



Restorative Approaches in Neighbourhoods Building Public Confidence

“...The Police should answer to the public and not government...” was the message delivered by the Home Secretary in March 2009, introducing a single national target for increasing public confidence by 15% between now and 2012. Fulfillment of this target will be measured by the British Crime Survey and as a consequence, police visibility at the heart of the community is now more important than ever.

Restorative Approaches in Neighbourhoods (RAiN) is an invaluable toolkit designed to assist with the delivery of national targets by providing policing teams and front-line workers from partner agencies with key skills. Based on restorative justice principles, RAiN helps to tackle signal crimes and events which fuel local concern including anti-social behaviour and criminal damage. RAiN will also help with the successful delivery of Public Service Agreement (PSA) and Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets:

- Public confidence and satisfaction with the services delivered - PSA 24
- Local concerns and perceptions about anti-social behaviour - PSA 23
- Dealing with drunken and rowdy behaviour - PSA 25
- Tackling first time youth offending - PSA 14
- Dealing effectively with prolific and persistent offenders - PSA 23

What is RAiN?

A problem-solving process that enables Police Officers, PCSOs and front-line workers from partner agencies to deal with the problems they encounter in their work. The process brings together victims and offenders in order to establish what happened, who was harmed and to work out what can be done to make things better. It could be as simple as a Restorative conversation or could involve one of the following interventions:

- ‘Instant’ restorative meetings (ie a Youth Restorative Disposal) to deal with less serious or low risk incidents more or less as they occur
- The full ‘restorative conference’ is conducted by a trained facilitator, involving the harmed and his or her supporters and those who caused the harm with supporters. The main participants in the conference work out themselves what can be done to make things better and sign up to an outcome agreement

We use the words ‘harmed’ and ‘harmer’ in the neighbourhood context and ‘victim’ and ‘offender’ where a criminal offence has been committed. Take-up rates of the offer of a conference is in the 60%-70% range for victims and the 90%-95% range for offenders.

Does RAiN work?

Independent evaluations and monitoring consistently show:

- High levels of victim satisfaction in the 75%- 85% range - PSA 24
- 30%-50% reductions in re-offending with prolific and persistent offenders - PSA 23
- Reductions in the rate of re-offending by 27% - PSA 23
- Reductions in number of young people being brought into the criminal justice system – Bristol reports 380 fewer cases in a year with few ‘breakdowns’ - PSA 14
- Reduced call-outs to ‘hot spots’ and recurring incidents including ASB, criminal damage and drunken behaviour - PSA 23 & PSA 25
- Reduced call-outs to repeat missing persons and residential care homes - PSA 14 & PSA 23
- Reduced call-outs to deal with neighbour disputes – PSA 23

The Benefits of RAIN

- Community engagement in resolving neighbourhood problems such as nuisance, graffiti, criminal damage and cross-generational issues such as young people loitering outside off-licences and in bus shelters
- Dramatic reductions in calls for service on recurring incidents, particularly where response teams and neighbourhood teams work together to deal collectively with problems in a neighbourhood
- Empowers communities
- Reductions in medical care and other costs for victims as they are able to get on with their lives
- Cost savings in that for every £1 spent on restorative conferencing, £9 can be saved further down the line
- Front-line workers feel more rewarded and empowered by resolving problems for both victims and offenders
- A significant aid to effective neighbourhood management with social housing and environmental officers engaged and involved in the process
- Neighbourhood policing teams are provided with a framework for developing common sense policing

The RAIN Implementation Package

If you would like to explore introducing RAIN to your neighbourhood and response teams for the first time or would like to improve existing restorative practices, Restorative Solutions CIC can provide a free consultation at BCU Commander or equivalent level.

If you decide to implement RAIN or build on and improve existing RAIN practice, here are the steps you need to plan for a successful uptake.

Step1: Management Briefing

A four hour briefing session with Senior Managers, Inspectors and Sergeants

- What are Restorative Approaches?
- How do they work?
- When can they be used (ie non-crime problem-solving, instead of court proceedings, after plea or sentence and during sentence)
- Capturing outcomes in relation to PSAs and SPIs
- Management Information System
- Appointing RAIN champions
- Training and development for all front-line staff in using 'instant' restorative conferencing and/or Youth Restorative Disposals

Our experience suggests that middle management staff are key players in implementing RAIN, and that the introduction of a policy on its own is not enough. Inspectors and Sergeants, the most important people for making things work on the ground, have to buy into the concept and ensure their teams use it consistently. RAIN is a methodology which aligns with citizen focus, community engagement and delivering visible services to neighbourhoods which address local concerns.

Step 2: Level 1 Training

Introduction to and the use of 'Instant' Restorative practice is a half day course for 35–40 trainees drawn from neighbourhood policing teams and front-line workers from partner agencies, delivered by two trainers.

- Restorative Approaches defined
- Application of Restorative Approaches in the wider and local context
- The Respect Tools - principles, script and communication elements
- Application of 'Instant' Restorative interventions - practice sessions

Each participant is supplied with a practitioner information pack. Please note the course outlined above can be adapted for Response Teams and for Officers responsible for Youth Restorative Disposals. By the end of the course most trainees will be capable of using 'instant' restorative conferencing.

Step 3: Level 2 Training

Two day course for 16 -18 selected Level 1 trained trainees, delivered by two trainers. Participants will be those expected to undertake restorative conferences to deal with more serious crimes, recurring community incidents and neighbourhood disputes. The selection of participants is to be made by Sector Inspectors and Beat Managers based on ability and readiness to use this powerful tool.

- Who to involve in a conference?
- Preparation and risk assessment
- Demonstration of Restorative Conference
- Conference practice (bespoke role plays)
- Outcome agreements and management
- Dealing with difficult people
- Support networks
- Trainees plan first conference

By the end of the course, most participants will be able to conduct successful restorative conferences. For those lacking in confidence, we will provide on demand telephone support or if the funds are available, call-down support for new facilitators during their first conferences.

Step 4: Training for Trainers

The received wisdom is that it is very difficult for trainers with no direct experience of using the restorative tools to train, akin to non-drivers teaching people to drive. Given the attrition rate in neighbourhood policing teams, it is vitally important to build an in-house Restorative Approach training capacity. Our solution to this issue is to offer 'Training for Trainers courses' for experienced facilitators and Police Trainers. Two day course for up to 10 experienced and successful practitioners, delivered by two trainers.

- Principles of Restorative training
- Preparation and risk assessment role plays
- Restorative conference script
- Training for running Restorative Conferences
- Review training resources
- Training theory

Our package includes a comprehensive course, complete with case studies, exercises and everything needed to deliver an inspirational, informative and interesting course.

Step 5: Make up your Mind

Restorative Solutions has put together an implementation package which effectively assist your organisation with meeting the targets for neighbourhood policing and for giving the communities you serve a better service. The principles of our training apply equally to those responsible for Integrated Offender Management and Intensive Alternatives to Custody Schemes.

We are aware that there is a perception that Restorative Approaches are too resource intensive and sometimes ineffective, but we are confident that our outlook on the method fits the present day public-service agenda and complements neighbourhood policing. Our programmes are designed by former Police Officers for serving Police Officers. The RAIN programme has the support of NPIA and ACPO and we expect to enlist the support of HMIC, APA, SA and Home Office Ministers.

For more Information about the Restorative Solutions and the different training options available:

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About Restorative Solutions (CIC)

Restorative Solutions work on a not-for-profit basis. Our mission is to develop and promote the use of Restorative Approaches as an effective tool for police officers and workers from other front-line agencies, to deal with crime and anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods, schools and other communities. We work directly with police forces and other agencies tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, with Prolific and Persistent Offenders Units and with Yots, Social Housing Officers and Young Offender Institutions.

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