



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

 **sacro** 

Strategic Plan 2015–2020



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



Sandy Cameron CBE
Chair

The development of this strategic plan has taken place against a backdrop of almost unprecedented challenge for third sector organisations in Scotland. Although our sector is often among the hardest hit in periods of austerity, the current stress on government and local authority budgets seems particularly relentless and shows little sign of abating anytime soon.

With this in mind, we have sought to deliver a stable yet flexible plan to help us steer a course through the tempestuous waters we find ourselves in. However, it is not without ambition and we have drawn on our experience and knowledge to look at how we can be creative in making our services work even better for those who use them.

I am in no doubt that some of the excellent work carried out over the period of the previous strategic plan has put Sacro in a position of great strength to move forward confidently and purposefully.

- In terms of service provision, we sought to develop services to support women, to build partnerships with other organisations and to deliver our work nationally.
- Our priorities for outcome evaluation, monitoring and research included developing effective performance management and outcome evaluation tools.
- We looked at how we could improve our influence by building strong, lasting relationships with stakeholders and developing our communications activity to embrace new technologies.
- We also reviewed the governance and management of Sacro with the objectives of ensuring greater Board effectiveness, promoting a culture of engagement and opportunity for staff and ensuring the organisation's IT infrastructure provided us with the functionality we needed it to.

In each of these areas, our priorities have been achieved and it is to the credit of Tom Halpin, his management team and the magnificent Sacro staff that our previous strategy has succeeded so well in providing a sound platform to take us into these next five years – and beyond. It is therefore with confidence that I commend this strategic plan to the Board and staff of our unique organisation.

A strategic plan is not a document to read once and leave to gather dust. It is a road map that sets out where we want to be and what we need to do to get there. The priorities and actions we set out here build on our strengths but they also reflect our ambitions. I hope you will join me by contributing to making this plan a success too.



Our long-standing principles of effective conflict resolution and a community approach to addressing offending are in Sacro's 'DNA' and will underpin all we do



Tom Halpin
Chief Executive

It will not have escaped anyone's notice that Scotland has of late, been engaged in a national discussion about the kind of country it wants to be. Regardless of the politics, the view coming through loud and clear is the one that aspires to a more caring and inclusive society. Such a progressive society will care for all of its citizens. Where people need support to improve their wellbeing or circumstances, it will be made available and provided without prejudice.

There are many reasons why people offend but when citizens become detached or isolated from their community, the supports that can have a positive influence on their behaviour are degraded. Unemployment, poverty, fear, health problems or poor educational attainment are just some of the factors that can result in social exclusion but they are all issues that can be addressed with the proper care and support.

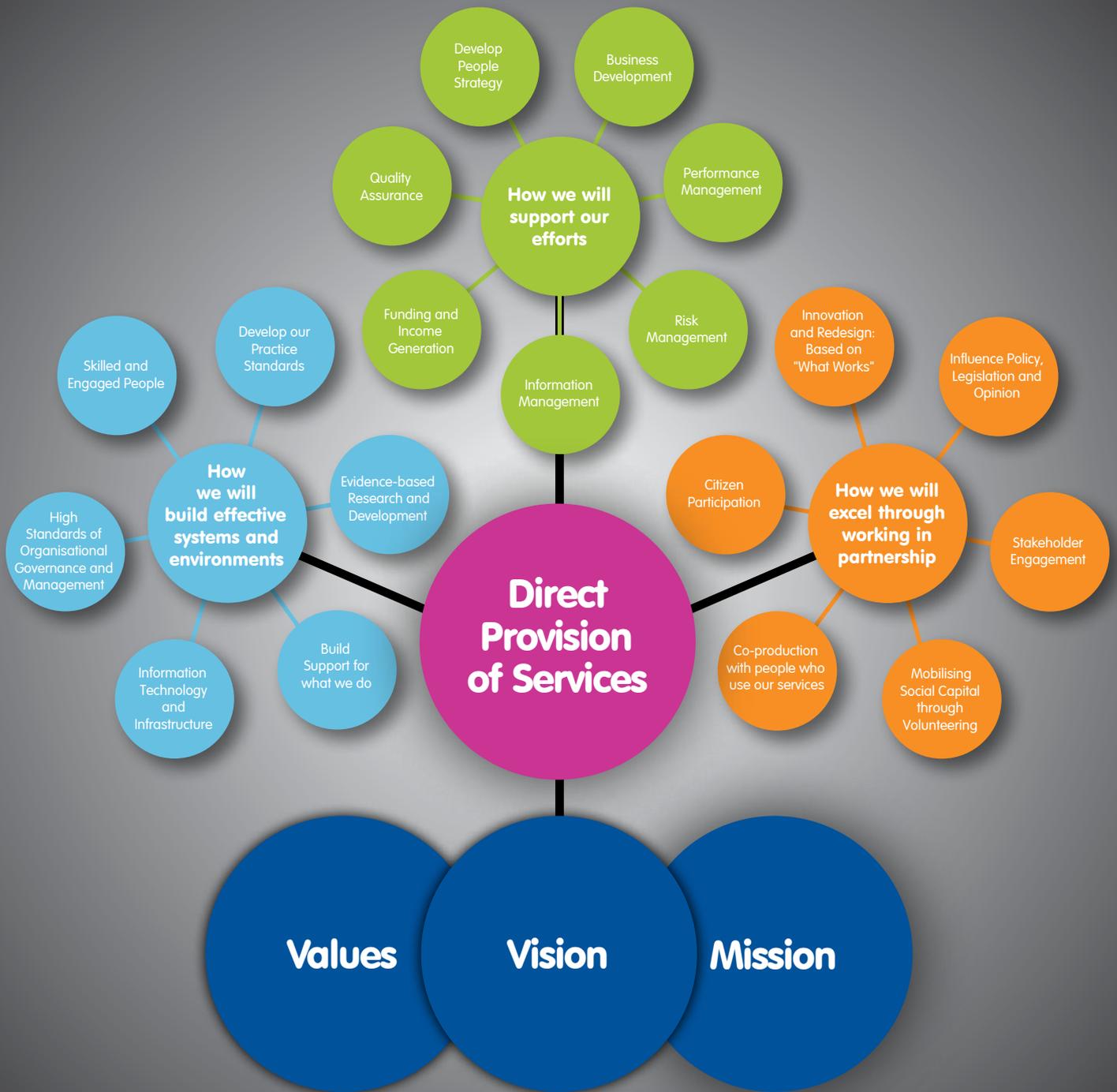
The people who use Sacro's services are often vulnerable and rely on the work we do to support them more than ever. The anticipated duration of this strategic plan coincides with a sustained period of austerity. This means that the benefit of the work we do in reducing offending and reoffending is of increasing importance.

In a highly competitive and increasingly cost-conscious environment, we are clear about what we need to do differently. We understand the areas we must focus on to achieve the best outcomes for those who use our services; the best value for our funders; and the improved wellbeing of our communities.

At this time, Sacro is fully supportive of, and engaged with the redesign of community justice in Scotland. We will ensure our own operational structures and focus continues to be influential, relevant and competitive within the emerging landscape.

Although this Strategic Plan will guide our path to 2020, we have sought to establish principles and approaches to take us far beyond that. Our long-standing principles of effective conflict resolution and a community approach to addressing offending are as relevant today as they ever were. These principles are simply in Sacro's "DNA" and will underpin all we do. However, having established principles does not mean standing still. Sacro has a reputation as a progressive organisation, basing our approaches on solid evidence, contemporary thinking and first-hand experience of "what works".

Sacro remains a strong, confident and assured organisation with clarity of purpose and we look forward to continuing to play a vital role in improving the safety and wellbeing of Scotland's citizens.



Our Vision

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

Our Mission

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

Our Values and Principles

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

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

Our guiding principles are that:

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

Our Strategic Priority

To deliver services that contribute to the reduction of crime and harm within our communities. To do this both independently and in partnership with others who share our values and whose contribution helps to achieve the best possible outcomes in a way that empowers the people who use our services.

Direct Provision of Services

Sacro delivers a wide range of services across the community justice spectrum in Scotland. We work all over the country both independently and in collaboration with many other statutory and voluntary organisations. We are committed to delivering services that provide support, encouragement and opportunities to help people change their lives for the better; to respect themselves and others and to live their lives free of offending. We do this by supporting them to feel empowered and take responsibility for improving their behaviours and wellbeing.

Delivering services that provide the best possible outcomes for those who use them and contribute to the reduction of crime within our communities remains our key strategic priority. We will continue to develop a progressive, outcome-focused culture of innovation and quality, while remaining mindful of our mission, and responsible in our assessment of value, affordability and risk.

As we continue to innovate with new services, we apply the same standards and approaches that have built Sacro's reputation for delivering quality criminal justice services over the years. Core services such as Throughcare, Supported Accommodation, Arrest Referral and Community Payback will continue to command our attention and resources as we respond to future challenges.

Our approach will focus on the needs of the individual and this will underpin the delivery of all of our services. We will continue to build on our knowledge and expertise of effective interventions to support stability in a person's behaviour.

Continuous development of our mentoring services will ensure they meet the needs of individuals who are trying to desist from offending and fulfil their potential. We will build on our very successful and innovative mentoring services for women, young men and our armed forces veterans and extend our expertise in this approach to other groups of individuals with distinct and particular needs.

For many years, Sacro's mediation services have played a valuable role in resolving conflict within neighbourhoods and improving the wellbeing of people and communities across the country. We are committed to this core service which contributes to safer communities across Scotland and we will continue to work with households to find their own effective solutions to resolving neighbourhood disputes and so reduce or avoid instances of more serious harm and conflict.

Our restorative practices are widely used to repair the harm caused by offending in both the youth and adult justice systems. Our experience in providing mediation and restorative practices have been applied successfully in many other situations of conflict and offending including sectarianism, historical institutional abuse, honour crime, housing and workplace disputes. We will seek to expand and develop our services in these areas.

Sacro's work with young people who offend must be timely. We will seek to provide interventions which are both early and effective and we will work in partnership with key agencies to ensure this.

We will listen to young people and their families to establish what they need to support their continued wellbeing. Acknowledging the strengths and potential of young people, we will help them improve their life chances by supporting and encouraging them in building positive relationships.

We fully recognise the impact of offending on communities and our approach – underpinned by restorative practice – will help to build capacity to acknowledge and repair harm caused.

Our extensive experience in monitoring and supporting some of the most high-risk offenders in Scotland is widely acknowledged and – working in partnership with statutory bodies – we will continue to provide robust Intensive Support Packages to enhance public safety. In addition, we will promote awareness of, and build our expertise and capacity for, the nationwide availability of our Circles of Support and Accountability service. This service monitors activity and supports desistance among those whose behaviour (including sexual offending) has isolated them from society.

Our focus on developing Sacro's response to tackling domestic abuse will align with national priorities. Our approach will ensure that the wellbeing of partners and children in abusive relationships are at the heart of service delivery.

How we will excel through working in partnership

The twin challenges of an increasingly competitive sector and a contracting funding environment mean that now – more than ever – it is important to innovate and add value to whatever we do.

Sacro has a long history as a pioneer in service design and we will draw on this expertise to remain at the forefront when designing solutions to meet the needs of people who use our services. This experience will guide us in adapting existing services to new challenges. We will diversify where necessary with the aim of growth but remain mindful of our core objectives and protective of the strong foundation we have built in our core services.

We will continue to build nationwide capacity to support local delivery. Local circumstances can require us to adapt services to suit local needs and we will endeavour to provide bespoke services as necessary. This will be built on local relationships and, as our service provision responds to society's needs, we will continue to monitor change in the external environment, and maintain a responsive and timely approach to relevant opportunities.

Much can be gained from forging strategic alliances with other organisations and agencies. The synergy gained from effective collaborations can often bring results greater than the sum of its parts. Working together and nurturing a culture of trust and transparency, will allow us to create a more collaborative approach to rehabilitation, recovery and reintegration.



In delivering and designing services, it is crucial to remain focused on those who will ultimately use the services we provide. Co-production of services with the involvement of the people who use them will ensure greater ownership and participation in the process. By involving people at all stages, we will seek to learn from their experiences, and benefit from their first-hand knowledge.

Creating safer communities must involve the people who live and work there. Sacro will work to make closer links with our communities across Scotland and mobilise the social capital that already exists within. By taking this asset-based approach, we can harness the existing talent, networks and goodwill already operating within communities. We will form partnerships with and support the work of these individuals and groups to deliver strong, interconnected local services that enhance the work of all involved.

We will encourage good citizenship among all our people by promoting and supporting greater volunteering opportunities within communities.

The contribution of volunteers to the work we do is immeasurable and we are committed to providing our volunteers with the greatest support and opportunities for development. Recognising the importance of their role, our Volunteer Strategy will embed the importance of volunteers into every aspect of our operations.

Active engagement with national and local government, community organisations, and our main stakeholders and partners continues to be a priority. Through purposeful dialogue, we will promote our aims and objectives, our key skills and expertise, and our approach to delivering our services. Where it is mutually advantageous, we will actively seek to forge alliances with like-minded bodies to support and enhance influence.

Greater citizen participation within our communities will be encouraged as we seek to influence at both governmental and community level.

Our engagement with the media will remain proactive and focussed on ensuring our voice is heard by the widest possible range of stakeholders. Through this work we will seek to promote our services and approach with the aim of building on and upholding our good reputation.

Building strong, collaborative networks is a powerful way to create traction and to generate awareness on new thinking. Investing time and effort in building social networks, both online and in person, will encourage and develop participation in – and support for – our activities. We will keep abreast of advances and trends in new media and will continue to invest in and utilise these new tools as they develop.

Our communications will develop strategically with the aim of speaking clearly, persuasively, authoritatively and consistently in dealings with others.

Key Partners and Networks



How we will support our efforts

The successful development of services requires robust systems and infrastructure. We will continue to build on the extensive upgrading of our IT capability by ensuring future development receives the necessary targeted investment and attention.

Given the current economic climate, securing adequate funding for delivering our services is challenging and we expect it to remain so for some time. To address these constraints we will build on our strategic partnerships to identify additional and alternative funding streams.

Sacro has a strong foundation of dedicated individuals working together to ensure the best possible outcomes for people who use our services. Everything we do revolves around caring for people who need our support and this caring approach applies equally to those who work for Sacro. As an organisation we have had to make difficult decisions as a result of the external pressures on us. These decisions are never easy but we have been – and will continue to be – fair and transparent in all dealings with our people.

Provision of quality services requires a robust evidence base and accurate and effective performance management. We have invested heavily in information systems to allow improved collection of data and effective monitoring and evaluation of our services.



We will continue to develop our case management system to produce consistently reliable data, allowing us to monitor and evidence the quality and performance of services.

Our aim is to be recognised as a sector leader within the community justice arena. We will do this by making the achievement of outcomes the focus of our approach to service design and delivery. These outcomes will be linked to those of our partners in community justice, health and the wider public authorities. Sacro has already had success in doing so and we have invested in new technology and systems to embed performance monitoring and management throughout. Building on this will ensure that evaluation is integral to any new service we develop.

Innovation is key to making real improvements to our services. Our dedication to consistently achieving high standards of service provision and to continuous improvement will remain throughout this plan.

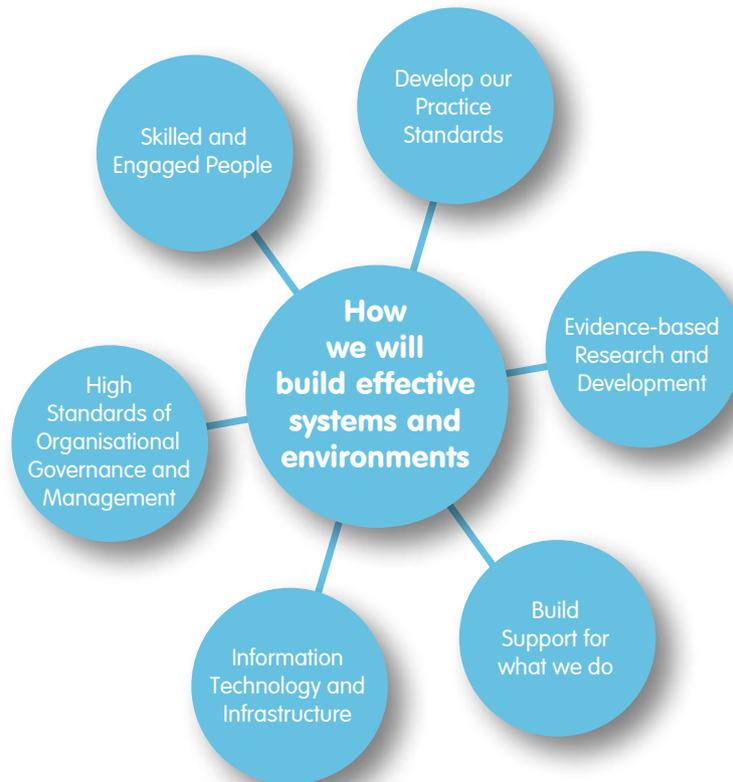
How we will build effective systems and environments

Providing direction for the organisation – particularly within a challenging environment – requires strong and effective leadership. We will continue to invest in and develop our people to help equip them with the skills necessary to ensure Sacro retains its strong position in the sector. Learning opportunities will be provided for staff to develop professionally and progression will be encouraged at all levels.

Through our communication channels, we will continue to inform and encourage feedback from our people. This will be continuously developed to engage, empower and involve all staff in the future development of the organisation.

Building on our relationships with academics and business will help us progress our research commissioning programme. The programme will continue to monitor and utilise relevant national and international research. These findings will be used to evidence the benefits of the work we do, inform future service provision and develop practice standards.

We strive to achieve and maintain the highest standards of governance and management across all Board, operational and supporting activities. Our standards of governance will continually be tested for compliance against the recommendations of Audit Scotland and we expect behaviour to be compatible with the Nolan Principles for Public Life.



Sacro's approach to governance is underpinned by our commitment to transparent and supportive working to achieve high levels of trust, based on sound principles and values.

Sacro will continue to target its resources where the need is greatest and be prudent and determined in developing the organisation and its people.

Providing assurance in relation to the external and internal arrangements for financial and accounting reporting, the strategic risk register and Board effectiveness will continue to be a high priority. This work is essential to safeguard and promote sound corporate governance.

We will:

Ensure the people who use our services are central to the design and delivery of those services

- The design of new services will have co-production built-in. The people who use our services will be consulted and will influence the model of service delivery.
- Our service user involvement group will continue to identify areas where those who use our services can contribute to and shape the delivery of existing services.

Prioritise an asset-based approach to service provision

- We will identify and build strategic partnerships with individuals, organisations and services already available in the community. Tapping into this pool of talent and expertise will enhance service delivery at a local level.

Identify and develop strategic partnerships to encourage synergy within operational practice

- Build sustainable partnerships with organisations involved with health and social care.
- Provide forums and networking opportunities to share knowledge and experience.

Create greater links and participation within communities

- We will continue to work with communities through awareness-raising campaigns and direct engagement with community groups and representatives.
- We will continue to raise awareness of volunteering opportunities at a local level.

Diversify our funding streams

- Identify and build relationships with a broad range of funding organisations including trusts, philanthropic funding streams and grant-giving organisations.
- Continuously develop our tender management capability.

Ensure outcome data and quality of service are effectively gathered, demonstrated and disseminated

- Continue investment in IT and training to demonstrate performance, quality and outcomes.
- Embed quality procedures and seek accreditation and validation from recognised authorities.

Continue to develop our core services and apply them to other groups and individuals in need

- Development of services will be evidence-based and built around extensive knowledge and practice standards.
- Continuously develop and evaluate our core services to create best practice standards which can be applied to new services for people in need.
- Widen our range of partnerships, particularly across the health and social care sectors and with involvement of academia.

Use our experience to innovate and adapt services, ensuring they are based on need

- Provide staff with opportunities to develop expertise into other areas and disciplines.
- Create an environment where best practice and knowledge is shared and extensively developed.

Build on our good relationships within national and local government

- Continue with our participation on the Scottish Government's Reducing Reoffending agenda.
- Remain supportive and constructive in our contributions to the redesign of community justice in Scotland.
- Meet with the justice spokespersons from the main political parties at least annually.
- Meet regularly with local authority heads of criminal justice social work and Community Planning Partnerships.

Build alliances with organisations and individuals with values aligned to our own

- Ensure representation at major conferences and events.
- Actively promote and publicise our activities using multi-media channels.
- Monitor and evaluate our communications activities to continuously enhance our dialogue with partners and stakeholders.



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