



Promoting safe and cohesive
communities by reducing
conflict and offending



SAFEGUARDING COMMUNITIES – REDUCING OFFENDING

ANNUAL REPORT 2008/2009

Key Achievements

- The Aberdeen Community Based Reparation Service received an 'Outstanding Award' from the Howard League, presented at a ceremony at the House of Lords in London.
- 'Fairer Scotland' funding was secured for a new service to work with persistent young offenders in the Tillydrone area of Aberdeen.
- A new Bail Supervision service was established in the Highlands.
- A new Supported Accommodation service has been set up for homeless young people in Orkney.
- An expansion to partnership working with Edinburgh Cyrenians now includes landlord mediation in addition to homeless mediation for young people.
- New intergenerational conflict resolution projects were set up in Falkirk and North Edinburgh.
- The Community Links Centre (CLC) now engages 14 agencies, and has increased prison contacts and numbers of users.
- The Scottish Community Mediation Centre was established to replace the Community Mediation Consultancy & Training Service.
- The total number of service users was in excess of 15,000.
- Scottish Government funding provided for a feasibility study into a joint restorative justice project with Victim Support Scotland.
- Positive Care Commission inspection reports were received; four relating to Offender Accommodation Services and two relating to Housing Support Services.
- Our Investors in People recognition was renewed and upgraded from basic to bronze award.
- Scottish Qualifications Authority accreditation allows us to provide VQ courses and assess candidates in Working with Offending Behaviour.
- The Scottish Community Mediation Centre's training courses were approved by the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland and the Scottish Community Mediation Network.
- Sacro's new National Office was established with funding support from Scottish Government.

Chairman's Report

Paul H Morron MBE



This has been a hard working and energetic year for Sacro, its Board and its staff. It has been a year where the expected difficulties occasioned by the mounting financial problems in the external environment, competitive tendering affecting existing (as well as new) services and associated business pressures have started to be felt by and inside the organisation. But it has also been a year where the pace of our programme of refreshment and modernisation of Sacro has quickened to ensure our future health and fitness for purpose for the years to come.

In last year's Annual Report, the Board envisaged a shrinkage from the then high water mark of service provision and turnover and this period of contraction has now started, with the associated pain of redundancy arising out of service cutbacks. However, good financial management has ensured that as a company we remain stable, financially sound and well able to overcome continued shortfalls next year (2009) before achieving our break even point once more during the course of the 2010/2011 financial year.

Up and down the country, our 77 services in the spheres of criminal and youth justice, restorative practices and community mediation (including schools work) continue to work and produce excellent results for individuals and communities alike. We as an organisation should be proud of the fact that we take on some of the highest risk and most difficult work in the country when dealing (often via Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements [MAPPA]) with the close supervision in the community of serious sex and violent offenders through our intensive supervisory work. There is always a vulnerability and risk to our organisation arising from our involvement in this type of work, but it represents public service at its best and gives us increased authority of not just commenting on issues but actually getting involved in them; we not only talk the talk but walk the walk, and we do so where public safety matters the most!

We said final farewell to our long standing Chief Executive Susan Matheson with a reception in her honour at the City of Edinburgh Council chambers which was gratifyingly well attended. Unfortunately her replacement was with us for a short time, but we are greatly encouraged by the appointment of Tom Halpin QPM, former Deputy Chief Constable of Lothian & Borders Police. Tom has made an energetic start as our new Chief Executive and it is already apparent that his leadership has enthused the organisation at all levels.

Next year at this time will see a refreshed Sacro, more efficient, more effective, more focussed and visibly giving increased value for money. Next year's annual report will be able to contain service results and achievements as we start to systematically evidence the impacts and outcomes of our services and we are able to continue to support and enjoy the counter-balance of the financial environment with the more

favourable community justice based policy environment. Economics may also come into increasing play of working with offenders in the community other than where there is an overriding need to protect the public.

I wish this year to pay particular thanks and tribute to our staff for their magnificent efforts and work on our behalf; they and our volunteers are Sacro. I would also like to thank the members of the Sacro Board for their unstinting efforts, advice and encouragement in moving our organisation ever forward; it has been a challenging year for all of us so your advice and support has been especially important over these past months. And to Bob Marshall and Elizabeth Carmichael, our respective Treasurer and (first) Depute Chair, my particular thanks in equal measure for your patience and encouragement!

SACRO BOARD MEMBERS 2008/2009

Paul Morron MBE, *Chair*

Neil Ballantyne

Elizabeth Carmichael CBE

David Croft

Robert Marshall, *Treasurer*

Prof. Mike Nellis

Sheriff Mike O'Grady

Jandy Stevenson

Lindsay Thomson

Salma Siddique

OBSERVERS

Mark Williams Association of Chief Police Officers of Scotland

Robin Duncan British Association of Social Workers

Jane Martin Association of Directors of Social Work

Vacancy Victim Support Scotland

Wilma Dickson Scottish Executive Assessor

IN ATTENDANCE

Tom Halpin Chief Executive

Lynda Ross-Hale Head of Operations

Keith Simpson Head of Development & Research

Andrew Philip Head of Finance & Support Services

SECRETARY

Steven Morton Executive Assistant to Chief Executive

Chief Executive's Report

Tom Halpin



I am delighted to be writing this annual report as Sacro Chief Executive. I took up my appointment on 17 August 2009 and I have been hugely impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the people who work and volunteer with Sacro. People are the lifeblood of this organisation. They are what allows us to deliver first class services and to have a positive influence in Scotland's communities.

The staff and volunteers have positioned Sacro strongly for the future and I would like to record my appreciation for all the hard work that has characterised the past year. I also wish to pay tribute to my colleague Keith Simpson. While acting Chief Executive, Keith has provided stability and continuity to the organisation during a period of change. I am grateful for his diligence.

The coming years will see the public sector facing unprecedented financial challenges. That will prompt a reconsideration of what they do and what they fund in an effort to reduce spending. This is a reality that Sacro and the wider Third Sector must understand. It means that we must focus on being flexible, on being open to change and on being able to evidence the value of what we offer. Our challenge is to demonstrate the added and best value that our services provide.

More than ever, it is important that Sacro flourishes as an influential partner in both delivering services and contributing to the policy debate. The Scottish Prisons Commission led by the Rt. Hon Henry McLeish is to be commended. It offers Scotland a real opportunity to bring about sustained reductions in offending. Making this a reality will require difficult resourcing decisions by Scottish Government, but if we are to break the cycle of reoffending then this must be a priority.

During the coming year, Sacro will continue to review and develop as an organisation, ensuring our services are designed and delivered around client and funder needs. This will include embedding a performance management framework that helps us build confidence. To further strengthen the organisation, we will undertake a major external consultation exercise, to listen to stakeholders and understand better what those needs are.

I look forward to working with you all to safeguard communities and reduce offending.

Partnership Working

Working in partnership with other agencies and organisations has always been important to Sacro. Our commitment to it is in line with the current and proposed changes, to ensure the management of offenders is tackled as efficiently and effectively as possible. Sacro continues to work in partnership with a wide range of agencies towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Sacro has a representation on the following bodies:

- Scottish Consortium on Crime and Criminal Justice (Member).
- Scottish Prison Service National Suicide Risk Management Group.
- Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum (Member).
- The Custodial Sentences Planning Group.

Research

Sacro undertakes outcome evaluation, monitoring and research of all its services. This helps us establish the effectiveness of our services and highlights ways in which practice can be improved. Effective, evidence-based research also helps us to inform and influence those responsible for national policy, legislation and practice.

Key achievements for this year include:

- A comprehensive evaluation of Sacro's Supported Accommodation services.
- Research on Restorative Justice (Diversion) services was presented at the European Forum for Restorative Justice Conference in Verona, Italy, April 2008.
- A literature review of research on Supported Accommodation for offenders was published by the Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre for Scotland in April 2008 and in the Scottish Legal Action Group (SCOLAG) Journal, June 2008.
- An article on Circles of Support and Accountability was published in the Scottish Journal of Criminal Justice Studies, July 2008 and in the Scottish Legal Action Group (SCOLAG) Journal, October 2008.
- Results of an evaluation of Bail Supervision Services was presented at the European Society of Criminology Conference in Edinburgh in September 2008.

Finance

In 2008/2009, Sacro's turnover was £9,794,082.

Criminal Justice Services continue to represent 60% with Youth Justice and Community Mediation each accounting for 20% of total expenditure.

Audited accounts are available on request.

Income (£'000s)	
Funding from Local Authority Service Level Agreements	8,117
Scottish Executive Funding	779
Rent and Service Charges	161
Other Income (including Training and Intensive Support Contracts, Donations and Bank Interest)	737
Total Income	9,794

Expenditure (£'000s)	
Youth Justice	1,789
Criminal Justice	5,785
Community Mediation	1,710
Governance Costs	19
Total Expenditure	9,303

THE SACRO TRUST

The Sacro Trust is constitutionally separate and aims to provide small grants to individuals in the process of rehabilitation. A total of 44 grants, averaging just over £135 were awarded in 2008/2009.

Grants were made to assist with tenancy items (household goods) and to enable access to training courses.

Criminal Justice Services

The year has provided a range of opportunities and challenges for Sacro's operational criminal justice services and its national advisory and development functions. The Scottish Government's proposals to replace the use of short-term custody with more robust community sentences accords with views expressed by Sacro for many years, as does their emphasis on a community payback approach. The implementation of these proposals should provide opportunities for several developments in line with Sacro's strategic objectives. The Scottish Government's intention to reduce the use of custodial remands also resulted in the expansion of Sacro's Bail Supervision services in the Ayrshire and Highland regions.

During this year the "Caledonian System" – a groupwork programme which focuses on men who have been convicted of domestic abuse offences – was accredited by the Scottish Accreditation Panel for Offender Programmes. This programme was jointly developed by Sacro and two other agencies who had been involved in the design and delivery of Domestic Abuse Perpetrator programmes for a number of years.

The Scottish Government's proposals to replace the use of short-term custody with more robust community sentences accords with views expressed by Sacro for many years.

There are also challenges arising from the reshaping of priorities within Community Justice Authorities and associated reallocation of funding from 'non-core' to 'core' services. Within the year there was some reduction in service provision, namely in relation to Supported Accommodation services for offenders. Some of these changes related directly to the change of emphasis within these services from working with "generic" offenders to those considered to be more of a risk and often managed under the auspices of MAPPA. It is anticipated that as the policy shift which encourages "resources to follow risk" increases, Sacro's Supported Accommodation services will focus more on supporting the "responsible authorities" within the MAPPA arena.



Development of the Community Links Centre in Edinburgh continues to be positive, with the increasing involvement of relevant partner agencies to create a 'one-stop shop' for people leaving prison and an increasing numbers of users. A greater number of our services are now subject to Care Commission inspections and we have been encouraged by the positive nature of inspection reports received during the year.

At a national level, Sacro was involved in the consultation for the *Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Bill* and provided oral and verbal evidence to various Scottish Parliamentary Committees including the Justice and Equal Opportunities Committees. During 2008/2009, Sacro also undertook a major piece of research focussing on its Supported Accommodation services. This work has now been completed and is believed to be the most comprehensive piece of research in the world into this area of service provision. A major costing exercise has also been undertaken in respect of our Supported Accommodation services, the outcomes of which are expected in the coming year.

Sacro also maintained a continued focus on developing innovative new services and influencing stakeholders as to their potential. These developments included ongoing promotion of the Circles of Support and Accountability initiative. Sacro undertook workshops and podium inputs at a variety of conferences in this respect. These included the Scottish Association for the Study of Offending (SASO), National Association for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA), Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS), and the Circles UK inaugural conference. Sacro were also asked by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to develop a proposal for a mentoring service using volunteers to engage with women offenders during and after their custodial sentences. We were also asked by Lothian and Borders Police to support them in terms of interventions for dealing with those charged with offences relating to "Kerb Crawling". Considerations of these proposals are ongoing.

Restorative Justice Services

A key government strategic objective states: 'We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger'. It is with this in mind that Sacro is committed to providing Restorative Justice services in which assisting persons harmed by crime is a priority. Restorative Justice work with young people contributes further to the Single Outcome Agreement indicators:

- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

In 2008/2009 there have been many changes to services both locally and nationally, reflecting the impact of the Concordat and the associated national and local indicators. Restorative Justice services have reached 89% of their capacity and have achieved a 34% meeting rate (46% in adult RJ, 22% in under 16s) and 36% participation rate for persons harmed (out of all referred cases, many of which did not have person harmed details available or they could not be contacted) and 56% for persons responsible. Overall 47% of cases came to a successful conclusion.

Providing 17 local authorities with services for persons responsible under 16 and five with services diverting adults from prosecution, Sacro continues to be the main provider of restorative justice in Scotland. The combined service provision saw 2,907 persons harmed being offered an opportunity to take part in restorative justice.

The following quotation is from a person harmed who has participated in restorative justice. It is typical of the kind of feedback we regularly receive.

In my experience of Sacro, I think I have benefitted from the service and I think that the person that helped me has been a great help. Sacro is a great service for the community to have.

During the year, Sacro started a 'reconfiguration' of restorative services, where the focus moved from the age groups of those referred to best practice. We also continued the development of the performance improvement self-evaluation which saw improvements being achieved in the second phase of implementation.



Sacro is committed to providing Restorative Justice services in which assisting persons harmed by crime is a priority.

The Government's *Getting It Right For Every Child* policy and Youth Justice framework have been welcomed as ways of establishing best practice for young people and those they harm. The proposed reforms to criminal justice sentencing will provide an opportunity to examine the potential role of restorative justice in Community Payback Orders. We have been very pleased to work in partnership with Victim Support Scotland in drawing up proposals for a joint restorative justice initiative which we hope will be submitted for possible government support in the coming year.

We were delighted to see our Aberdeen Community Based Reparation service receive a UK 'Outstanding Award' from the Howard League for Penal Reform, presented at an awards ceremony at the House of Lords in London.

Community Mediation Services

Sacro's Community Mediation services continue to make a hugely positive impact on the communities they serve, both by resolving conflicts and building skills within these communities. Community Mediation is a straightforward, tried and tested way of helping people handle conflict positively and our mediators deal with a wide range of individual and group conflicts, assisting people to find shared practical solutions to their problems. In terms of funding, the last year has been a challenging one, but we remain confident that mediation will play an increasingly crucial role in making our cities, towns and villages positive places to live in.

Mediation is an essential arm of local government initiatives in tackling anti-social behaviour, and features in the Scottish Government's recent strategy on *Promoting Positive Outcomes*. This strategy represents a welcome change of direction from an over-dependence on the use of ASBOs – particularly in respect of under-16s – and is in line with policies advocated by Sacro in this respect. In this context, Sacro has sought opportunities in the past year to gain support for local initiatives to deal with intergenerational conflict through the use of mediation and restorative practices, together with the organisation of local intergenerational events designed to improve communication and mutual understanding between adults and young people.

Sacro pays particular attention to ensuring our mediators operate to the highest standards and benefit from approved training. We are currently instrumental in the development of the Scottish Community Mediation Network's accreditation standards for mediators, services and training. This initiative consolidates Scotland's position as a European leader in Community Mediation practice.

Sacro's Community Mediation services operate within a standardised dispute classification system and benefit from a tailor-made database package which contributes greatly to ease of case management and monitoring and evaluation. This system has been commended by the UK Department of Trade and Industry as leading in its field.

A total of 1,796 conflicts involving 3,806 households were referred to Sacro's Community Mediation services between April 2008 and March 2009. The first aim of our services is to assist people in conflict to resolve their issues themselves by providing assistance which varies from simply informing people about their options or giving advice to coaching on how to approach neighbours positively. This method was used in 63% of referrals.

Sometimes, however, this approach is not enough, and our services bring people together to work out resolutions to their conflicts with the assistance of mediators. In 2008/2009 this approach was used with 654 of these cases, and success rates were high with mediation taking place in 85% of cases.



SCOTTISH COMMUNITY MEDIATION CENTRE

Sacro manages the Scottish Community Mediation Centre. Funded by the Scottish Government, the Centre assists local authorities in developing efficient and effective mediation provision. It provides a range of mediation training to housing officers, police, and many other professionals, and its five day neighbour mediation training course continues to accredit mediators throughout Scotland. The Centre also acts as the administrative base for the Scottish Community Mediation Network and its accreditation schemes.

The last year has been an extremely busy one for SCMC with a record number of people now having been trained, both through our SCMC-accredited Basic Mediation Training and our two-day Constructive Conflict Resolution Training which is now accredited by the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland. The Centre has also launched its web-based resource of downloadable materials on all aspects of community mediation, from sample policies to theoretical resources, and is in the process of developing a full range of brief CPD courses for experienced mediators.

The Centre's main priority over the last year has been the piloting and full launch of a system of accreditation for mediators, community mediation services and community mediation training. The scheme is proving very successful and places Scottish mediation well ahead of the rest of the UK in this regard. Also in development is a web-based manual covering all aspects of setting up, running and monitoring performance of community mediation schemes.

Work With Schools

This year, we focused heavily on building the internal capacity of Sacro to improve and support our delivery of Restorative Practice development work with schools. Extensive effort was also put into the delivery of direct consultancy and training services to schools and local authorities and the further enhancement of Sacro's standing in the field of Restorative Practice schools development work.

A greater emphasis was given to developing links with local authority education and children's services with a view to building more sustainable development models for service delivery. This was targeted on those authorities where Sacro either had already built a significant background in terms of schools work, or where the authority had expressed a direct interest in engaging with Sacro in this field.

During the year, 24 places were taken up on our internal training programmes (Working with Schools 2 & 3), bringing the total number of participants since inception in May 2007 to 60 for level 1, 31 for level 2 and 22 for level 3. A dedicated area on the Sacro intranet was established to promote these staff development opportunities and provide resources, news and information.

Agreement was given to explore how best to support local services in approaching funders to include a 'schools support' component in future funding agreements – a decision that has proved significant in light of the changing funding climate. Funding was secured for three ongoing schools development posts in Fife (April 2008 – April 2009) and Moray (January – December 2009).

The National Coordinator: Work with Schools, delivered direct training programmes to staff from 12 schools in seven local authorities. This work was supported in most cases by local Sacro staff, to enhance their own CPD. There was co-ordinated planning with the relevant council services in four of these local authorities and Sacro staff continued to work with schools in their own, local areas.

We continued to build collaborative links with the Scottish Government's Positive Behaviour Team, including co-delivery of staff development courses for teachers in Falkirk Council schools. Working relationships and collaborative projects were further developed with two of Scotland's teacher training providers: Moray House, University of Edinburgh, and Jordanhill, University of Strathclyde.

The National Coordinator: Work with Schools delivered workshops at national conferences and strengthened links with influential external providers who already have significant influence in Scotland.

We Are Listening

Traditionally, voluntary sector organisations such as Sacro have provided vital services to augment the work of statutory agencies, often in very high risk and sensitive areas. Through experience, research and best practice, Sacro has established innovative schemes and services and continues to play an important role in helping create safer and more cohesive communities.

As we approach the second decade of this century, we can be fairly certain of a major shift in how Scotland addresses offending and the part a modernised voluntary sector will play in this new environment.

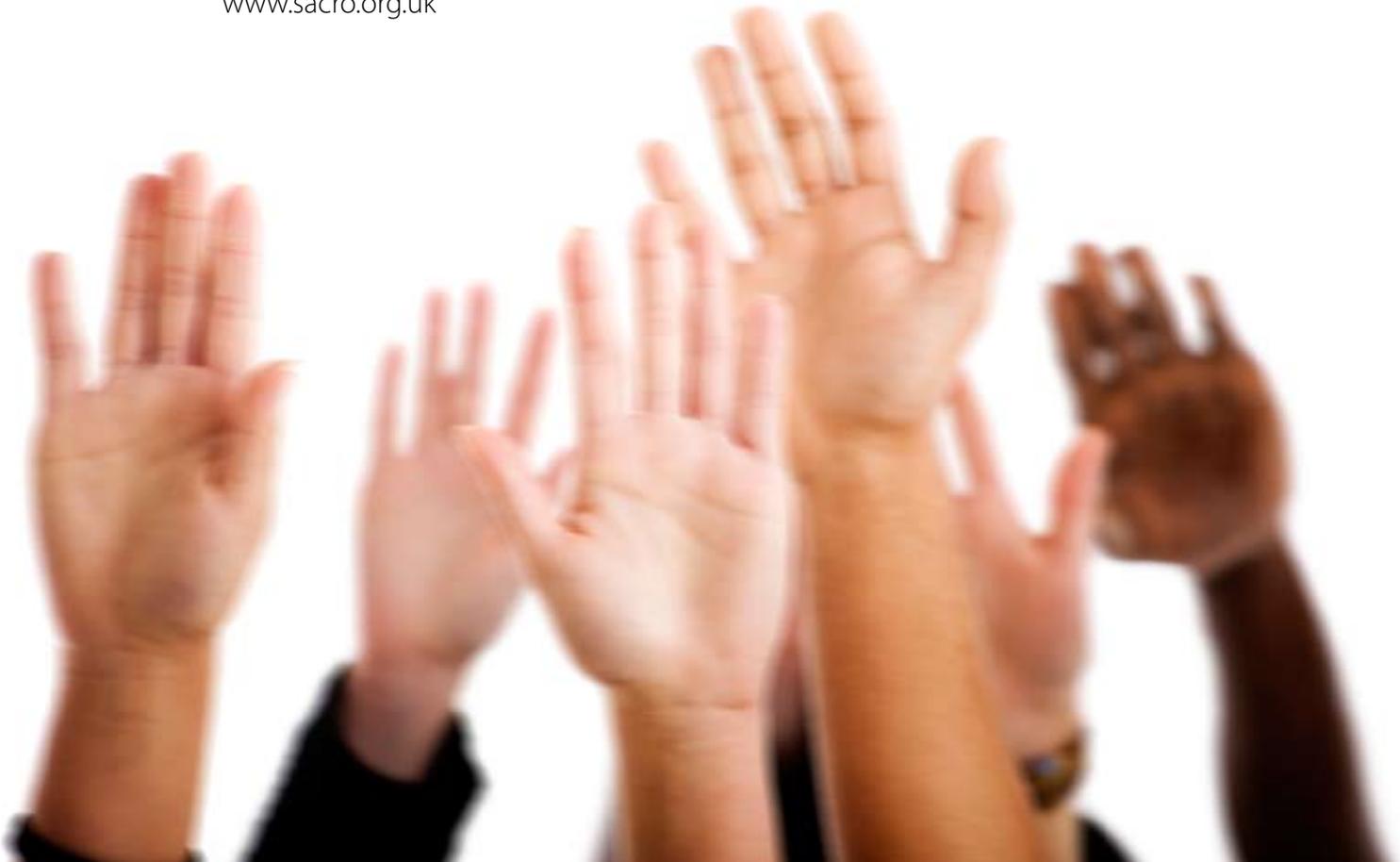
Over the coming year, I will be making it my business to find out exactly what you would like to see from Sacro in order to help us maintain and develop our position as a modern, effective community justice organisation.

I am keen to meet and discuss this with many of you over the course of the year and have set up a consultation area on Sacro's website at www.sacro.org.uk to further canvass your thoughts on the subject. I hope you will use this opportunity to put your views forward and help us work towards a safer and more cohesive society.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Tom Halpin
Chief Executive, Sacro.

www.sacro.org.uk





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