

STRATEGY FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

December 2018



Preventing Offending:
Getting it Right for
Children and Young People



Contents

1.	Foreword	1
	Tom Halpin, Chief Executive, Sacro	1
2.	Preface	2
3.	Introduction	3
	Aims:	3
	Objectives:	4
	Practice Guidance for the Delivery of Consistent and Professional Services	5
4.	Youth Crime in Scotland	6
5.	Sacro Strategic Focus	8
	Advancing the Whole System Approach (WSA)	8
	Advancing Whole System Approach	9
	Improving Life Chances.....	9
	Improving Life Chances.....	10
	Developing Capacity and Improvement.....	11
	A Guide to Youth Justice in Scotland:	
	Policy, Practice and Legislation	11
	Preventing Offending: Improving outcomes for children and young people	12
	Short-Term Assessment of Risk and Treatability: Adolescent Version (START:AV)	14
	Care and Risk Management (CARM) Training	14
	CARM Overview.....	15
	Support to Vulnerable Girls and Young Women	15
	Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	16
	ACEs.....	17
	Developing Capacity and Improvement.....	18
6.	Sacro's Approach to Working with Children and Young People	19
	Strengthening relationships and engagement:	19
	Victims and Community Confidence:	19
	I. Assertive Outreach Model.....	20
	II. Relationship Based Approach	20
	III. Desistance.....	21
	IV. Trauma Informed Practice	21
	V. Gender Specific Approaches	22
7.	Implementation – Next Steps	24
	Appendix A	25
	Preventing Offending:	
	Improving outcomes for children and young people.....	25

1. Foreword

Tom Halpin, Chief Executive, Sacro

Supporting and working with children and young people is a core element of the work undertaken by Sacro staff and volunteers. High standards of professional practice are at the heart of our work.

In writing this foreword I wish to firstly acknowledge the dedication and commitment shown by Sacro staff and volunteers in the delivery of the day-to-day support and work they provide to children and young people. Many of these young people are vulnerable and can present a risk to themselves and in some instances to others. The professional practice from Sacro staff over recent years has been of the highest quality, and in many instances has been both aspirational and inspirational for the children and young people together with their families as service users.

Sacro's 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 dealt with effectively and appropriately.

Sacro Strategic Plan 2015-2020

This strategy outlines Sacro's commitments and priorities for young people, ensuring that they have a strong voice on how services develop. It provides Sacro with an opportunity to review services and consider how we can continuously improve services in the future. This strategy, along with supporting Sacro practice guidance, aims to ensure that our practice with children and young people is aligned with and informed by the most recent research, policy and national practice guidance.

Workforce development is a key commitment for Sacro as we see our staff and volunteers as our greatest resource and asset. Through the implementation of this strategy, supported by our practice guidance, it is our aim to ensure that Sacro staff have the most relevant and up to date knowledge and skills to best support children and young people and deliver an effective service.

2. Preface

Sacro is committed to working with the Scottish Government and other partner organisations to create a paradigm that would result in all children and young people at risk of becoming or who are involved in offending being automatically considered for alternative early intervention support, including diversion from prosecution. It is Sacro's belief that having this as a default position will contribute to the development of a pragmatic justice system based on mediation and restorative approaches, with both the victim and perpetrator at its core. Such a model will be responsive to needs of both the victim and perpetrator while using effective models of engagement, such as an 'assertive outreach model', that responds to the needs of individual young people and engages them on their terms while taking into account other influential factors such as ACE's (Adverse Childhood Experiences).

The increased use of mediation and restorative approaches will improve the experience of victims and contribute to communities that are increasingly safe and supportive, hence creating the environment where individuals are able to exercise their rights and responsibilities.

Sacro Working with Children and Young People Strategy (December 2018)

The increased use of mediation and restorative approaches will improve the experience of persons harmed and contribute to communities that are increasingly safe and supportive, hence creating the environment where individuals are able to exercise their rights and responsibilities. It is also Sacro's contention that a sustained commitment to these approaches will create more safe, cohesive and resilient communities and through time contribute to a much-needed reduction in our prison population and a reduction in the need for secure placements.

This strategy takes account of the debate in relation to the definition and upper age limit of a child and young person. The strategy covers young people aged 8 years to 20 years inclusive.

Sacro recognise that services for young people who are 18 years and over (sometimes 16 years) are often provided by range of young people services and/or adult services. Where this is the case Sacro will provide services to these young people as outlined in this strategy and our associated Practice Guidance, taking account also of GIRFEC principles.

3. Introduction

It is our intention that this strategy, developed and launched in the Year of Young People will reflect key elements of the themes from the year with a focus on the rights of young people and their involvement in the development of services. It is an opportunity to celebrate young people and their many achievements and to provide them with a platform and a voice.

Children and young people should be helped to take responsibility for their decisions and actions in line with their stage of development and understanding. Most children and young people who offend or are at risk of offending will mature into responsible adults. The labelling of children's behaviour as 'criminal' can be harmful, as it has potential to stigmatise and reinforce negative self-image and behaviour.

Preventing Offending – Getting it right for children and young people

In line with Sacro's Strategic Plan 2015-2020 this strategy for working with children and young people recognises the people who use Sacro's services are often vulnerable and rely on the work we do to support them more than ever. Also in line with the Scottish Government 2015-2020 strategy 'Preventing Offending – Getting it right for children and young people' Sacro will take a child-centred, preventative approach focused on the following outcomes:

- > Helping ensure communities are safe from crime and disorder;
- > Improving life chances for children and young people involved in or at risk of offending;
- > Enabling all children and young people to be confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens.

In achieving these national outcomes Sacro is committed to the following aims in working with vulnerable children and young people and their families.

Aims:

It is Sacro's aim to deliver a professional and effective service to vulnerable children, young people and their families that we support. We are committed through this strategy to ensure that we have an informed and skilled workforce who are using the most effective and up to date guidance and interventions.

Objectives:

The overall objectives of Sacro's strategy in supporting and working with vulnerable children and young people are to:

1. Provide quality evidence based processes and practice in our work with young people;
2. Provide an appropriate range and availability of interventions for the vulnerable children and young people that we support;
3. Promote the use of diversionary approaches, including Early & Effective Interventions (EEI) and Diversion from Prosecution;
4. Ease the transition for children at key times in their lives, including between the children's hearing system and the adult criminal justice system;
5. Continue to develop and promote the use of mediation and restorative approaches, including Restorative Justice, in our work with children and young people;
6. Deliver a "Rights Based Approach" in the provision of services to children and young people with a focus on avoiding the labelling of young people;
7. Develop a highly skilled workforce who are able to provide a range of interventions and support to young people.

Article 40 (3) of the CRC states that:

"...the States parties shall seek to promote measures for dealing with children alleged as, accused of, or recognised as having infringed the penal law without resorting to judicial proceedings whenever appropriate and desirable..."

This statement recognises the important role of alternative services and diversionary measures that provide support to those young people as an alternative to formal processes.

Committee on the Rights of the Child

Practice Guidance for the Delivery of Consistent and Professional Services

In line with all Sacro staff, those staff involved in delivering services to vulnerable children and young people will adhere to the *'Practice Framework'* as outlined in Sacro's *'Practice Guidance – for the Delivery of consistent and Professional Services'*.

The Practice Framework provides guidance to staff in relation the following areas:

- > Risk Assessment
- > Consent
- > Confidentiality
- > Information Sharing
- > Care Plan, Action Plans and Support Plans
- > Risk Management Plans
- > Case Recording
- > Review Process
- > Workload and Case Management
- > Exit Strategy

This practice guidance for the delivery of consistent and professional services also provides a 'Practice Note' in relation to the allocation of referrals through to case closure. This 'Practice Note' addresses the following areas:

- > Allocated referral
- > Engagement with the service user
- > Assessment of risk and needs
- > The first review
- > Service user feedback
- > Completion report

Further information on this guidance and practice framework can be found on Sacro's website www.sacro.org.uk

4. Youth Crime in Scotland

As detailed in the CYCJ Report *'The Story of Youth Justice in Scotland'* (November 2017), we know that the majority of young people (children) do not get involved in offending with Police Scotland data indicating that in 2012/2013 that 23,726 young people aged 8-17, representing 4% of the population in this age range, committed an offence. Therefore, based on this Police Scotland measure 96% of young people aged 8-17 did not commit an offence.

"While it appears that crime may be falling more quickly in Scotland than in most other Western societies over a number of years, Scotland's prison population remains high. It is higher than any other Western European jurisdiction, other than England and Wales.

International evidence shows that prison can have damaging effects through weakening social ties, creating stigma, adversely impacting on employability and housing stability, ultimately increasing the likelihood of reoffending."

Justice in Scotland Vision and Priorities (2017)

This CYCJ report provides a range of statistics that indicate, in line with UK national and international trends, a positive profile regarding offending by young people over a number of years, including the following:

- The number of detected crimes and offences by young people aged 8-17 has fallen from 78,572 to 43,117 between 2008/2009 and 2012/2013;
- The number of young people referred to the Children's Reporter on offence grounds has reduced from a peak of 17,361 in 2005/2006 to 2,761 in 2015/2016 representing a reduction of 84%;
- Crimes of violence made up 1% of all crimes and offences by young people, with detected crimes of violence by young people fallen from 1,233 in 2008/2009 to 533 in 2012/2013, representing a 57% reduction;
- The number of young people aged under 18 (16 & 17 year olds) convicted in a court has fallen with 66 young people per 1,000 in 2006/2007 having a charge proven in court compared to 15 per 1,000 of the population in 2015/2016, representing a reduction of 78%;
- The number of under 21s with a charge proven against them in court has fallen from 28,903 in 2007/2008 to 9,779 in 2015/2016, representing a 66% reduction;

- The number of under 21s who receive a custodial sentence has fallen from 3,245 in 2006/2007 to 1,262 in 2015/16, representing a reduction of 61%.

Despite the positive trends from the youth and criminal justice systems in Scotland that would indicate crime may be falling more quickly in Scotland than most other Western societies, Scotland's prison population remains high. Scotland has the second highest prison population (138 per 100,000) with England and Wales being the highest (145 per 100,000). This rate is more than double the average of Scandinavian countries and far higher than that of Northern Ireland at 83 per 100,000.

“When used with imagination, restorative justice can form the foundation of early interventions with young people on the cusp of criminality, working upstream to help divert them from a criminal path. Schools are increasingly aware of the advantages a RJ approach can have for their students. It helps resolve conflict between young people, increase their self-awareness, and consider alternative – more productive – resolutions to their issues.”

**The Rt Hon the Lord McNally,
Chairman of the Youth Justice Board for England & Wales**

Sacro will continue to highlight and promote the use of restorative approaches (including RJ) and mediation as an underpinning element of the range of services they provide and deliver to deal with conflict and crime. This inclusive approach within the range of services we provide, including tailored programmes and mentoring support, ensures the needs of others affected (including victims) are met.

Diverting young people away from the criminal justice system can be effective in reducing their reoffending and can have positive long-term impacts in people's lives. Findings from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime indicate that the deeper a youth is carried into the formal processing system, the less likely he/she is to stop offending. The authors argue that the most significant factor in reducing offending is minimal formal intervention and maximum diversion to programmes that do not have the trappings of criminal processing.

Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime

5. Sacro Strategic Focus

In line with the Scottish Government 'Preventing Offending – Getting it right for children and young people' Sacro's priority themes will reflect the Scottish Government's priority themes for 2015 to 2020, which are:

- > Advancing the Whole System Approach (WSA)
- > Improving Life Chances
- > Developing Capacity and Improvement

Advancing the Whole System Approach (WSA)

Sacro recognises the positive achievements of the implementation of the WSA in the improvement of practice to engage and support vulnerable young people involved in or at risk of becoming involved in offending. Sacro's work with young people is informed by the WSA and focused around the following key components:

- > Early and effective intervention (EEI)
- > Opportunities to divert young people from prosecution
- > Court support
- > Community alternatives to secure care and custody
- > Managing high risk, including changing behaviours of those in secure care and custody
- > Improving reintegration back into the community

The ethos of WSA is that many young people involved in offending behaviour could and should be diverted from statutory measures, prosecution and custody through early intervention and robust community alternatives. WSA works across all systems and agencies, bringing the Scottish Government's key policy frameworks into a single, holistic approach to working with young people who offend.

**A Guide to Youth Justice in Scotland
(Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice)**

Sacro are committed in their continued support of the WSA and its key elements.

Advancing Whole System Approach

We will:

- > Encourage the expansion of WSA to include young people aged under 21 years of age;
- > Continue to support the development and implementation of EEI approaches (including Diversion from Prosecution);
- > Support the increased use of mediation and restorative approaches as a key aspect of preventative work and early intervention with children and young people;
- > Promote the importance and effectiveness of the role that restorative justice can have as a core component of interventions with young people, including high risk cases;
- > Continue to work closely with local authorities as partners towards the development of collaborative justice for young people.

Improving Life Chances

Sacro's main focus in this area reflects that of the main strategic focus outlined to the Scottish Government '*Preventing Offending – Getting it right for children and young people*' publication, that is:

- > School inclusion
- > Strengthening relationships and engagement
- > Victims and community confidence
- > Improving health and wellbeing
- > Opportunities for all
- > Transitions

Sacro is presently active in supporting work in many of these identified areas through existing services and are committed to showing continued support to these areas of practice.

As outlined in the next chapter (Sacro's Approach to Working with Children and Young People) Sacro recognises the importance of having skilled practitioners who are aware of the importance of effective models for engagement with and working with vulnerable young people and their families.

Through its direct work and recognition as an agency that often leads the way in the areas of mediation and restorative approaches, Sacro's aim to influence others and support the increased use of these approaches. The evidence demonstrates the positive role these services play in supporting school inclusion and working with children and young people within a residential setting.

Improving Life Chances

We will:

- > Promote work with school professionals to ensure that young people at risk of disengagement from education are identified and supported at an early stage and that school staff are aware of the impact of this on young people at risk of offending;
- > Ensure victim's rights and needs are addressed and reflected in the work we undertake with young people and their families;
- > Support and recognise the need for gender specific approaches where appropriate, including awareness raising training for staff on effective working with girls and young women including young people who identify as Transgender.
- > Encourage and promote community engagement and help develop an increased understanding of young people at risk of or involved in offending and the important role of communities in supporting desistance;
- > Help ensure that the rights and needs of victim's are recognised, identified and reflected in the work with young people and the families of young people who offend;
- > Increase knowledge and understanding of practitioners regarding the prevalence of and need for a greater understanding of and awareness raising training in the area of Speech, language and Communication Needs (SLCN);
- > In line with the national preventing offending strategy Sacro commit to improve the understanding and enhance capacity in relation to mental health and trauma through practice development and awareness raising training for staff;
- > Work with partners and employers in supporting the vulnerable young people we work with to be supported to effectively engage in training and employment opportunities;
- > Ensure and understanding of practitioners regarding the importance of and pivotal role of effective transitional support for young people at key stages of their lives. This is especially important for those moving between services and from care and or custody.

Developing Capacity and Improvement

In line with the Scottish Government 'Preventing Offending – Getting it right for children and young people' Sacro's focus in this area will be on:

- Supporting workforce development and encouraging a culture of continuous learning and improvement;
- Improving systems and making best use of performance information both nationally and locally.

Within these areas Sacro will continue to support workforce development ensuring that practitioners and managers of services to young people are using appropriate assessment tools and interventions. Sacro recognises that an informed and skilled workforce is vital in the delivery of effective services and the retention of staff. In supporting workforce development

Through this Strategy and practice Guidance Sacro are committed to the continuous development of their workforce towards ensuring that managers and practitioners delivering services to young people are using appropriate tools and interventions.

Sacro Strategy in Working with Children and Young People (December 2018)

Sacro are committed to all staff working with young people having access as appropriate to information and/or training as part of their continuous learning and improvement. In relation to this strategy/development plan Sacro has identified the following areas as a priority for staff development and training:

- A Guide to Youth Justice in Scotland: policy, practice and legislation
- Preventing offending – Improving outcomes for children and young people (including using the on-line wellbeing tool)
- Short-Term Assessment of Risk and Treatability: Adolescent Version (START:AV)
- Care and Risk Management (CARM) Training
- Working with Girls and Young Women
- Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)

A Guide to Youth Justice in Scotland: Policy, Practice and Legislation

This guide is supported by the Scottish Government's Youth Justice Strategy and produced by the Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice (CYCJ) and provides an overview of key strategic and practice areas. Sacro is committed to ensuring that practitioners and managers responsible for the delivery of services to young people are familiar with the latest policy

and practice legislation in youth justice. On this basis Sacro will ensure that staff are familiar with and have easy access to 'A Guide to Youth Justice in Scotland' outlined below:

- > Section 1: Background, Policy and Legislation
- > Section 2: Youth Justice in Scotland – the roles and responsibilities of key partners
- > Section 3: Theory and Methods
- > Section 4: Early and Effective Intervention & Diversion from Prosecution
- > Section 5: Managing Risk of Serious Harm
- > Section 6: Reintegration and Transitions
- > Section 7: Vulnerable Girls and Young Women
- > Section 8: Residential Child Care
- > Section 9: Speech, Language and Communication Needs in Youth Justice
- > Section 10: Mental Health
- > Section 11: Children's Rights, Our Responsibilities

'A Guide to Youth Justice in Scotland' is a valuable resource for Practitioners and managers who work with Children and young people who offend or who are at risk of offending. Sacro will ensure all managers and practitioners working in this area are familiar with and have access to the guide.

Sacro Strategy in Working with Children and Young People (December 2018)

Sacro is committed to ensuring that practitioners and managers responsible for the delivery of services to young people are familiar with the latest policy and practice legislation in youth justice. On this basis Sacro will ensure that staff are familiar with and have easy access to ['A Guide to Youth Justice in Scotland, Policy, Practice and Legislation'](#).

Preventing Offending: Improving outcomes for children and young people

This improvement approach is being developed by the Scottish Government and is due to be launched late 2018 or early 2019. This improvement approach will help collate robust data and effectively evaluate services to young people who offend or are at risk of offending. It is designed to support service providers, planners and practitioners to embed preventative practice to assist reducing offending by children and young people.

The 'Improvement outcomes' document, including the planned linked on-line wellbeing outcome tool provides a focus on the needs of children and young people who are involved in offending or at risk of becoming involved in offending, while taking into account known offending related factors within the

context of the overall SHANARRI principles. The improvement approach has four sections:

- > Wellbeing outcomes
- > On-line wellbeing tool
- > System performance
- > Improvement Planning

Sacro is committed to using the Scottish Government improvement outcomes and recognise it as a key element in the monitoring and evaluation of services provided for children and young people. It is Sacro belief that the improvement approach will provide an added dimension and focus to the practice implementation and evaluation of our work with young people as well as contributing to a national database.

Sacro in particular see the benefits of the online wellbeing tool when it is used in conjunction with and supported by the wellbeing outcomes as detailed in the 'Wellbeing outcomes' section of the improvement approach. This section details the logic models for achieving each national outcome and wellbeing outcome for children and young people involved in, or at risk of, offending behaviour.

"The improvement approach is designed to support service providers, planners and practitioners embed preventative practice to assist in reducing offending involving children and young people. It will assist in the accurate and consistent measurement of outcomes across the sector, help to evidence success and assist in identifying continued areas for improvement based on analysis of need. It assists partners with the information required to build on existing success and focus improvement in areas that are important."

Scottish Government, Preventing Offending – Improving outcomes for children and young people.

In terms of 'Preventing Offending – Improving outcomes for children and young people' Sacro is committed to:

- > Adopting the improvement approach as a core element of our planning, reviewing and evaluation process;
- > Embedding the improvement approach in everyday practice through the provision of awareness raising and training relating to the use of the improvement approach and on-line wellbeing tool once implemented;
- > Incorporate the use of the on-line wellbeing tool and the reports produced by the tool into our practice review and planning process.

- Use a 'System performance' approach to help ensure and provide measures of impact of approaches and interventions such as increased use of early interventions, reduction in risk factors, increases in protective factors, increases in positive outcomes, reductions in aggression etc.

Short-Term Assessment of Risk and Treatability: Adolescent Version (START:AV)

START-AV provides a structure and guides an individualised assessment of vulnerabilities that contribute to adverse outcomes and the strengths that help protect against them.

This assessment tool is intended for use with male and female adolescents (aged 12 to 18) in mental health and justice settings and facilitates a review of an adolescent's histories and short-term risk for multiple adverse outcomes. START-AV provides a robust method of assessing all forms of clinical risk – harm to self, harm to others, absconscion, exploitation, etc. whilst maintaining a focus on the changeable nature of risk.

START-AV is a highly practical tool that requires a rating on both strengths and vulnerabilities making it ideal for short-term plans and decisions about care planning. The assessment can be used to guide evidence-based intervention-planning, facilitate communication among professionals involved in the adolescent's care, and provide a framework and common language in developing and monitoring risk and intervention plans.

Due to the increasing evidence in support of START-AV as an effective assessment tool for young people, Sacro is committed to adopting START-AV as one of its core assessment approaches in relation to young people aged 12 to 18 inclusive. Therefore Sacro will facilitate access as appropriate to START-AV training for managers and practitioners responsible for the delivery of services to young people in this age range.

Care and Risk Management (CARM) Training

CARM is a multi-agency framework designed to assist with the early identification, assessment and management of children who display harmful behaviours whilst ensuring that their needs are met and links are made with any Child's Plan and Child Protection procedures. The aim of the CARM Guidance is to ensure that the risks presented by children's behaviour are managed effectively and minimised through effective communication, information sharing, assessment, multi-agency decision making and the implementation of effective risk management plans.

CARM Guidance is applicable with children and young people aged 12 to 18 years where any or all of the following may be present:

- sexually harmful behaviour and/or violence is displayed;
- intent and potential for harm;

- > a pattern of behaviour suggests a more serious incident may be imminent;
- > where a child or young person has been involved in an incident of a serious nature.

CARM Overview

To provide a consistent national framework for the assessment, management and evaluation of young people aged 12-18 years who pose a serious risk of harm to others.

Referrals to CARM will likely be young people involved in violent or harmful sexual behaviour, although referrals for other concerning behaviours may also be appropriate

The CARM process should run parallel and compliment the GIRFEC process and Childs Plan.

Risk Management meetings should be multi-agency and local processes should be "signed off" by local child protection committees.

FRAME Care and Risk Management CARM Guidance

CARM training will allow participants to put into practice the use of skills which help guide assessment, intervention and management of cases. These include: risk factor identification, risk formulation, scenario planning and risk management planning. The training is provided by CYCJ over two days and is aimed at practitioners who are:

- > involved or likely to be involved in case management responsibility for cases where risk management measures are in place or will likely be in place for under 18s.
- > or be involved in supporting and delivering services to under 18's where risk management measures are in place or will likely be in place.

Sacro is committed to the CARM approach and will ensure information on this is accessible and to provide access to the associated training for relevant managers and practitioners.

Support to Vulnerable Girls and Young Women

Many girls and young women involved in offending behaviour have histories of trauma and vulnerability (McIvor and Barry 2006; Batchelor 2005). For most their needs are best met through a welfare orientated system that recognises that this group are often 'vulnerable' but not necessarily 'risky'. A high level of need and vulnerability is not an automatic route into persistent offending. Based on these findings we realise the importance of not intervening too early with a justice focus and where possible we will intervene using an early intervention voluntary support based approach.

If, as professionals, we are to engage effectively with girls then we must incorporate gender into the development and formulation of care plans and consider gender not only within a contextual risk framework but also within age and stage of development.

McIvor and Barry 2006; Batchelor 2005

Towards ensuring our practice in supporting and working with vulnerable girls and young women is the best it can be, Sacro is committed to:

- > Providing awareness raising training on effective working with girls and young women for managers and practitioners;
- > Review our existing monitoring and evaluation practice in relation to our practice with girls and young women, including user feedback and if need be develop more robust procedures;
- > Consider training identified staff in further research based interventions and programmes specifically developed for working with girls and young women.

Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

International research working with people who have lived through traumatic events has helped us to understand that many people who have experienced abuse and trauma are resilient and will recover with little or no additional support from services. However, it is also crucial to recognise that living through traumatic events and adverse childhood experiences increase the risk of inequalities, disadvantage and poorer wellbeing outcomes including poor physical and mental health and reduced educational and social attainment. We want people to change the way they think about people's difficulties and ask not "what's wrong with you?" but "what has happened to you?" this approach fits well with our increasing understanding of the broader impacts for individuals and society of adverse childhood events (ACE's).

Trauma, including Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), is increasingly associated with poor life outcomes. Research consistently shows a strong association between ACEs and crime. People who experience multiple ACEs are more likely to engage in risk taking behaviours which are harmful to health and often associated with criminal behaviours. The Welsh ACE Study (Public Health Wales NHS Trust, 2015) reported that compared with people with no ACEs, those with 4+ACEs were:

- > 14 times more likely to be a victim of violence in the last 12 months
- > 15 times more likely to be a perpetrator of violence in the last 12 months
- > 20 times more likely to have been incarcerated in their lives

ACEs

“It changes how you look at a person – whether you look at them as just a criminal or someone who had trauma in their background”.

(acestoohigh.com)

The single most common factor for children who develop resilience is

“at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult”.

(**Harvard University Centre on the Developing Child**)

Sacro recognise the importance of having a trauma informed service and are committed to ensuring that:

- > Sacro practitioners are kept informed of latest ACE research and developments with a focus on young people and related practice;
- > Sacro staff have access to awareness raising training in relation to trauma and its impact on the young people we work with, including the importance of their role in understanding and supporting young people.

Developing Capacity and Improvement

We will:

- > Ensure that staff are familiar with and have easy access to 'A Guide to Youth Justice in Scotland';
- > Adopt the improvement approach as a core element of our planning, reviewing and evaluation process;
- > Embedding the improvement approach in everyday practice through the provision of awareness raising and training relating to the use of the improvement approach and on-line wellbeing tool;
- > Incorporate the use of the on-line wellbeing tool and the reports produced by the tool into our practice review and planning process;
- > Agree a 'System performance' approach to help ensure and provide measures of impact of approaches and interventions such as increased use of early interventions, reduction in risk factors, increases in protective factors, increases in positive outcomes, reductions in aggression etc;
- > Adopt START-AV as one of Sacro's core assessment approaches in relation to young people aged 12 to 18 inclusive and therefore facilitate appropriate staff training in this tool;
- > Commit to CARM approach and will ensure information on this is accessible and to provide access to the associated training for relevant managers and practitioners.
- > Provide awareness raising training on effective working with girls and young women for managers and practitioners;
- > Review our existing monitoring and evaluation practice in relation to our practice with girls and young women, including user feedback and if need be develop more robust procedures;
- > Consider training identified staff in further research based interventions and programmes specifically developed for working with girls and young women.
- > Ensure practitioners are kept informed of latest ACE research and developments with a focus on young people;
- > Ensure Sacro staff have access to awareness raising training in relation to trauma and its impact on the young people we work with, including the importance of their role in understanding and supporting young people.

6. Sacro's Approach to Working with Children and Young People

In line with the Scottish Government strategy, '*Preventing Offending – Getting it right for children and young people, 2015-2020*' (Scottish Government 2015), Sacro as an organisation are committed to and will strive to ensure their practitioners have the knowledge and skill set to deliver in the following areas:

Strengthening relationships and engagement:

- > Help create the conditions for children and young people to be active participants in change;
- > Develop positive relationships between young people, their families and communities to help develop social networks and build resilience;
- > To build quality and consistent relationships with children, young people and their families;
- > Recognise the need for and provide gender specific approaches to working with young people.

Victims and Community Confidence:

- > Where possible use restorative approaches and/or mediation in our work with young people;
- > Have victim's rights and needs central to and reflected in work undertaken with young people who have offended;
- > Encourage better and more regular engagement with communities about services to young people who offend or are at risk of offending and to build awareness and understanding of, and support for, approaches used in Scotland.

In achieving the above outcomes Sacro will implement a range of interventions in line with our service agreements. To help support positive and meaningful engagement in our services being delivered to young people and their families Sacro practitioners will operate to the principles outlined in the following areas:

- I. Assertive Outreach Model
- II. Relationship Based Approach
- III. Desistance Methodology
- IV. Trauma Informed Practice
- V. Gender Specific Approaches

I. Assertive Outreach Model

Assertive outreach is an effective and crucial method of delivering services to the hardest to reach groups of young people needing support. Underpinned by social justice values, assertive outreach is a proactive approach to engagement and if required delivering support and interventions to young people. It challenges the idea that the young person (or service user) is always responsible for engaging with services and showing they want support and instead asks "who is in most need of this service?"

'Assertive outreach asks who is most in need of this service'

Underpinned by social justice values, assertive outreach recognises the many barriers vulnerable and disconnected young people face when accessing services. By its very nature, being vulnerable and disconnected often means young people don't have adults to support and advocate for them when seeking help.

Sacro Dumfries & Annan Antisocial Behaviour Reduction – Scoping Project, Overview & Findings (March 2018)

II Relationship Based Approach

Also crucial to ensuring the effective engagement of young is the development and maintenance of a strong trusting relationship between the individual young person and individual practitioner. An effective young person's support service will value and encourage a strong emphasis on this relationship in order to promote engagement and retention in services, and because there is evidence that a high quality working relationship is therapeutic in itself. Qualitative research involving adolescence with multiple and complex needs has found that young people place very strong value on having a quality relationship with workers.

- > Strong, trusting working relationships perform at least the five major functions:
- > Building a sense of security
- > Teaching relationships and other life skills
- > Acting as a vehicle or platform for the delivery of various other supportive interventions
- > Facilitating reconnection with a young person's ecological community
- > Facilitating engagement with services

III. Desistance

The desistance process, in terms of reducing a young person's involvement in crime or antisocial behaviour, can often be unique to an individual young person that relies on them facing up to and dealing with various external and internal factors that impact on them. For young people to desist from continued involvement in offending or antisocial behaviour is usually not down to one thing but through a combination of activities, including services and supports that contribute to a change in their social circumstances. Research suggests that some of the key factors that contribute to a young person to desist from involvement in offending or antisocial behaviour include:

- > Life Course
- > Relationships
- > Employment
- > Faith
- > Identity & Self-belief.

Forming a positive relationship with workers can also be an important part of a young person's desistance process.

Research found that when changes in behaviour was attributed to support and supervision from workers that the professional and personal commitment shown to young people by these staff was a key factor.

Desistance from Offending: Experiences of Offending (Rex 2009) cited by McNeil, F. and Weaver, B. (2010)

IV. Trauma Informed Practice

There is an increasing recognition of the impact of trauma, including ACE's on the vulnerability of and future risk of a young person being involved in or at risk of being involved in offending. Sacro recognises the correlation between trauma and offending and will ensure that staff can access awareness training in relation to the impact of trauma informed by the National Trauma Training Framework

(NHS Education for Scotland, May 2017)

An effective young person's support service will value and encourage a strong emphasis on this relationship in order to promote engagement and retention in services, and because there is evidence that a high quality working relationship is therapeutic in itself.

A key aspect of trust involves building confidence in the young person that we will not abandon them, irrespective of how challenging their behaviour maybe or how many times they might fail to live up to perceived expectations for change.

NHS Education for Scotland, May 2017

V. Gender Specific Approaches

A correlation exists between the victimisation and abuse of girls and young women and high risk behaviours such as substance misuse, self-harm and suicide and these experiences in turn can often contribute to truancy from school and absconding. This in turn may also be a pathway to drug and alcohol misuse and sexual exploitation.

Sacro recognises that many girls and young women involved in or at risk of becoming involved in offending have histories of trauma and vulnerabilities. For most their needs are best met through a welfare orientated system that recognises that this group are often 'vulnerable' but not necessarily 'risky'. We therefore recognise the importance of not intervening too early with a justice focus and where possible we will use an early intervention voluntary support based approach.

In the development and delivery of our services to girls and young women Sacro's practice will have relationships as central to achieve effective assessment and service delivery. The attitudes, knowledge and abilities used by workers in this approach provide the foundation for capacity building, empowerment and developing potential.

In our work with girls and young women Sacro recognise the following key principles:

- > Girls and young women, involved in offending, are likely to have been known to Social Work Services from an early age due to welfare/or child protection issues;
- > Our practice is founded on a commitment to person-centered principles;
- > Girls and young women require a more individualised assessment and intervention based on research in relation to what is effective for girls and young women;
- > A physically and emotionally safe environment should be provided which promotes and values females;
- > Social and emotional needs should be addressed alongside programme interventions;
- > Interventions should be solution focused, build on strengths, and directly address and promote physical, emotional and mental health;
- > Our practice will encourage and develop positive relationships built on trust and respect.

More detailed and insightful information on these models of working with children and young people are provided in the supporting practice guidance.

7. Implementation – Next Steps

Sacro is committed to a collaborative approach with young people and key partners in order to achieve outcomes which will enhance the well-being of young people. We will prioritise continuous improvement of services, listening to the voice of young people and understanding young people in the context of their family background and circumstances. A flexible and creative approach to service provision will be in place in order to help young people reach their potential.

A 'Children and Young People Strategy Implementation and Review Group' will be established. This group will oversee improvements and developments consistent with professional effective practice. The membership of the group will be flexible but should consist of relevant Service Team Leaders, National Learning Coordinator and other identified staff members who are best placed to support the implementation and ongoing review of this strategy. It is recommended that this group meets on at least a quarterly basis with the possibility of additional meetings for the planning of events and training etc. A key component of its role will be to:

- > Develop and support the implementation of agreed training plan that is reflective of the commitments outlined in this strategy and the identified needs of practitioners;
- > Involve young people in the improvement and development services;
- > Provide quarterly updates and an annual report regarding progress on and recommended changes to this strategy;
- > Work with the identified responsible senior manager in agreeing representation on and attendance at key strategic and practice forums in relation to policy and practice development for services to children and young people;
- > Support the review and if required future development and implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems regarding services provided by Sacro for children and young people (e.g. implementation of national on-line wellbeing tool for Sacro services);
- > Ensure that good practice and evidence relating to work with Children and young people is shared and informed by the best knowledge and evidence;
- > Develop and update working with children and young people interactive hub on Sacro website that allows practitioners access to policy, guidance, research and practice information (interventions and programmes).

Appendix A

Preventing Offending: Improving outcomes for children and young people

Example objective indicators of wellbeing for young people involved in or at risk of offending

Wellbeing outcome	Objective Indicator
Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Adheres to age appropriate curfew time > Reduced unauthorised absences > Association with prosocial peers > Involvement in supervised activities > Good communication skills > Improved de-escalation skills
Healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Decreased substance use > Reduced alcohol consumption > Access to enough good nutritional food > Accesses healthcare when required > Good hygiene standards
Achieving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Good attendance at school, post-16 learning or employment > Improved ability at school, post-16 learning or work > Doing well in prosocial activities > Positive relationships with peers > Reduced number of school exclusions > Stable educational placement > Achieving grades > Engaged in learning
Nurtured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Living in stable accommodation > Accommodation is warm and furnished > Has a stable, caring and trusting relationship with at least one responsible adult > Positive and supportive family relationships > Has support to build resilience > Consistent, high quality professional relationships
Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Engages in prosocial activities > Engages in exercise at least twice weekly > Engages in mentally stimulating activities > Age and stage appropriate activity levels
Respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Contributes to relevant discussions > Is able to voice their opinion in an appropriate manner > Is asked for their opinion when appropriate > When there are differences in views these are explained
Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Restorative approaches are used when appropriate > Makes decisions that are thought through > Does not take unnecessary risks that could cause harm to themselves or others > Attends appointments on time > Engages in appointments or meetings
Included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Engaged in prosocial activities in the community > Is engaged in school, post-16 learning or work > Has a support network in the community they live in > Has prosocial friends in the community they live in > Is an active participant in change > Gender specific approaches are utilised where appropriate

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