



Annual Review 2024/2025

sacro

Paths to **Positive Change**



From the Chair



Jon Beck

Chair of Sacro Board of Trustees

As I look back at 2024/2025, my overall feelings are of gratitude and, indeed, celebration. A particular highlight was seeing Sacro awarded the leading role in the new Upside programme. Alongside our partners in the programme, Sacro has been entrusted to deliver nationwide voluntary throughcare for people released from prison, an area of acute need at present. This success is testament to the skills and experience of Sacro's management team to lead the partnership, as well as to the outstanding level of service that Sacro's staff provide to people every single day, often in difficult circumstances. We offer our thanks to them all, and we feel very proud and grateful to be associated with them.

As Sacro's Board of Trustees, we strive to live the organisation's values in our governance. Two of the key pillars within Sacro are hearing the voice of lived experience and being trauma-informed. We believe in the importance of embedding these principles throughout the organisation and, as a Board, we must play our part. During this year we have undertaken development to understand how we can be trauma-informed and have made significant progress in a project to seek input from lived experience of Sacro services directly in the board room. Whilst discussions in these areas can be uncomfortable at times, I believe it is crucial for Sacro's trustees to have our cause "live and breathe" and for it to be context for the way we make decisions. Ultimately, I hope that the backdrop of trauma and the presence of lived experience will allow Sacro to continue to be the best possible support for people seeking better paths in life.

In more mundane, though no less important, matters we have a revised financial strategy that clarifies for the Board our path towards sustainability and organisational development. We expect a number of strategic investments to be brought forward over the coming months to utilise the current excess reserves and our intention is that these will further strengthen Sacro for the future.

I should also pay tribute to colleagues on the Board who have left us this year. In particular, I'd like to thank Fiona Davidson and Eric Fraser who both served for three terms. I'm grateful to both of them for their wise counsel, guidance and dedication and we will miss them. We were also sad to see Zahra Hedges and Alistair Brown step down. However, we are delighted to welcome new trustees Mhairi Wylie, Kim Johnstone and Kate Clement, who each bring valuable and complementary skills to our group, and I'm looking forward to their contributions.

Top:
Launch of Upside National
Voluntary Throughcare Service,
Glasgow Fruitmarket.

Bottom:
Celebration event for Shine
Women's Mentoring Service,
The Haberdashery, Glasgow.



From the Chief Executive



Annie Mauger-Thompson

Chief Executive, Sacro.

It is always very moving to receive feedback or to hear a story about how a Sacro team member has helped someone and made a difference to their lives. I've had quite a few opportunities to do that in the past year, reflecting on the amazing work that the people who work for Sacro are doing in different communities across the country.

During the year, I was very sad to lose my PA Claire Sterland to cancer. She was a valuable and loved part of our team and is very much missed.

The past year has been about learning to listen and to understand people better, including the people we work with and our employees. As we develop new participation opportunities, we learn more about how the people we support feel about our services, we learn more about how to help them and to use that feedback to innovate.

We've begun a staff wellbeing programme including a support group for people in the organisation experiencing the menopause. We're working to embed trauma responsiveness in everything we do and delivering an organisation wide programme to support this goal.

We have made fantastic new partnerships over the year. Most importantly, we will keep putting people first; sticking to our values, and working with partners to improve the lives of people in the justice system.

Highlights

We have been privileged to lead the successful application to deliver voluntary throughcare for people leaving prison after serving short term sentences across Scotland.

Working with Access to Industry, Action for Children, Apex, Barnardo's, Circle, Families Outside and Turning Point Scotland we have formed the Upside Programme delivering services wherever people are in the country using a Pod system. The service was launched at a celebration at the end of March and will include support for men and women, working with thousands of people every year. We are just at the beginning of the delivery journey and whilst it is a huge undertaking it is founded on the core values that we developed as partners in the justice third sector.

In February, we held a reception to mark the closure of the Shine Women's Mentoring Service. Staff, stakeholders and women who had used the service over its 12 years, joined us in Glasgow to celebrate the impact this ground-breaking service has had for women, touched by the justice system in Scotland. Much of the design of Upside stems from our experience and learning from Shine, so we are confident the new service will continue to provide the absolute best support for all who need it.

Top:
South Lanarkshire Recovery
Oriented Justice Team with their
Integrated Care Award.

Bottom:
Partnership with Street Soccer to
deliver support work in prisons.





In this past year we began a special partnership with Street Soccer Scotland to support their programme of work in prisons developing people's skills and confidence and linking them to throughcare support to help with better outcomes on release.

Our South Lanarkshire Recovery Oriented Justice Team received a well-deserved accolade for the Integrated Care Award at Scotland's Health Awards 2024 ceremony in the O2 Academy in Edinburgh. Peer support and mentoring plays a vital role in the recovery of people in the justice system with substance use issues, and we are delighted for our peer mentors who make up part of this team.

We were also recognised as Partner of the Year by Access to Industry for our work with them in developing the Upside Programme.

We were very proud of our Public Protection Team who received top scores of six for our Intensive Support Service and fives for our brand new AVERT service.

We were so pleased to be re-awarded our Investors in People Gold standard this year as a mark of our work to support our staff teams and their commitment to supporting each other as managers and leaders.

Our Edinburgh Head Office moved to Gayfield Square, sharing with our partners, Families Outside. This more efficient space suits our hybrid working model and provides meeting space. It is great for networking with our Families Outside colleagues and for good coffee shops!

Sacro's Big Day

In November, the whole organisation came together for our Big Day conference. We were joined by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs, Angela Constance MSP, giving her perspective on challenges in the justice system and James Docherty, who told us about best practices in working with people in a way that recognises and responds to the impacts of trauma.

We were privileged to have Sir Geoff Palmer, a long-time supporter of Sacro and former trustee as a speaker at our conference who has since sadly passed away. His legacy for us will be the inspiration to drive our equality and diversity work and make Sacro's pillar of equalities a reality for everyone.

We also presented awards to our 'unsung heroes' in memory of our dear colleague Alan Shand and were delighted to be joined by his wife, daughter and grandson for the event.

Sacro's Big Day; our staff conference was held in COSLA Conference Centre, Edinburgh.





Building Blocks for Sustainable Change



In the past year we have spent time and resources on developing tools and mechanisms to support our ambitions to transform the way we work and to collect and provide evidence of outcomes that could lead to systems change by doing things differently.

Our three transformation pillars are: co-production, being trauma responsive, equalities, diversity and inclusion.

We have been delivering programmes of training and learning and supporting wellbeing for our people focused on these areas.

Co-production and Participation

Our organisational approach to co-production is about making sure the voices and experiences of the people we support shape what we do at every level. We've structured our approach across four interconnected levels:

Service level: most of our activity happens at service level, where our focus is on tailoring our services to meet the evolving needs of the people we support. This helps us to improve services in real time and uncovers issues that need to be tackled at an organisational or system-wide level. Our intention is to extend this across all services in the future.

Organisational level: in the coming months, our organisational level co-production group will also begin meeting, bringing together insights from across services to shape how we work as an organisation.

External level (systems change): we're building our capacity to share what we know, through policy engagement, consultation responses, and direct links with decision-makers to influence wider systems change for



justice, so it's easier for government, inspectorates and others to hear from the people we support in a more structured, informed way.

Board Level: our Board has set up a working group looking at how we can create a clear route for people who have experience of our services and have been involved in co-production to contribute in a way that's informed, supported, and not tokenistic.

A Trauma-informed Organisation

As an organisation we are committed to being more intentional in our journey in relation to trauma – how we recognise the prevalence of trauma and the ways it can affect people, how we respond and adapt, ensuring relationships are at the centre of our interactions and how we resist re-traumatisation.

Through close engagement of our teams, we established an 'essentials' approach, based on people first, understanding impact, creating safe and compassionate spaces, flexible support and supportive policy and process design that helps the healing process.

We established a regular series of sessions to create space for connection and reflection, offering opportunities to hear what is happening across services and the wider organisation. Our initial focus has been on participation: what it means, what is planned and where it is already making an impact. Across our services, we are already seeing brilliant examples of trauma responsive work. In Fife, teams are working with local authority partners to complete collaborative self-assessments, identify areas for improvement and co-design youth justice interventions.

We will continue to explore approaches to trauma-informed, reflective practice more deeply, both in supervision and in peer-led groups with training support from Epione.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

As an organisation, we are committed to ensuring everyone who approaches, works with, or is supported by Sacro is treated equally, and without judgement or favour. We have an active and vibrant EDI group within Sacro. The group meets regularly to discuss and advise on areas we need to improve on to be as inclusive as possible.

The group has covered a wide mix of priorities, from how we recruit and communicate to how accessible our buildings and services are. A new workplan has been drawn up, focused on meaningful, practical actions and ensuring that EDI remains at the heart of our work.



Case Management and Outcomes Measurement

This coming year we will be completing the roll out of our new Pulse Case Management System (CMS) and a brand-new outcomes framework so that we can gather better information and use it to keep improving everything that we do. We are making sure that we can measure our success in delivering real change using the new outcomes framework we've developed to turn the data we collect into measurable quality outcomes that show our impact.

Sacro's Role in Shaping Justice Reform in Scotland

In 2025, Sacro submitted a detailed response to the Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission's national Call for Evidence. Drawing on our role as a national provider of justice services and our close work with people with lived experience, the response made the case for a more person-centred, trauma-informed, and effective justice system.

We called for a shift away from custody in all cases where there is no serious risk of harm. Community sentences should reflect a person's full life context, including trauma, poverty, and structural disadvantage and responses to non-compliance must focus on re-engagement and support, not punishment.

We highlighted the need to reduce Scotland's reliance on remand and ensure alternatives are available consistently across the country. Sacro's AYE service was cited as a strong example of how relational, trauma-informed bail supervision can help individuals meet their conditions, attend court, and address underlying support needs. Approaches like this should be accessible nationwide and structured in tiers to reflect varying levels of risk and support needs.

On release from custody, our submission welcomed the updated SHORE Standards and highlighted Upside as a leading model of evidence-led voluntary throughcare. However, delivering this type of support at scale requires sustained investment and strong collaboration across sectors.

Finally, we called for system-wide change: clearer accountability, integrated data sharing, and shared responsibility across agencies for reintegration and community safety.

Sacro's contribution reflects our commitment to turning frontline experience into policy influence, helping to deliver safer, more just outcomes for people and communities.



Finance and Sustainability

The environment for any third sector organisation has been challenging in 2024/2025 with the ongoing short-term nature of commissioned funding and the rising cost of living. We believe that fair funding should include moving towards a longer-term contracting process that gives stability for our employees and supports quality development of services. With this in mind, we have been pleased to achieve several successes in new contracts where we can add value to supporting people in the justice system.

For Sacro, this was a year for regrouping and focusing on our future sustainability. We decided to move away from services which were not part of our core purpose and to focus on work related to the justice sector where we began our journey and where our strengths lie. This had some impact on turnover for the year, but we believe this will make us more secure ongoing.

The Board approved a new financial strategy which is designed to enable Sacro to respond to the challenges of the environment and to plan for future investment in developing the quality of our services and the capacity to 'lift and shift' what works well to other areas, helping achieve our goals for change.

During 2024/2025, Sacro's operational turnover amounted to £6,340,161

Expenditure in the year amounted to £6,598,987, resulting in a net operational deficit of £258,826 for the year. Expenditure was split between the two directorates of Justice, and Public Protection and Community Safety.

Sacro is focused on sustainability of income streams to ensure that we can continue to help the people we support. We are committed to our strategy and will ensure that our work is built on our core values, seeking new funding streams to support our innovation and development.

The Sacro Trust

The Sacro Trust is constitutionally separate and aims to provide small grants to people in the process of rehabilitation. In 2024/2025, the Trust awarded 43 grants totalling £7,119. Most of the grants were made to the people we support across a variety of our services, engaging in education, training, and work experience. Funding was also awarded for basic household items and items pertaining to personal wellbeing, mainly clothing.



Income and Expenditure

	2024/2025 (£'000s)	2023/2024 (£'000s)
Income		
Donations	1	7
Investment Income	75	92
Justice Directorate	3,718	3,333
Care Directorate	-	1,927
Community Safety Directorate	2,546	2,379
Total Income	6,340	7,738
Expenditure		
Justice Directorate	3,925	3,471
Care Directorate	-	2,040
Community Safety Directorate	2,674	2,840
Total Expenditure	6,599	8,351



Governance

Sacro Board of Trustees: 2024/2025

Chair	Jon Beck
Depute Chair	Jayne Laidlaw
Standards Assurance Convenor	Kerri Maciver <i>(re-appointed on 3 May 2024)</i>
Finance Convenor	Faye Shaw
Board Members	Alistair Brown <i>(retired from Board on 1 May 2025)</i>
	Fiona Davidson <i>(retired from Board on 12 December 2024)</i>
	Jane Davidson
	Eric Fraser <i>(retired from Board on 12 December 2024)</i>
	Zahra Hedges <i>(retired from Board on 13 August 2024)</i>
	Natalya Macholla
	David Mackie
	Greg Maxwell
New Appointees	Kate Clement <i>(appointed on 30 April 2025)</i>
	Kimberly Johnstone <i>(appointed on 30 April 2025)</i>
	Mhairi Wylie <i>(appointed on 30 April 2025)</i>
Company Secretary	Annie Mauger-Thompson
Honorary President	Rt. Hon. Lord Carloway

Sacro Executive Team: 2024/2025

Chief Executive	Annie Mauger-Thompson
Chief Operating Officer	Gerry Milne
Director of Justice	Lynne Thornhill
Director of Community Safety and Public Protection	John Kennedy



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Sacro ref: NAT/148

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