

Police and Crime Panel: Proactive Scrutiny 2016/17

Session Two: Restorative Justice

In November 2015 the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), launched a Restorative Justice Strategy. The vision of this strategy was to ensure provision of Restorative Justice (RJ) to all victims of crime and anti-social behaviour across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, at all stages of the criminal justice system. It was hoped that through the introduction of this strategy, victims would feel more empowered and that communities would be safer.

Developing from, and widening the scope of the original strategy the Commissioner intends to launch his new Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches Strategy in November 2016. The new strategy, building on the vision of the previous, aims to make restorative justice available to every victim and offender across the two counties, where there is willing participation, regardless of the crime or how long ago the offending occurred. The new strategy also recognises the importance of mediation and other restorative approaches in reducing conflict and anti-social behaviour within local communities.

Definition: The Ministry of Justice defines Restorative Justice as *“the process that brings those harmed by crime, and those responsible for the harm, into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward”*¹.

The Restorative Justice Council describes the use of restorative approaches as *“an innovative and rapidly growing field. New ways of using restorative approaches are developing all the time, not just to prevent and repair harm but also to allow people to communicate effectively in a range of situations”*². They further state that restorative practice *“resolves conflicts and disputes before they escalate into crime and is an effective approach to dealing with antisocial behaviour and neighbour disputes”*³.

Aims: Through holding an evidence-gathering session the Panel aims to scrutinise and support the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in his intention to keep communities across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight safe and secure, through reviewing the progress made towards achieving the vision of the Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches Strategy. This scrutiny will also consider how the Commissioner is engaging partners across the two counties in delivering this agenda, as well as increasing awareness and engagement from the wider community.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restorative-justice-action-plan-2014>

² <https://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-other-areas>

³ <https://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-community>

Scope: The session will invite written evidence from a range of stakeholders who may be able to assist the Panel with their proactive scrutiny looking at how the restorative justice provision within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight is supporting victims, reducing reoffending and making communities safer. It will also seek to provide feedback to the PCC on where improvements can be made. The review will operate at a strategic level, and collate and analyse information that stakeholders will be expected to produce. Several stakeholders will be invited to provide oral evidence based on the level of information that can usefully be provided to the Panel.

The Panel will analyse the evidence provided in order to identify recommendation areas for action to the PCC.

1. Key Stakeholders:

Oral Evidence

(To be determined by plan working group)

Written Evidence:

Age UK Hampshire
Age UK IOW
Aurora New Dawn
CISters
Citizens Advice Bureau
Community Safety Partnerships
Compass School
Crown Prosecution Service
Hampshire and IOW CRC
Hampshire Constabulary
Hampshire County Council
Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service
Hampton Trust
HMP Isle of Wight
HMP Winchester
Isle of Wight Council
Ministry of Justice
National Probation Service
New Forest Mediation Service
NOMS
Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the IOW
Portsmouth City Council
Portsmouth Mediation Services
Restorative Justice Council
Restorative Solutions
Southampton City Council

Southampton Rape Crisis
Southern Domestic Abuse Service
Survivors Trust
Victim Support
Winchester Mediation Service
YOU
Youth Offending Teams

2. Key Questions

The key questions of the proactive scrutiny are:

- How well have the OPCC worked with voluntary and statutory sector partners to date, to support the development and delivery of the Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches Strategy?
- How are the Commissioner and his office engaging with local communities and victims and perpetrators of crime and anti-social behaviour, to raise the profile of restorative justice and restorative approaches within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight?
- What are the key priorities which need to be considered by the PCC to support delivery of the Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches Strategy?
- What best practice exists which could also be considered by the PCC in his approach to enhancing the restorative justice provision across Hampshire and the IOW?

In order to answer the key questions, the following will be asked of selected stakeholders:

- 1) How effective do you feel the OPCC have been in engaging and seeking commitment from partners in the development and delivery of the Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches Strategy? What opportunities do you feel exist for greater engagement?
- 2) How are the Commissioner and his office communicating with local communities, victims groups and offender services to raise awareness of the benefits and availability of restorative justice and restorative approaches within Hampshire and the IOW? Can you identify further examples of how the PCC might enhance this communication?
- 3) What do you think should be the priorities for action to support delivery of the Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches Strategy? Do you feel that the PCC should consider anything further for future development of the strategy to increase the access victims and perpetrators have to restorative justice and other restorative approaches?
- 4) Are there any examples of successful approaches to delivering restorative justice and other restorative approaches which you or your organisation are aware of, either within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight or in other areas?

- 5) Is there anything further that you can provide to the Panel that will assist us with our proactive scrutiny of this topic?

3. Approach:

- Invite the key stakeholders listed at 1 to respond to (some or all of) the key questions listed at 2. Provide four-six weeks for written responses.
- Provide a webpage for the review, giving access to information about the timescales, publishing relevant documents etc and to provide a channel through which the public can make comment.
- Identify key witnesses to attend oral evidence session (afternoon of 27 January 2017).

4. Outcome

The Panel will go into private session after they have held their oral evidence session in order to formulate and agree recommendations to the Commissioner on delivering effective restorative justice and restorative approaches across Hampshire and the IOW. The outcomes will be communicated by a report, which will be published on the Panel's website.