



**Restorative Justice Annual Review for 2015-16**

**1 BACKGROUND**

The initial purpose of developing Restorative Justice (RJ) in Stockton was to give victims the chance to meet or communicate with their offenders to explain the real impact of the crime - it empowers victims by giving them a voice, it holds offenders to account for what they have done and helps them to take responsibility and make amends. The broader community can also benefit from this approach in terms of reducing the impact of re-offending.

In line with the aim of Restorative Cleveland the process used ensures that at any stage of their journey victims have access to high quality restorative justice, building on existing provision and ensuring the same high level of service across the whole of the Cleveland area. It is down to each local authority as to how this will be delivered locally, however engagement with the Restorative Cleveland multi-agency working group is mandatory in order to achieve a consistent standard across Cleveland. As part of this Stockton has fully trained all facilitators to a high standard as per the Restorative Justice Council guidelines to be able to deliver conferencing and other restorative interventions.

The objectives of Restorative Cleveland and within Stockton are aligned to those that were detailed in the MOJ Criminal Justice Action Plan (November 2012) and include:

- Access – ensuring victims have access to high quality RJ at any stage of their journey which is easy to access
- Awareness – making sure that the public and RJ practitioners are aware that RJ can be used as an option at any stage of the victims journey.
- Capacity – ensuring highly skilled RJ facilitators are available
  - Evidence – understanding the impact on victims, offenders and the community

The following aims below were identified as key deliverables for the duration of the PCC grant total of £47,500, based on a two year programme of £23,750 allocation each year :

- Aim to offer all victims of low level crime and anti-social behaviour the opportunity to engage in RJ;
- To ensure relevant people are trained in restorative interventions and to deliver RJ conferencing as detailed in paragraph 1.4 of the original PCC Grant Agreement;



- Adherence to the Restorative Cleveland Service Promise will be developed and agreed support from the Restorative Cleveland multi-agency group and form part of this grant agreement.

## **2. Year 1 - Progress**

The Council's Community Safety Team appointed a Restorative Justice Co-ordinator to embed the ethos of RJ across the Borough of Stockton. Within the last year using the existing Restorative Justice ( RJ) literature and processes prevailing in Stockton, the RJ co-ordinator went about getting to know colleagues, their status in terms of RJ experience, and their appetite for the subject, given Stockton's agreed commitment to developing RJ further.

Some colleagues had already received facilitator training, but had not had the opportunities to put the skills they had learnt into practice, the co-ordinator encouraged them to identify potential RJ cases and then worked to support colleagues on a case – by – case basis. This has worked very well, in giving colleagues the confidence to work through the stages of the RJ process and to see the positive outcomes the work can deliver, in terms of victim satisfaction and the reduction in criminal / anti-social behaviour. This approach has also led to non-trained colleagues identifying cases and passing to trained colleagues for action. This approach should continue to be developed, as it is the most productive in moving toward embedding RJ within day-to-day business as we move into Year 2 and beyond.

In order to build confidence and ultimately capacity for RJ delivery, the co-ordinator engaged colleagues within role play sessions, which allowed them opportunity to work through example / real cases, concluding in a face-to-face meeting. All participants reported this to have been beneficial and asked if this could continue, using real case examples, thereby allowing for the development of knowledge and practical RJ delivery skills. It is recommended that this action is continued periodically.

The co-ordinator has sought to broaden the appeal of RJ to encourage collaborative working with other colleagues within the authority and partner agencies, which include the following: Environment, Enforcement, Youth Offending, Thirteen group, Schools, Police and Fire & Rescue. In terms of Enforcement meetings held – cases identified, but no outcome, at present. Enforcement held no cases or identified any yet through to the co-ordinator. Youth Offending Service meetings were held in determining how best to support one another, with a positive response in some cases identified with RJ outcomes. YOS staff also engaged in role play activity and promoted good collaborative working.

Thirteen Group discussions were held to highlight the value of RJ were completed through meetings with managers. As a result of this introduction to RJ, presentations were given to both the ASB team at Stockton and to the group's innovation team at Newcastle.

The Police continue to show their support for the RJ process and a recent example was an assault referral, which resulted in a face to face meeting between victim and offender. Achieving a positive outcome! Work with Joint Action Group / Problem solving shows significant potential and as colleagues attend such meetings, there is



an opportunity to ensure that RJ is used as a problem solving tool, in what is day-to-day business.

Fire – A project that is being developed via Paul Beattie, on fire related anti-social behaviour, has commenced and will need further work to embed and complete procedure and protocol for referrals in Year 2.

Schools - Some RJ activity has taken place at Ian Ramsey Academy, Northfield School and Sports College and St. Michael's School. From recent activity, notably Ian Ramsey and St. Michael's, there is an appetite to utilise the RJ process on a case – by – case basis.

In conclusion, some very positive work has been undertaken over this first year reporting period, with foundations being put into place for the further development of RJ practice, both within the team and partner agencies, notably in the area of schools.

### **3. BENEFITS/DELIVERABLES ACHIEVED TO DATE**

Progress have remained slow and steady, thereby ensuring the identification of key partners / areas for the development of RJ. Foundations for RJ have almost been fully established, with scope still to further embed within Stockton and once this is fully achieved the pace of activity / results will increase. RJ work needs to be used as a problem solving tool by more than just the ASB Team.

As previously reported awareness raising and support to colleagues continues, with some valuable learning for those individuals involved for the first time in 'real' cases.

The value and direction of Restorative approaches continues to grow within Stockton. This remains of benefit in the development and future shaping of local delivery of RJ, taking into account the national landscape moving forward into Year 2 of funding from PCC office.

- Outcomes from 15/16: A total of 40 cases identified and considered with the following result:-
  - 9 face – to – face meetings
  - 6 potential face – to – face meetings.
  - 7 letters of apology.
  - 7 cases ongoing.
  - 11 cases considered and deemed not appropriate
  - The majority being low-level crime and anti-social behaviour – referrals received through ASB / CSP.

The ASB Team in particular remain pivotal in the further growth and development of RJ and have now made a shift in thinking and utilising the positive benefits of RJ and will continue to showcase and offer this as a problem solving tool within all JAGS where appropriate.

### **4. Planned activity to develop RJ in Year 2**



- We will be building on the activities detailed above we will continue to develop skills and knowledge of colleagues to give them confidence to deliver and promote RJ effectively.  
With colleagues from across all agencies and internally we continually review/monitor and reflect on RJ practice. Through this process we will continue to work to identify and record and share good practice.
- We will, as a team of trained officers further explore the potential benefits and activity with partners, given RJ can be very effective, but labour intensive. Consideration will be given to factors such as the cost benefits and resourcing of this project for the longer term. Utilising the departure of the one day a week RJ co-ordinator, this will remain the responsibility of the pool of trained officers to take forward. To test if this is a sustainable method of promoting and coordinating RJ from a central point.
- Regular dialogue with partners is paramount and will continue, in terms of project impact, and the ability to maintain, develop and deliver this service. This will also impact on delivery of RJ in the longer term now and will utilise funding and support in Year 2 to look at most effective ways to do this.
- This will include finding more suitable venues for delivery and the development of RJ into schools.
- The Team of officers will continue to broaden the appeal of RJ to encourage collaborative working with other colleagues within the authority and partner agencies, which include the following: Environment, Enforcement, Youth Offending, Thirteen Group, Schools, Police and Fire & Rescue.
- In terms of Enforcement meetings held cases have been identified, but no outcome, at present. This will be developed in Year 2.
- Youth Offending collaboration with Community Safety to continue to develop to look to support one another in the further embedding of RJ.
- Thirteen Group – it is unlikely that RJ will be developed further at this time, this is due to their resource constraints and the way in which they have to change their response to tackling ASB.
- RJ for Schools – so far good RJ work has taken place at Ian Ramsey Academy, Northfield School and Sports College and St. Michael's School. From this recent activity, notably Ian Ramsey and St. Michael's, there is an appetite to utilise the RJ process on a case – by – case basis. Within Year 2 we will look to consider a broader ethos of Restorative Practice (RP) that could be introduced within local schools. It is proposed that this is further discussed at a Head teacher cluster meeting.
- Fire Service – Continuation and development to support the Fire Service RJ project with young fire setters that was initially developed by seconded fire officer within SBC ASB Team.