

Restorative Justice, The Journey so far...

Issue 2

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South Yorkshire Police, in partnership with the Local Criminal Justice Board, have implemented the South Yorkshire Restorative Justice Programme as another way of dealing with first time offenders who have committed low level crime. This victim-centered approach firstly gives power to the victim, enabling them to influence the punishment of the offender and have their voice heard. The offender is held responsible for their actions, and also given the opportunity to explain their behaviour to the victim and repair any harm caused. This has a positive impact on the community, as their faith is restored in the local police and can see immediate results. Police officers are able to stay visible on the streets, feel able to deal with matters as they see fit and appropriate, and utilize their professional judgment. Here is an update on the progress so far.....

THE JOURNEY SO FAR....

In March 2010, the Restorative Justice Programme was launched within South Yorkshire Police. Since the launch of the programme, Remedi have trained 2000 front line officers-Sergeants, Constables, PSCOS's and Special Constables in Restorative Justice Interventions. Evidence to date has shown that this project has been very successful, and officers from across the force have welcomed Restorative Justice as another tool, to assist them in policing our communities and enabling officers to police professionally and appropriately. Feedback given is that Restorative Justice, "allows us to be bobbies again".

By March 2011, 1300 Restorative Justice Interventions have been recorded since the launch, with offences varying from Shoplifting, to Assault, Public Order to Dangerous Dogs. 1500 offenders ranging in age from 10 to 90 years old, have successfully been diverted from entering the Criminal Justice System as first time offenders, as a direct result of Restorative Justice.

A number of victims were asked for feedback around the RJ Programme. Here are just some of the responses captured from victims and offenders.

"I am over the moon with the outcome"
"It restored my faith in Justice"
"Overjoyed by the outcome"
"I am usually Anti - Police, I can't thank you enough"
"Thank you for not criminalising my daughter"
"Thank You"

HALLAM UNIVERSITY

The Hallam Centre for Community Justice at Sheffield Hallam University has been commissioned by South Yorkshire Police to provide an independent evaluation of the Restorative Justice Programme. The evaluation is to identify the extent to which SYRJP has achieved its aims. To do this, the evaluation will explore:

- Victim Satisfaction
- Community Confidence & satisfaction
- Officer confidence and satisfaction and
- Offender Perceptions
- Diversity

An interim evaluation will be produced by July 2011, with the full evaluation being completed by March 2012. The evaluation team at Sheffield Hallam University is keen to capture the views of a wide range of people, including members of the public. If you would like the opportunity to participate in a community survey or community focus group, then please send your contact details by email to hccj@shu.ac.uk or by post to Hallam Centre of for Community Justice, Collegiate Crescent Campus, Sheffield S10 2BP. Quoting the reference SYRJP/Comm.

PHASE III

Phase three of the SYRJP will commence this year. Phase three involves linking restorative approaches to integrated offender management and hate crime.

Integrated Offender Management Developments. A working group will come together in May 2011 to look at implementing two proposals to link restorative justice approaches to the management of those offenders who have already entered the criminal justice system.

1. A restorative Justice Specified Activity. A specified activity will enable an

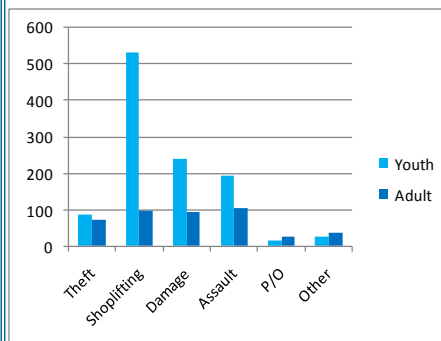
offender to undertake a restorative intervention as part of a sentence from the court.

2. Restorative approaches with persistent offenders. A group of offender managers (police and probation staff) will be receiving enhanced training to assist them in delivering restorative conferencing for Offenders who are being managed within Integrated Offender Management Units.

The working party will include key people from across the criminal justice system and members from voluntary and third sector organisations such as Remedi and Victim Support to ensure the best possible service is designed that meets the needs of South Yorkshire Communities.

Hate Crime Extensive consultation has taken place with leaders from BME communities and Faith groups to ensure the SYRJP develops an appropriate and effective response to dealing with hate crime. Victims of hate crime are now given the opportunity to be involved in restorative processes and offenders made to face up to the consequences of their actions particularly the negative impact that their actions can have on individuals and communities.

Breakdown of Restorative Justice disposals by offence type and offender status



Success Stories from the community...



Since the launch of Restorative Justice, we have heard countless cases where Restorative Justice has worked extremely well in and around the communities of South Yorkshire. During a recent Restorative Justice Executive Board meeting, a number of officers from across the force spoke about their personal experiences of delivering a Restorative Justice Disposal in

relation to crimes.

PC Lindsay Glassup conducted her first Restorative Justice Conference (the next tier up from RJ). PC Glassup attended a neighbourhood dispute where two 12yr old boys had been causing harassment to two elderly women. PC Glassup, very quickly recognised that this was a large conference where everyone wanted to have their say and needed to ensure that everyone got their chance to speak. It worked really well and both victims and offenders were extremely happy with the outcome.

PC Neil Moxon discussed an incident he attended last summer where a group of local boys, aged between 8 and 17yrs old had destroyed a hay bail valued at £600. The farmer was infuriated with what had happened and demanded compensation from the boys for the damage. PC Moxon engaged with the farmer and spoke of Restorative Justice as an alternative form of punishment rather than go down the route where each boy would receive a criminal record. It was agreed that PC Moxon could

the training provided by Remedi.

I entered this process with SYP with a healthy respect for the Police. My grandfather was an officer in the old Barnsley Borough. The training was challenging at times but ultimately rewarding. I have completed my own personal journey through this training, both as a resident of South Yorkshire and as a restorative justice practitioner, and have come through it with a heightened level of respect for the work undertaken by the Police. It is a service of which we can rightly be proud and one, which in my opinion constitutes a best practice model for restorative policing.

Steve Jones
Director, Remedi

deal with this as he saw fit, and by means of RJ each boy was instructed to litter pick in the farmer's field. This had a very positive impact on the community once word had spread. It also resulted in one of the boys—a 17year old who was about to start a role on the railway network, not getting a criminal conviction. Had he done so, he wouldn't have been able to take up this job offer.

PC Jacqui Atkinson attended a dispute at a public house in Barnsley, where a funeral had taken place. One of the members of the funeral party had smashed a window in the pub during the wake. The Victim (Landlord) wanted the member of the family arrested, which could have caused further dispute amongst the party given the circumstances of the day. In light of this PC Atkinson spoke to the victim and discussed RJ as a means of disposal and spoke of compensation for the window. The victim was very impressed with how this matter was dealt with the bereaved family was overwhelmed with the satisfactory outcome. PC Atkinson spoke how on this occasion RJ was very effective, as this incident could have resulted in a large-scale public order incident, if the matter had resulted in an arrest. Prior to RJ, an arrest may have been the only recourse open to the officers.

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From a trainers perspective.....

The provision of the training programme on a scale of that undertaken by Remedi for South Yorkshire Police in the last year is, to say the least, a daunting prospect. Having secured the contract to deliver the programme in early 2010 we were at a starting point of a significant journey.

It was apparent that the RJ team within SYP had commitment, passion and vision about what they wanted to achieve. More importantly, from my perspective, the team had a very clear understanding of, and willingness to embrace genuine partnership working. The success of this project is in no small part due to that commitment.

The very first stage of the training was to deliver a 'taster' session at Niagara for a selected group of various ranks from SNT and Response. In Remedi history this day will be forever remembered as the 'baptism of fire'. It was and I am sure will remain the most challenging training day we have ever had to deliver. For a number of reasons the day did not go as anticipated and on concluding, Nicola and I looked at each other and without speaking, shared one crystal clear thought- 'What the hell have we done?'

We reviewed and discussed the problems with the RJ team. We agreed a plan of action, re-drafted the training day and arranged for input from senior SY Police colleagues as an 'opener' to sessions. The content was agreed and we began to roll out the training. Much to my gratification some months later, I delivered the revised day to three officers who had been there at the 'taster' session and they confirmed that it now struck the right balance.

Our trainers (Nicola Jeffs, Chris Hickin, Gavin Hudson, Tony Jackson, Lousie Price and I) delivered 88 training days followed by a number of tier two 3 day training courses for 140 officers. As the training went on, we each became more comfortable with our roles. When I look back on the training that we delivered and the truly inspirational level of restorative practice being achieved by the force, I am genuinely proud. The creativity with which many officers have approached the work is wholly impressive.

It is clear to me, as an outside observer to a large extent, that reasons for this success are the drive and committed governance of the SYRJP team led by Supt Widdowson. The structured and clear strategy that her team developed for RJ in SYP, the demonstrable support of the key partner agencies, along with the substantial abilities of all officers and of course the truly superb quality of

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