



ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010

*Leading change in
community justice*



Key Achievements

- > Sacro engaged with almost 19,000 individuals and more than 16,000 referrals in 2009/2010.
- > New National Office premises officially opened by Kenny MacAskill MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice.
- > Sacro Annual Lecture given by Hugh Monro, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons in Scotland.
- > Eight new services and pilot projects began this year.
- > New processes and training underway to enhance success rate in competitive tendering.
- > Care Commission inspections rated Supported Accommodation Services as "Good" or "Very Good".
- > Major Business Change Programme initiated to secure and build for the future.
- > Performance Improvement project initiated.
- > Service-user Engagement Strategy initiated.
- > National Research and Evaluation framework in development.
- > Increase in news releases and statements to media.
- > Sacro's 21 Criminal Justice Services responded to over 2,000 referrals.
- > Edinburgh Throughcare Team exceeded targets for the third year running.
- > Edinburgh & Midlothian Arrest Referral Service has seen a record number of service users keep appointments and continue contact with the service.
- > Significant increase in Another Way service referrals.
- > Sacro's eight Community Mediation services received referrals for 3,564 households.
- > Successful outcomes of Community Mediation cases amounted to 81% of total.
- > Scottish Community Mediation Network (SCMN) accredited three Sacro services and 10 individual Sacro mediators.
- > Sacro's three adult Restorative Justice services received 437 referrals last year resulting in 405 cases.
- > 10 Youth Justice services worked with over 1,100 young people this year and success rates were high with almost 90% of youth cases being completed successfully.
- > National Evaluation of Youth Restorative Justice Services in Scotland reflected very favourably on RJ practices. Of persons responsible, 90% said taking part in restorative justice made them want to change their behaviour for the better and 75% thought they would not re-offend.
- > Lothian & Borders Police in partnership with Sacro and City of Edinburgh Council hosted a major one-day conference on Restorative Practices and Young People – the first of its kind to be held in Scotland.
- > Sacro's Work with Schools delivered consultancy and/or training sessions to schools in 11 council areas.

Chairman's report



Paul H Morron MBE
Chairman

A Period of Change and Challenge

The last year has been characterised by an increased pace of change in Sacro as the organisation continues to adapt to meet the difficult external environment. As always, our Board, staff and volunteers, have shown their resilience and willingness to rise to these challenges with energy, commitment and success.

A high priority has been the close management of our financial affairs to ensure the future strength of the organisation. This task has been helped by our careful husbandry of free reserves. In line with most in the third sector, our turnover has reduced over the last couple of years. However, we have shown a determined strength to take all necessary measures to secure our future competitiveness.

With more pronounced public funding cuts on the agenda over the next few years, it will remain necessary for Sacro to pursue further the refreshment of the organisation to ensure our future fitness to meet these and other challenges.

A Sense of Partnership

A major feature this year has been the successful assimilation of our new Chief Executive, Tom Halpin. He has brought a sense of energy, leadership and direction to Sacro and has shown particular strength and skill in overseeing and managing the necessary process of change.

I have been especially pleased – and gratified – this year with the partnership between the Chair and Board on the one hand and the Chief Executive and senior staff on the other. I note with pleasure the skills set members of the Board have been able to offer Sacro has been greatly appreciated by our managers as evidenced by their increased call on these skills and specialist knowledge. This is an important value added aspect of our Board of Directors.

Strategic Direction for Sacro

The current three-year Strategic Plan for Sacro sought to refresh the organisation as we foresaw changes in the external environment to which we would have to adapt. For the first time, it defined priorities in relation to our services and identified client groups on whom we would concentrate. It foresaw and encouraged more joint working and strategic partnership with other agencies and sister voluntary organisations; this is now showing fruit and has important, future significance. The plan also showed intent to modernise governance.

Adult Criminal Justice Services

The Board further refined Sacro's strategic direction this year: (a) it agreed the future focus for service development would concentrate on adult criminal justice services. With its community based work and neighbourhood conflict resolution, community mediation would be included in this new focus. Other areas of current service – including the bulk of our youth justice services and schools based work – will of course continue to be a valued part of the Sacro family; (b) the Board together with senior staff also agreed that future service development would include greater involvement in contributing to community payback orders.

The Board were pleased to endorse and support the initiative of the Chief Executive in promoting our involvement in future social enterprise models of service.

Modernity in Governance

During the first half of 2008, the Board accepted an agenda for the modernisation of governance. The work was taken forward through the creation of a Governance Sub Committee, headed by Elizabeth Carmichael, and has continued to advance apace through her skilful and energetic leadership. Since 2008, changes have included:

- > Opening up the Board's work through the publication of our minutes on the Sacro intranet
- > Increased role of sub committees (both regular and ad hoc short term) in the detailed work of the Board thereby freeing full Board meetings to be more strategic in nature
- > Creating a new Audit Committee to become operational later this year with the current Audit & Finance Committee losing its audit function
- > The introduction of a Board skills audit informed subsequent appointments of Directors this year and an annual appraisal of Board members will be initiated next year
- > The introduction of the new post of Depute Chair to ensure continuity of Governance both in the absence of the chair and at the time of changes in the chairmanship
- > A special general meeting this year saw our old and dated Articles of Association modernised to reflect current objectives and the new environment in which we are working
- > Vacancies on the Board were publicly advertised for the first time and this experience used to inform recruitment of the new Sacro chair through an open and public process
- > Agreement in principle has been reached to involve service users and/or previous service users in the governance function of Sacro as part of a wider initiative of their involvement in the organisation. Work is in hand about the structures required and the methodology to be employed to ensure the effectiveness of this involvement.

Criminal Justice Policy

Sacro welcomes the new legislation which introduces Community Payback Orders in Scotland and the lead of the Scottish Government and an increasing range of political parties in fostering a tone of positivism, promotion and encouragement of community based penalties. It may be the financial situation which faces the United Kingdom is the prime motivator, but the welcome conversion of Westminster towards the merits of community based supervision as an alternative to custody – not least on the stated grounds of effectiveness in tackling crime and reducing offending – is also good news.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the members of the Board for their advice and support throughout. We have a strong, hard working and committed Board which has continued to strengthen over the past year and which clearly – with the new appointments operative from the AGM – will strengthen further in the year ahead.

My particular thanks to Elizabeth as Depute Chair and head of Governance Committee, to Bob Marshall as our fantastic Treasurer and Convenor of Finance Committee and to Neil Ballantyne as Convenor of our Roles & Responsibilities Review Committee and HR expert, for their contribution to Sacro and for being such reliable and trustworthy advisors, counsellors, colleagues and friends.

Sacro Board 2009/2010

Officers

Chair

Mr Paul Morron MBE

Depute Chair

Mrs Elizabeth Carmichael CBE

Treasurer

Mr Robert Marshall

Members

Mr Neil Ballantyne

Mr Graham Birse (co-opted 25/03/2010)

Mr David Croft

Mrs Jo Knox (co-opted 25/03/2010)

Prof. Mike Nellis (resigned 04/11/2009)

Sheriff M G O'Grady QC

Prof. Geoff Palmer (co-opted 25/03/2010)

Mrs Jandy Stevenson (resigned 01/04/2010)

Dr. Lindsay Thomson

Dr. Salma Siddique (resigned 04/11/2009)

Observers

Chief Superintendent Mark Williams
Lothian & Borders Police

Mr Robin Duncan
British Association of Social Workers

Ms Jane Martin
Association of Directors of Social Work

Wilma Dickson
Scottish Government Justice Department

Honorary President

Rt. Hon. Lord Cullen of Whitekirk KT

Secretary & Chief Executive

Tom Halpin

Sacro's volunteers and staff are the backbone of the organisation and I am indebted to them – current and past – for all their work and devotion to the cause of Sacro and its work. My particular appreciation to Tom as Chief Executive – a true professional and faithful partner.

Handover

I am delighted with the appointment of Esther Robertson as Sacro's new chair designate and pay tribute to the work of the Appointments Committee consisting of Elizabeth (Chair), Bob and Neil for the manner in which they have overseen this process including the business of selection and the conduct of interviews. And a special thank you to Steven Morton for his expert servicing of the Board and his support and advice to the Chair and directors.

Esther will provide strong, experienced and positive leadership. Her extensive contribution to public life and service in Scotland is well documented and widely acknowledged. Her interest and involvement in offender and criminal justice matters is an added bonus with her experience of serving as a Director on the Apex Board and her membership of the Scottish Government Offender Learning Project. I wish Esther every good fortune for her term of chairmanship.

I am delighted also that Alan Baird has accepted an invitation to join the Board thus ensuring the Board, staff and Sacro will be able to access directly his extensive knowledge, experience and expertise of social work and criminal justice management. Alan is Director of Social Work for the City of Dundee, a former President of ADSW and one of the longest serving and respected Social Work directors in Scotland.

The third area of handover secured for the future has been the successor to Bob's finance portfolio once his term of office ends in 2011. Graham Paterson has extensive experience in this area of work, works at Glasgow University and will join the Board from the AGM this year in effect as Treasurer designate.

Final Reflections

As my three-year term as chairman – and nine years service on the Board – comes to an end, just a few reflections:

My chairmanship coincided with Sacro's 10 years of rapid growth reaching its high water mark and just in time to meet the ebbing tide! It was therefore my task to lead and guide the organisation through a period of adjustment and necessary change. I was always conscious this process would at times be difficult but was equally conscious that the future of Sacro would depend on our ability to adapt to the rapidly changing environment. Modernising governance, refreshing the organisation and setting a new strategic direction were priorities. I am particularly grateful, therefore, to staff at National Office and throughout the country in seeing through this process of change, and for making such excellent progress.

The Board has always kept in mind the "end product" of a leaner but stronger Sacro, a Sacro that is clearly and sharply focused, runs services which are consistent and of a high standard, and a Sacro that is a powerhouse of innovation and ideas in the advancement of community based criminal justice services consistent with our continuing values and beliefs.

I wish Sacro well in the future.

Chief Executive's report



Tom Halpin
Chief Executive

This year, Sacro engaged with almost 19,000 individuals and more than 16,000 referrals.

The past year has been a demanding period for our staff and volunteers with significant change for many individuals. I am always hugely impressed by the professionalism and dedication of our people who are the real strength that makes Sacro a positive influence in Scotland's communities.

As predicted, we have seen an increasing use of competitive tendering by funders and it is anticipated this will continue to increase further as pressure to reduce costs in response to demands for greater fiscal efficiency increases. Economic reality is acutely felt across all services at this time, this means often doing things differently and with less resource than previously available. It also means our strong commitment to working collaboratively through partnerships is crucial to delivering social care to Scotland's people.

This responsiveness and flexibility reinforces why a strong Sacro is so crucial to Scottish Government's programme for reducing re-offending.

A priority over recent months is our change programme involving a number of projects that form the building blocks for success across all Sacro services and National Office. This reinforces our bottom up approach to localised services. As I continue to visit services and hold round table discussions with staff, support for change is very evident.

I want to thank all our staff for their hard work, and to our partners and funders in Scottish Government, local authorities, CJAs, SPS, and others for their continuing support.

Special mention and sincerest appreciation goes to our Chair, Paul Morron who will stand down at our AGM. Paul has made an outstanding contribution to Sacro, steering us through change with great professionalism and dedication. Also our thanks and appreciation go to Board members Jandy Stevenson and Mike Nellis who stood down during the year and welcome to our new Board members Geoff Palmer, Graham Birse, Jo Knox and Esther Robertson who have joined in their place. The Honorary President, The Rt. Hon. The Lord Cullen of Whitekirk and individual Board members have been tremendous ambassadors and sound in their advice and governance for which I am most grateful.

This report will demonstrate the important achievements of Sacro in the last year, demonstrating the importance of what we do. Through our practical experiences we will continue to influence policy and develop new approaches to working with our service users who will have a voice in what we do.

Thank you for taking time to read our report, your voice is important, let us know where and what we can do to improve.

Introduction

Sacro delivered 69 services in 21 locations.

Sacro is Scotland's leading community justice voluntary organisation working across the country to make communities safer by reducing conflict and offending. Sacro operates in the community in partnership with others who share the same values. It works with offenders and victims, their communities and those in conflict. It does this in four key ways:

- by being a leading provider of direct, innovative services in Criminal Justice, Community Mediation and Youth/Adult Restorative Practices including schools work
- through consultancy and training services which equip Sacro and other organisations to deliver best practice and extend the impact of Sacro's specialist expertise across Scotland
- through research which monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of Sacro's services and keeps it abreast of research in the field, and
- by seeking to influence policy and legislation, on the basis of the research evidence, so that the use of imprisonment is restricted to those who have committed serious crimes or are a danger to the public.

Sacro has offices across Scotland – from Orkney to Dumfries – providing 69 services in 21 locations. Overall, Sacro engaged with almost 19,000 individuals and more than 16,000 referrals in 2009/2010. The organisation employs 108 full time, 95 part time staff and 102 volunteers.

Sacro's national office acts as an administrative base for the services it delivers across Scotland. The office moved to new premises in Edinburgh in 2009 and was officially opened by Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill MSP in February 2010.

After unveiling a commemorative plaque, Mr MacAskill spent over an hour talking with Sacro staff, Board members and service users. He said: "Sacro plays an important role in Scotland's justice system, undertaking fantastic work right across the country to make our communities safer. This new national office will be a central hub of co-ordination for the many services they provide to the community and will help the organisation go from strength to strength. If we are to stop offenders in their tracks and pull them away from a life of crime, we need organisations like Sacro who have a proven ability of helping offenders turn their backs on their previous ways."

The Cabinet Secretary also chaired our Annual Lecture in November. The lecture – "A Steep Learning Curve: My Introduction to Scottish Prisons" – was given by Hugh Monro, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons in Scotland and was attended by over 100 people in Edinburgh's Playfair Library.



Criminal Justice Services

This year has seen many changes in Sacro's criminal justice (CJ) service provision. The turbulent financial environment has forced many local authorities to rethink how they provide CJ services, resulting in some services being brought in-house and an increased use of competitive tendering for service procurement.

In order to compete for these services, we have had to undergo a major upheaval in our staffing structure. These are necessary changes and we are currently in consultation to see how they will be implemented. This will have an impact on how we resource and operate many of our criminal justice services in the coming year but it is a challenge we are facing up to and one we are confident of addressing successfully. Tendering will also provide us with new opportunities and where there are areas for expansion we will assess and actively pursue these as they become available.

Throughout the year, Sacro's 21 Criminal Justice Services responded to over 2,000 referrals covering:

- > Supported Accommodation
- > Intensive Support & Monitoring
- > Throughcare
- > Travel to Prison
- > Arrest Referral
- > Domestic Abuse Groupwork programmes
- > Sex Offenders Groupwork programmes
- > Alcohol Groupwork programmes
- > Bail services
- > Street Sex Worker project
- > Persistent Offenders Initiative
- > Community Reparation service

In Glasgow, the Supported Accommodation (SA) service has represented Sacro at National Department of Work and Pensions Forums and attended quarterly Customer Representative Group forums. It also hosted a round table presentation on Best Practice Work with Service Users for Scottish Homeless Involvement and Empowerment Network. As a member of Glasgow Criminal Justice Authority, the service attended a Learning Disability Event which led to a training session on the Autism Spectrum for Glasgow.

Since the introduction of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), the Glasgow service has represented Sacro at meetings as and when required. Although a significant commitment, this presence continues to enhance our reputation with partner agencies.

A Care Commission Inspection in October 2009 was extremely positive and the service scored 5 (Very Good) in all three Categories.

The Aberdeen SA Service was developed to include provision for Home Leave for prisoners within the Open Estate (SPS). A designated property was allocated by Aberdeen City Council and Community Service Order teams assisted with decorating the property. The service also received users from Aberdeen's Intensive Support & Monitoring service (ISMS) which closed in September 2009. The SA, ISMS and Supported Tenancy services all received excellent inspections by the Care Commission this year.

Sacro's Throughcare services received 473 referrals this year resulting in 4,153 contacts with service users. The services play a vital role in reducing reoffending by helping short-term prisoners (and ex-prisoners who are not subject to statutory supervision) with problems that they face on release. In Edinburgh, specific attention is provided via the Throughcare Addiction Service for people with alcohol and drug addiction problems. The service is further augmented by the Community Links Centre, a facility which provides access to a number of agencies under one roof. These agencies can assist with many other difficulties faced on release such as healthcare, accommodation, benefits, literacy, training and employment. Sacro's Voluntary Throughcare Team in Edinburgh has consistently exceeded targets for the past three years; a trend which seems to be continuing.

Sacro's 21 Criminal Justice Services responded to over 2,000 referrals.

Sacro's Throughcare services received 473 referrals resulting in 4,153 contacts with service users.

Sacro's Travel to Prison service carried 419 passengers on 193 journeys last year to help keep families and friends in touch with those in prison.

In its first four months, the Sacro community service pilot in Glasgow delivered:

73 completed tasks.

489 placements attended.

2,849 hours of work undertaken.

67% attendance.

(significantly higher than the national average for community service attendance).

Over the past year, Sacro have provided an Intensive Support and Monitoring Service (ISMS) to some 22 high risk offenders in the community across 12 local authorities in Scotland. These service users often have very high support needs and Sacro has successfully supported many of these individuals – with multi agency cooperation – in resettling them back into the community and lowering the risk factor.

With the aim of expanding the service on a national level and ensuring the service is consistent in terms of service delivery, Sacro have appointed for the first time a National service manager to oversee the ISMS Service. The future direction for Sacro's ISMS services will:

- > Provide a national focus for future service delivery
- > Ensure the high risk service we provide continues to meet the requirements of the local authorities and the needs of the service users
- > Ensure the service fulfils the ISMS Operational Practice Standards put in place and is consistent across all services
- > Ensure all services provide a 50/50 approach in terms of monitoring and support
- > Continue to develop the staff through relevant training and development
- > Continually review the service to ensure added value for money is achieved.

Sacro's Travel service provides prisoners' families and friends with transport to and from many Scottish prisons from Glasgow and Edinburgh. The service plays an important role in promoting this valuable contact and carried 419 passengers on 193 journeys last year.

Arrest Referral services engage with people at the point of arrest whose offending is linked to drug or alcohol misuse. Sacro's Edinburgh & Midlothian Arrest Referral Service has maintained an excellent working relationship with partner agencies and continued to provide comprehensive assessments in the often difficult environment of the court cells. This year, we have seen a record number of service users keep appointments and continue contact with the service.

Another Way is the lead agency in Edinburgh working with street sex workers. The Sacro service supports and encourages women to engage with drug treatment and care services, helping them break their cycle of drug dependency and offending. We have secured a significant increase in referrals this year by successfully establishing official referral routes from the police and procurators fiscal. This is in addition to court and self-referrals which continue to rise. The service received referrals for 40 primary and secondary service users this year – up from 24 last year. Another Way was able to engage with all those referred; helping them with drug treatment, general and mental health care, housing, benefits and employment. In many cases, service users reported that they either reduced or ended their involvement in street sex work. The service continues to have excellent relations with partner agencies via the Street Sex Workers Practitioners Forum which group meetings the service convenes and chairs. The service was facing closure this year following a decision not to continue funding the service. However, we have managed to attract trust funding and hope to secure service provision by applying to other funds.

In Aberdeen, funding from the Fairer Scotland Fund has enabled us to deliver two group work programmes to male perpetrators of domestic abuse. The fund has also backed a Persistent Offender Initiative in Aberdeen's Tillydrone area. This Sacro service developed a 'whole family' approach to engage with young offenders involved in persistent offending. The Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill visited the project in February whilst launching the Scottish Government's funding of £1.2 million to tackle youth crime in Aberdeen city. Sacro has been asked to scope a new citywide service for young people based on the Tillydrone model.

In Glasgow, Sacro has been piloting a Community Reparation Service. The service provides community service placements to do small household tasks for members of the community who would otherwise be unable to get jobs done. The pilot has consistently exceeded the national average for attendance at community service and been shortlisted for a national Howard League Community Programmes award. Following the success of the pilot, a full-blown service is now planned and has been put to competitive tender by Glasgow City Council.

Case Study: Edinburgh Voluntary Throughcare/Addictions Service

Robert was referred to Sacro for support with his drug and alcohol misuse and accommodation issues while in prison. Robert, his sister and mother, were victims of domestic violence at the hands of his father, until his father eventually left the home. When nine years old, he was the victim of an attack from a cousin who suffered from schizophrenia. This resulted in Robert spending three years in hospital for brain injuries and has left him completely paralysed down his left side and with some brain damage. Robert feels he has done nothing with his life, even though he had studied computers over the years.

A Sacro worker and a volunteer visited Robert at his home to assess his needs, go over some budgeting issues and explore suitable college courses. Robert explained that he can find it difficult remembering to make payments or attend appointments. It was also noted that he was in need of some furniture for his house. During the discussion he explained that he drinks a lot during the day to escape his situation and stated that it is worse when he is bored or alone.

The Volunteer helped Robert fill in forms for a college course in computers and made a calendar for all his appointments and payments. He also went through all his mail and sorted out his finances and paperwork. His criminal justice worker referred him to Bethany Christian Trust to obtain some donated furniture.

The Volunteer accompanied Robert for his interview with Telford College. Although nervous and agitated at first, Robert calmed down by the time the interview took place and successfully completed the interview. The course was due to start in a few weeks and although Robert was happy at the outcome, he was anxious that his class mates might not like him. The Volunteer reassured Robert that this would not be the case and the college environment was very different to what he had experienced at school.

Robert has not been back in prison in the time he has engaged with Sacro (over a year). His drinking has decreased due to being at college and he is currently studying for a Higher in computers. He no longer has any drug issues, he has more furniture in his house and his life has more of a positive outlook.

Robert's self-esteem has grown noticeably and he is more confident around other people. He is engaging well with Sacro and attends all of his appointments.

Mediation Services

Sacro's eight
Community Mediation
services received
referrals for 3,564
households this year
amounting to 1,716
conflicts.

81% of Sacro
mediation cases
had a successful
outcome.

Sacro's Mediation services continue to make a significant contribution to resolving conflict in many aspects of everyday life. Mediators help people in coming up with their own solutions to disputes and do not lead or impose changes on the parties involved. This self-help and personal empowerment is a valuable life-skill and assists people in taking responsibility for their own lives by handling conflicts constructively.

Community Mediation is an established and highly effective process for dealing with conflict and reducing anti-social behaviour. With a success rate in excess of 80%, mediation deals with the causes of conflict, not just the symptoms. Sacro's eight Community Mediation services received referrals for 3,564 households this year amounting to 1,716 conflicts. Advice, guidance or assistance was given in 1,115 instances and 602 cases were worked with over the period. Successful outcomes of cases amounted to 490 (81%).

In addition to helping people resolve neighbour disputes through our Community Mediation services, Sacro has also applied its expertise in mediation to other areas of everyday life. This year, we have developed services in Workplace, Landlord/Tenant, Intergenerational and Homelessness mediation. The Edinburgh Amber service, delivered in partnership with Cyrenians is now also available in East Lothian. The service helps young people and their families to resolve conflict which involves them becoming – or at risk of – homelessness.

Sacro mediation services continue to work on building positive relationships with statutory and voluntary organisations. This has paid dividends in increasing referrals and attracting funding for volunteers throughout the year.

Although new mediation services have been developed this year, we have also lost Community Mediation services in Irvine and Dumfries & Galloway. The North Edinburgh Intergenerational Project also closed its doors this year. Despite excellent results, the service was unable to attract sufficient funding to continue.

Sacro manages the Scottish Community Mediation Centre. Funded by the Scottish Government, the Centre assists local authorities in developing efficient and effective mediation provision and provides a range of mediation training to housing officers, police, and many other professionals. Its five-day Basic Mediation Skills course continues to train new staff as well as a growing number of individuals looking to add to their skills and employability.

The Centre is currently developing a marketing plan to promote the two-day course: Handling Conflict Constructively. The course is intended to help people who are not mediators to handle difficult situations and conversations more effectively. The course is approved by the Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland (REHIS), the body that approves Health and Safety courses in Scotland. Participants who complete the course receive a joint award from REHIS and the SCMC.

This year, SCMC has added Continuing Professional Development courses including: Monitoring and Evaluation and Selling Your Service for service managers. Mediation Theory, Shuttle Mediation, Whole Stair Mediation, Advanced Questioning and Co-Mediation courses are also available and are aimed at practitioners. A refresher course is being developed in response to requests from people who trained with us some time ago but have not had the opportunity to practice and develop their basic mediation skills. A one day course will be available to help those recently trained to plan their development as mediators.

The Centre also acts as the administrative base for the Scottish Community Mediation Network (SCMN) and its accreditation schemes. SCMN members are trained as assessors by the SCMC and they assess services and individual mediators to nationally agreed standards. The assessment of services is progressing nicely with Sacro's Dundee & Angus, Fife and Aberdeen services having achieved accreditation. 10 individual mediators were also accredited this year. The Network holds quarterly meetings for local authority and Sacro service managers. These meetings continue to be well attended and members value the opportunity to discuss service management issues with their peers.

Case Study: Perth & Kinross Community Mediation Service

(Names have been changed to protect their identity.)

Party A: Jennifer and Michael Jones - a couple in their late 50s. Michael is recovering from a heart attack and Jennifer works full-time shifts.

Party B: Angela and son Liam - aged three. Boyfriend, Nick occasionally stays over. Party B moved in six months ago.

The Jones's are disturbed by noise. There is laminate flooring in Angela's flat and the noise from footfall and dropped objects is causing distress. Also, Liam does not go to bed until very late in the evening. Angela however, feels that she is being unfairly targeted as she does not play loud music or have wild parties. Nick and Michael have exchanged angry words on the stair, which almost led to an assault. The Jones's feel that Nick should not be involved in these issues as he should not really be living there. Angela has concerns about the Jones' dog which often roams around outside in the communal garden.

To prepare for Mediation, both parties were visited in their own home. The mediators listened to all the issues of concern and talked through the future outcomes that both parties hoped to achieve. A second visit was arranged to party A as Michael was very anxious about the meeting and the effect it could have on his health if he lost his temper. The mediators looked at the different scenarios that could arise in the meeting and this allowed Michael to practice appropriate responses.

The mediation session was held in the evening at Sacro's Perth office, a safe and neutral venue. Initially Nick was not going to be present but at the last moment Angela decided that she wanted him there. The mediators approached Jennifer and Michael and although anxious, Michael now welcomed the opportunity to discuss the issues with Nick.

After the initial emotion, both sides worked productively towards achieving a realistic agreement. There had been a lot of misconceptions about each other dating right back to when party B first moved in. This prevented both sides from dealing with any issues as they arose. Nick acknowledged he had not appreciated Michael's health problems or that Jennifer worked different shift patterns.

Michael and Jennifer were not aware Nick and Angela would be getting married shortly and Nick had been working away in order to finance this.

Angela agreed Liam was excessively noisy but disclosed that the health visitor was working with her on discipline and bed time issues. Nick said as soon as they could afford it they would be replacing the laminate floors with carpets.

Michael and Jennifer agreed they would not let the dog out unsupervised and would ensure they cleared up after it.

The written agreement included an acknowledgment of the above points plus a section on how the two parties would communicate with each other in the future should further issues arise. Both parties left the meeting feeling that the distress and previous dislike of the other had been resolved. They were both aware that it would take time for some of the points to be addressed and requested that the case would be monitored for several months.

Restorative Justice Services

Sacro's 10 Youth Justice services worked with over 1100 young people this year with almost 90% of cases completed successfully.

90% of those responsible for offending said taking part in restorative justice made them want to change their behaviour for the better and 75% thought they would not re-offend.

National Evaluation of Youth Restorative Justice Services in Scotland.
Sacro/Viewpoint.

Based on restorative principles, Sacro's Youth and Adult Restorative Justice (RJ) services give support to those affected by and those responsible for harm. The aim is to address behaviour in a way which empowers the people harmed, those responsible and wider community members to resolve issues in a constructive way. The services received 1,959 referrals this year resulting in 1,462 cases involving 910 persons harmed.

Sacro's three adult RJ services provide sentencers with an alternative to prosecution in court of accused adults who are willing to make direct reparation to victims of their offences. The services received 437 referrals last year resulting in 405 cases.

Sacro delivers a range of Youth Justice interventions, specific to young people between the ages of 8 and 17 as well as providing a Youth Justice Strategy Co-ordination role on behalf of the Youth Justice Partnership in Aberdeen. Our 10 Youth Justice services worked with over 1100 young people this year and success rates were high with almost 90% of youth cases being completed successfully.

In November, Sacro published the findings of a major evaluation of youth restorative justice services. The "National Evaluation of Youth Restorative Justice Services in Scotland" is the most extensive study on the subject in Scotland to date. Carried out in 2008/2009, the evaluation looked at 1,420 Youth Restorative Justice cases. The evaluation was funded by the Scottish Government and carried out by the Viewpoint organisation in co-operation with Sacro.

The research confirms international findings which have been overwhelmingly positive about the value of this method of dealing with crime as a means of addressing the harm caused to victims and reducing risks of re-offending. Our study showed over 90% of both young people responsible and the people harmed by the offending were satisfied with their experience of taking part in restorative justice. Of those responsible, 90% said taking part in restorative justice made them want to change their behaviour for the better and 75% thought they would not re-offend. Previous research cited in the report also shows that people are generally more satisfied with restorative justice compared with standard criminal justice processes.

Lothian & Borders Police, Sacro and City of Edinburgh Council hosted a major one-day conference on Restorative Practices and Young People – the first of its kind to be held in Scotland. The March conference was held in Edinburgh's Assembly Rooms and attracted over 100 delegates from education, social work, voluntary sector and police.

Sacro's Work with Schools has involved three principle activities:

1. Consultancy and staff development sessions to Local Council Services.
2. Developing Sacro's Youth Justice and Community Mediation services work with schools and children's residential settings.
3. Raising the profile of Sacro's work with schools within the UK and internationally.

Consultancy and/or training sessions have been delivered with schools in 11 local authority areas. This activity has included Peer Mediation and Restorative Practice awareness-raising, training and 'training for trainers'. Sacro Youth Justice and/or Mediation services have also been supported in developing significant roles with schools and children's residential settings in many of these areas.

Sacro's National Co-ordinator – Work With Schools, contributed to the planning or content of four major conferences and developed effective links with the Scottish Government's Positive Behaviour Team including joint delivery of staff development sessions.

Sacro's work with schools was cited positively in a new book, two journal articles and various press reports.

Case Study: West Dunbartonshire Youth Justice Service

In a recent case, a young person aged 12 had accepted responsibility for causing damage to a bench and grounds of a children's nursery in Dumbarton and was referred to Sacro from the Reporter to the Children's Panel.

The young person expressed a wish to apologise and make amends for what she had done and the nursery manager agreed to a face to face meeting with her, facilitated by a Sacro Youth Justice Worker. Sacro met with the young person on nine occasions to prepare for the meeting by working on rules, emotional intelligence and problem solving.

During the meeting, the manager expressed the upset felt by the staff, the children and their parents as some of their hard work had been damaged. The nursery is a place where the children should feel safe and this had also been affected by the incident. There were financial impacts too as the bench had been rendered unusable and the manager had to commit considerable time analysing CCTV to establish what had happened.

Having explained her actions the young person apologised and the nursery manager gave thanks for and accepted the apology. An action plan was agreed between them on how the harm might be repaired.

To make amends, the young person agreed to carry out a reparative task. This involved weeding a section of the nursery garden to allow the children to plant in this area and decorating 12 bicycles with streamers for a sponsored cycle the children were doing in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. This was a charity close to the young person as she had been affected by cancer when younger. Both tasks were completed successfully and a closing report submitted to the Reporter to the Children's Panel.

Operational Review

Service Closures during 2009/2010:

- > Dumfries and Galloway Community Mediation
- > Irvine Community Mediation
- > North/South Lanarkshire Bail Service
- > North/South Lanarkshire Youth Justice
- > Inverness Intensive Support & Monitoring Service
- > North Edinburgh Intergenerational Project.

New services during 2009/2010:

- > Ayrshire Arrest Referral
- > Aberdeenshire Homelessness Project
- > Aberdeen (Tillydrone) Persistent Offenders Project
- > Glasgow Community Reparation Service Pilot Project
- > East Lothian Workplace Mediation
- > East/West Lothian Amber Project
- > Edinburgh Landlord Mediation
- > Fife Circles of Support and Accountability Pilot.

In their inspections,
the Care
Commission scored
Sacros Supported
Accommodation
services as 5 (good)
or 6 (very good).

Continuous improvement has always been a cornerstone of Sacro's operational delivery. Ensuring we meet the requirements of stakeholders is crucial to successful service delivery and this year, we have worked to enshrine this culture of improvement in all we do by putting a performance improvement framework in place. This will become increasingly important as services are expected to deliver ever more effective and efficient services while budgets are being squeezed from all sides.

The way we negotiate new and existing contracts has changed markedly this year with the traditional approach of negotiating directly with funders being steadily replaced by competitive tendering. Tendering places a high demand on resources and many voluntary sector agencies are experiencing a skills gap when it comes to completing these – often complex – processes.

There is a danger that local knowledge of services, relationships with funders and the communities they serve can all suffer with this competitive approach but one of the great advantages of the voluntary sector is its flexibility and creativity in times of change. This is a major shift in how we work and deliver services but we are constantly evaluating our procedures with a view to improving all aspects of service delivery.

Sacro has lost some services this year as they have gone to tender but we have also retained and added services. Where we have lost out it has not been due to any lack of quality, highlighting the financial pressures faced by our funders.

Whether successful or not, tendering places a high demand on Human Resources through staff being TUPED to other organisations or changes in the staffing structure for future delivery. Morale too can be affected yet throughout all of this, the key strength of our staff is their commitment to service delivery and the continued priority given to service users. In talking to other organisations we are fully aware that these emotions are not unique to Sacro.

To support and assist Sacro in moving forward in the tendering environment, our operational management is supported by external training to help improve our competitive edge.

The Roles and Responsibilities Review: Stage 3 (RRR3) was borne out of the Sacro Strategic Plan 2008–2011 and commissioned to review Sacro's senior management structure. The key principles for RRR 3 were:

- > To ensure our senior management structure meets the needs of Sacro in the current climate by examining the roles of senior manager operations and advisors
- > To examine the roles of Heads of Services
- > To ensure capacity for contraction but the ability to respond to growth.

The review was concluded in 2009 and saw our four Senior Managers (Operations) and our three specialist advisor posts becoming redundant. Within the new management structure there were opportunities for redeployment for all involved. Implementation of the new structure was concluded in February 2010 and Sacro is carrying out a modular training programme for all service managers to enhance or develop their skills in leading and managing in a continuous changing environment. We have also appointed a Business Change Manager to support staff and help steer the organisation through the changes both externally and internally.

Care Commission inspections were carried out on all our Supported Accommodation services and the outcomes in the main were scores of five (good) and six (very good) across all our services. This was an excellent morale booster for those involved in the delivery of these services and demonstrates the continuous improvement and consistency of practice we continue to strive for across Sacro.

Business Change Programme.

Sacro is currently implementing a major Business Change Programme aimed at securing and building for the future. A Business Change Manager was appointed in February 2010 to support our programme of significant organisational change and restructuring. The changes build on Sacro's existing strengths and reputation for quality whilst supporting improvement and innovation throughout the organisation. The change programme also recognises the current economic climate by matching capability to available funding.

Various projects, including Performance Improvement, Evaluation, Service User Engagement, Communications and Business Development – each designed to enhance current policies and practices in these areas – are overseen by a Change Programme Board.

Significant resources have been invested by Sacro for the support of staff and managers undertaking change in order to ensure service delivery and quality are not compromised.

Performance Improvement Project

This coming year, Sacro will implement a Performance Improvement Model (PIM). This tool is currently used by our Youth Justice services and will now be applied to all services within the organisation. The project will improve Sacro's ability to properly evidence the quality of our services by using a recognised national evaluation tool.

New recording procedures for criminal justice services and a system for evidencing outcomes will be used by service managers and staff to evidence Sacro's commitment to continuous performance improvement across the organisation.

The Project directly relates to three key areas of Sacro's strategic plan, namely:

- > Direct Provision of Services
- > Influencing Policy, Legislation and Practice
- > Outcome Evaluation, Monitoring and Research of all our Services.

The project will commence by the end of June 2010 with a full progress report available by September 2010. The project, including a six month evaluation and review will be completed by 31 March 2011.

Research and Evaluation

In the past year, Sacro has made a number of changes to its Research and Evaluation Function. The organisation is currently developing a national Research and Evaluation Framework which will support services to ensure they are delivered to the highest standards possible. There will be an increasing emphasis on outcome measures as well as a continual monitoring of outputs by services. This will result in new systems being put in place which will provide a rich spectrum of evidence by which the services can be judged. Sacro is committed to partnership working in this respect and, as such will be making use of resources, skills and knowledge from a number of academic institutions.

The organisation also intends to commission individual research in order to demonstrate the efficiency and effectiveness of its services. Database development will support these agendas and as such there will be an increased focus on key performance indicators within services. This data will be invaluable to the organisation, funders and other key stakeholders.

Sacro's Building
Blocks for Change
are transforming
how we approach and
develop:

Evaluation and
Performance
Management

Engagement

IT Strategy/
Infrastructure

Business Development

Communications

Financial & Cost
Management/
Procurement

Our People.

The result will be an innovative and comprehensive strategy which will set the benchmark for ensuring the "user voice" is heard across the organisation.

108 full time,
95 part time staff
and 102 volunteers.

Service User Involvement

Service user involvement is one of our strategic priorities. For many years Sacro has been proud of the way in which it has engaged with service users in terms of receiving feedback regarding their experience of the service provided. However, we believe these strengths could be enhanced and to this end, the organisation is developing a national service user strategy. The result of this piece of work will be a strategy which uses feedback from current and ex-service users at both Board and Service level. It will be supported by a range of new systems to improve how services users can feedback their views to the organisation. This will include the use of focus groups and online feedback systems.

Additionally the organisation will improve how it uses the information received from those who use the services to improve them. The result will be an innovative and comprehensive strategy which will set the benchmark for ensuring the "user voice" is heard across the organisation.

Information Technology

The Information Technology (IT) team responded to over 2,500 IT requests via the helpdesk. The team continues to manage the Sacro intranet and maintains Sacro's IT and telephony infrastructure throughout Scotland.

The IT team works closely with Service Managers to provide performance data to aid service improvement and delivery. The team are also responsible for producing data for annual, Board and research reports.

A further review of Sacro's intranet was undertaken during the year and improvements are currently being implemented to improve its speed, functionality and content.

A project board has been created to review and implement Sacro's IT Strategy in 2010/2011 and to also review and develop the IT infrastructure currently in place.

Human Resources

The Human Resources (HR) team continues to provide support to employees on all human resource matters. The team aims to ensure that Sacro is able to recruit and retain staff with the required skills and knowledge to contribute to the achievement of Sacro's mission.

The HR team has supported Sacro in maintaining best practice by reviewing existing policies and drafting new HR policies.

In addition, the change programme and resultant staff restructuring have placed increased pressure on the HR Team during the year, through the provision of additional advice and support to inform the process.

Finance

In 2009/2010, Sacro's turnover amounted to £8.5 million.

Criminal Justice Services continue to represent the main source of expenditure (60%) with Youth Justice and Community Mediation accounting for 21% and 19% of the total respectively.

Audited accounts are available on request.

During 2009/2010,
Sacro's turnover
amounted to
£8.5 million.

Income (£'000s)	
Funding from Local Authority Service Level Agreements	7,720
Scottish Government Funding	558
Rent and Service Charges	119
Other Income (including Bank Interest)	128
Total Income	8,525

Expenditure (£'000s)	
Criminal Justice	5,276
Youth Justice	1,820
Community Mediation	1,691
Governance Costs	18
Total Expenditure	8,805

The financial environment in which Sacro operates has changed significantly during 2009/2010 and Sacro has had to adapt rapidly to its changing circumstances. Sacro has undergone a significant period of transformation during the year which has reduced the tiers of management within the organisation and focused resources upon front-line service delivery.

Sacro has upgraded its finance system during 2009/2010 and this will be rolled out across the organisation in the coming year. The upgraded system will enhance the financial information available and encourage improved efficiencies and reduced costs through more effective purchasing of supplies and services for our operations.

The Sacro Trust

The Sacro Trust is constitutionally separate and aims to provide small grants to individuals in the process of rehabilitation. A total of 53 grants, averaging £165 were awarded in 2009/2010. Grants were made to assist with tenancy items (household goods) and to enable access to training courses.

The Sacro Trust
approved 53 grants
this year - averaging
£165.

Sacro have been successful in securing funding to carry out a number of pilot projects.

Over 50 news releases and statements issued.

45,000 visits to Sacro website this year.

Business Development

Increased pressures on local authority budgets and the wider financial climate has made it necessary for Sacro to compete in order to sustain our current services, as well as seeking to develop areas of new business.

Recognising we must develop more efficient services that we can sell to commissioners and funders, Sacro have started a project to implement a new Tender Management Process. This will be implemented in the coming year, supported by a programme of training for all service managers.

It is also important to recognise that tendering for public sector contracts is not the only method of generating new business. In the last year, Sacro have been successful in securing funding to carry out a number of pilot projects and we are also in discussions with partners to develop some social enterprise activities that will be less reliant on funding from other agencies over the long-term.

Communications and Media

Sacro continues to be proactive in seeking media coverage and has issued over 50 news releases and statements this year. Contributing to the news agenda helps raise the profile of the organisation and we continue to be contacted regularly by the media for our views and opinions. Regular exposure in the news media also reinforces and promotes our views and we make a point of responding to requests and providing spokespeople at every opportunity.

We continue to produce our national newsletter *Sacrosanct* as well as *SCMC News*, a regular newsletter for the Scottish Community Mediation Centre.

The Sacro website received almost 45,000 visits in the period covered by this report with visitors spending an average of over two minutes on the site. The site was further developed to carry links to relevant news stories and this facility is updated on a daily basis. Work on forging links with other sites and regular updating has also seen the site achieve and maintain a very high ranking and presence on Google's search facility.

Sacro also administers and maintains the Scottish Community Mediation Centre website. Regular development meetings ensure this site is kept up to date and more content is being added all the time.

Sacro services regularly attend seminars and exhibitions over the course of the year and the communications department continues to provide services with a high standard of leaflets and display material.

We regularly receive requests from Advanced Higher students for assistance with Modern Studies dissertations on criminal justice subjects. Although we try to accommodate students where possible, this has proved to be a time-consuming exercise in the past as they have been arranged on a one-to-one basis. Last March we invited students and teachers from schools in Edinburgh and the Lothians to attend a presentation and Q&A event with us at National Office. Such was the demand; we ended up having two, two hour events with almost 70 students and teachers attending. Feedback was excellent and schools have been very keen for us to continue hosting events in the future. We are currently planning further events at National Office for early 2011 and hope to offer something similar in other parts of the country.



"Sacros put me on the right track. Since getting out of court and meeting with my worker and getting her support, my life has totally changed for the better. I'm getting help with employability now, through Transition. I've only got positive things to say about Sacro - you've been excellent."

Nick, 28 years old from Edinburgh, who was 'topping up' his methadone prescription with illicit methadone. Sacro Edinburgh Arrest Referral Service.

"Speaking to the mediation service has been really good for me. The benefit has been getting things off my shoulders just by talking about it. It made me think that a lot of it is so silly, quite child like at times and I've been able to stand back and look at things in a different way."

Client, Sacro Highland Community Mediation Service.

"He was very affected by the face to face meeting. He seems to understand, for the first time, how his actions affect others. I think he realises the harm they had done and the way it affected people."

Parent of Young Person Responsible for offending, Sacro Aberdeen Youth Justice Service.

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