

sacroSANCT

February 2008

SAFEGUARDING COMMUNITIES – REDUCING OFFENDING

Inspiring Initiatives to Build On

WELCOME to the second edition of Sacrosanct.

2007 was an exciting year for Sacro. We welcomed a new Chair, Paul Morron, and a new Treasurer, Robert Marshall. The organisation's turnover exceeded £10 million, with 75 services being provided in 35 different locations.

We believe one of the reasons we continue to grow in strength each year is our willingness and ability to work openly with related agencies and partners.

The success of this partnership approach is evidenced very clearly in the work being done at the Edinburgh Community Links Centre. The ministerial opening of this 'Centre of Excellence' was a highlight of 2007.

This newsletter tells you more about the Centre, as well as many other achievements, of which we are proud. As always, we welcome any comment on issues covered in this newsletter.

Susan Matheson, Chief Executive, Sacro.



Sacro's Hon. President Receives Top Honour From The Queen

Sacro congratulates its Honorary President, The Rt Hon The Lord Cullen of Whitekirk – one of the most senior and distinguished members of the Scottish Judiciary – on his appointment as a Knight of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle. This prestigious honour has been awarded by the Queen for outstanding service to Scotland. The title is held by only 16 people in the country.

We would like to take this opportunity not only to congratulate Lord Cullen, but also to thank him for his continuing support for Sacro and its objectives.

Don't Miss ...

Cabinet Secretary for Justice Leads Sacro Conference

WITH the Cabinet Secretary and other key speakers such as Julius Lang, Director of Technical Assistance at the Centre for Court Innovation in New York, this year's conference promises to be a stimulating one.

The conference, *Community Sentences – Making Scotland Safer*, will encourage delegates to consider the real benefits of developing and implementing practical and sustainable services to make community sentences effective.

A lively programme of lectures, workshops, panel discussion and voting will ensure that delegates are fully engaged and gain maximum benefit from involvement in this one day event.

The date for your diaries is 5 March, 2008, at the Royal College of Physicians on Queen Street, Edinburgh.

For further information please visit the Sacro website at www.sacro.org.uk.

To book a place please email events@national.sacro.org.uk.



Kenny MacAskill MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, will address delegates at this year's Sacro Conference.



MBE FOR ONE OF OUR OWN

Sacro has another reason to celebrate. Linda Orr, from Kelty in Fife, one of the organisation's longest serving volunteers, has been awarded the MBE.

Linda has been a volunteer in the organisation's supported accommodation service for 18 years. The support she provides is unique, in that she accommodates young offenders in her own home, sometimes for as long as two years.

Chief Executive, Susan Matheson, said

"Sacro is enormously proud of Linda and thrilled that her dedication to young people in Fife has now been publicly acknowledged. She welcomes vulnerable young people into her family to give them the 'TLC' she says they need!

"Supported accommodation is a vital part of any rehabilitation programme. It is much more difficult to re-enter society without a settled place to live and support to tackle the problems that lead to offending. Supported accommodation provides the opportunity to re-learn practical and social skills required for independent living.

"Over the years, Linda has provided a home environment for countless vulnerable young people trying to break the cycle of offending and her support has been invaluable. This is evidenced by many of the young people staying in touch with Linda for years after they move on to independent living".

THE FUTURE



Paul Morron MBE, Sacro's new Chair.

IT WILL be a pleasure for all at Sacro to support Paul Morron in his new role of Chair and Robert Marshall as Treasurer. Both Paul and Robert have been active Board members. Paul has a wealth of experience in Criminal Justice, having been a consultant to the then Scottish Executive on the introduction of the Drug and Youth Courts. Prior to this he was Head of Criminal Justice Social Work Services in Glasgow City Council and earlier in his career introduced Community Service Orders to Scotland, as well as being a founder of Sacro.

Of his new role, Paul said

"Sacro has a proud heritage and record of public service in Scotland and it is on this solid base that we will build an organisation for the future. The pace of change in the criminal justice, youth justice and community mediation fields in which we work is significant and I want to support Sacro in being at the cutting edge of change, working with flair and imagination, giving value for money, and a service brand that is synonymous with quality and dependability.

"But, providing a quality service in this age is not enough; we must be able, through research and evaluation, to demonstrate the effectiveness of our work. Sacro, and each of our service

areas, will continue to develop clear and measurable objectives together with apposite outcome information. That way we can enhance further our influence on policy direction and contribution to achieving safer communities. It is towards achieving these ends that the new Board will work in close partnership with our officers".

Robert Marshall, the new Treasurer, is Head of Organisational Development, former Head of External Relations and Marketing and former Head of Fundraising at the University of Glasgow. Most of his experience is in business, marketing and finance: he has worked all over the world in the electronic engineering sector. Robert said: "I am delighted to take over the reins of Treasurer from my outstanding predecessor, Jandy Stevenson, who has left the Sacro finances in excellent shape. However, although our turnover remains healthy at over £10m, the tough external environment and public sector financial settlement means that Sacro can expect a difficult 18 months or so ahead. It is, therefore, important for us to be recognised as an efficient provider as well as a quality provider. If we can do this through the efforts of our excellent people, we are well placed to get through this storm and emerge an even stronger organisation.



Robert Marshall, Treasurer, Sacro.

Minister Supports 'One-Stop Shop' for Rehabilitation

THE END OF 2007 saw Sacro celebrating the official opening of its Edinburgh Community Links Centre (CLC) by Fergus Ewing, MSP, Minister for Community Safety. The Centre is the only one of its kind in the country and an initiative chosen as a Centre of Excellence by the Lothian and Borders Community Justice Authority.

“... too many prisoners are caught in the “revolving door” of short-term prison sentences. We are determined to break that cycle of criminality”

Fergus Ewing MSP, Minister for Community Safety.

Based at 25 Nicholson Square, it houses a range of statutory and voluntary agencies working in partnership, offering best practice under one roof. These agencies provide guidance and support with addressing offending; family issues; health; substance use; sustainable tenancies; accommodation; benefits, employment and training; literacy and numeracy skills; and legal advice.



At the launch of the Edinburgh Community Links Centre.

Left to right: **Neil Meads**, Service User; **Erich Murch**, SPS Director of Partnership and Commissioning; **Ian Norman**, Service Manager, CLC; **Susan Matheson**, Chief Executive, Sacro; **Fergus Ewing MSP**, Cabinet Secretary for Justice; **Paul Morron**, Chair, Sacro; **Iain Smith**, Health and Homelessness Co-ordinator, NHS; **John Muir**, Convenor, Lothian & Borders Community Justice Authority.



Above: Service user, Neil Meads and Fergus Ewing MSP officially opened the Centre.

Below: The Minister meeting staff from StreetLegal – one of Sacro's many partner agencies at the Centre. This legal advice project improves access to civil legal advice for those excluded from traditional services, including prisoners.



Fergus Ewing, MSP, Minister for Community Safety, said,

“It’s a tremendous honour to launch the pathfinder Community Links Centre, a one-stop shop that will provide the continuity and support that so many short term prisoners require at the crucial point of release.

“A smooth transition from prison to the community provides offenders with the opportunity to rebuild their lives and avoid further offending. Effective support mechanisms in the community are vital in order for that transition to prove successful.

“Currently too many prisoners are caught in the ‘revolving door’ of short-term prison sentences. We are determined to break that cycle of criminality but while we will make every effort to reduce crime, we will never completely eliminate it. Therefore, we must support prisoners and offer them a positive path out of repeat offending.

“I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the very valuable work by Sacro and the other voluntary sector organisations that, in partnership with the statutory agencies, are delivering with this and other services to offenders and their families”.

“... we must support prisoners and offer them a positive path out of repeat offending”

Fergus Ewing MSP, Minister for Community Safety.

The Centre is funded by the Scottish Government, through the city of Edinburgh Council. For a list of agencies working out of the Centre, please refer to our website: www.sacro.org.uk.

A New Name and a New Role

WHEN The Community Mediation Consultancy & Training Service becomes the Scottish Community Mediation Centre later this month, it will also take on a new responsibility. Funded by the Housing Voluntary Grant Scheme, The Centre is to be a national resource for good practice.

This means the Centre will develop and manage a qualification system for all community practitioners across Scotland. Mediators working for Sacro and the local authorities will attend training run by the Centre and be assessed to ensure standards are maintained and consistency achieved. In addition, there will be an on-line resource for sharing experiences which will be available to all mediators.

Ian McDonough, Sacro Community Mediation Specialist Advisor, said

"This is an exciting development and one that is welcomed by all those working in the field. We are looking forward to introducing new initiatives alongside the training, the first of these being a mentoring scheme for new mediators. We will also be developing a model for intervention in areas experiencing continually high levels of neighbourhood conflict".

For further information on The Centre please call 0131 624 9200.

Event Calendar Highlights

> Cabinet Secretary for Justice to Address Sacro Annual Conference

Sacro Annual Conference	5 March 2008
<i>'Community Justice – Making Scotland Safer'</i>	
Kenny MacAskill, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, will address the conference. The other key speaker is Julius Lang, Director, Technical Assistance Center for Court Innovation in New York.	
Venue: Royal College of Physicians, 9 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JQ	
Please call 0131 624 7270 or email events@national.sacro.org.uk .	

Sacro Expertise

Sacro's experience and knowledge is sought by other European organisations. In addition to our own conference, Sacro is taking part in:

European Mediation Conference, 10-12 April 2008 in Belfast. Sacro is co-presenting a workshop on Mediation and Anti-Social Behaviour with Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Further information: www.mediationconference.eu/register.htm

Building Restorative Justice in Europe, 17-19 April, Verona, Italy. Sacro is co-presenting a workshop at this event. Further information: info@euforumjrj.org or www.euforumjrj.org.

SASO Annual Conference, 12 May, Glasgow. Sacro will be speaking about Circles of Support and Accountability at the conference. Further information: www.sastudyoffending.org.uk

Try Walking In My Shoes!

HOW DOES IT FEEL to be picked on or intimidated? How does our behaviour affect others?

Sacro's Aberdeen Street Mediation Service, which engages with groups of young people in the streets to raise levels of tolerance and understanding between them and the wider community, recently took its expertise into the school setting. Conflict had arisen between a group of school children on their way home from school and the local community.

With the support of the head teacher, the service delivered a five-week conflict resolution course with children in primary five and primary six. The creative and interactive sessions had a profound effect on the attitude and behaviour of those involved.

Through role play and games the children learnt to understand constructive conflict resolution and developed skills to help deal with difficult situations. In one game they were asked to pretend to be 70 years old, just back from hospital, having had a hip replacement. The door bell is constantly rung by a group of noisy, unaware

children. Time after time this happens and the old person is distraught. "How do you feel says the trainer?" "Tell me how you feel?"

Through this kind of interactive learning, the children began to understand the problems faced by others and were able to imagine what life is like for those facing daily conflict. They learnt how to deal with conflict in an everyday setting and control their anger and frustration without resorting to fighting or arguing. The children said:

"I learnt that if we all work together we can stomp out conflict".

"I love my mum but I fight with her so I am going to deal with conflict differently now".

After the training, the deputy head teacher said, "a pupil came to see me at break because he was arguing with another pupil. He didn't want to end up fighting so asked if he could sit with me until he had calmed down. Here was a child putting into practice what he had learnt. I was extremely pleased and encouraged to see this".

For more information on Aberdeen Street Mediation please call 01224 560570