JUSTICE COMMITTEE

PRE-BUDGET SCRUTINY OF THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S DRAFT BUDGET 2019-20

SUBMISSION FROM SACRO

Sacro welcomes the opportunity to submit a view on the Justice Committee priority areas as part of pre-budget scrutiny process. The views of our senior team on priority areas 3 & 4 are detailed below:

Question 3 - What is your view on the level of current funding and planned spend on the rollout of electronic monitoring to ensure that the courts, prisons and Police Scotland have sufficient resources to provide for an enhanced service in all parts of Scotland? Additionally, is sufficient funding provided to third-sector and voluntary groups who provide services in relation to people who have such a device fitted as well as helping people with prior convictions or who have been accused of a crime?

As an organisation Sacro recognises and identifies with the funding constraints across all services in our current environment. Currently we have limited exposure to providing services to people with device fitted, with most of our involvement coming for provision of ISP and through-care services. We consider that funding to enable appropriate support for third sector organisations is critical in effective provision of both support and supervision to individuals and their families, where electronic monitoring is a key feature of their supervision.

Question 4 - What funding issues arise more generally from the work of third-sector and voluntary groups who operate in the civil and criminal justice systems, especially in terms of preventative spend?

There are a number of key funding issues which Sacro would identify as providing significant challenge in this area.

- Currently the majority of funding is short term in nature, which provides significant challenge in forward planning

- A significant proportion of the third sector funding in this area is contracted from Local Authorities, with a consistent risk of activity being taken in-house, with the sector losing funding at short notice

- Sacro believes significant benefit would accrue from taking a longer term approach, with a 5 – 10 year timescale for investment and planning being optimum in providing key gains and embedding positive behaviours
We hold a core belief that investment in preventative activity is key action in reducing offending and re-offending, and provides material savings, efficiencies and community benefits on an ongoing basis.

While we’d reiterate the benefits of longer term planning and investment, it should also be recognised the third sector has capacity to adapt quickly and be responsive to changing requirements on an ongoing basis.

In the current financial context, non-statutory activities are being significantly disinvested by commissioning authorities and this is directly having a negative impact on preventative activity.