

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Welcome to this month's bulletin. We've seen a few changes at the RJC over the past few weeks. For those who attended our AGM, you will be aware that Dr Gerard Drennan stood down from his role as Chair of Trustees and we welcomed our incoming Chair, Debbie Watters OBE. Both Gerard and Debbie have worked closely over the past few months to ensure we have a smooth transition period. You can read more about this change [here](#).

I've also released our call for abstracts for our 5th Annual Conference which will be held online on the 20th and 21st November. The theme for this year will be **'RESTORATIVE REFLECTIONS: A blueprint for a restorative future.'** Given we celebrate our 25th anniversary this year, it felt fitting to reflect on our past and explore what the future for the restorative sector holds. You can find out more about submitting an abstract [below](#) or take advantage of our early bird registration [here](#).

On the 9th June I was delighted to announce our strategic partnership with Restorativ, a Community Interest Company, to bring Restorative Justice technology to the market.

Restorativ have launched a mobile app, which includes embedded case management that focuses on the needs of thousands of RJ facilitators, who are often volunteers and need simple and effective mobile technology. You can find out more about our partnership and read an overview of the Restorativ platform in more detail [below](#).

I would also like to take this opportunity to say farewell to our Policy and Communications Officer, David Smith. He will be retiring on the 17th July and although has only been apart of our team for a short while, I know he will be missed. I'm sure you will join me in wishing David a very happy retirement.

For those of you considering restorative training, you will find the latest RJC Approved Courses being delivered by our Registered Training Providers [here](#). I've also include a list of other training and continued professional development activities currently being offered by our members. You can read more [below](#).

Don't forget, you can keep up to date with all the latest developments at the RJC by visiting our [website](#).

Best wishes,

Jim Simon

Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to our new Chair of Trustees

I'm delighted to welcome our new Chair of Trustees, Debbie Watters OBE, to the RJC. Debbie has served as Board Appointed Trustee for the past year and was elected to the position of Chair in June 2023.

Debbie is the founder member and Co-Director of Northern Ireland Alternatives, a community based restorative programme based in Belfast and accredited by the Department of Justice. She has 28 years' experience in restorative work having spent 5 years managing a restorative programme in the USA and then moving home to Belfast to start Northern Ireland Alternatives as part of the wider peacebuilding process. She is a former Vice-Chair of the Northern Ireland Policing Board and a visiting Professor at Ulster University. Debbie has trained and taught extensively in restorative justice both at an academic and community level. She has been to the forefront of the development of restorative justice in Northern Ireland including the introduction of restorative justice in arenas other than justice such as schools; churches, welfare, care and youth sectors.

Debbie's knowledge and experience will undoubtedly be a great asset to the RJC and I look forward to working with her in the coming years.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Chair, Dr Gerard Drennan. Throughout his tenure, Gerard has worked tirelessly to support the RJC team and Board of Trustees through challenging times. On behalf of us all, I thank Gerard and wish him well in whatever the future holds for him.

Jim Simon

Chief Executive Officer

The 5th Annual Restorative Justice Council Conference - Call for Abstracts

This year, the RJC celebrates its 25th anniversary and, as such, it is a good time to acknowledge the sector's achievements, face up to the present challenges and imagine future possibilities.

Over the past 25 years the restorative sector has made significant strides, but we know that more can be done moving forward. This is why, during this year's conference we want to explore what the future of restorative holds. Thus, the theme of the 5th annual RJC conference is **'RESTORATIVE REFLECTIONS: A blueprint for a restorative future.'**

This year, our conference sessions will focus on four conference themes:

- The transformational power of restorative justice for adults and young people
- Creating a restorative ecosystem in our education system
- Centring restorative practice in health and social care innovation
- A blueprint for restorative community building

We are currently accepting abstracts to present at our conference. You can contribute to the programme of speakers by submitting an abstract of no more than 500 words by the submission deadline of the **14 July 2023**.

[SUBMIT YOUR ABSTRACT HERE](#)

For further information please email enquiries@restorativejustice.org.uk and a member of the team will get back to you.

Jim Simon

Chief Executive Officer

RJC NEWS AND UPDATES

A new technological approach to raise the Restorative tide for all

Restorativ is a partnership between Restorative Justice and Practice (RJ/P) professionals, academics and technologists; we have come together with a mission to rebuild relationships and to make RJ/P available to everyone using mobile technology, predictive assessments, and machine learning. We are a start-up technology business that is also a Community Interest Company (CIC) with the goal of raising awareness and capacity of RJ/P. We believe that raising the RJ/P tide can only be done through better access, economics, and scalability of RJ/P practices which can only be achieved through technological solutions and the understanding that RJ/P is a tool for all. Our stakeholders include volunteer facilitators, restorative practitioners, police forces, schools, and corporations.

The Restorativ platform empowers a more transparent face to face practice whilst simplifying the management of the process. The interface is intuitive, so all users involved, that is the facilitators, the responsible party (harmer), the affected party (harmed), and community members, have access and information readily available at their fingertips. Facilitators have the ability to manage and record the process, allowing for better tracking of the value of RJ/P. Restorativ also enables online case processing, expanding the types of cases that can use restorative practices into a diverse set of industries. With an eye on the future, we have embedded predictive technology to aid decision making and an industry first we also enable fully virtual RJ/P so that sessions can be managed via the app.

Five characteristics make Restorativ unique which give the company its social enterprise credentials. At the heart of these is a technology platform that focuses on the needs of those who do restorative practice whilst making sure that the price of Restorativ will never be a deterrent to its use.

Investing profits back in the industry it supports

First and foremost, as a CIC, Restorativ has a mandate to invest its profits in a meaningful way. Our partnership with the Restorative Justice Council (RJC) provides the perfect vehicle for channeling any profits made back into RJ/P.



This partnership enables both the growth of restorative practices beyond established sectors and ensures that Restorativ maintains its restorative roots and values. This makes Restorativ both philanthropically and economically sound, and the key way to increase awareness and access to restorative practices.

Variable pricing model to enable RJ/P to spread its wings

Restorativ recognises that existing restorative practices and practitioners do not have large budgets to spend on technology solutions. The company has implemented a very low price for organisations which are government or community funded. Large corporations and organisations that can afford to pay for the technology solution, will help subsidise this approach. We make no apology for this approach, large corporations will benefit significantly from the amazing work championed over decades by RJ/P.

Providing support to make RJ/P more scalable

Restorative practices, although simple in their objectives, can be complex to manage. The more organisations embrace and use these practices, the better for their communities, however

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complexity is a barrier. The Restorativ platform has been designed so that the benefits of RJ/P can be utilised by any organisation, with full training and support from our team. In many cases, larger organisations will want more support including management of their restorative practice. Restorativ offers a supported model for virtual RJ/P sessions which removes the barrier of complexity.

Everything you need in the palm of your hand

What is the point of technology? The fundamental answer to that question is making life easier. In this case, it means helping facilitators manage their RJ/P sessions. Restorativ focuses its platform on your mobile device, giving facilitators everything they need in the palm of their hand (or in their pocket). This device is always there and enables facilitators to capture data and progress in real-time, without the need to log in to a computer.

Profile Driven, putting the needs of Facilitators first

Restorativ platform has been designed with a focus on 'engagement'. Making the application relevant and easy to use ensures that facilitators feel the benefit of using the app. Restorativ wants practitioners to look forward to switching on the app and keep coming back to it. Being 'profile-driven' means focusing on the needs of each user, particularly those managing restorative sessions. We have included a safe social media component so that those practicing RJ/P can celebrate success, ask questions, and share knowledge with their peers around the world.

Predictive capabilities so that decision making can be supported

The final point is simple but often overlooked is 'efficacy'. There is no point having a piece of software if it doesn't deliver measurable improvements and better decision making. Restorativ has embedded a predictive assessment that helps facilitators understand the

empathy types of the harmed and harmers they are working with. This assessment increases the likelihood of success by allowing facilitators to better understand the needs of the people they are working with.

RJ/P delivers value, impacts lives, and brings communities together. Injecting technology will extend those life-changing opportunities further and into other industries. This increases the value for RJ/P facilitators as they venture into new frontiers. The partnership between Restorativ and the RJC is designed to do just that; increase the efficacy, efficiency and economic value for RJ/P professionals so that the Restorative tide can be raised for all.

To find out how the Restorativ software can benefit you, visit our [website](#) or get in touch using our [online form](#).

Chris Twyman & Dr Anamika Twyman-Ghoshal
Founders, Restorativ CIC

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The ReTrust Project – Restoring trust after corruption

A new project on corruption and restorative justice, which is an offshoot of the well-established research programme on white-collar crimes carried out at the Universidad Autónoma of Barcelona, was set in motion in April of 2023 with the support of the European Forum of Restorative Justice and the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO).

Aimed at gathering restorative justice scholars and restorative justice practitioners in order to develop good restorative justice practices in this field, the ReTrust Project mainly consists of a group of individuals working together to explore the following question: “Is restorative justice capable of repairing the loss of social trust caused by corruption in the public sector?”

So far, around ten representatives of restorative justice centres from different European countries have been participating in interviews, focus groups and theoretical seminars on the topic. However, as the ReTrust Project remains a work in progress, anyone interested in joining the project will be warmly welcomed.

Why we set up the ReTrust Project

It is common knowledge that corruption has innumerable negative repercussions at a societal level: for example, it debilitates social policies, increases public spending, reduces its efficiency, curtails the quality of public services and exacerbates inequality.

Corruption also undermines the legitimacy and credibility of public institutions and public servants, thus arousing institutional and interpersonal distrust.

What’s more, it erodes social trust which is the “social glue” which contributes to a better quality of social life, by allowing for more cooperation and participation, encouraging openness and tolerance towards fellow citizens and strengthening democracies.

When social trust is broken, widespread feelings of pessimism and helplessness emerge, along with the decay of citizens’ participation in public life, increasing levels of intolerance and resignation further discouraging them from collaborating with fellow citizens for the common good.

Current prevention and/or repression policies don’t seem very effective at repairing such breaches of trust.

The main reason for this is that they are mostly focused on individuals, therefore they seldom address the social dimension of corruption. Secondly, their approach is quite “exclusive”, rather than “inclusive”, thus encouraging distrust rather than trust among citizens.

Consider the criminal justice system: Punishment alone can perhaps provide immediate satisfaction to victims, but it is unlikely to make the offender a trustworthy person again. Rather, punishment mostly causes offenders to assume an exacerbating defensive posture. This in turn arouses more mistrust among victims, nurturing vicious cycles difficult to thwart.

Or think about prevention policies based on whistleblowing: Staff members of public or private organisations are encouraged to “blow the whistle” when they see or suspect potential threats or harm to public interest in their organisation’s activity. Encouraging reporting and protecting whistleblowers may certainly be effective in exposing corruption or other illegal activities. However, it is a policy based on encouraging distrust, rather than promoting trust among citizens.

In the wake of all this, we try to envisage inclusive ways for dealing with corruption, which also consider the need to protect and regenerate trust, both at interpersonal, institutional and social level. It goes without saying that we think that restorative justice could be a suitable means to that end, at least under certain circumstances. We will return to this point later on.

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How we are working

All this being said, the ReTrust Project looks at the way restorative justice can deal with corruption and what conditions restorative justice practice must comply with in order to be considered a suitable trust repair strategy in this field.

To that aim, we work at different levels.

At the theoretical level, we have been analysing the mechanisms involved in the building, subsistence and strengthening of social trust as well as on the way corruption affects such mechanisms. On the other hand, we try to understand what factors do or do not make restorative justice capable of repairing breaches in social trust in cases of corruption.

At the empirical level, we have been sharing experiences and knowledge about the types of trust involved in restorative justice, about the way trust is addressed in restorative justice meetings, and about the approach we should reasonably take to facilitate the reparation of social trust. We are also reflecting on the advantages and drawbacks of applying restorative justice for dealing with corruption, based on the restorative justice practitioners' perspective.

At the communication and dissemination level, we have been preparing some academic papers as well as some information and educational material, which will be publicly available in the coming months.

What we have learned so far

1. Corruption is a “crime of trust”, i.e., it needs trust to be committed. This is the reason why, aside from legal definitions, corruption is mainly characterised as abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Such breach of trust is one of the most relevant elements of corruption, which needs to be addressed in order to repair and prevent the loss of trust at the social level.
2. Corruption is a “crime of trust” which generates diffuse victimisation, i.e., victims of corruption are

difficult or even impossible to identify. We could say that large communities or even societies are victims of corruption. Such a circumstance could make it difficult, if not impossible, to carry out restorative meetings between victims and offenders in these cases. Therefore, we intend to determine the specific criteria by which restorative justice practitioners can establish who is to participate on behalf of diffuse victims. Some of these criteria have already been partially identified and are currently under verification. Among other criteria, “spokespersons” of diffuse victims should be collective bodies, rather than individuals (for example, anti-corruption NGOs would be proper candidates for that task). This is because agreements would have to be reached on issues of public relevance. Moreover, collective bodies have a greater capability than individuals to confront the powerful, so that it would be easier for restorative justice practitioners to handle power dynamics during the meeting and avoid revictimisation. Other conditions for spokespersons to comply with should be a high degree representativeness, a direct link between the spokesperson's objectives and the interests of those on behalf of whom they act as well as a nonprofit nature, a long-standing experience in the field and unequivocal intentions to contribute to finding a common solution.

3. The restorative justice paradigm can provide a substantial contribution to dealing with the loss of social trust caused by corruption. For example, the participatory and inclusive restorative justice methodology allows for handling debates among a large number of people in restorative justice meetings. Also, the typical restorative justice orientation towards “the community”, as well as its inclusive concept of conflict management and reparation of harm, allow for complex interventions beyond the strict boundaries of the criminal justice system. Finally, restorative justice practitioners have also gained a great deal of experience and expertise over the time in the field of complex and serious crimes. Therefore, they would already be prepared for working on corruption with a simple “training boost” on white-collar crimes and victimisation.

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4. A number of obstacles could nevertheless negatively interfere with the objective of implementing restorative justice practices in the field of corruption. One of them is that very often restorative justice programs are still considered as subordinate services to the criminal justice system. This may result in limited funding which in turn may prevent restorative justice practitioners to embark in complex interventions due to lack of resources. Another obstacle is that many European jurisdictions do not recognise the right of diffuse victims to stand in criminal proceedings and, consequently, to participate in restorative justice processes. In these cases, the problem would not be whether or not restorative justice is suitable for diffuse victimisation, but rather that restorative justice is prevented from working with diffuse victims.

5. We should furthermore consider the fact that social trust is a complex and multidimensional social process. As such, it is also dependent on structural and institutional factors which are often static and resistant to modification: for example, economic inequality, inequality of opportunity, cultural and social environments which do not encourage honesty, integrity or trustworthiness, lack of quality of performance of governments and institutions in general or belonging to a discriminated minority. Corruption, so to speak, insinuates itself among these factors, feeding them and feeding off them, and intensifying their negative effects. Thus, self-reproducing vicious cycles are generated that make any prospective interventions very difficult.

6. As a result, structural and institutional reforms are also required in order to repair breaches in social trust. However, it is worth noting that restorative justice can contribute to improving such reform planes. In fact, restorative justice provides a vision of justice which encompasses both the material and immaterial consequences of crime and victimisation. Restorative justice can also promote citizens' participation in building effective solutions both for restoring trust in institutions and for giving impetus to mechanisms which can regenerate social trust. Following this line of thought, specific restorative agreements could result in a series of useful guidelines for

improving the quality of public administration at a general level.

7. Despite the fact that restorative justice practitioners have extensive knowledge to deal restoratively with serious crimes, restorative justice has hardly ever been applied to corruption cases thus far. One reason for this could be the fact that restorative justice has long only dealt with individual victims and less serious crimes. Therefore, the idea remains that crimes like corruption are too complex for restorative justice. It is often said, for example, that in these cases managing the alleged "natural" and overwhelming imbalance of power between both parties and/or identifying who should participate in the restorative meeting on behalf of diffuse victims would just be impossible. This idea is still so widespread that legal professionals and sometimes restorative justice practitioners themselves doubt or do not even imagine the feasibility of restorative paths for cases of corruption. In more general terms, a lack of legitimisation makes the implementation of restorative justice in this field almost unthinkable.

8. Some of the ReTrust Project participants have in fact already dealt with other "crimes of trust" such as "scams". These were scams involving people who were already in a previous relationship; therefore, these were relatively simple events to manage, with easily identifiable individual victims. Nonetheless, experiences like these open up the possibility of also addressing trust issues in restorative justice in cases of diffuse victimisation based on the criteria described above.

What we want to do from now on

As mentioned before, the ReTrust Project is arousing interest among restorative justice scholars and practitioners. Some of them have already joined the project at different levels and we are now mapping out the future steps.

With the ultimate goal in mind of implementing restorative justice for cases of corruption, we are considering establishing a European team of restorative justice scholars and practitioners who would:

- promote empirical research on restorative strategies in cases of corruption
- bring together good restorative justice strategies in this field through participation in conferences, seminars, and workshops both online and in
- work on the communication and dissemination of the project results and raise awareness among legal professionals and judicial gatekeepers
- develop training programs for restorative justice practitioners on repairing social trust in cases of corruption
- lay the ground for the creation of a consortium working on a European Commission funded project on the implementation of restorative justice in cases of corruption.

We are also considering arranging a pilot program to begin working on small scale corruption at the local level. This could, for example, be related to municipal authorities issuing illegal building permits in protected areas or to police officers taking bribes for falsifying evidence during investigations.

Stay in touch with the ReTrust Project

Anyone who might be interested in joining the project or simply receiving information and updates can contact the project organiser, Daniela Gaddi, at daniela.gaddi@uab.cat

Daniela Gaddi

The ReTrust Project



First Annual Northern Ireland Restorative Conference

We are delighted to be hosting our first annual Northern Ireland Conference in Belfast on Friday 15th September 2023. You are invited to join us as we explore the importance of restorative justice in creating sustained change and resilient communities.

During this one-day conference, we will be focusing on the following themes:

- The importance of practice standards and quality assurance
- The importance of Restorative Justice/ Practice in policy decision making
- The importance of Restorative Practice in early intervention initiatives
- The importance of Restorative partnerships

Registration is now open

Our full conference programme will be available shortly. Early booking is recommended as spaces are limited.

Location: Stormont Hotel, Belfast

Start Date: 15 September 2023

[FIND OUT MORE AND REGISTER HERE](#)

5th Annual Conference: Restorative Reflections, a blueprint for a restorative future

Over the past 25 years the restorative sector has made significant strides, but we know that more can be done moving forward. This is why, during this year's conference we want to explore the what the future of restorative holds. Thus, the theme of the 5th annual RJC conference is 'RESTORATIVE REFLECTIONS: A blueprint for a restorative future.'

This year, our conference sessions will focus on four conference themes:

- The transformational power of restorative justice for adults and young people
- Creating a restorative ecosystem in our education system
- Centring restorative practice in health and social care innovation
- A blueprint for restorative community building

Location: Online

Start Date: 20 November 2023

[FIND OUT MORE AND REGISTER HERE](#)

If you are interested in presenting at this conference please [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

The deadline for the call for abstracts is the **14th July 2023**.

RJC APPROVED COURSES & CPD



Whether you are just starting your restorative practitioner career or you are an experienced practitioner seeking continued professional development opportunities, selecting the right course is vital to ensuring high quality practice. You can be confident that by opting for an Approved Course, delivered by our [Registered Training Providers](#), your course meets our practice standards.

Complex and Sensitive RJ Case Training

Location: Online

Provider: Restorative Engagement Forum

Start Date: 5 July 2023

[APPROVED COURSE DETAILS](#)

Restorative Practice Facilitation Skills for Education Settings

Location: Online

Provider: Restorative Now

Start Date: 14 November 2023

[APPROVED COURSE DETAILS](#)

Restorative Practice Facilitation Skills for General Settings

Location: Online

Provider: Restorative Now

Start Date: 19 September 2023

[APPROVED COURSE DETAILS](#)

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OTHER EVENTS AND COURSES

Restorative Stories - Snake Skins

Location: Online

Provider: Hannah Moore

Start Date: 18 July 2023

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Restorative Justice from a Children's Rights Perspective

Location: London

Provider: Why me?

Start Date: 20 September 2023

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Introductory Schools Restorative Approaches Training

Location: Online

Provider: Restorative Justice 4 Schools

Start Date: 2 November 2023

[READ MORE](#)

Restorative Justice Conference Facilitation Training

Location: Online

Provider: Restorative Justice 4 Schools

Start Date: 2 November 2023

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Thriving Survivors Annual Conference 2023

Location: Glasgow

Provider: Thriving Survivors

Start Date: 17 November 2023

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SUPPORTING THE RJC

The RJC's role is to set and champion clear standards for restorative practice. It ensures quality and supports those in the field to build on their capacity and accessibility. At the same time, the RJC raises public awareness and confidence in restorative processes. The ultimate aim of the RJC is to drive take-up and to enable safe, high quality restorative practice to develop and thrive.

The RJC receives no government or Grant funding and relies on the income generated through our membership, supporters and generous donors.

By supporting the RJC, you can help sustain this vital work, and be part of our vision to create a society where high quality restorative practice is available to all.

Jim Simon

Chief Executive

The Restorative Justice Council

BECOME A MONTHLY SUPPORTER

We are building a community of supporters to help us raise the profile of restorative justice with the public and enable victims to access restorative justice wherever and whenever they need it. I hope you'll consider joining this community and make a monthly contribution towards our work.

BECOME A SUPPORTER

MAKE A DONATION

Your donation will help us to campaign for the widespread use of restorative justice, raise the profile of restorative justice in the media and with the public, and enable more victims to access restorative justice wherever and whenever they need it.

MAKE A DONATION

BECOME A MEMBER

Anyone can become a member of the Restorative Justice Council. We are the independent, national voice for restorative justice in the United Kingdom. Our constitutional objectives are to promote restorative justice for the public benefit as a means of resolving conflict and promoting reconciliation by:

- A. Promoting the use of restorative justice in the criminal justice system, in schools, in the workplace and elsewhere in the community in situations where conflict may arise
- B. Developing and promoting agreed standards and principles for evaluating and guiding restorative practice
- C. Advancing education and research on restorative justice and the publication of the useful results of that research

Membership brings along with it many benefits including:

- Monthly RJC bulletins
- Access to, and opportunity to, promote your own work in the RJC's publication: Resolution
- Networking opportunities with academics, researchers and practitioners from the UK and beyond
- Access to our quarterly practitioners network
- Reduced fees for the annual RJC conference
- Reduced fees for RJC Connect CPD activities and other RJC events
- Ability to nominate for the RJC Annual Award for significant contribution to the field
- Exclusive access to the member's section of the website
- Access to our standards for practice registration
- A voice in the decision-making of the RJC
- Opportunities to participate in RJC working groups

BECOME A MEMBER

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.

Restorative Justice Council

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