

PRESS RELEASE

To: Editors

Date: 17 December 2007

New Research Confirms Link Between Homelessness and Offending

Research conducted by Sacro, the leading community justice voluntary organisation, in conjunction with Glasgow Caledonian University, confirms supported accommodation is a major factor in the successful rehabilitation of ex-prisoners back into the community. The organisation provided around 40,000 bed-nights during 2006/07.

The research was conducted with a group of ex-prisoners using the organisation's Glasgow Supported Accommodation Service, which has access to 60 temporary furnished flats. The research assessed the effectiveness of the service and identified ways to enhance the provision.

The key to reducing re-offending is not only to reduce homelessness, but to provide practical and social support required by many ex-prisoners before successful independent living can be achieved. Service users are helped with sorting out benefits, budgeting, emotional support and health related issues.

100% of those interviewed valued the practical support from Sacro in accessing housing and benefits; 88% of those relied on emotional support, and 57% stressed the value of help with behaviour linked to drug or alcohol use.

Keith Simpson, Sacro Head of Development and Research, said,

"Our findings confirm the strong link between supported accommodation and stopping offending. Having somewhere to live is obviously vital, but the majority of those interviewed also stressed the crucial need to have support to re-build the skills necessary for independent living, which have been lost during time in prison.

"With a national audit of supported accommodation provision currently being undertaken by the Criminal Justice Authorities, Sacro is keen to raise awareness of the strong link between supported accommodation, rehabilitation and a reduction in re-offending".

A service user said, "Coming 'out' (of prison).. it's hard work man! Every time I get out I have plans that I have made.... things I want to do, but the pressure gets too much...it's too hard... nobody wants to make things easy for you. It's like you against the world and they are not letting you in. I usually just end up doing the usual...."

In relation to the every day hurdles involved in independent living, another service user said, "On the 'inside' all these things that other people take for granted (especially housing and rent issues such as paying bills and the ability to be self sufficient), are taken away from you".

Sacro runs supported accommodation services in Edinburgh and Glasgow, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Highland, Orkney, Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Stirling and Fife.

For further information please call 0131 624 7270



National Office

1 Broughton Market
Edinburgh
EH3 6NU

Tel: 0131 624 7270

Fax: 0131 624 7269

Email: info@national.sacro.org.uk

Web: www.sacro.org.uk