

sacro SANCT

March 2009

SAFEGUARDING COMMUNITIES – REDUCING OFFENDING

New Beginnings

JUST as spring heralds a time of awakening and renewal, I join Sacro at a time of significant change and modernisation of the criminal justice system in Scotland, with the long and eagerly awaited release of the *Criminal Justice & Licensing Bill*.

The changes suggested within the Bill, particularly in the areas of: serious and organised crime; age of criminal responsibility; establishing of a Sentencing Council; presumption against reduction of short term sentences; provision for effective new Community Payback Orders; and, support for those who fall victim to offenders, are actively welcomed and applauded by Sacro in driving forward initiatives to make our communities safer.

Sacro has for many years been at the forefront of delivering services to build stronger and safer communities. The opportunities presented within the new Bill combined with the challenging economic and funding climate means that in keeping with the theme of spring and awakening/renewal, Sacro must review and continue to build upon its expertise in the sector. By modernising and ensuring that Sacro is fit-for-purpose, we will bring a freshness of thinking to influencing and informing policy while delivering robust services that make communities safer within the context of 21st century criminal justice.

My focus and aspirations over the next 12–18 months and beyond, will be to work with colleagues and Board members to ensure that excellence and continuous improvement is at the core of Sacro's activities and services. With an emphasis on quality, we will strengthen Sacro's infrastructure to ensure that it is responsive and competitive; build effective and productive partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholders; utilise knowledge management to influence and inform policy and practice; invest in and develop the expertise of employees; and, design and deliver services that reflect the needs of service users.

I feel immensely privileged to be leading Sacro at a time of such progressive legislative changes within the criminal justice landscape. Such significant change will undoubtedly bring a future of plentiful challenge and opportunity but I have no doubt that with the talent and commitment of its employees, Sacro will be in a strong position to respond to these.

Collaboration and partnership is a key theme within this newsletter, reflected in our forthcoming joint conference on 18 March 2009 with Victim Support Scotland entitled 'Repairing the Harm'. The focus of the



conference will look at the benefits of restorative justice practices for individuals and communities affected by crime while addressing the harm caused by the offence. We are pleased to have the support of key speakers, Frank Mulholland QC, Solicitor General for Scotland and Professor Ivo Aertsen, K.U.Leuven Institute of Criminology, who will talk about lessons learned from international perspectives on restorative justice practices. This is particularly topical and current given the measures within the *Criminal Justice & Licensing Bill* to protect the public and provide greater support for individuals who have been the victim of, or witness to, crime.

Having been in post for a few weeks, I must express my grateful thanks for the warm welcome I have received from colleagues and external partners. I look forward to visiting all of Sacro's services in due course and meeting our many partners across local authorities, voluntary and private sector agencies, other public and statutory bodies and external funders. Through working together we will continue to foster a culture of innovation and excellence, leading to safer communities and transformational change across the whole of the criminal justice sector.

Karen Anderson
Chief Executive

Sacro's National Office will be relocating to 29 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3QN.

There will be no change to telephone numbers and the new offices will be fully operational by 23 March.

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SAFEGUARDING COMMUNITIES – REDUCING OFFENDING

Addressing the Alcohol and Offending Link

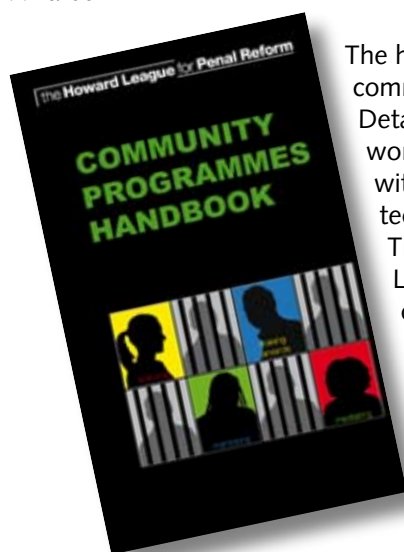
THE ALCOHOL GROUPWORK SERVICE is a low-cost, short-term intervention programme aimed at those whose offending is linked to alcohol use. The service aims to address the nature, causes and consequences of alcohol-linked offending behaviour and to reduce the risk of re-offending. The service is unique to Scotland and has been available since 1991 in the Midlothian/Edinburgh area. Based at Sacro's Community Justice Centre in Edinburgh, it is open to men and women (though group work is single sex) over the age of 16 and usually on a Probation Order.

Referrals are received from Supervising Social Workers and the Courts with assessments being based on the history and pattern of alcohol use and offending. For a successful referral the client must be compliant, acknowledging a link between using alcohol and offending and showing evidence of motivation and a capacity to change.

The programme runs for eight consecutive weeks, though it is anticipated that it will be increased to 10 in the future. Groups take place in the evening as well as during daytime hours in order to fit in with clients' employment commitments. Group work includes both an educational and cognitive behavioural approach and teaches skills in controlling alcohol use, consequential thinking, goal setting and decision making. Participants keep a diary of their alcohol use and self report changes in their behaviour. Supervising Social Workers will then report back to the Court on progress being made.

The programme has consistently seen good results with typically an 87% completion rate of the course and a significant reduction in alcohol use and offending. Following the completion of the course clients and their Social Workers meet up again eight to ten weeks later to see if targets have been met and to assist in future plans.

The Service's Manager, Simon McLean, recently represented Sacro at a roundtable parliamentary meeting at the House of Lords to launch the Howard League for Penal Reform's Community Programmes Handbook. Simon was invited following the Alcohol Groupwork Programme's success in being recognised as an outstanding scheme in their Community Programmes Awards.



The handbook identifies creative and successful community programmes from around the UK. Details of different schemes are covered from work with high risk offenders to working with children using a number of different techniques to reduce the risk of re-offending. The meeting was hosted by Baroness Linklater and was attended by Members of Parliament, including Edward Garnier, Shadow Minister for Justice, Chris Huhne, Liberal Democrat Shadow Home Secretary. The Rt. Hon David Hanson MP, Minister of State addressed the meeting. Copies of the handbook can be ordered from www.howardleague.org.

Simon was also successful in securing a place on a residential three-day course run by the Scottish Social Enterprise Academy for future leaders of the Third Sector entitled *Journey to Succeed*. The course, funded by the Scottish Government, had a very competitive application process and was attended by other organisations such as Turning Point Scotland and the Cyrenians.

REGULATING THE WORKERS WHO PROVIDE CARE IN SCOTLAND

THE Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the organisation responsible for registering people who work in social services and regulating their education and training.

There are over 138,000 social service workers in Scotland and the SSSC will register key groups of these workers in phases. Registration will increase the protection of people who use social services by ensuring that workers are trained, are qualified for the job that they are doing and are properly regulated.

The SSSC also publishes and distributes Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers containing standards of conduct and practice.

For further information on which key groups are registering now, for registration phases for the future or to request a free copy of the Codes of Practice please contact:

Scottish Social Services Council
Compass House,
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee DD1 4NY

Lo-call: 0845 60 30 891
E-mail: enquiries@sssc.uk.com
Web: www.sssc.uk.com

EX-ARMED FORCES? VETERANS' FIRST POINT

This new organisation has been established to provide a first contact point for veterans, including recently discharged, serving personnel and their families.

Specialisms include counselling and mental health but any issues can be dealt with including housing and homelessness, relationships, family life etc.

Staff and volunteers are ex-service.

Drop in for a chat at 2 South Charlotte Street (west end of Princes Street), Edinburgh or phone 0131 220 9920.

North Edinburgh Intergenerational Project goes from Strength to Strength.

THE North Edinburgh Intergenerational Project is a unique community service co-ordinated by Service Team Leader and Pilton resident Tracy Stewart-Kellagher. Tracy, a long standing local community activist, is passionate about the work being achieved at the centre and aims to "empower a community" by providing self help tools in community mediation for all age groups and to attempt to become an established, positive role model within the community.

The NHS run Pilton Community Health Project which houses the Intergenerational Project is also home to a number of other services including smoking cessation clinics, a healthy eating fruit and vegetable home delivery scheme, Women Supporting Women and Volunteering for a Change. The dedicated building is welcoming and accommodating making it an accessible port of call for residents; the multi agency approach has been praised by service users. Tracy believes that the uniqueness of the project, given that the majority of staff and volunteers are local residents, will make it a model for effective working practice throughout Scotland. Volunteers to the service are eligible for certificated Sacro training which has had a positive effect on the number of local applicants offering their services. Tracy believes that the service would not run as effectively without local knowledge of grassroots issues and the training itself is empowering for volunteers.

To further the mediation services provided within the community the project will be hosting four Intergenerational Conferences for local residents in the following months. The first conference will be held on 26 March 2009 at the Muirhouse Millennium Centre, further events will be held at later dates at Drylaw, Granton and Pilton. Tracy has begun work in local schools to raise awareness and find suitable delegates. Each conference will be held in a different corner of Greater Pilton in an effort to reach specific local residents and to ensure that the different age groups meeting at the events will be ones who would regularly see each other on their local streets. Tracy identified the need for strategically locating the venues understanding that a young person from Granton would not attend an event in say Muirhouse or Drylaw. The events have drawn inspiration from the *Them and Us* intergenerational conference held in Falkirk last year whereby members of a local community of all ages and status meet to discuss issues affecting the area, be this young people feeling that they have nowhere to go or older people feeling intimidated by groups of young people on the street.



Tracy Stewart-Kellagher (right) with UK Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith and Cammy Day, Councillor for Edinburgh Forth ward.

To continue the momentum, volunteers from the conferences will be invited to help organise a community gala, which if successful, could become an annual feature in the area. Tracy feels that this could help cement civic pride and give participants a chance to become involved with a positive pursuit. The local police force, housing authority and association, Community Development Team and Youth Workers who are involved with the project will also be present at the conferences.

The service has received much positive attention lately and was commended by Home Secretary Jacqui Smith last October when she visited the centre to learn more about innovative work being done in hard to reach areas throughout Scotland.

Intergenerational Conference
Tuesday 26 March 2009
Muirhouse Millennium Centre

Future events are being planned for Drylaw, Granton and Pilton

For further information, please contact:
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REPAIRING THE HARM

How restorative practices can benefit victims and communities while addressing the harm caused by offenders

Sacro Annual Conference 2009. In partnership with Victim Support Scotland. Our Dynamic Earth, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh. Wednesday 18 March.

We all want our lives free from conflict, anti-social behaviour and crime. However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the use of compulsory measures or imprisonment alone to deal with these issues and their impact on our lives is ineffective.

Restorative practices offer a unique and effective way of dealing with a range of harmful and damaging behaviours in our communities, our schools and our places of work. The application of restorative practices to resolve the consequences of anti-social behaviour and offending has been available to some of Scotland for over 20 years and we can now draw on vast experience and research to explore the greater use of such practices. Research carried out internationally by a large number of respected authorities shows, and Sacro's own evaluation of its services demonstrates conclusive benefits and effectiveness arising from the use of restorative practices.

Up to now, restorative practices have been used mainly within a youth context in Scotland but their application in other situations is gaining widespread acceptance on the back of considerable evidence into their effectiveness. Contrary to popular belief, the practices are not limited to youth offending or less serious offences and have been used by Sacro to successfully address the harm caused in more serious crimes including culpable homicide.

In recent years, Sacro has also pioneered the use of restorative practices and mediation to great effect in Scottish schools. Giving schoolchildren a structured and considered way of dealing with conflict among their peers and teachers has been shown to provide a very effective and important life skill. Furthermore, where conflict was not effectively dealt with and harm was caused, restorative practices were successful in achieving a successful outcome.

This year's conference will focus on the many areas in which restorative practices can be applied to meet the needs of victims and address the harm caused by anti-social behaviour and offending. In addition to key presentations by expert speakers, the conference will hold a series of dedicated "practice focus" sessions. Each session will concentrate on a specific application of restorative practice and will show how this innovative approach to repairing harm can benefit our communities and address the needs of those harmed and affected by offending.

For details and online booking, please visit www.sacro.org.uk, email: events@sacro.org.uk or phone 0131 624 7270.

Holyrood Magazine: Reducing Re-offending conference

Monday 27 April 2009,
Sheraton Grand Hotel, Edinburgh

Following the publication of the Scottish Government's *Protecting Scotland's Communities: Fair, fast and flexible justice* report in December 2008, reducing re-offending is a national priority involving those throughout the justice sector. This key event will discuss the partnerships between statutory and third sector bodies that meet the complex immediate and long-term needs of offenders once they leave prison.

This conference will feature a joint presentation from Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill MSP and COSLA Community Wellbeing and Safety spokesperson Councillor Harry McGuigan, on how they will be taking policy forward and what work is being done in partnership to deliver services where they are needed. The conference will be a key forum for debate around the key issues including health, housing, employment and addiction and include best practice examples for discussion. It will also hear from Bobby Cummines, Chief Executive of Unlock, The National Association of Reformed Offenders.

For more information or to book your place please visit:

www.holyrood.com/reintegration

