



**Lancashire**  
**Constabulary**  
police and communities together

**REPORT TO: Strategic Scrutiny Meeting**

**DATE: 5 January 2017**

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**SUBJECT: Restorative Justice within Lancashire Constabulary**

## **1. Issue for Consideration**

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Commissioner in respect of the utilisation of RJ in the force area at the current time

## **2. Recommendation**

2.1. The Commissioner is asked to note the report and support the development of an action plan to promote further roll out

## **3. Background**

### **Police Structure**

3.1. Prior to receiving initial funding from the OPCC in October 2015, Lancashire Constabulary had 3 FTE RJ Coordinators as budgeted posts dedicated to delivering Restorative Justice. As a result of the funding made available from the OPCC, a full time manager's post was created from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 and initially to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. The funding for this post has since been extended to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

To support the full time manager and the coordinators, a 0.5 FTE RJ Admin post was created (financed from OPCC funding) and this is funded until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

The RJ Coordinators had established Panels of trained RJ volunteers across the county.

## **Victim Awareness Course in HM Prisons**

- 3.2. In June 2015, a bid was received by the OPCC from the Prison Fellowship for monies to run victim empathy course in the prisons in the North West. At the same time this bid was received, it became apparent the CRC (Probation) staff dedicated to Restorative Justice in North West Prisons were being reduced in numbers and eventually there would not be a dedicated CRC person delivering victim awareness input and generating RJ referrals.
- 3.3. As a result, Lancashire Constabulary prepared a bid for the PCC on a 'like for like' basis as the Prison Fellowship bid and including staffing and mileage costs. The advantage of the Lancashire bid was that not only is it a more 'challenging' course in terms of challenging offender behaviour but it is also accredited by the North West Prisons. Additionally, by running the VA courses, the Constabulary could guarantee a steady stream of RJ referrals from offenders attending the course. This is compatible with the Commissioner's goals of reducing reoffending and improving victim services.
- 3.4. The Lancashire Constabulary bid was subsequently accepted and the OPCC has provided the funding to cover the costs incurred. However, it has since been recognised that the provision of courses is more labour intensive than first thought and further money has been bid for successfully, to cover abstractions and to help service the extra referrals the courses will generate. As a result, a further full time coordinator post has been established on a temporary basis until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.
- 3.5. The Constabulary is committed to delivering 21 courses to NW prisons (10 in Preston, 7 in Lancaster and 4 at Kirkham) between 4<sup>th</sup> April 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.
- 3.6. The courses to date have been well attended and over 50% of those attending have expressed a wish to meet their victim and as a result of presence in the prison, the RJ coordinators have picked up numerous other referrals. The RJ referrals are being progressed and meetings between offenders and victims are now starting to take place.
- 3.7. Resourcing the courses does interrupt the RJ coordinators day to day work and therefore following consultation with the OPCC, it is proposed that from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, that there be a dedicated force trainer, funded by the OPCC, who would deliver the course in the NW prisons. Preparation for the courses, interviewing offenders wanting to attend, delivery of them, updating of force and prison databases etc. will require one full time post. The Coordinators and the RJ Manager will assist with delivery of the courses but this can be catered for within their existing workloads.

## **Numbers of referrals**

- 3.8. The table below shows RJ referrals (Level 2 RJs), across the force for the period 1<sup>st</sup> November 2015 to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016.

	November 2015 to November 2016	Of which - Prison referrals
<b>Total:</b>	364	69
<b>Positive Outcome, RJ Conference Complete</b>	130	4
<b>Positive Outcome, No RJ (e.g. a letter from Offender)</b>	27	3
<b>On-going</b>	64	19
<b>Discontinued</b>	143	43

- 3.9. The figure of 364 for referrals is very commendable and the high conversion rate to RJ meetings (130) was subject to favourable comments during a recent visit from the Restorative Justice Council.
- 3.10. As stated, the referrals from the prisons are now beginning to result in meetings between offenders and victims and whilst these are time consuming due to the number of visits and assessments that have to take place and the location of some of the offenders, the RJ team has capacity to deal with these at this stage.

### **Breakdown of referrals by Division**

- 3.11. The table below shows referrals in to the RJ team from officers within the divisions. These are incidents/crimes that officers believe are suitable for RJ/mediation and may not have the time to deal with themselves or require the expertise of the RJ team.

<b>Breakdown of Referrals by Division</b>	<b>July 2016</b>	<b>August 2016</b>	<b>September 2016</b>
<b>East</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>West</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>South</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>

- 3.12. The RJ trainers have trained around 100 community volunteers to deliver RJ and/or mediation and some of the referrals shown below can be dealt with by the community volunteers. However the table below the divisional breakdown illustrates how many are actually being referred to the panels.
- 3.13. On first examination, the numbers are very small and it means the force has a large number of volunteers trained to deliver RJ/mediation but who are not doing so. This has led to some of them in effect 'resigning' from the role.
- 3.14. Closer examination of the referrals though by the RJ Manager indicates that few of the original referrals are suitable to be dealt with by the panel members. This is due to the nature of the original incident and when the 'risk assessments' have taken place it would not be suitable to use the volunteers based on the offenders/participants offending history or the backgrounds of others who may be present. It is also true to say that many of the cases are so complex and have been problematic for so long that the volunteers do not have the skills or experience to deal with them e.g. long running neighbour disputes involving councils, housing associations and other agencies.

3.15. However, it is true to say that more 'low level' cases could be referred in to the panels including those first time neighbour disputes where there is massive potential to resolve at an early opportunity and so stop them developing in to the long running and complex cases.

3.16. The RJ Manager will produce an action plan to develop further the role out of RJ and with emphasis on how the community panels can be used more with the benefit being the savings in time for operational officers and a better quality service to victims and other participants in incidents and crimes. The plan will be produced by 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and will be managed in Divisions by the nine placed based Chief Inspectors in their respective areas.

**The table below details cases dealt with by Panel Volunteers -**

<b>DIVISION</b>	<b>JULY 2016 Referrals to Panel Volunteers</b>	<b>AUGUST 2016 Referrals to Panel Volunteers</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 2016 Referrals to Panel Volunteers</b>
<b>EAST</b>	<b>1 Colne Panel</b> (Criminal Damage)	-	<b>1 Colne Panel</b> (ASB - Nuisance)
<b>SOUTH</b>	-	-	<b>1 Chorley Panel</b> (ASB- Nuisance) <b>1 - Skelmersdale Panel</b> (ASB Personal)
<b>WEST</b>	<b>1 Fleetwood Panel</b> (Theft) <b>1 Lancaster &amp; Morecambe Panel</b> (Theft)	<b>1 Fylde Panel</b> (ASB- Nuisance)	<b>1 Blackpool Panel</b> (Assault with injury)

## Conclusion

3.17. The RJ team are statistically producing some impressive results, but importantly the feedback from participants in RJ and from offenders in HM prisons is also of a high standard. A number of examples have been brought to the attention of the OPCC's office. As stated though, there needs to be a greater utilisation of the community panels and in an effort to promote greater usage the RJ team will have more contact time with operational officers to promote their work and the potential of the volunteers. This work will be highlighted in the more detailed action plan which is being produced.

3.18. In order to maintain the general impetus in expansion of the use of RJ, bids have been made to the OPCC to:

- Continue the managers roll for a further 3 years from April 2017.
- It is recognised the role of the admin post relieves a large admin burden from the coordinators and so a request has been made to extend the hours for this post and to roll out for a further 3 years from April 2017.

- More work can be undertaken with other agencies and especially 'hard to reach groups' not only to promote RJ but also overcome the barriers to its use. As a result, it is proposed to create a 'promotional' post (part time) to undertake this work. The post would also commence April 2017 for a period of 3 years
- As mentioned, the creation of a full time post to deliver the Victim Awareness courses in the NW prison estate, from April 2017 for 3 years.

#### **4. List of attachments / appendices**

#### **5. Background Papers**