

PRESS RELEASE

To News Desks

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Page 1 of 1

Alcohol Education Probation Programme Wins Award

The Howard League for Penal Reform hosted an event on 8 May 2007 in Edinburgh, to give Scottish recognition of the Award of Special Merit which they presented in London in 2006, to Sacro's Alcohol Education Probation Programme. Sacro, the leading community justice organisation, which works to safeguard communities and reduce offending, were thrilled to receive this prestigious award. The Howard League for Penal Reform Annual Community Programme Awards are supported by the Rethinking Crime & Punishment initiative. Baroness Linklater, Chair of RCP, attended the event to praise those involved in the project. Angus Skinner, Scottish Secretary; David Staples, Trustee; and Catryn Yousefi, Senior Research & Campaigns Officer; all of the Howard, attended and brought a message from the Director.

Sacro's Alcohol Education Service assists people to understand and control their alcohol-related behaviour. Its purpose is to reduce the risk of re-offending due to alcohol misuse.

The programme, which has been running for 15 years, can demonstrate a greatly reduced risk of re-offending in those that attend and complete the course. In a two-year period prior to the programme, 86% of the service users had one or more convictions but of those that completed the course, 71% had no further convictions after one year. Even those who failed to complete the course reduced their level of reconvictions.

Director of the Howard League for Penal Reform in England and Wales, Frances Crook said,

"The Howard League's annual Community Programme Awards are aimed at increasing public protection by recognising community programmes that help to reduce the seriousness and frequency of re-offending. It should be no surprise that Sacro, as a leading charity championing the importance of rehabilitation and the principles of restorative justice, received one of our awards".

Susan Matheson, Chief Executive of Sacro said,

"Alcohol is a bigger problem in our society than drugs. Two in every five prisoners has an alcohol problem and 40% of crimes are committed under the influence of alcohol. Our programme offers service users the chance to examine their relationship with alcohol and its effects on their behaviour. The skills and the control they gain with Sacro support means the likelihood of re-offending is greatly reduced".

Referrals to the alcohol programme are made by the courts and social work criminal justice teams.

ENDS

For further information please call Lisa Stewart on 0131 624 7270.