

Volunteering Strategy 2015-2020





“**There are few better examples of good citizenship than the giving of time and effort to improve the wellbeing of others.**”

Tom Halpin, Chief Executive

Sacro is built on a strong foundation of dedicated individuals working together to ensure the best possible outcomes for people who use our services. Everything we do revolves around caring for people who need our support and this caring approach applies equally to those who carry out this work on Sacro’s behalf.

The contribution of volunteers to the work we do is immeasurable. Sacro’s volunteers provide us with much more than their time, energy and commitment. The skills and knowledge they bring has a very positive effect on the lives of those who access our services.

Volunteers matter to Sacro. In the coming months and years we aim to develop volunteering within many of our existing services and to put volunteering at the heart of new services.

We will listen to the voices of our volunteers through initiatives such as our Volunteer Development Group and highlight their achievements where the opportunity arises.

We will continue to provide volunteers with the greatest support and opportunities for development and strive for best practice in volunteer involvement. I was immensely proud that Sacro attained the Investing in Volunteers award in 2009 and am committed to maintaining this accreditation in 2017.

Sacro’s commitment to volunteering is ongoing and in implementing this strategy, we are seeking to embed the importance of volunteers in every aspect of our operations.

There are few better examples of good citizenship than the giving of time and effort to improve the wellbeing of others. To those who have made – or will be making – such a personal investment in Sacro, I offer my sincerest thanks.

Tom Halpin
Chief Executive, Sacro.

“**If it wasn’t for the help I get from Sacro I would never manage, by myself, to get to the prison to see my son, face to face. For the service and for the drivers, I can’t thank you enough.**”

Edinburgh Travel Service user



Sacro staff and volunteers being presented with Investing in Volunteers award in 2014.



“**When I retired I knew that I still had a lot to offer. I enjoy being active and also enjoy interacting with people, so decided that volunteering was a good way to meet new people and use the skills I have.**”

Helen Cullen, volunteer

Our Vision

Our vision is for a safer Scotland where the wellbeing of people within their local communities is supported, where conflict is resolved constructively and where offending and its consequences are addressed effectively and appropriately.

Our Mission

Our mission is to work nationally and deliver locally as a strong community-based organisation that seeks to create safe and cohesive communities, across Scotland.

Our Values and Principles

We are committed to working to the highest ethical and professional standards. These include: integrity; recognising and valuing diversity; promoting equality of opportunity; and probity in the use of funds.

Our practice is guided by the belief that everyone should be shown respect and be supported and empowered to take personal responsibility, acknowledging their capacity for change.

Our guiding principles are that:

- conflict is most effectively resolved through informal, facilitated resolution which assists those people involved, to identify their own lasting solutions;
- offending and its consequences are most effectively addressed through an emphasis on community disposals and sentencing, other than where there is an overriding need to protect society.

Sacro has spent over 40 years working to reduce conflict and offending in Scotland and volunteering has been an important element of our work throughout these years. Initially, volunteers provided a drop-in centre in Edinburgh, a hostel in Glasgow and travel services for families of prisoners from the two cities to Scottish prisons. In these early years, Sacro volunteers provided ex-prisoners and their families with friendship, support and guidance following release.

As Sacro has developed into an organisation where services work with communities and with offenders and their families to make communities safer, the involvement of volunteers in our services has evolved and grown.

Volunteering is the cornerstone of many of Sacro's services. Much of the work we do could not be delivered without the dedication and skills of our volunteers. Volunteers add extra value to our service delivery and do not replace paid staff.

“**I have enjoyed my overall experience. The staff and other volunteers have always been helpful, friendly and make you feel valued for your time volunteering with them.**”

Sacro volunteer



What our current volunteers do

Trained volunteer mediators within our Community Mediation Service help deliver our work with neighbours and neighbourhoods by helping people find their own solutions to conflict within the community.

Within the Women's Mentoring Service (WMS) and as part of the Shine WMS Public Service Partnership, volunteer mentors across Scotland provide additional support to women involved in the criminal justice system, helping them to build confidence and self-esteem.

Circles of Support & Accountability are trained groups of Sacro volunteers from local communities which form circles around high-risk offenders. Each circle provides a supportive social network that requires the 'core member' to be accountable for their actions.

Volunteers within various criminal justice services such as Throughcare Services, Supported Accommodation Service, Arrest Referral Service and Veterans Mentoring Service provide important additional support to offenders and their families.

Our Travel Service volunteers drive relatives and friends to prisons across Scotland, helping to sustain family relationships and facilitating the prisoners' re-integration to the community on release.

Volunteer Mentors within our Another Way Service in Edinburgh help deliver non-judgemental, one-to-one support for women at risk of, or involved in sex work.

Within our Restorative Justice Services volunteers support the facilitation of a restorative process for those harmed by and responsible for offending as well as the wider community.

Volunteers at our National Office assist in developing policy and communications.



Our Commitment to Volunteering

Sacro is committed to:

- Providing a valuable experience for our volunteers.
- Recognising and valuing the contribution of volunteers.
- Explaining the standards we expect of volunteers, and encouraging and supporting them to achieve and maintain these standards.
- Flexibility in relation to the volunteer's commitments; honouring the time commitment volunteers have agreed to give us and not expecting more.
- Providing an initial learning and development programme, good health and safety training, and on-going learning and development as required for specific volunteer roles and individual development.
- Providing regular support & supervision meetings, in an individual or group setting, with on-going support between meetings.
- Reimbursing all agreed volunteer expenses without delay.
- Treating our volunteers with respect at all times and ensuring that they are treated fairly and in accordance with Sacro Equality Policy.
- Resolving difficulties or grievances that a volunteer may have whilst volunteering.
- Communicating effectively with our volunteers and involving them in the development of our work and services.
- Maintaining our achievement of the Investing in Volunteers quality standard.

Our Plans for Volunteering 2015-2020

Our key strategic priorities are to:

1. **Embed a culture of volunteering across Sacro;**
2. **Enhance training, support, involvement and reward of Sacro volunteers;**
3. **Build awareness and reputation of Sacro volunteering in the community.**

Embed a culture of volunteering across Sacro	
To achieve this strategic priority we will:	Key objectives: what we aim to achieve
Ensure that volunteering is prominent within our organisational strategy.	Highlight volunteering within the Sacro Strategic Plan 2015-2020.
Incorporate volunteering costs and resource implications in our planning for new services and development of existing services.	Service development proposals and funding bids will include volunteering cost and resource implications and reference to the benefits of volunteer involvement.
Seek new funding to ensure we are able to develop volunteering within Sacro services.	Sufficient funding to grow volunteering across Sacro.
Evaluate services currently involving volunteers to assess capacity to involve more volunteers in current roles and what new volunteer roles can be created.	An increase in volunteering roles and numbers within services already involving volunteers.
Evaluate services currently not involving volunteers to assess whether and how we can involve volunteers in these services.	Creation of new volunteer opportunities within services not currently involving volunteers.
Ensure that staff involved in work with volunteers are confident in dealing with volunteering issues.	Relevant staff are trained and supported in dealing with volunteering issues. Job descriptions and person specifications for new staff include reference to volunteer supervision where appropriate.
Encourage a culture of open, effective and honest dialogue between staff and volunteers and amongst volunteers.	More opportunities for staff and volunteers to openly discuss volunteering issues within services and across Sacro.
Improve awareness by all staff and volunteers about the contributions made by volunteers.	More volunteer roles, stories and successes are highlighted on the intranet and other internal communication channels.
Encourage volunteering by those who use our services.	All services consider how those who use our services might become volunteers and recruit them where and when appropriate.
Ensure that we continue to meet the highest standards in volunteering.	Re-accreditation of Investing in Volunteers award in 2017.

“**Seeing the progress of our core member from the start until now and seeing the change in his confidence within the community makes it all very worthwhile.**”

Volunteer with Sacro Circles of Support and Accountability service

Enhance training, support, involvement and reward of volunteers

To achieve this strategic priority we will:	Key Objectives: what we aim to achieve
Ensure that volunteers are sufficiently equipped to carry out their role.	<p>A common basic induction course is accessible for all new volunteers.</p> <p>All services regularly review service-specific volunteer training.</p> <p>Training materials are shared across Sacro wherever possible.</p>
Monitor the ongoing individual training and support needs of each volunteer to ensure that they are confident in carrying out all aspects of their role during their time with Sacro.	<p>Meet the ongoing training needs of volunteers.</p> <p>Invite volunteers to participate in staff training when possible, to improve knowledge and skills and integrate volunteers into service teams.</p>
Provide access to more free external training for volunteers.	<p>Create a database of free external training available for volunteers.</p>
Ensure that volunteers are aware of what is happening across the organisation as well as within their service, and are encouraged to contribute their ideas.	<p>All volunteers are given access to internal communications, through the Core Brief, Intranet and other channels.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for volunteers to contribute to and participate through available communication channels.</p>
Ensure that volunteers feel they are a significant part of the Sacro team.	<p>Create more opportunities for volunteers to meet together with staff and other volunteers, both locally and nationally, for training, mutual support, and networking.</p>
Ensure that volunteering is a prominent theme within Sacro staff conferences.	<p>Invite volunteers to attend and contribute at staff conferences.</p>
Continue the work of the Volunteer Development Group.	<p>Involve more staff and volunteers in the work of the group.</p>
Listen to what our volunteers tell us about volunteering at Sacro.	<p>Carry out an annual volunteer survey.</p> <p>Act on and respond to survey feedback where possible.</p>
Reward volunteers for their achievements, so that they feel valued by Sacro.	<p>Present volunteer certificates for 2, 5 and 10 years of volunteering and for particular achievements.</p>
Thank all volunteers when they leave Sacro, so they know that their contribution was valued, and ask them about their volunteer experience.	<p>Ask all volunteers to return an exit questionnaire.</p> <p>Act upon exit questionnaire feedback where appropriate.</p>

“ I have found volunteering for Circles to be a hugely rewarding experience. I met a group of people with whom I genuinely bond and enjoy their company and whose aim is to support an individual who faces difficult challenges after having spent the vast proportion of his adult life in prison. I believe Circles support provides a firm base for safe integration back into the community and I am glad that I took the opportunity to be part of this process.

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Volunteer with Sacro Circles of Support and Accountability service



“ I love it! I believe that one of the most important factors when seeking voluntary work is to make sure that it is something you enjoy – otherwise your heart is not in it and it can become a chore. Volunteering is meant to be rewarding ”

Sacro volunteer

Build awareness and reputation of volunteering in the community

To achieve this strategic priority we will:	Key Objectives: what we aim to achieve
Create more publicity about Sacro volunteering.	<p>Make use of our website, newsletter, social media and other communication channels to highlight volunteer roles, stories and successes.</p> <p>Generate volunteering stories for local and national media.</p>
Recruit a broader mix of volunteers from across the communities we work within.	<p>Advertise volunteer opportunities in the communities where we work.</p>
Build stronger links with, and work collaboratively with, other community and voluntary organisations to develop volunteering.	<p>Nominate volunteers for awards in the community.</p> <p>Showcase Sacro volunteering at external conferences and other events.</p>
Work collaboratively within partnerships.	<p>Work closely with our partners in Shine, New Routes and other partnerships to develop common approaches to volunteering.</p>

“ Developing personal skills and knowledge is great but I really appreciate the opportunity to work with people who have difficulties and to be able to offer assistance. It is an ongoing reminder of the problems that many people have to face and the need for good public – and voluntary – services. ”

Sacro volunteer



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

