

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Welcome to this month's bulletin. As I mentioned in my last bulletin, I've been working in the USA for part of the month and, since returning, myself and the team have been busy with the final preparations for our Northern Ireland conference which we'll be hosting in Belfast next week. In this month's bulletin, I've picked out some of the highlights of the NACRJ conference which I hope you enjoy reading!

SHARING LEARNING FROM THE USA

I'm thrilled to share my experience of the [NACRJ conference](#) that I attended in Washington DC earlier this month. The theme of the conference, Re-Envisioning Our Legacies: A Defining Moment, was thoughtfully curated and the opening welcome ceremony truly set the tone for the rest of the event.



With a wide range of parallel sessions to choose from, it was definitely a challenge to decide which ones to attend. However, I must say that I was not disappointed with any of the sessions I

selected. The first session I went to focused on effectively communicating Restorative Justice with different audiences. It highlighted the importance of public awareness and support for the growth of restorative justice, which can only be achieved through a clear and cohesive

message. It was eye-opening to see the data and messaging guidance presented by various groups to combat harmful narratives surrounding restorative justice.

At lunchtime, we were fortunate to hear from the first keynote speaker, Heather M. Thompson, who delivered a powerful and moving speech. Heather shared her personal journey of healing after the murder of her brother, which included a restorative dialogue with her brother's murderer. Her story of loss, anger, forgiveness, and healing truly showcased the transformative power of restorative justice.

The next session I attended was titled Decolonising Restorative Justice in the Pursuit of Freedom and Racial Equity in Palestine. It was not only insightful but also thought-provoking. This session emphasised how restorative justice can be a powerful framework in achieving decolonisation and racial justice by holding oppressors accountable, promoting healing for the oppressed, and striving for racial equity. It was a wake-up call to our role as restorative justice practitioners in advocating for the sovereignty of historically marginalised people, particularly in the current political and social climate.

The final session of day one, Queering Restorative Justice, addressed the erasure of queer identities within the restorative justice field and how we can centre liberation and connect it with other anti-oppressive and transformative movements in responding to harm. It was

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enlightening to hear from members of the Restorative Rainbow Alliance Board and learn about their experiences since 2020.

Day two started early with an opening plenary focused on integrating restorative justice into law and policy. The panel was chaired by Sandra Pavelka, a Professor from Florida Gulf University, and joined by Beau RaRa, Dwanna Nicole, Erica Washington, and Representative Sandar Feist.

Each panelist introduced themselves and talked about their involvement in shaping future legislation. A key question for the panel was what restorative justice legislation would look like in the USA. They stressed the importance of starting at a local level and gradually progressing to a State level, especially when tackling issues like the school to prison pipeline and focusing on historically marginalised groups.

The panel highlighted that policymakers struggle to understand the nuances of restorative justice and its principles, making it challenging to incorporate it into existing frameworks for drafting legislation. They suggested starting locally, gathering data and success stories, and influencing at a State level to bring about change. This approach mirrors the work being done by the Restorative Justice Council (RJC) in the UK through their involvement with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Restorative Justice.

The panel was then asked whether restorative justice should be legislated and what the funding implications would be. They agreed that legislation is essential, but it can lose its meaning when poorly implemented. Striking a balance between being ambiguous and restrictive is crucial. Being too ambiguous may lead to poor delivery, while being too restrictive can limit creativity in its implementation.

Some key takeaways from the session were that funding for restorative justice needs to be sustainable and ongoing. Simply making a large initial investment will not lead to sustainable implementation. It is also important to work with policymakers in designing legislation and supporting guidelines for a smooth rollout.

My first parallel session focused on community-led systems change. The Legal Rights Center, a non-profit law firm founded for Black and Indigenous communities over 50 years ago, shared their community-based approach to systems change through their Restorative Justice Program and Community Strategy Team. They work with school districts, offer Youth Fellowships, and have been a part of historic legislative changes in 2023 by involving the community in decision-making.

It was crucial to set aside some time during the conference for networking. That's where I bumped into Brenda from [infinetleyfreetobe](#).

Her journey started in one classroom, a small source of hope within the prison walls. However, its influence quickly spread, touching the lives of people in various security levels, genders, and age groups. Her organisation even broadened their reach by providing distance learning and online courses, making knowledge more accessible.

I found it fascinating to hear how her organisation's initiatives have changed lives and decreased the rates of reoffending. What particularly caught my attention was her dedication to reducing recidivism. She achieves this by providing individuals with the skills they need to empower themselves. Through methods like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, participants learn to understand their thoughts and emotions, make positive decisions, and unleash their true potential.

Brenda's organisation has established educational programs tailored for reentering individuals, recognising the significant role education plays in reducing recidivism and arming individuals with the necessary tools to make positive changes. Although the question of how to decrease recidivism is complex, their programs seemed to offer a comprehensive approach.

I'm excited to continue our conversation and explore ways in which we can share their knowledge with the restorative sector in the UK.

Overall, the NACRJ conference was a truly enriching and enlightening experience. It was a

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wonderful opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and be a part of important conversations and sessions that have further shaped my own perspective on restorative justice.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW TEAM MEMBER

I'm delighted to welcome Jodie Gould to the RJC team. Jodie joined us in early August as the executive assistant to the chief executive, whilst completing her Criminology BA degree at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge. Her dissertation focuses on the implementation of restorative justice and the impacts of mental health upon offending.

Although Jodie is not an experienced restorative practitioner, she is enthusiastic about advocating practical and constructive change through restorative justice across varied sectors including the criminal justice system and education.

I'm sure over the coming weeks and months, many of our members will have the opportunity to meet Jodie at various events and networks.

NORTHERN IRELAND CONFERENCE 2024

It's not long until we host our second annual Northern Ireland conference which is taking place on **Friday 6th September 2024** at the **Stormont Hotel, Belfast**.

This year our conference will be exploring restorative strategies to disrupt the school to prison pipeline. We've secured an amazing line up of speakers including RJC members, [The Restorative Lab](#) who will be sharing their knowledge of restorative practice within educational settings. If you've not yet checked out our full programme, head over to our [CONFERENCE WEBPAGE](#) to find out more and register.

myRJ I'm delighted that our colleagues at

[myRJ](#) are sponsoring this year's conference.

CEO, Darren Edwards will also be sharing his knowledge of how effective data collection and analysis can significantly improve the quality of restorative justice delivery.

Registration closes on the 2nd September so don't delay in securing your space.

BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS THE DIVIDE

I'm delighted to be supporting Jo Berry, founder of [Building Bridges for Peace](#), in raising awareness of her organisations work in this, the 40th anniversary of the Brighton bombing, in which she lost her father, Sir Anthony Berry.



To mark this anniversary, Patrick Magee and Jo Berry will be in conversation with Marina Cantacuzino on Wednesday, 16 October 2024 at St James's Church, Piccadilly, London.

The discussion will focus on the courage and complexity of a healing journey developed over 24 years. Their story has become a profound example of reconciliation and the power of compassion. Their experience is unique in the world and has been the subject of peace studies and conflict transformation education globally.

Beyond offering full price and concessions/low waged tickets, Jo is also seeking donations, the proceeds of which will be split between her two charitable organisations.

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For additional information and to book your tickets visit the [BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS THE DIVIDE WEBPAGE](#).

PRODIGAL MONSTER SHORT DOCUMENTARY RELEASED

You may recall that the RJC has been working with Therapeutic productions to create a documentary drama version of the Prodigal monster, the story of a young man's path to criminal and mental health rehabilitation after a lifetime of emotional setbacks. During the documentary, we see him heal through engagement in a range of services including restorative justice.

After months of hard work, it's a pleasure to announce that the short documentary has now been released and is available to view online.

[WATCH THE DOCUMENTARY HERE](#)

We're currently working with Therapeutic productions to plan an online screening and panel discussion with members of the cast and crew during International RJ Week. Keep an eye on our [WEBSITE](#) for more details!

SEND AND THE RESTORATIVE MOVEMENT

The RJC, in collaboration with [The Restorative Lab](#) and [Restorative Relationships](#), are holding



an innovative [Open Space Technology](#) event on the **18th October 2024** to explore the inter-relationship between restorative practice/ restorative justice and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

This event is aimed at all colleagues working in the restorative field, including youth and adult justice, social care, health, education and community settings. The aim is to come together as a community to progress thinking and practice around RP/RJ and SEND.

This topic is proving to be extremely popular and we only have limited spaces that are filling fast! [CLICK HERE](#) for more details and to register for your place.

COMING UP SOON!

Don't forget, registration is also now open for this year's Annual Conference, taking place on the **15th and 18th November**. This year, delegates will have the option to attend in-person at the Raddison Blu Hotel, Cardiff on Friday 15th November and online via Microsoft Teams on Monday 18th November.

For those unable to join us in-person, take advantage of our online only pass and join us for our online sessions on Monday 18th November 2024. Be sure to head over to our [CONFERENCE WEBPAGE](#) to find out the full details and register. I've also included further details below.

AND FINALLY

Don't forget, we are also planning the next edition of Resolution Magazine which will be published in November 2024. If you have an article you would like to propose for inclusion, please read our [CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS HERE](#). The deadline for submissions for the next edition is the **4th October 2024**.

Jim Simon

Chief Executive Officer



**JOIN US ON THE
15 & 18 NOVEMBER 2024**

PAVING THE WAY TO A RESTORATIVE FUTURE

**A MULTI-DAY CONFERENCE WITH BOTH IN-PERSON AND ONLINE
SESSIONS**

Friday 15th November 2024

In-person

Radisson Blu, Cardiff

9.00am - 4.00pm

Monday 18th November 2024

Online

9.00am - 4.00pm

We are excited to announce our annual conference for 2024 will take place on the 15th & 18th November 2024. This year, delegates will have the option to attend in-person at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Cardiff on Friday 15th November and online via Microsoft Teams on Monday 18th November.

For those unable to join us in-person, you take advantage of our online only pass and join us for our online sessions on Monday 18th November 2024.

GOLD CONFERENCE PASS

Our Gold Conference pass gives you access to our in-person event at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Cardiff on the 15th November. This includes a full range of refreshments throughout the day and buffet style lunch.

You can also attend our online conference sessions being delivered on Monday 18th November via Microsoft Teams and view the recordings of these sessions after the event.

RJC MEMBER: £140

NON-MEMBER: £210

ONLINE ONLY PASS

Our online only pass provides you access to all conference sessions being delivered on Monday 18th November via Microsoft Teams. You will also be able to view recordings of these sessions after the event.

PLEASE NOTE: This **does not** include recordings of sessions from the in-person event.

RJC MEMBER: £85

NON-MEMBER: £155

15 NOVEMBER CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

09:00	ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION
09:30	CONFERENCE OPENING <i>Jim Simon, CEO, Restorative Justice Council</i>
09:45	EMPOWERING CHANGE THROUGH EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE <i>Dr Jon Hobson, Cardiff Metropolitan University</i>
10:10	RESTORATIVE PRACTICE AS A MODEL FOR COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION AND INNOVATION <i>Julie Houlston Clark, CEO, Wales Restorative Approaches Partnership</i>
11:00	REFRESHMENTS
11:30	CREATING THE RIGHT CONDITIONS FOR A RESTORATIVE CULTURE TO THRIVE - PANEL DISCUSSION <i>Panel to be announced</i>
12:30	LUNCH AND NETWORKING
13:30 MAIN HALL	CREATING A RESTORATIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITY <i>Tom Procter-Legg, Education Consultant and DPhil Candidate</i> <i>Dr Kyla Honey, Principal Educational Psychologist, Caerphilly County Borough Council</i> <i>Nicola Bowden, Deputy Head Teacher, Islwyn High School</i>
13:30 ROOM 1	WORKING RESTORATIVELY WITHIN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM <i>Rebecca Richardson & Jenn Crickett, Restorative Gloucestershire</i>
13:30 ROOM 2	WORKING RESTORATIVELY WITH DIVERSE COMMUNITIES <i>Dr Anamika Twyman-Ghoshal, Brunel University</i> <i>Women Connect First Team</i>
13:30 ROOM 3	COMMUNITY LED APPROACHES TO RESTORATIVE PRACTICE <i>Gifford Sutherland, Founder, UPSKILLU</i>
14:30	REFRESHMENTS
15:00	THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN RESTORATIVE CULTURE AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT <i>Debbie Watters OBE, Director, Northern Ireland Alternatives</i>
15:45	CLOSING REMARKS <i>Jim Simon, CEO, Restorative Justice Council</i>

18 NOVEMBER CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

09:00	CONFERENCE OPENING <i>Jim Simon, CEO, Restorative Justice Council</i>
09:30	OPENING KEYNOTE <i>Speaker to be announced</i>
10:15	SCREEN BREAK
10:30	PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF THE POWER OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE <i>Aisa Shearing, Standards Officer, Restorative Justice Council</i>
11:15	SCREEN BREAK
11:30 Parallel Sessions Options	THE FUTURE OF RESTORATIVE POLICING <i>Speaker to be announced</i>
	RESTORATIVE APPROACHES TO IMPROVING BEHAVIOUR IN PRISONS <i>Dr Katherine Doolin, University of Auckland</i> <i>Tamara Höfer, CEO & Founder, Richtungswechsel</i>
	BREAKING THE CYCLE OF YOUTH OFFENDING: A RESTORATIVE APPROACH <i>Speaker to be announced</i>
12:30	LUNCH
13:15 Parallel Session Options	CHANGING UNIVERSITY CULTURE: A RESTORATIVE MODEL <i>Dr Anamika Twyman-Ghoshal, Brunel University</i> <i>Rowan Sweeney, University of Gloucestershire</i>
	RESTORATIVE HEALTHCARE: COMPLAINTS AND PATIENT SAFETY <i>Joanne Hughes, Harmed Patients Alliance</i>
	CULTIVATING A RESTORATIVE LEARNING CULTURE <i>Speaker to be announced</i>
14:15	SCREEN BREAK
14:30	SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION AWARD <i>Presented by Jim Simon, CEO, Restorative Justice Council</i>
15:10	CLOSING KEYNOTE <i>Speaker to be announced</i>
15:50	CONFERENCE CLOSING <i>Debbie Watters, Chair of Trustees, Restorative Justice Council</i>

OUR PROGRAMME WILL BE UPDATED AS SPEAKERS
ARE CONFIRMED

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

OR

SCAN THE QR CODE



WWW.RJC.ORG.UK

About us

About the RJC

The Restorative Justice Council (RJC) is the independent third sector membership body for the field of restorative practice. It provides quality assurance and a national voice advocating the widespread use of all forms of restorative practice, including restorative justice. The RJC's vision is of a restorative society where everyone has access to safe, high quality restorative practice wherever and whenever it is needed.

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