



Kent and Medway RJ Service Newsletter

Matthew Scott, Police and
Crime Commissioner for Kent

This newsletter marks one year since Restorative Solutions began delivering Restorative Justice (RJ) in Kent thanks to funding from my office.

I commission the service because bringing victims and offenders together under RJ can be a very powerful tool in reducing reoffending. It enables victims to tell offenders the real impact of their crimes, get answers and possibly receive an apology. It also gives offenders the chance to understand what they have done, take responsibility for their actions and consider ways to make amends for their behaviour.

It has been a busy year and I thank everyone for their hard work. However, we still have more to do to banish some of the misconceptions around RJ, so I challenge you to take a look at the Q&A section and test yourself and your colleagues about what RJ is, and what it isn't.



NOVEMBER 2018 Restorative Justice Newsletter

Happy 1st Birthday!

The RJ Service for Kent and Medway has been in operation for a year:

So what have we been up to?

The Police and Crime Commissioner launched the service in October 2017 as a service for victims of crime in Kent and Medway.

Restorative Solutions, in partnership with Salus, deliver the service through a combination of highly skilled staff and volunteers.

The Team

The team is led by Jacqui McHugh, Service Manager. Jacqui has a background in the Met Police and a long history of supporting community services. She has specialized in Restorative Justice managing some of the most complex and sensitive cases.

The practitioners in the team have joined us from a wide range of backgrounds; all are highly skilled in Restorative Justice.

We also have a group of talented and dedicated volunteers who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to support this service.



Heather Skelton and Sue Latimer from the RJ Team, attend the PCC's Blue Light Jobs Fayre in Dartford to raise the profile of the Restorative Justice Service in Kent and Medway.

The Service

Since the very beginning of the Service;

Number of referrals

264

Number of victims contacted
(multiple victims in some cases)

303

Number of cases we are currently supporting

53

Of all victims who are offered RJ in Kent just under a third express a real interest in the process. This is significantly higher than many RJ services nationally, we are seeking to increase this as news of the service spreads.

(Continued overleaf)

Happy 1st Birthday!

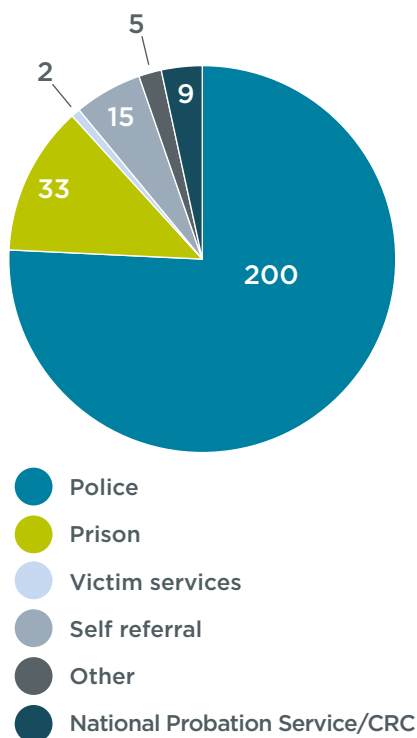
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The team have attended over 70 staff meetings and team briefings with organisations such as Victim Support, National Probation Service, Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company, Kent County Council, Kent Police, Domestic Abuse Forum, Family Support Services and many others, to publicise the service and give information to partner agencies on how to refer or signpost.

The referrals we have received have ranged from “low level” anti-social behaviour to “high level” murder and manslaughter cases. We have also received a number of complex domestic abuse cases referred by the victim.

If you would like us to deliver a short RJ input to your teams, please do contact us via the details below.

Where our referrals have come from:



Kent Police appointed Nikki Essex to the role of RJ co-ordinator, in May 2018. A huge asset and hugely helpful in communications between Kent police and the RJ service and has made the referral process smoother.

Liaising efficiently with Kent police is essential to the success of the service, so that we can respond to the needs of victims in a timely manner.

RJ in Practice: Attempted Murder and Grievous Bodily Harm With Intent

Referred to us via the National Probation Service, this offence took place in 1996. Discovering that his wife, from whom he was separated, was having a relationship with a friend of his, the offender went to her house where she lived with her children, and let himself in. He brutally assaulted the wife and her partner with a machete-type implement, leaving both victims with life-changing injuries. The offender then left the property and fled the country. He was arrested nine years later and stood trial at the Old Bailey. Having admitted the offences, he was convicted and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.

One of the offender's grown-up children, who was aged nine at the time of the attack, sought RJ earlier this year. He had not had any contact with his father since the incident, and at an initial meeting he said that he was worried that his father was coming to the end of his sentence and was due to be released. In subsequent RJ meetings he said that he had questions about the incident and his father's motivation, and he wanted to tell his father about the impact that the

offence had had on him and his family.

His father was willing to engage in RJ and on release he participated in preparation meetings before the RJ conference was held. At the conference both participants were given the opportunity to have their say, and to ask and answer questions. Due to the nature of this offence, the conference had the potential to become very emotional which we were prepared for, but the victim conducted himself with great dignity and composure. The outcome was that the offender agreed that he would not contact the family and would avoid the area where they lived. He also agreed that should they meet accidentally, they would not acknowledge one another.

The victim said that he felt 'lighter' and as if a weight that he had been carrying had been lifted, because the spectre of his father being a 'monster' had been removed. He was also less anxious about any threat to his mother and sisters. The offender said that he was glad to be able to reassure his son that he no longer posed a threat to the family.

Question Corner



Q: What is RJ?



A: An opportunity for victims to get answers, tell the offender how they have been affected and hold them to account, and therefore feel safer.



Q: Who can access this service?



A: Any victim (living in Kent or where the offence has occurred in Kent), regardless of crime type, age or stage of the criminal justice process can access the service. The service will also accept offender led referrals, with the exception of sexual crime and domestic abuse (victims can self refer for these cases).



Q: I have concerns that we might be mentioning RJ too soon in the process, why do we do this?



A: The Code of Practice for Victims states that the Police must provide information to victims of crime about RJ and how they can access it in their area. A recent study of victims who had engaged in the RJ process found that many wished they had known about RJ at the beginning. Police and victim



Q: What about adolescent to parent violence cases? Are they appropriate?



A: Yes the RJ service will accept these cases and we are seeing an increase of cases of this nature where the offence has happened in the home between family members. These cases are much more complex and sensitive and the success is often based around working with other agencies such as the Early Help team, Social Services or Joint Family Management teams to ensure on-going support for the family.



Q: How do I find out more or make a referral?



A: To make a referral to the RJ service see the contact details below.

Contact: Restorative Justice Kent & Medway

To contact the RJ Kent team please email rjkent@restorativesolutions.org.uk or call us on 0800 783 1583

www.rjkent.org.uk