

Performance Management in Community Justice

Consultation Response

June 2012

Sacro National Office: 29 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3QN.
Telephone: 0131 624 7270
Fax: 0131 624 7269
Email: info@national.sacro.org.uk
Website: www.sacro.org.uk

Sacro is a company incorporated under the Companies Act, limited by guarantee.
Registered in Scotland. Company Registration Number: SC86651.
Registered Charity Number: SC016293.
Registered Office at 29 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3QN.



Q1 As a body commissioning or delivering community justice services, what performance management arrangements do you currently have in place? Do you have specific proposals for improving these arrangements in your own area?

Sacro has an embedded performance management framework, with services reporting on internal service-specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) monthly to Sacro's Corporate Management Group, supporting formal reporting on service level targets and outcomes to funders.

To monitor the quality of services, Sacro has also adopted and implemented a Performance Improvement Model, based on the Care Inspectorate's model, across the whole organisation to ensure that services are quality assured. Sacro is continually reviewing and developing its Performance Improvement Model to ensure that it is dynamic and meaningful. Sacro has received Investors in People (Bronze level), and Investing in Volunteers awards in relation to staff and people management.

Sacro's Research and Evaluation framework ensures that outputs and outcomes are linked with national policy and that performance is formally monitored and evaluated by staff at Sacro's national office. This framework allows staff to review service performance against KPIs on an annual basis and to produce a report that will assist the organisation to make improvements. Each Sacro service is required to address the findings of any such report through an operational service improvement plan.

Performance is also measured in terms of risk assessment using tools such as the HOMES matrix and ASSET to measure change in level of risk. Sacro are also introducing '360 degree' review of services to ensure that all key stakeholders can influence the future direction and improvements to services. Sacro measure a service's performance not only in terms of the impact on offending, but on how helpful a service has been to people who have been harmed and what it has given the wider community. There is considerable variation across Scotland in what is required by funders and establishing a simple framework would go some way in standardising Key Performance Indicators and performance management. Sacro is currently developing its internal evaluation framework to focus more on outcomes and would welcome a simple, flexible National Framework.

Q2 Do you agree with the Government's proposed principles for a future performance management framework for community justice? What changes would you suggest?

Sacro agrees that local and service level performance measurement ought to align with the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework. This should be a simple framework that makes clear what is to be measured and include input, output, and outcome measurement that is linked to financial information wherever possible. The inclusion of reconviction rates has always dominated the field and Sacro welcome the suggested inclusion of inputs, activities and a range of 'intermediate' outcomes to give a broader basis for managing performance. Linking performance management to evidence is also welcomed as this ensures that service provision is measured against indicators developed from what, when combined, has been shown to have an impact on reducing reoffending.

Sacro would suggest that care would need to be taken when introducing a financial component to performance management or improvement. 'Payment by results' has been considered in several contexts and can be counterproductive. There is a danger that services focus on the most achievable 'results' to maximise the opportunity of continued funding rather than a focus on outcomes that benefit the service user. Looking at the outcomes of a combined set of services and their impact on high level targets is less fraught with this potential difficulty. This approach would still require that specific performance indicators that are linked to capacity funding, be included in service level agreements.

For example a performance framework for each Community Justice Authority could look at how much it costs for each of their responsibilities (prevention, early and effective intervention, restriction, rehabilitation, reparation and reintegration). As a system is developed that encourages early intervention a flexible financial model, where funding can be realigned to meet the demand as it changes is worthwhile and a less threatening way to go. If the service has a demonstrable positive impact, their capacity (and funding) can be increased, if they have less impact or none, the capacity and funding could be reduced as part of a 'whole system'. The illustration used as an example of a 'result chain' in section 26 reflects this proposal in that there are a number of measurement points enabling a more sophisticated performance management system.

Sacro would stress that the Key Performance Indicators in any proposed framework must be measurable and specific guidance on where the data will be collected from, where it will be stored, how it will be analysed and how it will be reported must be made clear from the outset. Otherwise, performance cannot be managed effectively. This has been the weakness in reoffending or recidivism as outcome measures. Rarely can robust and accurate data be accessed for the length of time required to make this meaningful. Sacro would suggest that this aspect of 'performance' would be best placed in the academic arena where longitudinal research can be most effectively conducted. Locally, trends can be reported upon, but without comparison groups and time, these are not a good measure of performance.

Sacro would also suggest more reference to and the inclusion of service user involvement. The information gained from service users can be used to enhance the management of performance and influence changes made to services at all levels.

Q3 Do you agree that a future performance management framework for community justice should reflect the intermediate outcomes identified in the reducing reoffending evidence review?

Sacro agrees that the intermediate outcomes identified in the reducing reoffending evidence should be reflected in a framework. However, to avoid lengthy generic lists of 'outcomes' or 'indicators' Sacro would endorse using a list such as the one in Section 29, including addressing needs associated with drugs usage/addiction status; alcohol usage/addiction status; employment status (structured days); accommodation status; social networks (family and community); financial stability and efficacy and problem solving skills. The remaining item, cognitive behaviour is not a need, but a way of supporting people. As suggested in the response to question 2, ensuring that these indicators are clear and linked to each other as a system, thereby tiered into appropriate levels matching an assessed need would avoid overcomplicating the framework. The earlier attempts at a framework (2006) did not consider this in enough detail and could have been part of the reason that the framework was not fully adopted. Taking time to develop a tiered framework that provides not only the specific indicators appropriate to the service type, delivery level and strategic level, but also how each outcome will be measured and who will provide, collect and analyse the data.

Q4 What arrangements for measuring intermediate outcomes do you currently use in your organisation?

Sacro collects data from a variety of sources and is continually developing a framework based on the principles detailed above in the response to question 3. As new services are being developed a detailed section on outcomes is presented. This section provides the outcomes that are to be measured as a performance indicator and where the data or information can be provided by and how it will be collected.

A variety of tools is being used across Sacro. These include Viewpoint for service user feedback, The Homes Matrix and the Asset: 'What do you think?' questionnaire amongst others. However, there is currently an internal project board looking at the 'LSCMI', the 'outcomes star' and other recently reviewed outcome measurement tools to develop this further.

For further information, contact:

Billy Nicol
National Service Support Manager (Research and Evaluation)
Sacro National Office
29 Albany Street
Edinburgh EH1 3QN.

Telephone: 0131 624 7270

Email: wnicol@national.sacro.org.uk