

QUESTIONS FROM CLLR JULIE GROCUTT & PROFESSOR ADRIAN JAMES

Cllr Julie Grocutt

- 1. What training do police officers receive around restorative justice and how often are they using it?**

(PCP Support officer note: This wasn't raised at the session with REMEDI on 15th December, but Members felt there must be a link between the PCC's funding of REMEDI and the training the Police receive to make referrals).

Response

Please **see attached PAB report** which provides information on restorative justice. The training mentioned is provided by REMEDI.

Professor Adrian James

- 2. Are SY Police members of the National Rural Crime Network?**

Response

South Yorkshire Police is not a member of the National Rural Crime Network.

Established in July 2014, the Network is supported by 30 Police and Crime Commissioners and police forces across England and Wales. The Chair is Julia Mulligan, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire and the Vice-chair is Tim Passmore, PCC for Suffolk.

In addition to PCCs and the police, the Network includes a wide range of other bodies with a deep interest in community safety and rural affairs, ranging from Neighbourhood Watch to Historic England.

North Yorkshire Police (NYP) administers the budget and funding for the Network. NYP produces the management accounts, issue invoices and make payments under the terms of a Service Level Agreement.

Support for the administration of the Network is provided by the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire and this work is supplemented by Waverley Consultancy who were appointed in November 2017, following a competitive tender process, to provide communications and public affairs support.

When Professor James' question was first received we contacted the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire to establish if the Network was still up and running and if so how we could join.

Further information has now been received and South Yorkshire is not eligible to join the network as we are not classed as a rural force. Discussions are now taking part to see if we could have partial membership.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

OF THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

9TH FEBRUARY 2021

REPORT OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE APPROACH TO RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

REPORT AUTHOR : TEMP/CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT STEVE CHAPMAN

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report seeks to outline the work that has been undertaken across South Yorkshire in Support of improved use of Restorative Justice, by South Yorkshire Police and its Partners.

2 SUMMARY OF OPTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISION REQUIRED

For the Board to consider progress to date and any recommendations, they may wish to make.

3 BACKGROUND

Restorative Justice

- 3.1 Restorative Justice is an Out of Court Disposal (OoCD), which gives the victim and offender of a specific incident/crime the opportunity for direct/indirect communication. The aim being to address the harm received by the victim and reduce the risk of reoffending by the suspect. The Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) 2015, also identifies that every victim has a right to be offered/made aware of services supporting/facilitating Restorative Justice in their area. This information must be provided by every police force in England and Wales.
- 3.2 Restorative Justice gives a victim the opportunity to have a voice in the Criminal Justice System (CJS), describe how the offence made them feel, ask questions of the offender, obtain an apology, understand the circumstances behind the offending and feel more empowered by the experience.
- 3.3 For an offender it can avoid unnecessary criminalization for lower tier/first time offenders. It offers the opportunity to show remorse, offer an explanation and take responsibility for their actions. Offenders are able to confront the real impact of their actions, develop empathy and understanding, and make amends where appropriate.
- 3.4 The benefits to policing include, improved victim satisfaction rates when restorative justice used appropriately, empowerment to officers to use Restorative Justice in creative ways that meet the needs of the victim and reduce the risk of reoffending by the offender. This can also lead to less paperwork/evidence gathering by the officer conducting the investigation, resulting in more time out on patrol, keeping the public safe. Restorative Justice can also be delivered in a more timely/effective way than through a court process, which can on occasions take months/years to achieve. Restorative interventions include:-
 - Letter of explanation/apology
 - Verbal exchange of messages
 - Informal restorative meeting between victim and offender
 - Proportionate reparative activity – i.e. repairing damage
 - Proportionate financial recompense

3.5 Nationally, there are three recognised levels for Restorative Justice interventions:-

- Level 1 – Low level crime delivered as part of a Community Resolution
- Level 2 – For more serious crime, or low level cases requiring additional work/risk assessment.
- Level 3 – Post Court Cases. Restorative Justice delivered by a specialist agency following a sentence outcome.

Commissioned Service for South Yorkshire

3.6 Remedi (Restorative Services) are commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Community Rehabilitation Centre to deliver Restorative Justice Services across the South Yorkshire area at all stages of the Criminal Justice System, including Out of Court Disposals and Post Sentence Outcomes.

3.7 In July 2019, a Central Restorative Justice Hub was implemented at Snig Hill Police Station (currently based within the Criminal Justice Unit). The Hub acts as a central point of contact for many Restorative Justice enquiries and referrals from both members of the public and victim/offender agencies including; South Yorkshire Police, Community Rehabilitation Centre, National Probation Service, Prisons, Probation Victim Liaison Officers, Victim Support, Witness Care and Witness Support.

3.8 The Hub is staffed from Monday to Friday 0900 hours to 1700 hours with an answerphone facility available out of hours. Referrals or calls can be taken in a variety of ways; via a dedicated telephone line, free text service, via an online webform via the RestorativeSouthYorkshire dedicated website or via CONNECT directly from police officers themselves.

3.9 Following the introduction of the Hub in South Yorkshire, Remedi and South Yorkshire Police have continued working to develop Restorative Policing Approaches. Improvements to date include:-

- A review of force policy
- A revised flow chart/RAG System that is clear and simple for officers to use.
- Improved/revised training for officers and staff across the force

Training

3.10 Foundation training across police teams was delivered through Street Skills between 31st July 2019 and 16th December 2019. This training equipped officers/staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver Restorative Justice at Level 1 and refer cases for further consideration at Level 2.

3.11 An enhanced training package for officers, staff and Partners (these are often coordinators and volunteers linked to District Community Justice Panels), equipping them to deliver Restorative Justice at Level 2 was commenced in January 2020. This three-day course equips attendees with the necessary skills to solve more complex community issues such as long running neighbourhood disputes, domestic abuse (non-intimate partners) and offences linked to violence. This training commenced in January 2020. A total of eight courses were delivered across South Yorkshire at various venues and 136 police officers, local authority staff or community volunteers were trained.

3.12 Due to the Covid pandemic, the training was ceased in March 2020 and is currently on hold until the situation eases. Due to the nature of the training, it is not possible to deliver the training remotely, as it is interactive with scenario-based group work required to embed the

skills needed to become a restorative practitioner to deliver Level 2 Restorative Justice. The training will resume when appropriate to do so.

- 3.13 The aim of the course was to support officers and wider partner agencies to build community relationships and provide restorative responses in neighbourhood disputes/ repeat callers. The training focussed on building a restorative mindset and developing restorative language skills to support policing and conflict resolution within the role.

Community Justice Panels

- 3.14 Most Local Authorities across South Yorkshire have coordinators and a pool of volunteers to oversee neighbourhood disputes and issues. These teams are known as Community Justice Panels, who receive referrals directly from officers or via the Restorative Justice Hub. The training detailed previously in this report has been offered to these panels to support restorative approaches across the County

Performance

- 3.15 Police crime investigations, once completed, are allocated an outcome code in accordance with Home Office Counting Rules an (HOCR's) and National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS's). Outcome Eight refers to Community Resolution, and includes any Restorative Justice outcome attached to a Community Resolution. At this time, South Yorkshire Police are unable to distinguish between a Community Resolution with, or without Restorative Justice attached, unless a manual review is undertaken. The force is currently working towards an automated solution within 'Connect' (South Yorkshire Police Crime Recording System)
- 3.16 The force can say that between March and August 2019, 2% of overall outcomes were Outcome Eight. For the same period in 2020, has risen dramatically to an average of 7%. It is also worthy of note that force satisfaction levels have also risen during the same periods i.e. 2019 73% of victims were at least fairly satisfied with the service they received, compared with 81% in 2020. Clearly increased victim satisfaction rates are influenced in many ways, however national research tells us that Restorative Justice used in the correct way impacts significantly on these results.

Examples of positive feedback from participants include:-

- *"We were very pleased with the process and felt that our practitioner was fair, skilled and impartial. We wanted an opportunity to meet with our neighbours calmly and safely, to have our side to the situation heard, and time to consider and empathise with them, and this is what happened".*
- *"Remedi supported us very well. I believe that this has been an excellent preventative strategy that has helped to clear the air and will hopefully improve relations in the future". (victim)*
- *"If this service was not available, the alternative process of police intervention would not be a suitable solution and could have escalated matters without resolution. The process has been fantastic and highly recommended". (victim).*
- *"I didn't want to do it at first but I'm glad I did as it's not good to fall out with your neighbour, at least it's all done now, and we can put it behind us". (neighbour/person responsible for an offence).*
- *"We were referred to Remedi from SYP due to ongoing neighbour disputes over parking. I was very sceptical about the process at first due to the ongoing issues. We talked this through and gave our questions in, which we wanted to share with the other party, which took place in a meeting at the police station. We all agreed to move on in a more positive way". (victim)*

Quality Assurance

- 3.17 Police supervisors are responsible for ensuring that officers under their supervision use OoCD's appropriately and in accordance with force policy and guidance. Additional internal scrutiny around the use of OoCD's (including Community Resolution/Restorative Justice) is provided by regular dip sampling of investigations by District Performance Leads/Quality Assurance Teams, the force Audit and Governance Unit, and by the Community Safety Department on behalf of the Force Outcomes Lead.
- 3.18 External scrutiny is delivered through a quarterly independent Magistrates OoCD Scrutiny Panel. The role of the panel being to dip sample a selection of OoCD's (including Community Resolutions) and check Policy and National Guidance has been applied by South Yorkshire Police as appropriate to the circumstances of the case. The Panel comprises of a Magistrates' Bench Chair and Deputy Bench Chairs, a Senior Youth Offending Team representative and a member of a victims' organisation representing the 'victims' voice' e.g. Victim Support. The Crown Prosecution Service will also be joining the Panel in early 2021. The results of the last two panels held in September and December 2020 gave compliance rates of 82% and 100% respectively.

3.19 Next Steps

- Introduction of a Digital template for Restorative Justice- Over the last nine months South Yorkshire and Humberside Police have been collaborating to introduce a digital template for officers to record Restorative Justice Compliance, as opposed to the hand written form currently being used and uploaded to Connect. This will make the use of Community Resolution/Restorative Justice more effective and officers will be able to access this template via their phones and laptops at the scene of crime, enabling efficient upload onto Connect and ready access to Partners.
- A review of Connect to establish how best to ensure an automated data set that separates Community Resolution with/without Restorative Justice. More accurate data will help inform future commissioning of services lined to Restorative Justice e.g. Mental Health/Drugs/Alcohol.
- To specifically survey/speak with victims of crime who have undergone a Restorative Intervention, and understand the impact of the intervention, what went well and how South Yorkshire Police/Partners can continue to improve.
- To recommence training, as identified above, once Covid allows.

4 RECOMMENDATION AND DECISION REQUIRED

The Board is asked to consider the content of this report and support the next steps, as identified above.

**S WATSON
CHIEF CONSTABLE**

REPORT AUTHOR : T/CHIEF SUPT CHAPMAN