

PRESS RELEASE

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Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People Joins Heavy Weights in Community Sentencing Debate

Professor Kathleen Marshall, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, is to further enhance the impressive list of presenters at Sacro's annual conference on 5 March 2008 – 'Community Sentences - Making Scotland Safer'. The Commissioner will present an afternoon workshop following speeches from Kenny MacAskill, MSP; Julius Lang, Director of Technical Assistance at the Center for Court Innovation, New York and leading experts from the community justice charity, Sacro.

Professor Marshall's workshop will focus on her recent report on Prisoners' Children entitled, 'Not Seen, Not Heard, Not Guilty: the rights of the children of prisoners in Scotland.' The research estimates that 13,500 children are affected at any one time by the imprisonment of a parent - their rights and interests rarely taken into account. The workshop will explore the impact of custody on prisoners' children and how alternatives might help meet children's rights.

Susan Matheson, Chief Executive, Sacro said,

"The Commissioner's presence adds another important dimension to this conference and we are delighted she agreed to join us. Her workshop will focus delegates' attentions on the real cost to society, to our children and young people, whose rights are not taken into account at the point of sentencing.

"The conference aims to raise the profile of the effective work done in the community with offenders and will highlight the benefits to society of effective community disposals. Short term prison sentences have been shown to be ineffective in deterring or rehabilitating, where as community sentences have a much higher success rate. Our strong line up of speakers - and delegates made up of leading practitioners, opinion formers and professionals in the field - will ensure lively debate and positive workable solutions will be proposed as a result of this event."

Other workshops at the conference will include 'Fines, Punishments, Justice' by the Law School at Strathclyde University; 'Service Orders – the Edinburgh Experience', presented by the City of Edinburgh Council and workshops on The Edinburgh Community Links Centre, Bail Supervision and Accommodation, and Meaningful Reparation presented by Sacro.

For further information or to book please call 0131 624 7270 or email events@national.sacro.org.uk

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