To inform this report the Restorative Justice Council held events with the three areas profiled. Scriberia produced visual minutes of these events, excerpts from which appear on the case study pages. For full versions of these minutes please see: www.restorativejustice.org.uk/scriberia
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Delivering restorative justice – making multiagency partnerships work

Introduction

Restorative justice works. It helps victims to put their experience of crime behind them and move on, while also giving offenders a chance to take responsibility for their actions and make amends. There is robust evidence that it both helps victims to recover from crime and reduces reoffending.

As a result of these widely recognised benefits, the last five years has seen increasing government support for the availability and use of quality restorative justice across the criminal justice system. New services have emerged across the country and criminal justice agencies have looked afresh at how they can best make it available to victims and offenders. Meanwhile, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have been funded by the Ministry of Justice to make restorative justice available to victims of crime in their area, introducing a major new stakeholder into the restorative justice landscape.

While an increase in the provision of restorative justice is wholly welcome, it is not unproblematic. As new services have emerged there are inevitable risks of duplication. For example, where a Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) wants to use restorative justice in its work with offenders to reduce reoffending and a PCC has also commissioned a service to offer restorative justice to victims in the same area, both agencies may separately consider a restorative process for the same case. Resources may be wasted through duplication and, more worryingly, there may be multiple uncoordinated efforts to offer restorative justice to the same victim or offender.

Recognising this, agencies in some areas have come together to develop partnerships to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of restorative justice. In order to support this welcome development, the Restorative Justice Council (RJC) has set out to explore the issues that need consideration in the creation of an effective partnership. This has included working with three areas – Hertfordshire, Northumbria and Sussex – and I would like to thank colleagues from all three areas for taking part in this project. It has also drawn on our broader work with and on behalf of the restorative justice field.

In the last five years, real progress has been made in embedding restorative justice across the criminal justice system. Legislation has ensured that it is available at every stage, while new funding has led to the emergence of new services. The next step in the progress of restorative justice, however, must involve consolidation and streamlining to make sure that resources are used effectively. Multiagency partnerships are a key development in ensuring that the best services are provided for victims and offenders alike.

Jon Collins
Chief Executive
Restorative Justice Council
About the project

An increasing number of organisations are now involved in delivering restorative justice. In any given area the PCC, CRC, National Probation Service, Youth Offending Team (YOT) and custodial estate may be commissioning or delivering restorative justice. Each agency will have its own focus, ways of working and funding arrangements.

To avoid duplication, effectively use resources and ensure that victims and offenders receive a seamless service, these agencies need to be able to work together. This is already happening in many areas at practitioner level – organisations are finding ways to support each other and forging individual relationships that support their work. The next step is creating these relationships at a strategic level.

This report is based on learning from three areas which have made the decision to formalise their working relationships into multiagency partnerships. These areas were chosen because they demonstrate real variety – in terms of the organisations involved in the partnerships, how they operate and how far advanced they are. Their diversity has enabled us to extract some broad principles which can be applied to any area seeking to develop a multiagency partnership.

The intent behind using these areas was not to provide a blueprint for replication, but instead to look at factors influencing success and to understand the journey that these partnerships have been on. We would not recommend that any area looking to form a partnership simply copies any one of the areas featured here or, indeed, any other area. What works in one local situation may well not work for another. Setting up a partnership needs to be based on an analysis of local need and local resources.

The lessons that we have learned from working with these three areas – and the RJC’s broader work with those involved in the delivery of restorative justice – have helped to shape what we see as the key areas in the development of effective multiagency restorative justice partnerships. As the field continues to develop and grow, these principles can help to support the development of good practice.
The areas we learned from

**Hertfordshire**

Of the areas that we examined, Hertfordshire’s partnership is in the earliest stage of its development. Its work is relatively new, and it has faced challenges with raising awareness and understanding across all of the agencies involved. It also has an unconventional partner – it is working with the local university, which co-ordinates its work and raises awareness and understanding. Hertfordshire was included to illustrate a partnership at an early stage. It also demonstrates the range of organisations that some partnerships have chosen to work with.

**Northumbria**

Northumbria is a partnership that is still under development but is relatively advanced and developing well. It is included to demonstrate how well a partnership can be made to work in a large and historically fairly fragmented area through having committed support at a senior level. It shows how, through hard work, unengaged partners can be brought into the process to enable multiagency working.

**Sussex**

Sussex is the most developed partnership we looked at. It was useful to examine how issues seen throughout the process had been overcome, and to look at how an area with a relatively high caseload made the partnership work successfully. Sussex demonstrates how barriers have been overcome and how the future of a partnership can develop.
How to set up a multiagency partnership

There are a number of broad principles which apply to setting up and running a successful multiagency partnership for the delivery of restorative justice. As the case studies in this report illustrate, these principles can be applied in very varied areas. The three areas covered by this report do not have much in common in the way that their partnership was set up, or how it works now.

There are no tried and tested methods that will work for every partnership. Each area will have a different history, different requirements, and different agencies that should be involved. The range of circumstances across the three case study areas discussed in this report serve to demonstrate that managing to establish a successful partnership is something that can be done anywhere.

The following principles are therefore headline recommendations – the detail for each principle will vary depending on the circumstances in the area.

Support at a senior level

Research into making criminal justice partnerships work has highlighted the importance of getting buy-in and support at a senior level. This support means that the services are being co-ordinated at a strategic level, rather than just through operational collaboration. It can also help to ensure that the partnership’s work is supported, and that obstacles to success are removed. It is a clear demonstration for all the agencies involved, and their staff at every level, that the project is worthwhile and credible.

In Northumbria, the PCC acknowledged the need for leadership and was prepared to take up this role. She is a very vocal proponent of restorative justice, and was forceful in making sure restorative justice took place. She offered her support and used her position to make clear to other agencies what needed to be done to support its development. Her enthusiasm ensured that the changes that the partnership needed to succeed could be made. Having decisions made or supported by senior figures means that those decisions are likely to become reality.

The push from the PCC also made it very clear that restorative justice was a priority for Northumbria at the highest level. In particular, having the PCC’s buy-in helped as it was widely understood that funding could come through the PCC. Highlighting this financial relationship was highly beneficial.

The partnership in Sussex similarly highlighted the strategic leadership and involvement of the PCC being beneficial to the formation and ongoing success of the partnership. She offered support and was very keen to find out what the partnership needed and ensure that it was provided.

In Hertfordshire, senior support has come not only from the PCC but from the judiciary, who are offering restorative justice as part of a new programme for dealing with prolific offenders. The fact that senior members of the judiciary support restorative justice has assisted with making it a mainstream option to be offered as part of the programme.

Other areas that have been less successful in establishing a partnership have cited the lack of engagement of senior staff as a main reason for the partnership’s failure. Without senior buy-in, there is no strategic support available and the work is done at a local or practitioner level on an ad hoc basis. This is not the most effective way to develop a co-ordinated and efficient delivery structure.

Getting the right partners involved

For a restorative justice partnership to function effectively, it is essential that the right partners are involved. Depending on the size and scope of the partnership the membership may vary but it is likely to involve a range of criminal justice agencies, including the PCC, the police, the local CRC, the National Probation Service, YOTs and any prisons or other custodial establishments that service the area. Local authorities, local charities and specialist restorative justice providers may also be members.

To build up good lines of communication and referral pathways, wherever possible consistent representation at partnership meetings or steering groups should be required from each agency. The same person from each agency should contribute to the partnership, at least in its early days. This helps to ensure continuity in approach and enables progress to be made more quickly.
With each partner, it is useful to make sure that there is broad buy-in, particularly among key decision makers in the organisation. A number of people in the case study areas expressed the concern that if they left, restorative justice from that organisation’s perspective would completely stop. When engaging with a new partner organisation, it is important to look at ways to encourage wider participation and explore how restorative justice fits in with the structure and focus of that partner’s work.

Membership of the partnership should be reviewed regularly to ensure that all the relevant stakeholders are engaged. Where gaps are identified, new members should be brought in. Leaders should think creatively about whose involvement would help the partnership function more effectively and how they can be brought to the table. Adding new partners, where necessary, can be a useful way to help the partnership grow and evolve.

Recent research by the RJC into restorative justice for women who have offended found that partnership working was extremely important for female offenders, who are more likely to have complex needs than male offenders. In particular, the study found that work between restorative justice services and women’s centres presented a real opportunity to deliver effective and ethical services to women who had committed an offence.

Defining shared aims and goals

A key first step for the partnership is to establish its aims and goals. The process for this can be as simple as getting all the potential partners in a room together and talking through what the partnership’s aims and values are. These aims should be clear and concise. They need to be understood by all members of the partnership, as well as external stakeholders.

A primary concern is establishing the goal of the partnership. Clarity is needed on the overarching aim that the partnership is working towards before other secondary considerations can be made. The partners then need to define the purpose and priorities of the partnership. Is it intended only to deliver restorative justice? If not, where does restorative justice fit within the partnership’s priorities?

Research\(^1\) indicates that having a shared vision of the partnership is a vital factor in ensuring its success.

When deciding on the aims and goal of the partnership, it is important to work out how the individual priorities of organisations involved in the partnership can be balanced. Different agencies will have different priorities. Working out how these can be brought together will ensure engagement.

The discussion can then move on to the practical considerations of the partnership. At what stage or stages in the criminal justice process will the partnership deliver restorative justice? Are there any crimes that are being excluded? If so, why and can that be justified given the requirements of the Victims’ Code? These practical decisions should be expressed simply to ensure that everyone in the partnership fully understands how the partnership works and what they will be doing.

Sussex, for example, has created a shared Terms of Reference for the partnership setting out their plans and the role of each partner. It has a clearly articulated set of values which explain clearly what the partnership is there to do and how it should function.

It is also worth establishing a clear definition of exactly what is meant by ‘restorative justice’ and what it will involve, in order to have a shared understanding and to address any ambiguities. This is also a good time to investigate any biases against restorative justice that the agencies involved in the partnership may hold, and to look at ways of addressing them.

Getting governance structures right

There is no ‘one size fits all’ best model for a partnership’s governance structure. Decisions about how best to govern a partnership should be made based on the agencies involved, the local situation and pre-existing work and relationships. In Sussex, the Criminal Justice Board manages the partnership, while in Northumbria there are steering groups set up involving all of the members of the partnership.

How often the governance board meets can vary depending on the needs and stage of the partnership. At first, while setting up the partnership, meetings may need to be very regular. Once the partnership is established, strategic direction might be required less frequently, and the governing board may only meet every few months. In Sussex, ‘agile working’ was used initially – the partners met regularly and carried out small portions of work in iterative, evaluated cycles enabling the evolution of the deliverables over time.

The way that the governance structures work will vary across different areas and different partnerships, and there are two main considerations for any partnership. First, whether the governance structure works for the partnership and its members. Second, the need for clarity – a shared understanding of how the governing bodies work, how they work together, where lines of responsibility and accountability lie and how decisions are made.

As long as this understanding and clarity is established, the partnership’s governance can be flexible and develop as appropriate. For example, in Northumbria, the partnership developed practitioner forums to provide frontline feedback to the governance board of the group. These forums were introduced as the strategic leads in the partnership realised that they were needed, and the governance structure was flexible enough to accommodate them.

Northumbria’s forums are just one way of bringing in more feedback. It is essential for the governance of the partnership to hear back from the people on the ground about how well implementation is working. Each of the case study areas did this, albeit in different ways. Hertfordshire used ‘task and finish’ groups, who implemented the strategy and reported back on its success.

The strategic governance of the partnership needs to be prepared to listen to the information being fed to them, and to make changes to the strategy based on this learning. This could include providing training or support, or reviewing case allocation between the different agencies.

### Information sharing procedures

Information sharing is highlighted repeatedly as one of the main barriers facing restorative justice delivery. Many pilots or restorative justice projects have had their ability to deliver effectively hampered by an inability to access victim or offender data.

Recent research by the charity Why me? found that agencies such as the National Probation Service, CRCs, the police and Victim Support are often not in a position to share essential information due to historical data protection restrictions. Even where they can legally share information, concerns or misunderstanding about what is permitted means that they do not.

One of the main advantages to partnership working is that it provides the opportunity to get information sharing right. The partners can be brought together to discuss the information that they need access to, and can explain to the other partners why they need access. These conversations can help to overcome worries that some agencies might have about information sharing, and can enable agreements to be created that are appropriate to the needs of the organisations.

The information sharing agreement should be based on an understanding of what each of the partners needs, and should take into account the problems that different members have had in the past. The partners should all be clear on what information can and should be shared, with whom and why. This is an opportunity to create something which will be useful to the specific circumstances of the partnership.

When considering information sharing, looking at the technology involved is important. Sussex has put a lot of work into making sure that all of the organisations in the partnership use the same software so that details of victims and offenders can be shared easily. Ensuring that data is easy to access and stored accessibly for all involved is a necessary underpinning to successful information sharing.

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The need for information sharing goes beyond the partnership’s geographical area. For example, an offender may be held in a prison elsewhere in the UK, or a crime could have been committed against a victim who lives in the partnership area while they were elsewhere. Looking at how to work with other agencies beyond the partnership is something to consider once protocols are in place in the partnership area.

As the partnership’s work evolves, any agreements can be revisited and revised. In Northumbria, getting the information sharing agreement right was a major project for the partnership. It was not an easy process, but crucial for the ongoing work of the partnership.

Clarifying funding streams

A range of funding mechanisms and arrangements will work for a partnership, but it is important to begin with clarity about how funding for restorative interventions is going to be apportioned. This can involve either paying for costs around the intervention – such as materials, or a room for a conference – or the provision of trained facilitators. Both the source of the funding and what it will be used for need to be established and agreed on.

In each of the areas studied for this report, the agencies involved all had their own staff who could deliver restorative justice. For example the CRC in Northumbria was managed by Sodexo, who had funding allocated for restorative justice delivery. The YOT is funded by the local authority and the Youth Justice Board to deliver restorative justice. The PCC’s funding for restorative justice comes from the Ministry of Justice. Each agency is responsible for funding their own staff to deliver the interventions.

Beyond this, different agencies contribute funding for the other costs. In Hertfordshire, the PCC’s office pays for restorative justice wherever a cost is incurred. The agencies cover the cost out of their own budget when they have a trained member of staff who is paid, but the PCC will cover the extraneous costs. Sussex’s hub model means that extraneous costs are already planned and provided for, with central hub funding to cover these needs.

Having the funding stream clarified is key to ensuring that disputes do not happen in the partnership and that the relationships work smoothly. It can, as Hertfordshire found, also help if the driving force behind the partnership is prepared to pay for the work of the other members. This financial incentive can help encourage other organisations to participate – and may make them more willing and able to take on referrals. It is important to recognise, though, that this may not be sustainable and there may be benefits for longer-term engagement if all partners have a financial stake in the success of the partnership.

Referring and allocating cases

Referral pathways and case allocation can be simplified by working in a partnership. A clear referral pathway, effectively managed, can be highly beneficial in making joint work more effective.

What is most important in establishing processes for referral pathways and case allocation is making sure that they simplify how members of the partnership work together. Having one agency in charge of managing referrals and case allocation can help the partnership to co-ordinate its activities.

For example, in Sussex, referrals go into one of the three multiagency ‘hubs’, depending on the area. From these hubs the case can then be assigned to the appropriate agency during one of the regular hub meetings. All cases are initially referred into the hub, and the hub assigns all activity in relation to the case. This includes which information agencies need to share about the participants, as well as the eventual case allocation. The work of the partnership is co-ordinated through the use of these hubs.

The co-ordinator can be one agency, one individual, or even part of the governance structure. What is important is having clarity around how work is assigned within the partnership and where responsibility lies. This is essential in managing the partnership’s efficiency and success.

First, this means that there is no risk that victims or offenders will be contacted repeatedly by different organisations, or that one organisation will contact them after they have told another they do not wish to participate.
Second, it is important for ensuring allocation of cases between different agencies. The referrals co-ordinator will know which agencies have capability and capacity, and which would be most appropriate to take on the case.

Third, it can be comforting for a victim to have one point of contact – their own dedicated member of staff in an organisation. Having one agency in charge of co-ordination can make it easier for each victim to have a nominated staff member in charge of their case. In one of our case study areas the co-ordinator was described as the victim’s ‘one friend’ throughout the process. Having one point of contact for the victim can ensure that they feel supported and well informed.

There is no one right way to choose where the co-ordinators should sit or who they should be. Hertfordshire works with the local university to build evidence around restorative justice. For this reason their co-ordinator works in the university – an unconventional arrangement. In Northumbria, a separate victims’ charity has been set up – with a much broader remit than just restorative justice – who contact the victim to offer it to them as part of a suite of options.

Basic principles for establishing a referral pathway involve the co-ordinator having oversight and understanding of all of the agencies involved in the partnership. They should be equipped with the knowledge of which agencies facilitate restorative justice, and should also be knowledgeable about what it involves to make good quality first contact with the victim.

Support and accountability

The entire purpose of creating a partnership is to ensure that the best possible service is delivered to victims and offenders. It is the practitioners who will actually deliver the restorative justice services, and the partnership must be designed to support them in this work. Ensuring that there are clear and simple pathways of support and accountability for practitioners is essential.

This is something which should run through all of the work done by the partnership. For instance, when looking at referral pathways and case allocation, the partnership will need a system in place to make sure that practitioners from different delivery organisations are not overworked – or, conversely, underworked. This will require the co-ordinator for the partnership to have a full understanding of the workload and capacity of the different agencies involved in delivery.

It is also important that realistic expectations are set for the practitioners about caseload. In the areas that we worked with, this was seen as an issue that was likely to occur in the early days of a partnership – there was a gap between how many cases practitioners expected to be coming through, and how many actually did. This may be a particular issue for volunteers who are keen to get involved and may become disengaged if they feel there is not enough for them to do.

Clear communication from the senior levels of the partnership to the practitioners about what the aims of joint working are, and what the effects are likely to be, is very important. This can help with managing expectations around caseload, but also with making sure that staff and volunteers understand what changes the partnership will bring.

Perhaps most important is establishing simple and widely understood pathways of accountability. If practitioners from different organisations are working on the same case that was referred to them via a shared referral pathway, establishing where responsibility lies if something goes wrong can be hard. This damages accountability and can also make staff concerned about participating in case they are held culpable for any mistake made by another organisation. Establishing accountability should be discussed very early in the partnership process.

Raising awareness and using evidence

Awareness raising is not something which only needs to be done among the general public – not all the agencies involved will have the same levels of knowledge, understanding and enthusiasm about restorative justice and it is essential for this to be addressed. In Hertfordshire, for example, a serious barrier to progress was the lack of knowledge about restorative justice among criminal justice agencies. Ensuring that everyone involved in the partnership has the same level of knowledge and is working to the same definitions is key to success.
Raising awareness can work in a number of ways. In Hertfordshire, the partnership with the university provides the opportunity to develop high quality evidence to be used to encourage other members of the partnership. The university has also run a number of events to promote public understanding and raise awareness about restorative justice.

In other areas, making sure that the agencies contacting victims understand their duty to offer restorative justice under the Victims’ Code has been a priority. While public awareness of restorative justice is growing, the majority of people still haven’t heard of it. Polling by the RJC and Ipsos MORI in 2015 found that 70% did not know what it was. The agencies involved in the partnership need to know exactly what restorative justice is, and how it can help, in order to inform victims.

All of the areas highlighted the importance of building knowledge early in the partnership. This is vital for ensuring that everyone involved understands what they are working towards. It is also very important to build public understanding in order to encourage take up of restorative justice early on, as this is a lengthy process and the results will not be seen immediately.

**Capturing impact**

Restorative justice is an intervention with clear and demonstrable impact. It is an effective way to improve victim satisfaction and reduce reoffending. Capturing this impact across the partnership is very important to ensure consistency of quality. Sussex, for example, is very good at capturing data and evidencing the impact of its service. This is useful to attract new members and funding, but also for the leadership to have a sense of how well its service is working.

Deciding on success criteria for delivery can be something that is uniform across the agencies involved, or there can be values around success that are shared but exact criteria that vary. In Northumbria, for example, it is understood across the partnership that quality and participant experience are what matters, rather than number of cases seen, but each agency decides on its own criteria for measurement.

There are some success criteria that are commonly used and can be easily shared. Comparing the reoffending rates following restorative justice – and the time it takes for an offender to reoffend – with other similar offenders can be a useful way to demonstrate impact. However, desistance is one of the long-term benefits of restorative justice – these figures will be meaningless if collected too quickly.

In order to demonstrate impact more immediately, offenders who have participated can be interviewed about their impressions of the restorative process – has it changed their thoughts on their offending behaviour? Do they feel less likely to offend now? These can form a useful interim measure until data about reoffending becomes available, and can give a sense of whether risk has been reduced as a result of the intervention.

PCCs are funded directly to deliver victims’ services, so it will be relevant for them to understand how restorative justice impacts on victim satisfaction. This is not necessarily something that other partners, such as CRCs or prisons, will be interested in recording. However, all agencies have duties to help victims to recover under the Victims’ Code. Involvement in the partnership and demonstrable results for victim satisfaction can be a way for the agencies involved to show their success against the Victims’ Code requirements.

**Evaluating the success of the partnership**

It is not just the success of delivery that needs to be understood. Evaluating the success of the partnership and how well the agencies are working together is vital in order to understand if changes need to be made.

There are a number of ways that the success of the partnership can be assessed. In some cases it can be a matter of gauging how involved partners are by how many attend meetings, and how regularly. The issues that are raised at these meetings can also serve as an indication of how engaged partners are, and the problems that they may have with the partnership, and constitute a useful form of feedback.
Gaining feedback from frontline staff is also a good way to tell how well the partnership is working. Practitioners should be encouraged to feedback – for example about whether the referral pathway has affected their workload, and how successful information sharing protocols are. As previously discussed, getting feedback from staff can be a vital part of the partnership’s governance structure.

It is not just staff who can offer useful insights about how well the partnership is working. Gaining feedback from participants is also helpful in improving the service provided. Taking advice from people who have used a restorative justice service may help to tailor it to local needs and to ensure that it is running smoothly from the victim’s perspective. In some areas, such as Sussex, restorative justice advocate groups have been set up which help inform how the service is developed and delivered.
Delivering a high quality service

For a multiagency partnership to work, the partners all need to be able to trust each other to deliver restorative justice to a high standard. Without this trust, partners will be unwilling to refer cases on to other partners, or to co-facilitate the restorative justice process with facilitators from other agencies. Particularly where one partner is funding the partnership, they need to know that their money is being well spent.

In a field which is growing rapidly, consistency of quality is paramount. The RJC has developed clear, evidence-based standards for restorative justice and has put mechanisms in place to enable service providers and individual practitioners to demonstrate that they meet those standards. Working to RJC standards can help to ensure that restorative justice is delivered consistently and well.

The Restorative Service Quality Mark (RSQM) was developed by the RJC, working with the Ministry of Justice, and provides organisations and partnerships delivering restorative justice with external validation that they are meeting the six Restorative Service Standards. The RSQM reassures participants in restorative processes that they will receive a safe, effective service. It also supports the development of restorative justice provision by enabling commissioners to identify high quality service providers.

For more information on RJC standards and accreditation, visit www.restorativejustice.org.uk/standards-and-quality

“The RSQM shows the public that our policies and processes have been tested and assures them that they will receive a high quality service.”

PCC for Cheshire
Area 1: Hertfordshire

Population

1.15 million

Crimes with an identifiable victim

39.4 per 1,000 people

Restorative justice caseload

Four delivered to date

This is an extract – the full image can be found at www.restorativejustice.org.uk/scriberia
The history of restorative justice in Hertfordshire

A 2014 scoping study by Restorative Solutions found that the restorative justice provision in Hertfordshire was offender-centred, and victims were often a peripheral part of the process. They were brought in to attend, but on occasion felt alone and unsupported. It was felt that more needed to be done to ensure that victims were central to the process.

Interviews with practitioners found that they identified co-ordination and systematic sharing of information as vital and missing. There was no central focus for the service, no central point of contact for the victim, and nobody offering co-ordination at a macro level. A first and single point of contact was needed. This person would co-ordinate, avoid duplication, support information sharing and direct victims to the right support.

The 2015-18 restorative justice strategy for Hertfordshire recommended an increase in multiagency working, the creation of a single point of contact (a co-ordinator), creating a shared definition and establishing delivery partners.

The partnership

The multiagency work in Hertfordshire comes from the 2015-18 restorative justice strategy for the area, and focuses exclusively on restorative justice. Other interventions may overlap with the work of the partnership in places, but the particular aim of this group is to deliver – and ultimately embed – restorative justice and restorative approaches.

The partnership’s values focus on involving the right individuals and getting them to work together collectively. They also aim to co-ordinate resources in order to maximise their availability. The partnership is intended to be based on a shared vision, with collaboration and open communication at its heart.

Members

- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- University of Hertfordshire, School of Law
- Welwyn Hatfield District Council
- Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire CRC (BeNCH CRC)
- National Probation Service
- HM Courts and Tribunals Service
- Mediation Hertfordshire
- Beacon
- Victim Support

Governance structure

The victims and witnesses subgroup of the Criminal Justice Board has oversight and decision making power for all interventions for victims in Hertfordshire. It takes advice on decisions and is fed into by the hub’s governance group. The victims and witnesses subgroup reports to the main Criminal Justice Board. This group contains:

- Victim Support
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Magistrates
- HM Courts and Tribunals Service – St Albans Crown Court
- National Probation Service
- BeNCH CRC
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Witness Care Team (Hertfordshire Constabulary)
- Witness Services – Court Based (Citizens Advice)
- University of Hertfordshire, School of Law
- OPCC

Below the Criminal Justice Board sits the governance board. This board sets the broad restorative justice strategy for the partnership and the area. It reports to the victims and witnesses subgroup. It contains:

- OPCC
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- University of Hertfordshire
- Mediation Hertfordshire
Task and finish groups enact the strategy of the governance board and feed back up the chain on how well the strategy works in practice. They are comprised of delivery agencies in Hertfordshire, including the constabulary, BeNCH CRC, University of Hertfordshire and Mediation Hertfordshire.

Delivering restorative justice

Referral pathways and case allocation
All victims of crime who have reported a crime to the police in Hertfordshire are contacted by Beacon, the witness care charity in Hertfordshire. Where appropriate, Beacon staff discuss restorative justice as an option with the victim.

Staff from Beacon speak with all victims and direct them to the services they need and are entitled to. Beacon has 44 staff members. This includes members of police staff from the Victim Services Team (from all ranks), and Victim Support staff (service delivery managers, service delivery assistants, initial response officers and children and young people’s case worker). The fact that every victim is initially approached by the team at Beacon means that the victim won’t be contacted by different people, which can be distressing.

If the victim is interested in restorative justice, Beacon can then refer them on to the restorative justice co-ordinator based at the University of Hertfordshire in order to provide them with more detailed information about the service. The co-ordinator sees and refers on all restorative justice cases. These either come from Beacon, or from self-referrals. The co-ordinator has a detailed conversation about what restorative justice will involve and whether the victim would like to be assessed for participation. Having one referral point through which all cases come means that cases can be distributed to different partners as appropriate, rather than held by one agency in the partnership.

The co-ordinator then refers the victim to a delivery partner in the partnership. The delivery partners involved in, or facilitating, the case are those most appropriate in this specific instance, or those who referred the participant. For example, if interest comes from the offender the CRC will lead the case. Victim-initiated restorative justice would be likely to be facilitated by Mediation Hertfordshire. In cases that come from victims choosing the restorative justice option on the Community Remedy document, the constabulary would facilitate.

Delivery

The restorative justice co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring the process takes place. This involves conducting risk assessments, contacting facilitators and arranging facilities for the conference to take place. The co-ordinator may or may not facilitate the conference themselves.

Facilitators can come from several of the agencies:

- The constabulary has 40 facilitators.
- The National Probation Service in Hertfordshire has one facilitator.
- BeNCH CRC has one facilitator.
- The University of Hertfordshire (the restorative justice co-ordinator is a trained facilitator).
- Mediation Hertfordshire has 10 volunteers and one full time member of staff.

There are usually two practitioners conducting a restorative intervention, one from a professional agency such as the CRC or National Probation Service and one from the charity Mediation Hertfordshire. Restorative justice meetings take place in the university’s mediation rooms, or in community fire stations which have been designated as safe places.

An increase in referrals may come from the introduction of the C2 scheme, an intensive programme to help turn around Hertfordshire’s most prolific offenders. The scheme looks mainly at burglaries by extreme repeat offenders, some with as many as 300-400 offences each. Offenders have to declare their entire criminal history to demonstrate their acceptance of guilt and willingness to change, with no guarantee that they will be accepted onto the programme. The judge is presented with all of this information.
Delivering restorative justice – making multiagency partnerships work

Offenders are given a suspended custodial sentence, with three and a half years of community sentence to complete. They have to enrol in and complete rehabilitative courses, drug and alcohol treatment, community payback, meetings with a probation officer and regular reviews in court. Any breach results in the offender being taken back to prison to fulfil their sentence with no discounts.

All victims are told that this is how their offender has been disposed of. Initially, this has led to many victims being very displeased – they feel left out of the process. It has now been made a pre-condition of participation that the offender is prepared to undergo assessment for restorative justice. This partnership work between the judiciary, probation and OPCC means potentially thousands of victims will be offered restorative justice in the near future.

No case types are excluded from participation in restorative justice in Hertfordshire.

Information sharing

Getting information sharing right across the partnership has been a process that has required multiple iterations, change and learning as it evolved. There are good information sharing practices in place between the constabulary, probation services and the university’s restorative justice co-ordinator. This means that there are no problems with getting information about the offender.

A small number of problems arose with local Victim Support services in the area. It is notable that the partnership has been a good way around these problems, promoting better communication between different agencies to help identify and overcome issues.

Monitoring, evaluation and standards

All organisations in the partnership aim to work towards the RJC’s Restorative Service Standards. The university is in the process of working out how best to monitor the success of the partnership and its restorative justice delivery.

Funding

Restorative justice is at an early stage in Hertfordshire, and the OPCC has decided that the key issue is to get it embedded and to raise public knowledge. To this end, the OPCC has decided to simplify matters and, using their allocated funds from the Ministry of Justice, fund restorative justice wherever a cost is incurred.

Where Mediation Hertfordshire delivers restorative justice then the OPCC pays a fixed rate for delivery. Where other agencies have a trained member of staff to facilitate conferences then this cost is covered out of that agency’s own budget – for example, the CRC facilitator is already paid for and the costs do not accrue to the OPCC. Extra costs such as facilities, however, are paid for by the OPCC.
Area 2: Northumbria

Population
1.43 million

Crimes with an identifiable victim
41.9 per 1,000 people

Restorative justice caseload
Each agency has very different caseloads – there is a high level of variation
The history of the partnership

In 2014, PCCs were given control over funding victims’ services and the OPCC in Northumbria decided that a core part of this should be allocated to restorative justice. Historically, Northumbria was one of the areas involved in the government’s large-scale randomised control trial into restorative justice. This tie to the development of restorative justice as a mainstream intervention highlighted the importance for the OPCC in ensuring that restorative justice continued to be offered to victims.

The PCC’s force area in Northumbria is large, and historically fragmented. The OPCC was aware that a lot of good work was being done by individual agencies, but it was being undermined by an uncoordinated approach. By bringing together the partners into a steering group, the quality of contact with victims and the offer for victims could be enhanced. The OPCC took the lead in making sure restorative justice could be a success in the area, fixing issues around communication and duplication.

The partnership

This partnership exists solely for the purpose of improving delivery of restorative justice. The OPCC has taken the decision that different interventions and areas of work should have different partnerships to ensure that prioritisation.

The partnership has a Terms of Reference which all partners understand and work to. The aim of the partnership is to ensure that:

- all victims have equal access to restorative justice at all stages of the criminal justice system for any age of offender or offence committed against them
- victims understand restorative justice, its benefits, what it entails and how to access it
- good quality restorative justice is delivered by trained facilitators

Members

- Victims First Northumbria
- OPCC
- Six YOTs
- CRC
- National Probation Service Northumbria
- Secure establishments
- The constabulary
- Magistrates

Governance structure

The multiagency partnership is run by operational steering groups. These were originally chaired by the CRC but are now chaired by the OPCC.

All of the organisations involved in the partnership sit on these steering groups. The groups meet on a quarterly basis. Practitioner groups have also been established to enable feedback from frontline staff about their current work.

Delivering restorative justice

Referral pathways and case allocation

The majority of referrals come from Northumbria Police to Victims First Northumbria. Victims First Northumbria is an independent charity and the victim referral service. It is the main point of contact for all victims in Northumbria.

Every suitable victim is contacted by the charity, and then referred on to the appropriate agency. A victims’ co-ordinator has the first contact with the victim, and calls them and/or meets with them to establish what care and support they need. The co-ordinator then liaises with the statutory agencies on their behalf. These co-ordinators are responsible for the whole suite of care offered to victims, not just restorative justice.

Offender referrals come through a different route. Each member of the partnership can receive referrals for offenders. The YOT receives referrals from the police and courts. The CRC, secure estate and National Probation Service all receive referrals from the courts.
Delivery

Delivery is spread across the agencies working in the partnership. The aim is to balance the workload and the expectations around delivery.

The organisations that deliver are:

- Victims First Northumbria
- YOTs
- The police (but this is mostly limited to Community Resolution/Remedy)
- Secure units
- CRC
- National Probation Service Northumbria

The Northumbria partnership is trialling a new way to improve working together to make restorative justice delivery more effective. This involves the secondment of CRC staff to Victims First Northumbria, funded by the CRC. These staff will be given training in facilitating restorative justice conferences, as well as being able to see how the charity works. This is a good opportunity not only to ensure that high quality delivery is consistent across the partners, but also to improve working together and understanding.

This working together will help to standardise restorative justice in Northumbria, enhance quality, improve information sharing and successfully amalgamate both offender- and victim-led processes.

The partnership also provides a mechanism to train facilitators who are inexperienced in delivering restorative justice by allowing them to work with a more experienced facilitator. This ensures that participants receive a high quality service while giving a new facilitator invaluable experience.

Information sharing

Information sharing across the partnership has been hugely simplified by the introduction of an information sharing agreement that all of the partners sign up to. This agreement was written as the partnership was set up, and is currently being re-written based on learning from the early stages of the partnership.

Monitoring, evaluation and standards

Feedback about the partnership at a strategic level comes from the steering group. Feedback about practice on the ground comes directly from practitioners. Increasingly, monitoring suggests that the various members of the partnership are becoming more interested in delivering restorative justice.

Across the different agencies there are various methods of assuring quality. Different delivery models necessarily mean that there are different ways of measuring standards. However, there is an understanding across all of the agencies involved that success is about victim satisfaction, not about the number of conferences that take place.

The OPCC has the vision of a ‘Restorative Northumbria’, where all partners are engaged and funding is available. To this end, they have offered funding to all agencies to apply for the RSQM, the RJC’s quality mark for providers of restorative justice. Some issues have been encountered with persuading partner agencies to engage with taking the RSQM, particularly around timings and varying degrees of readiness for participation.

The foundations are set for the restorative justice multiagency partnership in Northumbria, and good work is already going ahead. The next important stage is to build on these foundations, learning from issues that they have encountered to date. The goal for the future ‘Restorative Northumbria’ involves gaining buy-in and support at all levels.
Area 3: Sussex

Population

1.65 million

Crimes with an identifiable victim

47.9 per 1,000 people

Restorative justice caseload

The caseload in Sussex is high, with 251 referrals as of February 2016. There were 286 positive restorative justice outcomes achieved in the last 11 months. This led to 44 Out of Court Disposals and nine post-sentence outcomes.
The history of the partnership

The partnership developed from the National Offender Management Service restorative justice capacity building programme in 2013. The Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership (SRJP) was constituted as a direct response to the government’s aim to ensure the availability of safe, high quality restorative justice for all victims of crime at any stage of the criminal justice system. The Sussex PCC put her weight behind the partnership, which has been vital in ensuring the success of its restorative justice development. She is fully committed to delivering a high quality restorative justice service.

There have been some significant challenges during the development of the partnership. For example in 2011, before specific PCC funding was allocated to allow restorative justice to take place, a lot of good facilitators and volunteers were lost to the partnership in Sussex as a lack of funding led to a paucity of referrals. This has now been remedied by the creation of the SRJP, but the early stages of the partnership could have been simpler.

The partnership

The aim of the partnership is to create a complete, victim-focused restorative justice service for all victims at all stages of the criminal justice system. The partnership provides a joined-up service, bringing together organisations which used to work separately.

The partners include agencies more traditionally interested in reforming offenders, which meant that in the initial stages of the partnership it was essential to work out how to co-ordinate goals. This process led to the partnership providing victim-focused restorative justice, even though this was not necessarily the individual aim of all participating organisations.

A promise of resource commitment from all members of the partnership was established, guaranteeing that staff time would be dedicated to the partnership’s restorative justice work.

The partnership aims to ensure that:

- victims are offered and can access restorative justice at more points in the criminal justice system
- all restorative justice interventions have a positive outcome for all participants
- the victim focus of these services is maintained through monitoring and quality assurance
- a restorative community is created among services in order to deliver swift and safe restorative justice practices with minimum bureaucracy

The partnership operates on a ‘hub’ model, with three restorative justice hubs co-ordinating delivery, funding and co-working based in Bognor Regis, Bexhill and Brighton and Hove. The hubs have their own staff. Staff and volunteers from the other agencies in the partnership also contribute to the hubs. A range of contacts in other agencies support the hubs to help speed up the necessary flow of information.

Members

- Sussex OPCC
- Sussex Police Crown Prosecution Service
- Her Majesty’s Courts & Tribunals Service
- National Probation Service
- Kent, Surrey & Sussex CRC
- HMP Lewes
- HMP Ford
- HMP Bronzefield
- West Sussex County Council
- East Sussex County Council
- Brighton & Hove City Council
- Victim Support Sussex Pathways
- CALM – Community and Local Mediation service (London)
- Arun District Council
- Youth Offending Service (YOS)
- Legal Services Commission
- National Health Service Foundation Trust
- National Health Service England
Governance structure

The partnership is managed by the Sussex Criminal Justice Board. It is chaired by the OPCC’s strategic restorative justice manager. The restorative justice manager is also part of the Crime Reduction Group, which reports to the main Sussex Criminal Justice Board.

The SRJP has group meetings, where the OPCC strategic restorative justice manager will agree actions with members and ensure that the vision and aims are delivered. The partnership’s programme of work has been divided into 11 workstreams. These workstreams encompass all of the ongoing work of the partnership, broken down into manageable areas in which to achieve success – such as victim satisfaction, and performance and data collection.

At first, the group met monthly, moving to bi-monthly after the initial work had been completed.

The three partnership hubs co-ordinate its work. These hubs employ the co-ordinator and a delivery officer, and are where task allocation and operational delivery of restorative justice take place. Each hub has a monthly divisional meeting where referrals are assessed, cases allocated to facilitators and case progression is discussed.

The SRJP uses ‘agile working’. This is a working technique whereby the work plan is broken down into small portions of work, which are carried out in iterative cycles. The planned deliverables can be evolved over time in order for their completion at the end of the project.

Delivering restorative justice

Referral pathways and case allocation

In Sussex there are three restorative justice hubs where case allocation takes place on a day to day basis. The SRJP has agreed a detailed information sharing agreement. Information sharing agreements are in place at each hub, where the details of all victims and offenders are accessible to the different partners. There is an acknowledgement that the quality and ease of making referrals and allocating cases is in part due to the positive relationships on which the partnership is based.

All partners can refer into the hubs and can have cases allocated to them by the hubs. Efforts are made to ensure facilitators from different agencies are paired, and those with less experience are paired up with a facilitator with more experience.

When a referral is received by the hub, it is uploaded to the E-CINS computer system. E-CINS is a cloud-based case management system designed to enable information sharing across agencies. They then forward details to restorative justice leads or single points of contact across the partnership for initial research.

Police staff carry out internal research on the Police National Computer, and review the Niche RMS – a police case management system – for additional information about risk. They also upload the court case summary and victim statements to the E-CINS system. E-CINS has been fundamental to how the SRJP manages and delivers cases. It reduces the need for email or spreadsheets as direct task assignment can take place. E-CINS can be used during case management meetings to improve efficiency.

Each agency then has their role to play. Victim Support confirms if any of the participants are or have been engaged with their service, and if so the details of what this involved. The CRC and National Probation Service restorative justice single point of contact provides the contact details for the offender manager, and their views are sought on taking the referral forward and on the current level of offender engagement. The National Probation Service, for example, confirms if the victim liaison officer is engaged with the harmed party. Where the offender is in prison, the restorative justice lead in the prison confirms points of contact within the prison and the offender supervisor’s views on taking the case forward.

All of these pieces of information go to help build up a case for the facilitator to assess. Monthly divisional meetings take place to discuss the current caseload, and particularly those cases which could perhaps be challenging. If a case is suitable to progress, it is then referred to the relevant partner for delivery.
Delivery

Delivery of restorative justice is decided on a case by case basis, determined by the severity of the crime and the level of training facilitators have. Every case is co-facilitated.

Several agencies have either staff or volunteers who are trained in delivery. These include Sussex Pathways, Victim Support, Brighton YOS, Sussex Police, Sussex Road Policing Unit, the NHS Police Liaison and Brighton Crime Reduction Partnership. The volunteers working with these organisations may work with and receive guidance from the hub, but they are line managed by and accountable to their organisations.

Delivery can either be carried out by one of the agencies involved in the partnership, or by the volunteers or staff who work in the hub. Each hub has one delivery officer, and a restorative justice co-ordinator who is trained to facilitate.

Information sharing

An information sharing agreement has been developed for the partnership. The agreement sets out to improve sharing of information across the partnership by defining the purposes for which agencies should share information and setting out roles and structures to support information exchange. It also clarifies the legal gateway for information sharing, describing the necessary security procedures to ensure compliance with responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 as well as describing policy to monitor and review these arrangements.

Its aim is to ensure that all members of the partnership can meet information sharing requirements needed for effective restorative justice delivery.

Funding

The partnership is funded by the PCC. Hub staff are funded by the police, who are in turn funded for delivery by the OPCC.

The OPCC also provides funding to some agencies for restorative justice to take place. For instance, Victim Support and Sussex Pathways are funded by the OPCC to deliver victims’ services including restorative justice.

Monitoring, evaluation and standards

The partnership has a quality assurance and assessment framework in place which ensures that restorative interventions are delivered to standards set by the RJC. A performance framework has also been put in place to monitor the restorative work carried out across Sussex, the outcomes of referrals into hubs and participant satisfaction levels. The partnership is currently undergoing assessment for the RSQM.
Delivering restorative justice – making multiagency partnerships work

Dos and don’ts for setting up a multiagency partnership

Do:

• Make sure you have done your preparation for the partnership properly. You need to know who should be involved and why, in order to identify the right people to invite to participate and explain to them why they should take part.

• Establish how you will run the partnership. You need to be ready to think about how the technical details are going to fit together – how referral pathways and payment will look, for example. This is not only so that the partnership works, but also so that you can encourage and reassure the other members.

• Be prepared to be persuasive. Other agencies might not understand how restorative justice fits in with their priorities or why they should be interested. Knowing your case – and why they should be interested – can help to push the agenda.

• Find out what other areas are doing. If you talk to people from across England and Wales to find out what they are doing in their area and how well it is working, they can provide useful advice and in-depth information about good practice.

• Keep monitoring the partnership. This can involve checking how practitioners are finding the experience, assessing how committed the partners are and creating metrics of success specific to the partnership. However you measure it, it is important to always have up to date knowledge of how well the relationships and strategy are working.

• Understand how much of a priority this partnership is for the other partners, and what you can reasonably expect from them. This can help you understand how much you can push the partners or how much they can provide – for example, will creating a sense of urgency in the partnership get things done more quickly or will it alienate some members?

• Remember the RJC’s Restorative Service Standards. They can guide you in the development of a high quality service and help you think about issues that might otherwise get missed. Once the partnership is up and running, achieving the RJC’s RSQM demonstrates that you are meeting national standards.

• Get your definitions clear. All of the organisations involved need to understand what restorative justice is and means to the partnership, and what does or does not count as a success. This is key to streamlined working.

Don’t:

• Give up if things aren’t working. All of the areas included in this report had at some point struggled – with getting the right agencies involved, with getting information sharing right, with ensuring that all of the partners understood what restorative justice involved and were in favour of it. Working through the struggle – and overcoming problems – is part of making a successful partnership.

• Lose sight of the goal. Remembering what the partnership is there to do and how its priorities fit together is an important part of driving its activity forwards.

• Be put off by the area you are working in. Lots of areas with successful partnerships face challenging environments at the start. This might affect how the partnership looks or works, but it shouldn’t stop it from going ahead.

• Launch into the project without thinking about what your end goals are. Defining success – both the success of the partnership and how you all measure successful restorative justice – means your work will be more focused and can help align expectations. Having a conversation before the work begins about what everyone expects from their contribution can help with this.

• Stop changing, developing and growing the partnership. Looking at problems as they arise, or looking at opportunities and new avenues for working will keep the work of the partnership relevant and help it grow as provision in the area improves.

• Forget how important volunteers are. Having dedicated voluntary staff can be the backbone of a service. They can facilitate the process, provide additional support and make the process run more smoothly for victims and offenders.
About the Restorative Justice Council

The RJC is the independent third sector membership body for the field of restorative practice. We provide a national voice advocating the widespread use of all forms of restorative practice, including restorative justice, and raise public awareness and confidence in restorative processes.

The RJC sets and champions standards for the restorative justice field, provides quality assurance, and supports organisations in the field to build their capacity and accessibility. The aim of the RJC is to enable safe, high quality restorative practice to develop and thrive.

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