

GOOD MEASURE

March 2008 Newsletter

SACRO'S ALCOHOL EDUCATION PROBATION SERVICE

Welcome to the first edition of Good Measure, a newsletter for Sacro's Alcohol Education Probation Service.

We hope you find this interesting and informative, and a good way to keep up to date with developments and improvements to our programmes. We would be interested to hear from you on any items included and please do contact us for further information on Sacro services.

> Celebrating National Recognition

Last year we had reason to celebrate as the Alcohol Education Probation Service was given national UK recognition by the Howard League in its Community Programme Awards. We were delighted to receive an award of Special Merit from a panel of eminent professionals and opinion formers from the field of criminal justice.

Our submission demonstrated the extremely high quality and effectiveness of the programme which works with those whose offending behaviour is linked to their alcohol consumption. The judges were interested in the group work approach, exploring issues linked to alcohol misuse and the methods employed to help service users understand and control their alcohol-related behaviour. The programme demonstrates good working relations with supervising social workers and the Court service, so enhances and complements probation work.

The award submission also included outcome evaluation statistics that demonstrate the programmes' success. A year after completing the programme, 71% of those who attended had no further convictions, compared with 56% of those who failed to complete. The growing sophistication of Sacro's research and development department now enables the organisation to provide evidence of the success of Sacro's programmes across a wide range of services.



Sacro held a special event to celebrate the Service receiving the Award of Special Merit. Pictured L-R are: **Alastair Cattnach**, Service Manager, Sacro Alcohol Education Probation Service; **Heather McVeigh**, Criminal Justice Worker, Sacro Alcohol Education Probation Service; **Susan Matheson**, Chief Executive, Sacro; **Baroness Linklater of Butterstone**, Chairman of Rethinking Crime and Punishment, an Esmée Fairbairn Initiative; **Catryn Yousefi**, Senior Research and Campaign Officer, The Howard League for Penal Reform.

Community Disposal In Demand

Sacro's expertise in providing community based disposals such as the Alcohol Education Probation Service has resulted in an increasing demand from those outside probation orders. To meet this demand, we are now providing a service to those who have been referred by Voluntary Throughcare teams, as well as those on deferred sentences from Court. Depending on funding, we plan to increase the number of sessions we offer from eight to ten and the content of the programmes will be continually reviewed to ensure they meet the ever changing needs of society.

Further development and expansion of our services is reliant on funding. Should you be aware of any additional funds or grants available for work in the area of alcohol misuse, we would be pleased to hear from you!

> Communication

Sacro is always keen to liaise fully with social work teams and others involved in referrals to our services. To ensure that all parties are kept as well informed as possible, progress reports on each client are now sent out weekly. We hope these are beneficial and should you think they could be improved in any way, do not hesitate to contact us.

> A Centre of Excellence

Based at 25 Nicolson Square, the Alcohol Education Probation Service is proud to become part of the Edinburgh Community Links Centre.

The Centre is a unique partnership initiative funded by the Scottish Government through the City of Edinburgh Council. It provides support for vulnerable ex-prisoners as they rejoin society and is a first rate example of how agencies can work together to address the complicated and diverse needs of this group.

Fergus Ewing MSP, Minister for Community Safety, officially opened the Centre on 4 December 2007, a visible demonstration of the Government's support.

If you would be interested to come and meet those working at The Centre we would be pleased to show you around what we hope will become a model for other centres across the country.

> Facts and Figures

Our research team is always monitoring and evaluating the service we provide, ensuring we hit targets and maintain success rates.

In the Alcohol Service in 2006/2007 we received 146 referrals of which 90 were assessed as suitable for the service. Of these, 79 were disposed to the programme, 61 clients then started the programme with an excellent high of 55 completing it.

The research submitted for the Howard League Award clearly demonstrates the success of those that complete the programme. 94% reported they were consuming a lot less alcohol as a result of understanding its effects, and 84% felt they no longer needed help with their alcohol use.

Most recently, we have just finished running two groups for men and one for women. Of 15 people that started the course, 13 completed, so another success. Two further courses for men will commence on April 10, 2008 so if you are aware of any suitable candidates for referral, please do let us know.

> Refresher Courses

Further research has highlighted the demand for a refresher course after a period of nine months. 35 clients were surveyed, with 26 stating they would benefit from the opportunity to undertake this refresher course. Depending on funding, we would hope that this will commence in the new financial year so please let the service know if you are aware of any clients wishing to take part, particularly as this will provide us with evidence of demand.

> CLC agencies

Partnership agencies currently present at CLC include:

- > Caledonia Youth Offender's Project
- > Housing Options Team
- > NHS – Edinburgh Homelessness Practice
- > PATH – NHS
- > Progress to Work – Apex
- > South Bridge Literacy and Innumeracy Project
- > Spectrum
- > Streetwork Lawyers
- > Bethany Christian Trust

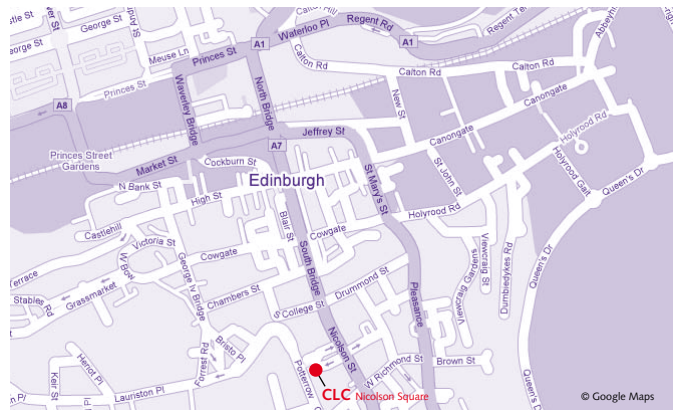
> Opening hours

The CLC is open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

Arrangements can be made with Sacro staff should any agency require access to facilities outwith normal opening hours.

An induction pack covering a wide range of information about using the CLC is now given to all agency staff using the Centre.

General enquiries on the operation of the Community Links Centre should be forwarded to: Ian Norman, CLC/Throughcare Service Manager.



The CLC is funded by City of Edinburgh Council and delivered by the community justice voluntary organisation, Sacro.

For further information or to arrange a visit to the CLC, please contact the Centre staff on **0131 622 7500**.

Community Links Centre

Epworth Halls, 25 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh EH8 9BX

Tel: 0131 622 7500

Fax: 0131 622 7525

Email: info@lothiancjs.sacro.org.uk

Web: www.sacro.org.uk

