

**REPORT**

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS AND SERVICES) SUB COMMITTEE		Subject: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CONFERENCING AND APPROACHES
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 29 JUNE 2005	Ref: LC/JS	

**1. Purpose of Report/Introduction**

To advise Committee of the implementation of Restorative Justice Conferencing and approaches within the Social Work Department and of the programme of training being developed to support this.

**2. Background**

2.1 Restorative Justice Conferencing places the needs of victims at the centre of the process, and focuses on the harm that they have suffered. It recognises the need for victim empowerment and for them to have a voice in what is essentially their harm. Crime and conflict fractures relationships and harms community living; Restorative Justice recognises that the crime is not an event that has affected the state or society alone – it is personal and harm has been caused to individuals offended against. This necessarily includes others than the direct or first victim, many people can be and are harmed by one incidence of offending.

2.2 The Restorative Conference process is not about shaming or browbeating the offender, nor does it provide an easy option for him/her. It does however provide an opportunity for the offender to recognise the harm that has been caused because of their choices and actions. It is essentially a process for putting victims and the community first and for the offender to:

- Acknowledge Responsibility for causing that harm.
- Make Reparation to victims
- To begin the process of Reintegration back into the community.

2.3 Restorative practice principles have been shown to be beneficial in a range of children's services such as groupwork, family work and within residential children's units.

2.3 The modernisation of Local Authority Children's residential Units in North Lanarkshire is being treated as a whole service process rather than just focusing on smaller buildings. The adoption of Restorative Justice Conferencing and approaches will assist in shifting the culture of care provided

- 2.4 In May 2003 Social Work Committee approved the purchase of a Restorative Justice training package. The training purchased specified work with young people with a particular reference to looked after children. The company commissioned has a proven background in the approach and is highly regarded in England and Wales, where Restorative Justice has been developing for a few years. The programme developed by this company is the only programme in existence for looked after children.
- 2.5 Initially two courses were run training workers in the process of Restorative Justice Conferencing and Restorative approaches. These took place in October and November 2004 with a total of twenty-seven workers completing the course. Staff trained were from Children and Families and Justice teams and included both main grade and Senior Social Workers and staff from Children's residential Units. This course provided the skills to develop Restorative Justice practices, which can enhance working relationships and offer additional interventions for current working practice.
- 2.7 These courses focused on both the use of Restorative approaches and Restorative Justice Conferencing within the Residential Child Care system and how it could:
- enable staff to further develop positive relationships with the young people they care for
  - Provide them with a further resource when dealing with challenging behaviour and conflict situations.

### 3. Proposals/Considerations

#### **Child Care System**

- 3.1 In February 2005 the 'training for trainers' course was completed by ten workers from the Social Work Department. The Department is now in the unique position within Scottish Local Authorities to train the work force, and to incorporate Restorative Justice principals and practices in the work with young people. This will include both those who are looked after and accommodated, and also those for whom the Department has statutory responsibility within the community.

#### **Adult Justice System**

- 3.2 In Adult Justice Services, Restorative Justice Services reflect a service committed to holding offenders to account, impacting on offending behaviour, giving credence to the victim agenda, and progressing reparation and restorative initiatives at the core of developments.
- 3.3 The Restorative Justice team have developed a range of services in partnership with Community Services colleagues. Service users who have been placed on a Community Service Order through the Court system, have been working on agreed projects including, litter clearing, environmental projects, Monklands litter campaign and the streetwise campaign. Additionally a range of environmental projects have been undertaken with a number of community organisations within North Lanarkshire Council.

- 3.4 The Scottish Executive has indicated that Restorative Caution, Restorative Orders and Restorative programmes of intervention will be being rolled out to Adult Justice services. North Lanarkshire Council Social Work Department are now in a stronger position to meet the challenges ahead in terms of delivering Restorative Justice services.

#### **4. Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications**

- 4.1 Youth Justice/Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Resources for 2004/05 and 2005/06 made available by the Scottish Executive were identified as a source of funding the Restorative Justice training. The Social Work Committee Report of 20 May 2004 approved the commission of Restorative Justice training programmes to ensure the availability of restorative approaches across a range of services.

#### **5. Recommendation**

- 5.1 Committee is asked to:
- (i) request the Director of Social Work to provide a report in twelve months time with an update on the progress made in the use of Restorative Justice approaches and Conferencing.
  - (ii) note the Report

  
**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**March 2005**

*For further information on this report please contact Lillian Cringles, Service Co-ordinator Justice, on telephone 01698 332195.*