

# Using Restorative Approaches to Reduce Police Costs for Dealing with Repeat Call Outs

## INTRODUCTION

The RAIN Programme introduces the use of restorative approaches to neighbourhood policing teams and staff from partner agencies. Using restorative approaches can make a positive impact on the harm caused to victims and reduce the likelihood of re-offending. There is growing evidence that restorative interventions can significantly reduce repeat calls to incidents that consume considerable amounts of police and other agency time. RAIN introduces the concept of 'Instant Restorative Justice' to police officers, community support officers and staff from partner agencies to deal quickly and effectively with minor anti-social behaviour and crime. Restorative Conferencing is used where more serious or persistent cases require it.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the case studies that follow is to show how restorative interventions can save time and resources when dealing with repeat incidents. The three cases were examined using available data from a police service participating in RAIN. Each of the following cases was recorded by the police force concerned for the purposes of logging and analysing the benefits of using restorative approaches. In doing so, they have applied an approved costing model for costing police time that can be found at Appendix A (see over).

In producing this paper, further analysis has been undertaken to extrapolate the cost and time savings over an extended period assuming that the described situation would have continued in each case without the use of a restorative intervention. It also outlines the potential savings that would have been realised if early restorative intervention took place after three repeat calls had been identified.

### Case Study 1 - Dispute between Neighbours

Savings of 171 hours of police time costed at £5,266.13

#### The Situation

Two neighbours in a street had been in dispute for some time over the noise and general anti-social behaviour caused by one of the parties.

Over a period of 7 months, the police were called to deal with the dispute on an average of 4 times per week (total 121 calls) but were unable to resolve the issue. It was decided to convene a restorative conference directly involving the parties involved. During the conference an agreement as to the future conduct of the party causing harm was agreed and since that time there have been no further calls to the police.

#### Input Time/Cost prior to the conference

It was estimated that each call to the police involved attendance and administrative time of 1.5 officers, totalling approximately 1 hour of police time per call. This has been costed at £3,717.28.

#### Input Time/Cost in delivering the conference

The total time in setting up and delivering the conference was 2 hours 50 mins. This has been costed at £87.15.

#### Savings

Assuming that the situation would have continued at the same rate for another 12 months the total time of the police in dealing with the incidents would have been 171 hours and at a cost of £5,266.13.

It is reasonable to assert that the restorative intervention saved this amount of overall police resource. If the incidents had been addressed after 3 repeat calls then savings could have amounted to £8,891.09 over the same time period.

### Case Study 2 - Teenage bullying and harassment

Savings of 156 hours of police time costed at £4,792.53

#### The Situation

Two teenage boys were engaged in the persistent bullying and harassment of two younger girls living within the same community. Over a period of 18 months, the behaviour became more regular and widespread, eventually taking place not only in public places but within the local school. Parents from all families became involved and the situation was beginning to escalate. Police were called a total of 234 times. A restorative conference was held and since that time there has been no further police involvement.

#### Input Time/Cost prior to the conference

It was estimated that each call to the police involved attendance an administrative time of 1.5 officers totalling approximately 1 hour of police time per call. This has been costed at £7,188.80.

#### Input Time/Cost in delivering the conference

The total time in setting up and delivering the conference was 4 hours 50 minutes. This has been costed at £157.37.

#### Savings

Assuming that the situation would have continued for another 12 months at the same level of intensity, the total time for the police in dealing with the incidents would have been 156 hours and at a cost of £4,792.53. It is reasonable to assert that the restorative intervention saved this amount of overall resource. If the incidents had been addressed after 3 repeat calls then savings could have amounted to £14,285.12 over the same total time period.

***"This enabled the police to show that they are doing something positive"***

### Case Study 3 - Young person regularly reported missing from home

Savings of 192 hours of police time costed at £9,819.51

#### The Situation

A vulnerable 15 year old girl living in a children's home was regularly reported missing. There were ongoing concerns for her welfare whilst absent and each call-out for the police involved at least 1.5 officers and a minimum of 5 hours of time. There were 13 such reports over a 3 month period. A restorative conference was held and a further follow up visit was made. Since that time the girl has not gone missing.

#### Input Time/Cost prior to the conference

Each missing report involved a minimum of 4.92 hours of police time costed at £3,273.17.

#### Input Time/Cost in delivering the conference

The total time in delivering the conference and making a follow up visit was 6.5 hours costed at £213.25.

#### Savings

Assuming the missing person reports continued for a further 9 months (this would not be considered exceptional) then the total time for the police involvement would have been 192 hours and at a cost of £9,819.51. It is reasonable to assert that the restorative intervention saved this amount of overall resource. If the incidents had been addressed after 3 repeat calls then savings could have amounted to £12,337.31 over the same total time period.

## TRAINING COSTS

Training for the RAIN programme is currently provided by Restorative Solutions Community Interest Company. The cost of training an individual to use 'Instant Level 1' restorative techniques is £70 based on 30 people being trained in a one day session. The cost of training an individual to facilitate a restorative conference at 'Level 2' is £295 based on an additional two day session for 16 people.

## CONCLUSION

The above case studies are taken from a log which contains over 40 similar examples and are intended to show the savings in police time when restorative approaches are applied to typical repeat incidents.

The use of restorative conferencing in these situations is shown to be inexpensive and the overall time and cost savings of doing so can be significant. If other socio-economic measures and costings were applied to these cases then the savings would be even more substantial.

#### For further information:

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#### APPENDIX A

The Employable Cost is the average cost of an Officer/PCSO's at each of the ranks. Employable costs include pay and pay on costs, including allowance, SPP, Competence Threshold, NI/ Superannuation contributions etc.

Direct Overhead Costs includes Uniform, Insurance, Transport, Training, Call Handling Communications and Infrastructure Costs (goods/services which support officers/PCSO in the direct delivery of the service). The Direct Overhead Costs is based on the methodology contained within the 'Guidance on Charging for Police Services' which was produced by the Finance & Resources

Business Area of ACPO and agreed by Chief Constables' Council on 14 I 2005 with the recommendation that forces should seek to harmonise their methodologies with the Guidance over the next three years.

Available Days = 365 Days less Rest Days, Annual Leave and Bank Holidays and Productive Hours being 7.25 Hours per 8 Hour shift as per the 'Guidance on Charging for Police Services'. The hourly costs used for this model are £30.72 for a Police Constable and £37 for a Police Sergeant.