



Restorative Prisons

Case Study: HMP Peterborough - Women's

Background

HMP Peterborough is operated by Sodexo Justice Services. It is the country's only dual purpose-built prison and runs as a local category B prison for men and a separate women's prison.

The operational capacity for women is 360, including a Mother and Baby Unit which can accommodate 12 mums. Peterborough accepts females from Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

HMP Peterborough Statement

"We use 'Restorative Approaches' to bring people in conflict into dialogue. Using a skilled and structured process, those who have been harmed have an opportunity to be heard and those that have caused the harm are held to account for what they have done."

In 2016 Restorative Solutions began a 12 month initiative to introduce and embed restorative approaches across HMP Peterborough to resolve conflict among prisoners, among staff, between prisoners and staff and between prisoners and their families. The restorative approach with women prisoners has also been successfully used in responding to an incident of self-harm.

The most recent inspection of the women's side of the prison was in September 2017 with HMIP stating they 'remain impressed with the way resettlement is really woven into the fabric of the operation of the prison [and] that the prison is a fundamentally respectful place.'

The Restorative Approach has embedded notably well across the women's side of HMP Peterborough with a greater amount of prisoners trained as facilitators and a higher volume of formal and informal interventions used. Although the women's population is less than half of the male population, 57% of all formal restorative meetings at HMP Peterborough have taken place in the women's side of the prison. This may be due in some part to the more personal and emotionally complex nature of conflict between women in prison¹ for which a restorative approach is particularly effective.

¹ PSO 4800: Women Prisoners, Issue H

Overview

Operational and non-operational staff and selected women prisoners have been trained in formal and informal restorative approaches to bring conflicting parties together in all areas of the prison to resolve conflict and repair harm.

Restorative approaches are being used to resolve conflict between prisoners as well as between prisoners and staff. Managers also use restorative approaches to resolve conflict between staff.

After successful use of restorative approaches to rebuild relationships between women and their families, RA has now been adopted as a specialised process by the Family Matters team.

Example: Family RA

A prisoner wanted to engage in the RA process to take responsibility for her actions and rebuild her relationship with her family. A meeting took place between the prisoner and her mother and the prisoner accepted all the harm caused to her parents and children. An agreement was reached allowing for improved communication between them which meant the prisoner was able to hear her daughter say 'goodnight' several times a week. The prisoner agreed she would spend her time in custody continuing to rebuild her relationship with her family.

Training

The training in Restorative Approaches is 100% tailored to the prison environment and to staff and prisoners. It runs at Foundation Level (1 day) and Practitioner Level (3 day). The Foundation Level course now forms part of the Induction Training Course (ITC) for all new Prison Custody Officers (PCOs). Regular training events are held to train all grades of operational and non operational staff to a Foundation Level.

Women prisoners are selected, using agreed criteria, and trained in the same way as staff. Suitable staff and prisoners who have completed the Foundation Level are selected to progress to Practitioner Level. This model provides an effective mix of skills and abilities across the whole prison.

To date, 145 staff members across the whole establishment and 12 female prisoners have completed the Foundation Level. Of these totals, 25 staff members and 10 female prisoners have progressed to and have completed the Practitioner Level.

Joint women prisoner and staff training events began in November 2017 and women prisoner practitioners are sharing their experience and providing support and guidance to staff and prisoner trainees at both levels.

The Restorative Approach

For low level conflicts and disagreements trained prisoners and staff conduct informal restorative meetings. For more serious or complex matters the case is referred to the RJ Coordinator for progression to a formal restorative conference.

Women prisoner practitioners run informal and formal interventions independently. Use of co-facilitation between staff and prisoners is also working successfully, with prisoner practitioners taking the role of lead facilitator where appropriate. Regular joint staff and prisoner meetings take place to share knowledge and experiences.

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By the end of 2017, restorative approaches were used in 89 cases of conflict. Informal meetings were used in 38 of these cases and formal conferences were used in 14 cases. Approximately 8 of these cases were verbal altercations and 40 were incidents of violence. Incidents of bullying, refusal of staff instruction, racism, drugs, threatening and abusive behaviour were also successfully resolved using well managed restorative interventions. Restorative approaches have also been used to restore family relationships.

Formal Disciplinary Process

The restorative approach is not an alternative to the formal Incentives & Earned Privileges (IEP) system or adjudication process where formal disciplinary process is appropriate. However, PSO 4800: Women Prisoners states:

Staff and managers should be appropriately trained and supported to understand why and how women may act anti-socially and how to manage and de-escalate conflict without resorting to formal disciplinary processes. The use of formal disciplinary action should only be used as a last resort.

To this aim, the restorative approach is working effectively as a powerful intervention to prevent conflicts escalating. It is also being used within the formal process itself. Starting in January 2018, formalised Restorative Approaches were introduced into the adjudication process with adjudicating governors using restorative questioning in the process and/or referring to RA once an award has been made. The restorative approach is also used as a reparative way to reintegrate women prisoners back into the mainstream prison following a significant conflict and adjudication.

In November 2016 the MoJ's white paper on *Prison Safety and Reform* highlighted the emerging efficacy of the Restorative Prison initiative to encourage governors to take a restorative approach where appropriate.

Learning Points

This pilot initiative shows that a whole prison restorative approach can succeed when:

- The selection and training process is robust
- Both staff and prisoners are trained, enthusiastic and actively promoting the initiative
- Staff and prisoners work together on planning, preparing and delivering restorative meeting and conferences
- As many people as possible support the initiative, including prisoners, staff and SMT
- The restorative approach is written into policies and procedures in the establishment
- The approach is embedded across all functional areas

Example: Work-based RA

A prisoner felt she was being bullied by another Orange Band worker. When a restorative approach was suggested by an officer, the prisoner agreed to engage in the process to resolve the problem.

A prisoner and a Senior Officer, both RA practitioners, co-facilitated the conference with the prisoner taking the role of lead practitioner.

Both Harmed and Harmer found the process 'really helpful' and as a direct result of their meeting they became friends and were able to work together again.

RA Training Feedback from Staff and Prisoners

I have learned many things that I will be able to use in the future in here but even after my release.

Something I am looking forward to using in the future. I feel privileged I was chosen for this opportunity.

I will use this knowledge in my life inside and out.

I found it beneficial for what I want to do in the future.

A great tool to use in the wider world.

Excellent and interesting course well delivered I would definitely be interested to complete and accredited qualification in restorative approaches.

Fresh approach to altering behaviour humans that I am sure will be beneficial and successful.

I can see how I can use these skills in my everyday life.

Very useful in dealing with my day to day job.

I look forward to using the skills in the future.

I feel I can use these skills both in prison and on the outside.

Challenging, exciting, nerve-wracking but thoroughly worthwhile.

I believe it is a really powerful tool to use before small issues become big issues.

I found the information appropriate to use not only in prison but would be useful for everyday life with family and friends.

I can see how I can use these skills in my everyday life.