



Annual Review 2010/2011

Creating safe and cohesive communities by reducing conflict and offending

Key Achievements 2010/2011

- > Women's Mentoring Service established in North Lanarkshire and Fife areas, and shortlisted for Howard League "Community Programmes" award.
- > Development of Willow Project working with vulnerable women in partnership with NHS Lothian.
- > Sacro's Community Reparation service in South Glasgow secured under competitive tender delivering supervision of unpaid work under Community Payback Orders.
- > Development of 'whole systems' approach to early intervention with young people in criminal justice extended from Aberdeen to other local authorities in Scotland.
- > Sacro nominated as 'charity of the year' by young people from S4/5 Aberdeen Schools participating in 'The Recruit' Programme run by North East Enterprise Trust.
- > Jointly designed and hosted a 'think tank' seminar on alternatives to custody and secure accommodation for children and young people in partnership with Scottish Consortium on Crime and Criminal Justice.
- > Development of Integrated Offender Management Project in partnership with Lothian and Borders Police and City of Edinburgh Criminal Justice Social Work.
- > Sacro competitively tendered and secured services in Orkney and Fife, and also gained significant new services supporting homelessness and young peoples accommodation commissioned in Elgin.
- > Joint collaboration with the Air League and Deeside Flying Club on pilot project to divert young people from prosecution to personal development opportunity.



Esther Robertson
Chair

I WAS delighted to join the Board of Sacro in June 2010 and to be elected Chair in September that year. It has been a privilege to work with such an able and enthusiastic team of people, both the Board members who volunteer to give their time so willingly and the staff who are so committed to delivering for our client group.

I would pay particular tribute to Paul Morron, my predecessor as Chair, who made such a significant contribution to the organisation in a variety of capacities over many years. He was, and still is, a tremendous supporter of Sacro and the valuable work it does and we hope that he is enjoying a well-earned retirement.

As many Annual Reviews say, it has been a challenging year but I am pleased to say it is one which has seen the organisation make significant progress. The staff have actively engaged in the Business Change Programme which has seen major improvements in communication, finance and performance.

The new environment is tough with tight finance and a much greater requirement to tender for contracts. Despite the uncertainty this creates for staff, they have risen to the challenge and continued to support service users in their efforts to transform their challenging and difficult lives.

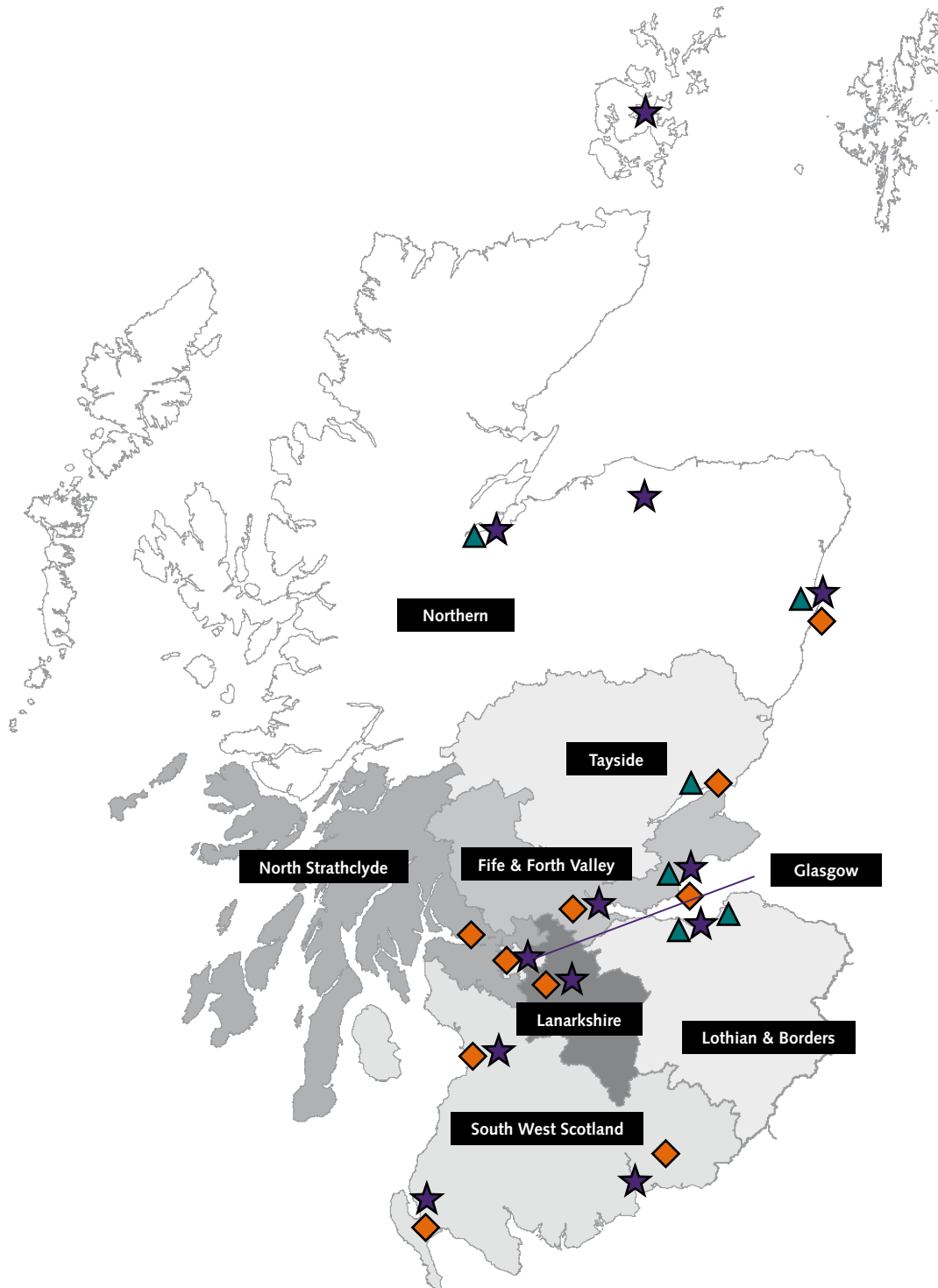
The shift in the Government's approach to sentencing, including the new Community Payback Order, offers a real opportunity for Sacro to demonstrate its expertise and experience in this area and we are developing plans to enable us to contribute to this crucial priority. This new approach was the topic of our Annual Lecture in November 2010 addressed by the Cabinet Secretary, Kenny McAskill MSP. The event was well attended and I was heartened by the support and encouragement the organisation received from its many supporters.

The future of public services in Scotland continues to be uncertain but the Board and the management team have a firm grasp of the issues and the opportunities which face the sector as well as the organisation. We are working on the new strategic plan for the next three years which will focus the organisation on continued delivery of high quality services to reduce offending, develop our capacity to contribute to new thinking and to ensure continued improvement in our governance and management.

I would like to record my warm thanks and appreciation to all who contribute to the organisation and in particular to Tom Halpin, our Chief Executive, with whom it has been a pleasure to work over the last year. His energetic leadership and ambitions for the organisation are matched only by his drive to ensure that Sacro plays its part in building a safer, fairer, more successful Scotland.

This year, Sacro engaged with almost 14,000 referrals.

Service Profile AUGUST 2011



Key to Services

- Criminal Justice ★
- Youth Justice ◆
- Community Mediation ▲



Tom Halpin
Chief Executive

Sacro provided 67
services in 22 locations.

In presenting our Annual Review, I am conscious that the numbers and results, though highly satisfactory, don't tell the whole story.

Sacro's services are delivered by people; our dedicated staff, volunteers and Board members. It is their support for, and dedication to, our clients and funders, that safeguards our communities and reduces offending. I want to thank them for their dedication and commitment at a time of tremendous change in our sector.

In many ways 'change' is the theme of this review. Since last year, the appointment of Esther Robertson as Sacro's Chair has guided our strategic development. Esther has brought a strong sense of purpose and great energy to the role, giving us confidence in the direction and purpose of the organisation.

My appreciation extends to all Board members, but I wish to make special mention of David Croft who stands down. His counsel and support to myself and Sacro staff was freely given and went well above and beyond the call of duty.

It is pleasing to report that Sacro's finances, having previously been in deficit, have now returned to a modest surplus. This has been achieved through stringent cost control and business changes including restructuring across our National Office and Sacro Services. Crucially, it has also been achieved by focusing on the quality of our services.

We knew that the year would be challenging. While our financial accounts report a continuing decline in overall turnover at £7.95m, our strong operational performance has meant the decline from £8.5m is not as severe as it might have been. Indeed our wide range of funding streams reflect services delivered throughout Scotland, spanning Criminal and Youth Justice, Mediation, Supported Accommodation and Schools services. These have provided us with the necessary resilience and enhanced our reputation as a leading service provider in the sector.

Clearly, financial planning must remain a high priority. However, the budget does not dominate our strategic thinking. For me, it is essential that sound business acumen and an understanding of our clients and partners' needs are evident at both Board and operational levels.

There is a sense that our Business Change Programme is now having significant effect with welcome buy-in from staff that reflects our emphasis on empowerment and services. Supported by the development of our performance management framework, we are making good progress with the roll out across all services of the Performance Improvement self evaluation model (PIM). This and our continuing programme of staff briefings demonstrate our commitment to improvement and communication. Being part of change is generating a real sense of purpose, even when change challenges individuals and the organisation alike.

This year saw the retirement after many years service to Sacro, of Keith Simpson, our Director of Operations and, more recently, the appointment of his successor, Paolo Mazzoncini. Paolo joins us with a strong reputation gained as a professional social worker, Government Advisor and latterly, Senior Social Work Inspector. Paolo's appointment strengthens Sacro's leadership, as we develop the quality of our services and support our people.

There are many splendid examples in this review of the quality and value of our work, including pathfinder work like Aberdeen's 'whole systems' approach to Youth Justice, now being adopted elsewhere across Scotland, and the expansion of our Women Offenders Mentoring Service. These, and many other projects, underline Sacro's commitment to flexibility and service quality in everything we do.

I am particularly pleased with the progress we made this year in developing our service user's voice throughout the organisation. This will continue, not only in influencing service delivery, but the policy and direction of the organisation.

Following the Scottish Parliamentary Elections, we welcome continuity in criminal and community justice policy. Through Sacro's active involvement in Scottish Government's Reducing Reoffending Programme, in the coming year I am confident we will build on our capacity as a thinking organisation, helping partners develop and promote policies that work.

Thank you for taking the trouble to read our review. I am confident Sacro has made significant progress in delivering our mission. As ever I welcome your views and suggestions to help safeguard communities and reduce offending. Please write to me at:

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Sacro Board 2010/2011

Chair

Paul Morron MBE (retired 23/09/2010)
Esther Roberton (elected 23/09/2010)

Depute Chair

Elizabeth Carmichael CBE

Treasurer

Robert Marshall

Alan Baird (co-opted 23/09/2010)

Mr Neil Ballantyne

Mr Graham Birse (elected 23/09/2010)

Mr David Croft (resigned 30/06/2011)

Mrs Jo Knox (elected 23/09/2010)

Sheriff M G O'Grady QC

Professor Geoff Palmer (elected 23/09/2010)

Graham Paterson (co-opted 23/09/2010)

Professor Lindsay Thomson

Observers

Mr Robin Duncan

British Association of Social Workers

Mr Joe Griffin

Scottish Government Justice Department

Chief Superintendent Mark Williams

Lothian & Borders Police

Honorary President

Rt. Hon. Lord Cullen of Whitekirk KT

Secretary and Chief Executive

Tom Halpin



High school students from Aberdeen at a gala dinner held to recognise their achievements in North East Enterprise's "The Recruit" programme. The students chose Sacro as their "Charity of the Year".



Left to right: With the help of Jail Guitar Doors, Jonny Neesom and Leon Walker learned to play and write songs while in prison. They now perform and help to promote the scheme with musician Billy Bragg and Alan Miles, director of "Breaking Rocks" – a filmed documentary of the project. Sacro and the Scottish Prison Service have helped bring the project to Scotland.



Two of the young people who participated in Sacro's collaboration with the Air League and Deeside Gliding Club. The event gave the young people an opportunity to spend some time flying, followed by a residential course where they learned more about aviation and could engage further with Sacro services and support.

John was referred to Sacro while he was in prison by the Phoenix Addictions team. This referral was based on his drug misuse and his accommodation needs on release; he had been a heroin user since the age of 15 years having experienced a chaotic childhood.

Prior to his release, Sacro Throughcare staff met with him on three occasions. Despite being from the Fife area and not familiar with Edinburgh, John stated he wanted his accommodation to be based in the city. This affected his eligibility for housing in Edinburgh to the extent he only initially qualified for 28 days accommodation and did not receive a 'priority' status.

John began looking at his pattern of offending with Sacro whilst in prison. He realised the detrimental influence his peer group might have on him and how this might increase the likelihood of him offending in future. He was also aware of the links between offending, drug use and the boredom factor of not being in work. It was this desire to break the cycle of offending that convinced John he needed to resettle in Edinburgh rather than return to his previous life in Fife and possibly continue with offending behaviour.

Sacro Throughcare staff arranged a pick-up from the prison gate on the day of his release in order to ensure his attendance at – and support him in – his appointment with City of Edinburgh Council Housing Options Team. Following this interview, John was offered a place in a hostel in Edinburgh.

This placement allowed for stable accommodation where his housing needs were addressed fully. John was allocated his Silver Priority award with the support of the staff team there.

John was given information on the services provided by the Community Addiction Recovery Service in Edinburgh. He asked that his Sacro worker would attend with him as he sometimes felt uneasy in new group situations. John is now drug-stable on a prescription with a view towards reduction and is more capable of coping with his substance misuse.

With Throughcare staff support, John attended a series of appointments with Job Centre Plus and was placed on work experience with a youth hostel where he successfully completed the eight week training programme. He was subsequently offered a part-time position with the youth hostel and continues to work there.

John was keen to point out that without the help of Sacro Throughcare Service in prison, on the day of his release and subsequently, he would have returned to both his abuse of substances and inevitably his offending lifestyle.

Service Developments

Sacro's Criminal Justice Services responded to over 5,000 referrals.

SACRO'S primary focus is – and always has been – the support and welfare of its service users. We do this by providing offenders with effective interventions to support stability in their behaviour and help them live a life, free of offending. For those harmed by offending, we provide restorative services to help them address that harm and move on to lives, free of fear. Where there is disagreement and misunderstanding, we provide mediation services to help people and communities come up with their own practical solutions to co-exist, free of conflict.

We have worked hard this year to optimise the performance of our existing services while remaining innovative in our service provision.

Youth Justice: This innovation is exemplified by Sacro's involvement in the Whole Systems Approach to early and effective intervention with youth offending. Sacro's Aberdeen services are actively involved in this initiative which brings a number of services together to respond and provide support for young people at the earliest opportunity. This approach is showing very positive results and our work with this group continues to develop across Scotland.

Women Offenders: Our focus on women offenders has made great progress this year with the introduction of our Women's Mentoring Services in North & South Lanarkshire and Fife & Forth Valley. This approach uses volunteer mentors to help women offenders return to their community following imprisonment. Early engagement and support is of particular benefit to these women at such a crucial period of transition for them. By developing a supportive relationship, the services contribute to an overall reduction in offending by increasing the service user's self confidence, self esteem and engagement with those agencies that can assist with their resettlement. Service users themselves often remark on how necessary this support is in stopping them reoffending. The service was shortlisted for a "Community Programmes Award" by the Howard League for Penal Reform and it is hoped we can develop the service in other areas of Scotland over the coming year.

Women offenders have some of the poorest health of anyone in society today and it can be daunting for them to try and get the help that they need. In partnership with NHS Lothian, Sacro has continued to develop its "Willow" project in Edinburgh to deliver life skills to women who have come into contact with the criminal justice system or who are at risk of offending. The programme teaches life skills from cookery and nutrition classes to financial and household management. Full healthcare advice is offered including cervical cancer screening, dental care and sexual health advice.

Sacro's Throughcare services received 443 referrals resulting in 2,918 contacts with service users.

Criminal Justice: An Integrated Offender Management (IOM) project has been developed in partnership with Lothian & Borders Police, City of Edinburgh Criminal Justice Social Work, Scottish Prison Service and NHS. Sacro's Edinburgh Arrest Referral Service and its partners identify prolific offenders with drug or alcohol misuse issues and provide intensive support to encourage desistance from offending and reduction of their drug/alcohol misuse. Input from police

Eve and Scott had been neighbours for about 10 years. When the mediators met with both parties separately to talk things through, they both indicated that they had never really got on even though they did not really know each other. By the time the referral was made to the service, the parties had stopped speaking to each other and were making tit for tat complaints to the police and the housing service.

Eve felt that Scott was unfairly blaming her for rubbish being dumped in his garden and being falsely accused for playing loud music at various times of the day and night. She thought Scott could be blaming her for music that was actually being played by someone else in the block. She was upset and angry that he displayed his anger by banging doors and shouting loudly and was worried about the effect his behaviour and her own anxiety was having on her family. Scott was very annoyed that rubbish was being dumped in his garden and was convinced Eve was asking her family to stomp around the flat deliberately to annoy him and playing loud music only when he was at home. Both parties felt anxious and frustrated at the situation and felt no-one was listening to their needs. Both talked about the effect of the conflict on their mental health and both were looking to move house to get away from the stress of the situation.

Both parties wanted to try to find a solution to the difficulties but were very worried about how they would cope with meeting each other. They felt that the safety and neutrality of a mediation meeting would be far better than meeting each other unexpectedly in the street. They had been avoiding each other of late as any chance meetings resulted in a short exchange of abusive comments and rude gestures. The mediators worked through their anxieties with them by visiting them separately several times and helping them to prepare for a mediation meeting.

The mediators arranged to meet with both parties individually shortly before the joint meeting. Both parties were very agitated at this pre-meeting and were presenting as confrontational and aggressive. The mediators decided it would not be productive to hold the meeting and advised the parties it would not take place that day. It was agreed that the mediators would check in with them both two weeks later to look at next steps.

When the mediators got back in touch with the parties they told us that they had happened to meet unexpectedly one day. One of the parties decided to “bite the bullet” and apologised for not being able to take part in the meeting. The other party responded to this approach and indicated that they just wanted to be able to put things behind them. They spent some time talking and agreed that a number of their complaints were “historic” and about behaviours they had each displayed some years previously. They agreed it had been really helpful for them both to hear that the other wanted to try and resolve the situation by taking part in a meeting and felt that there was nothing left to try to resolve.

The mediators checked in with them every few weeks to see how things were going and after three months, both agreed they were happy for the case to be closed and that they would contact the service if they needed help with any future challenges. No further complaints have been received by the referrer since the case closed.

Names have been changed to protect identity.

and other partners helps us monitor offenders' progress to provide an accurate picture of their needs and ensure interventions are effective and appropriate. This approach has been very successful in other parts of Scotland and England and all partners are confident about the project's potential to reduce offending levels within the community.

This year, Sacro's provision of supported accommodation services for offenders has been enhanced with the acquisition of significant new services in Moray. The services were secured through a competitive tendering process and provide support and accommodation for homelessness and young people in Elgin.

Mediation: Although Sacro's mediation services have endured a challenging year with regard to securing and maintaining funding, Community Mediation remains a cornerstone of our commitment to early intervention as an effective method of reducing conflict.

Restorative Practices: This year, we completed the pilot phase of the Time to be Heard project. The project offers restorative practice as support to survivors of historical in-care abuse. The success of this pilot highlights Sacro's pre-eminent role in such work in Scotland. This is an important and innovative piece of work and we are continuing to discuss how this might be taken forward and adapted to address other areas requiring similar support.

Schools: Work with schools has continued through a number of Sacro service teams including Youth Justice, Community and Street Mediation. This has included significant activity in Perth and Kinross, Fife and Aberdeen, where further funding was secured for continuing work with schools in 2011/2012. Throughout the year, Sacro's National Coordinator: Work with Schools was involved in delivering training and consultancy to individual schools in eight local authorities and represented Sacro on the Scottish Government's Restorative Justice Champion's Group, as a Board member of Restorative Practice Scotland and at a number of national and international events.

The latter part of this year saw the publication of Sacro's suite of Continuing Professional Development courses for education staff. This offers a modular approach to staff training which can be tailored and delivered to suit local authority needs and priorities. Three local authorities have already commissioned training from this programme.

Partnerships: Many of these services are provided in partnership with other agencies and that trend continues to be an important aspect of our work. We have reviewed and enhanced working practices for our Intensive Support & Monitoring Services for offenders subject to multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs). As a result, we believe we are in a much better position to further expand the Service on a national level. We have the resources and skilled staff available to continue providing this very valuable multi-agency approach and to the management of high risk offenders in the community.

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

Sacro's Community Mediation services received referrals for 4,000 households this year involving 1,245 cases.

88% of Sacro mediation cases had a successful outcome.

A young person was referred to the service with two road traffic offences. A meeting was arranged with the young person, and their family. He explained that he had been a passenger in a stolen car which had been involved in an accident with a parked car. He described how his friend had stolen his Mum's car keys then they took her car and drove around in it. He told of how they had crashed into a parked car, damaging both the car they were in and the parked car. The young person said they regretted getting into the car in the first place and thought it had been a stupid thing to do.

The young person said he would like to make amends for his part in the offence and was willing to meet with the person whose car had been damaged.

A meeting with the person harmed took place. She explained how she was unable to afford the repairs and the accident had caused difficulties getting to and from work and taking her children to school. She said that she was embarrassed driving around in a smashed car and would have to find the money to buy a new car when her MOT was due.

The person harmed said she would like to meet with the young person as she felt it would give her the opportunity to ask him questions about why he did it and to tell him how she was affected. She also said that she felt this opportunity may help him to think differently in the future and keep out of trouble and she would like to help make a difference.

A Restorative Justice Conference was arranged and extensive preparation work was carried out with all parties. This prepares people to participate in a restorative process by looking at the facts, consequences and future in regards to the offence.

The young person, their parent and the person harmed met. This meeting followed the structure of the restorative process. Firstly, the facts are discussed. The young person explained the circumstances surrounding the damage to her car. This enables the young person to take full responsibility for their part in the offence. The person harmed explained to the young person how their actions and behaviour had affected her and her family. This deals with the consequences and enables the person harmed to ask questions, get answers and enables the young person to hear exactly how people have been affected.

The young person apologised for his part in the offence and the person harmed accepted his apology and thanked him for having the courage to meet with her. In order to look at the future part of the restorative process, the person harmed asked the young person about their future plans and discussed how offending behaviour can affect those plans. She was able to share her experiences of how offending behaviour within her own family had affected everyone. The young person's parent was able to describe the stress and shame they have felt with regard to his offending behaviour. The young person was able to respond to this and acknowledge the areas in his life that are causing him difficulty and how he would like to change.

An Action Plan was set and it was agreed that the young person would continue to work on these issues as part of a behaviour programme which would be supported by Sacro.

Operational Review

New services started in 2010/2011:

- > Edinburgh Restorative Justice Service
- > Edinburgh Alcohol Groupwork Service
- > Edinburgh Arrest Referral Service
- > Edinburgh Throughcare Service
- > Aberdeen Assertive Outreach project
- > Aberdeen Court Support for Young People project
- > Aberdeen Youth Intensive Support project
- > Moray Adult and Young Persons' Homeless Supported Accommodation Service
- > Fife Circles of Support & Accountability project
- > Fife Womens' Mentoring Service
- > Glasgow Community Reparation Service
- > Motherwell Womens' Mentoring Service
- > Ayrshire Procurator Fiscal Diversion Project

Services closed in 2010/2011:

- > Edinburgh Supported Accommodation
- > Ayrshire Arrest Referral
- > Highland Youth Justice

CONTINUOUS improvement has always been a cornerstone of Sacro's operational delivery. Ensuring Sacro meets the requirements of stakeholders is crucial to successful service delivery and this year, Sacro has worked to enshrine this culture of improvement in all activities by implementing a performance improvement framework. This will become increasingly important as services are expected to deliver more effective and efficient interventions within a climate of increasing financial constraints.

Sacro's approach is proactive and the key strength of our staff is their commitment to service delivery. We continue to support and invest in the development of our staff as we adjust to the changes in the external environment and subsequent contraction and expansion of services.

Property reviews are ongoing to ensure we are making best use of our resources and that the locations meet the demands of our strategy to retain and strengthen our reach to all Scottish communities.

The Care Commission was integrated in to the new agency: Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) from 1 April 2011. To ensure Sacro fulfils its responsibilities and develops quality standards and learning, we have introduced the SCSWIS Champions Group. The Group will provide internal supports for our service managers as well as a group approach for reviewing inspection reports and identifying areas for service improvement and policy changes.

Jim was one of the first referrals from the Procurator Fiscal to the Ayrshire Youth Diversion Team in September 2010. He had been charged with assault and had a previous theft by housebreaking charge. At his initial interview he advised that he assaulted his neighbour who had threatened his family earlier that day. Jim stated that there was ongoing conflict between the two families but understood the seriousness of the situation he was in and acknowledged the consequences of any further offending. He stated that he was willing to participate in the Youth Diversion Programme and the Procurator Fiscal was duly informed.

At the time of referral Jim was not in education, training or employment. He had left school and approached a local project offering skills for work training and placements but he failed to attend regularly and therefore lost his place. He stated he was unhappy as he had nothing to do all week and frequently went out at the weekend drinking and risking further offending.

Jim started the six week Youth Diversion Programme and completed sessions entitled 'Offending Behaviour', 'Victim Empathy', 'Alcohol Awareness', 'Drug Awareness' and 'Personal Safety.' Jim's attendance was erratic but he managed to complete the programme and participated well throughout. He advised that he had cut down substantially on his alcohol intake as a result of learning about the risks associated with binge drinking.

Jim had stated he was keen to seek employment but was not sure where to turn to after handing out his CV to various places with no success. The Youth Diversion Worker agreed to contact the local project again to discuss the possibility of Jim returning to the course. The project worker was reluctant given Jim's recent lack of commitment but agreed to fund a life skills course which Jim attended. This led to a work placement at a local plant hire firm and it was recently confirmed that he has secured an apprenticeship with the firm.

In completing the Youth Diversion Programme, Jim learned how to ignore the ongoing conflict with his neighbour. He reduced his alcohol consumption and was given the opportunity to re-establish contact with the local training programme. The Procurator Fiscal was satisfied that Jim had changed his attitude to offending and was pleased to hear he was committed to gaining employment. She upheld the recommendation made by the Youth Diversion Team not to prosecute. At the time of writing Jim has not had any further offences and has successfully completed the first two months of his apprenticeship with excellent feedback from his employers.

Financial Position

During 2010/2011, Sacro's turnover amounted to £7.95 million.

DURING 2010/2011, Sacro's turnover amounted to £7.95 million.

Criminal Justice Services continue to represent the main source of expenditure (57%) with Youth Justice and Community Mediation accounting for 23% and 20% of the total respectively.

INCOME	£'000s
Funding from Local Authority Service Level Agreements	6,785
Scottish Government Funding	722
Rent and Service Charges	68
Other Income (including Bank Interest)	293
Total Income (excluding pension adjustments)	7,868
EXPENDITURE	£'000s
Criminal Justice	4,365
Youth Justice	1,734
Community Mediation	1,572
Governance Costs	21
Total Expenditure (excluding pension adjustments)	7,692

The financial environment in which Sacro operates remains challenging and the organisation continues to adapt rapidly to its changing circumstances. Sacro has undergone a significant period of transformation over the past two financial years, designed to increase competitiveness and enable services to demonstrate their effectiveness against clearly defined performance criteria linked to outcomes. The 2011/2012 financial year presents further challenges to Sacro but the actions taken during 2010/2011 ensures Sacro is well placed to respond.

THE SACRO TRUST

The Sacro Trust awarded 77 grants this year totalling £12,880.

The Sacro Trust is constitutionally separate and aims to provide small grants to individuals in the process of rehabilitation. The Trust had an increase in demand for grants last year with 77 grants awarded totalling £12,880. 18 grants were either returned in full or unspent monies returned totalling £2,327.

Events and Initiatives



Sacro's Youth Justice services worked with over 1,400 young people this year with over 75% of cases completed successfully.

An audience of almost 200 attended this year's Sacro Lecture.

The Whole Systems Approach to youth offending in Aberdeen has resulted in a drop of almost 10% in detected youth crime from the previous year. Sacro is a major partner in providing this Early and Effective Intervention.

A PACKED Playfair Library in Edinburgh heard Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill MSP deliver the 2010 Sacro lecture. In his lecture, "Community Payback: Getting the Balance Right", Mr MacAskill stressed the benefits of dealing with offenders within the community and the need to balance appropriate payback to the community with rehabilitation to reduce the risks of further offending.

We continued our involvement with schools by holding events for students of Advanced Higher Modern Studies. The events comprise an introduction to the justice system and the voluntary sector's role in it, followed by a question and answer session where students can focus on the information they require for their dissertation work. Once again, these were well attended and the feedback received was overwhelmingly positive from both teachers and students.

Sacro organised a meeting with representatives from the Scottish Prison Service and the musician Billy Bragg to explore ways in which his "Jail Guitar Doors" project could be developed in Scotland. Jail Guitar Doors was set up by the singer in 2007 with the aim of donating musical instruments to prisons to help them use music as a means of achieving the rehabilitation of prisoners. As a result, the initiative has been rolled out in a number of Scottish prisons.

Sacro's Community Reparation Service in Glasgow provided community service team placements to assist with the refurbishment of a community-based centre for children and young people in the Arden housing estate in Glasgow's south-side. The centre featured on the Channel Five TV show "Colin and Justin on the Estate" and the two presenters returned later in the year to officially open the Arden Chillout centre. The 1,200 hours of community service input transformed the centre into a valuable resource of which the local community and those who worked on it are immensely proud.

Young people from S4/S5 schools in Aberdeen participated in a business-based programme called 'The Recruit', run by the North-east Enterprise Trust. The concept was loosely based on TV programme, 'The Apprentice' with the successful student winning a one year, salaried work placement. The candidates completed a series of assignments over the year with all monies raised going to a charity of their choice. In keeping with the TV theme, the students used a "Dragon's Den" style grilling of local charities to choose who would benefit. Sacro were represented by Graeme Pyper whose persuasive "pitch" resulted in Sacro being chosen as their Charity of the Year. Sacro joined in congratulating the young people on their achievements at a gala dinner held in their honour.

Sacro is collaborating with the Air League and Deeside Gliding Club to offer a development project which diverts young people from prosecution by providing a personal development opportunity with the club. The one-day event gives young people the opportunity to spend some time flying, followed by a residential course for selected participants where they learn more about aviation and engage further with Sacro services and support.

Building for the Future

LAST year, Sacro embarked on a major business change programme aimed at securing and building for the future. The first phase of this programme was completed during 2010/2011 with the implementation of our “people-oriented” projects in: Service Improvement Teams, Performance Improvement, Development Activities, Service User Involvement and Communications Strategy for Business Change. A series of four “Briefing Events” were held in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth to introduce these projects to every staff member in Sacro.

Considerable progress has also been made with our “Infrastructure” projects covering: Monitoring and Evaluation, IT/Infrastructure, Tender Management Process and Financial/Cost Management. Development of these projects is ongoing with many elements already implemented.

With Board involvement, we have developed a Service User Involvement Strategy. This strategy will result in the implementation of a number of service user focus and advisory groups across the organisation to feed relevant issues to management, Board and vice versa. Additionally, key staff and Board members have been trained in the development of new and alternative tools, tips and techniques for Service User Involvement.

Sacro has been using the “Viewpoint” evaluation tool to collect data on outcomes from its youth justice services for some years now. The online service is capable of collecting a great deal of valuable data and Sacro is now developing the system for introduction across all its criminal justice services.

The formal project management structure applied to all these projects through Sacro’s Programme Board has achieved great success since its adoption. We are confident this approach will continue to help us in building a strong, secure and vibrant organisation.

Achieving and maintaining the highest standards of governance and management is a strategic priority for Sacro across all Board, operational and supporting activities. In recognising the importance of audit to sound governance, a review of Board governance and management arrangements has resulted in the establishment of an Audit Committee, separated from the previous arrangements within Finance Committee.

Sacro’s Womens Mentoring service in Lanarkshire engaged with 42 women offenders, 79% of whom stated they were less likely to offend because of the service they received.

When interviewed, 57% of Sacro’s Housing Support Service users in Dumfries and Galloway said they would most likely have reoffended were it not for the service.

"If I hadn't have got the support, I think I might have gone downhill again and ended up back inside. I would have had nobody to talk over my problems with. I'd have been left and my thoughts would have gathered momentum until I re-offended. If I didn't have the support, I would've just ended up back in prison. I know that for a fact."

Service user, Sacro Housing Support Service, Dumfries & Galloway

"They are very helpful and someone is always there if you need someone to talk to. I have also become close with my befriender from Sacro. We go out bowling, go for tea and I know she is there for me anytime. I have never reoffended since working with Sacro."

Service User, Sacro Women's Mentoring Service, Lanarkshire

"Records show in the past year the women who have been referred have either decreased their offending rate considerably or have no new offences."

Referrer, Sacro Women's Mentoring Service, Lanarkshire

"Absolutely treated politely. The mediators are very good at their jobs and were in touch all the way. There was no room for doubt as every step at each stage was adequately explained. They played their roles as mediators and facilitators of peace process and the end resultant effect of peace and reconciliation. They were very much unbiased to both sides."

Client, Sacro Community Mediation Service, Aberdeen

"We were at stalemate with the parties concerned. Receiving regular complaints ... and also complaining about staff ... despite our best efforts to resolve the situation. Thank you."

Referrer (Housing Officer), Sacro Community Mediation Service, Highland

"Kept fully informed what was going to happen. Very supportive and accommodating. I feel my son has benefited from restorative justice and will be less likely to reoffend in the future. I felt that it opened up a dialogue between myself and my daughter. I liked the way my opinions were asked for."

Parent/Guardian of young person responsible, Sacro Youth Justice Service, Fife

"Since May 2007, Sacro has been a key partner of the multi-agency Youth Offender Management Group, addressing low level youth offending. This sees Sacro accepting approximately a third of all referrals coming from the Group, offering a wide range of diversionary options for young people. Once a piece of work is undertaken with a young person, Sacro submit a comprehensive report detailing participation as well as levels of understanding. However, should a young person not engage for any reason, Sacro bring the referral back to the Youth Offender Management Group, seeking alternative solutions for intervention. Sacro continues to be an integral member of the Youth Offender Management Group, providing appropriate, proportionate and timely responses to youth offending".

Youth Issues Co-ordinator, Community Safety Dept, Fife Police

"Thanks guys. You made a difference with me. I now look at things differently. You've kept me without a charge for nearly a year and if it wasn't for you I'd have murdered someone in jail as I knew we were innocent. Thanks."

Service user, Sacro Bail Supervision Service, Ayrshire

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE