

CASE STUDY

John* aged 15, was referred to the service as a result of an offence of vandalism and possession of cannabis. He had previously worked with Sacro following an offence of vandalism whilst under the influence of alcohol.

The recent offence had involved him along with a group of older people vandalising a memorial bench in a small village park. John accepted responsibility for this and advised his worker that he felt embarrassed and ashamed about the incident. He wanted an opportunity to apologise and repair the harm he had caused.

During the course of his involvement with Sacro, John and his worker identified specific areas in his life that were difficult and required some assistance. John, who was about to become a father, was concerned about his use of alcohol and illicit substances and was therefore referred to the Youth Justice Mentor service. John told his worker that he really enjoyed these meetings, saying, "it keeps my head straight". He was also referred to a specialist worker with CAMHS who helped him deal with his substance misuse issues.

With regards to Sacro services, the worker contacted the persons harmed. At the first meeting, they decided to decline the service, due to their own poor health but were pleased to hear that the young person who had damaged their loved one's memorial was not only sorry, but also wanted to put right the damage. They did, however, put the Sacro member in touch with two community representatives who subsequently agreed to attend a Restorative Justice Conference with the Young Person.

At the conference, John's dad accompanied him, to provide support. The conference gave everyone the opportunity to discuss the facts of the situation, the consequences for all involved and ultimately how to look to the future. An action plan was devised, where it was agreed that John would repair the bench with Sacro supervising the task, thus ensuring that the action plan was completed satisfactorily. The bench was repaired, sanded and re-varnished much to the delight of all involved. John felt good about the project and proud that he has been able to do something to make amends for the damage he caused.

*name changed

Dumfries & Galloway Youth Justice Service

