

## **SE19. Sacro Youth Justice Service**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which focused on the Sacro Youth Justice Services which had been presented to the committee on 7 October 2021.

The committee requested a further report from the Director of Children's Services which provided benchmarking information about services provided by Sacro elsewhere in Scotland and information on how Sacro was funded. Additionally, as requested, this report provided information on previous years' funding and targets as well as future service options.

The committee recognised that Youth Teams had provisions to work with children who showed behavioural problems and schools had integrated counsellors to deal with social problems. It asked how Sacro provided a different service to young people. The Service Manager of Children's Services explained that Sacro provided a range of family support, but offered specialist help in the Youth Justice System particularly in relation to intervention in offending. Sacro had access to Structured Risk Assessment Tools which helped the young person in understanding the support that they required. Trained staff also had experience in Restorative Justice Approaches.

In terms of the £73,368 funding from the Council, members asked how much of this was utilised for employee salary as it was suggested money could be saved by providing the help internally. Ms McIntyre stated that in previous years there were more youth justice provisions within Children's Services, however, the salary and qualifications of staff were greater than Sacro thus currently spending less. The outreach Sacro could provide was significant and since the easing of lockdown restrictions, discussions had begun with group work for young people within schools and included Community Police Officers.

Discussions were held to increase the number of young people receiving a Sacro service from 50 to at least 80 in 2021/22, members sought more information on how this would be achieved. The Service Manager clarified that there had been ongoing reviews and evaluations of current work in the hopes of freeing up capacity in services. The criteria of help provided had been expanded to include Higher Risk Young People and court support for those over 16.

Members then asked if the current funding allocation of £73,368 would be sufficient for helping 80 young people to which Ms McIntyre stated it was expected to. Sacro would utilise the funding to target those who needed it most and provide time-limited early intervention. The Council had provided limited administrative help to Sacro in relation to their early intervention groups.

Throughout 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2021, the disparity of gender in those who receive a Sacro service had remained roughly the same; from 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021, Sacro received 53 referrals, 7 females and 46 males. The Service Manager explained national statistics would unveil

young males were more likely to participate in offending and anti-social behaviour which was reflected in the work of Sacro. In terms of the service provided, it was adequate for both males and females – the work undertaken for each individual was tailored for their personal needs, risk and offences.

Ms McIntyre explained that in areas which had experienced spikes of disorder, a targeted approach would be adopted. Sacro had been involved with Community Learning and Development in terms of community outreach and identifying individuals. This work was extended to the Community Safety Team to understand the reasons behind individual's behaviour.

The committee asked if it would be appropriate for referrals to be made at an earlier stage of an individual's behaviour to which the Service Manager explained the Early and Effective Intervention group was in place to allow Police Scotland to refer an individual, even if it was their first instance, and Sacro would respond quickly.

In terms of how effective the service was at mitigating reoffending, Ms McIntyre was unable to provide specific data at the meeting but would include it in future reports. When evaluating, Sacro compared wellbeing scores (which took into consideration all aspects on an individual's life) from prior and post intervention. Young people's feedback highlighted that they felt more confident and actively avoided negative behaviour.

Members sought for more information on how the approach to mitigate reoffending differed, the Service Manager explained that the inclusion of Higher Risk Young People and the employment of 1 full-time Youth Justice Service Worker brought forward more experience and better trained staff. They would provide more intensive work over a longer period of time with a different focus, more on underlying behavioural issues, the recognition of substance use or mental health or wellbeing issues.

The Service Manager provided more information on what was entailed during court support – if a young person was not subject to a supervision order and committed an offence, they could be requested to appear in court, thus entering the Adult Justice System. Sacro would quickly become involved to identify needs of the individual and their family and source legal assistance if required as well establish a Risk Management Safety Plan.

## **Decision**

**The Committee noted the additional information requested regarding Sacro's service delivery nationally and locally.**