definition and practical requirements. This is particularly in reference to risk assessment and case management.

9. Do you believe that there may be future costs associated with the Bill, for example through subordinate legislation? If so, is it possible to quantify these costs?

No information.