

Report of the Assistant Director – Environment & Sport to the meeting of the East Area Committee to be held on 22nd January 2015.

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Subject:

Neighbourhood Resolution Panels – Progress Report 2014.

Summary statement:

This report gives an update on the progress that has been made in the setting up and use of Neighbourhood Resolution Panels in Bradford district over the past 12 months.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area: Corporate



1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report gives an update on the progress that has been made in the setting up and use of Neighbourhood Resolution Panels in Bradford district over the past 12 months.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In July 2011 the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) invited Expressions of Interest from Community Safety Partnerships who wanted to be part of a pilot scheme to evaluate the rolling out of Neighbourhood Resolution Panels (NRPs) across the country.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 1 December 2011 the Bradford District Community Safety Partnership approved the submission of an Expression of Interest and allocated funding to be used to set up NRPs in Bradford District. Bradford Community Safety Partnership continues to support the project.
- 2.4 Neighbourhood Resolution Panels bring local victims, offenders and criminal justice professionals together, using restorative and reparative approaches and facilitated by a community volunteer, to agree what action should be taken to deal with certain types of low level crime and disorder.
- 2.5 Bradford Neighbourhood Resolution Project has a 90% victim satisfaction rate. Of the offenders that have been through the process, 95% have not reoffended.
- 2.6 In Bradford the scheme has targeted low level offenders (including those who are first time entrants). This includes those offenders who would attract the following sanction:
- Theft under £100
 - Criminal damage under £300
 - S.4 Public order offence
 - S.5 Public Order offence
 - Any other low level offence
 - Neighbourhood dispute
 - Those on the cusp of entering the Anti Social Behaviour process
- 2.7 The programme currently has 80 active volunteers. All the volunteers have been trained by an accredited trainer from a social enterprise company called Restorative Solutions who have received funding from the MOJ to provide training nationally. Restorative Solutions have been the lead trainer for Restorative Justice in Bradford and West Yorkshire. The training they deliver is a 3 day course which equips the volunteers with a strong knowledge of RJ, the ability to conduct instant RJ and the training to allow volunteers to run a full RJ conference. Restorative Solutions are accredited via the Restorative Justice Council. Since May 2012 over 3500 volunteer's hours have been spent on cases, training, practice sessions and workshops.
- 2.8 Since the project began in May 2012, 140 referrals have been made. These referrals have primarily come from the Police but also housing organisations, including Accent Housing, Manningham Housing and Yorkshire Housing. The NRP Co-ordinator has delivered training sessions to all Neighbourhood Policing Staff and

Area Based Staff. This training needs to be refreshed as police arrangements change across the district.

- 2.9 The project has changed and expanded during this financial year, to a model dealing with only pre court work such as Neighbourhood Resolution Panels, anti social behaviour cases (such as quad bikes, ASB panel referrals, neighbour nuisance, conditional cautions) to 'post court' work with Probation, Youth Offending and local prisons.
- 2.10 Bradford NRP is a national award winning project, having won the highest accolade for community safety in a RJ category for the Howard League for Penal Reform in July 2014. This was presented by HRH the Princess Royal and the CEO of the Howard League for Penal Reform. This is a category that was most highly competed for nationally. Bradford NRP won the Assistant Chief Constable commendation last year for solving problems with partners and a finalist in the West Yorkshire Policing Awards for the approach to working with low level crime. The work undertaken by this project has formed a blue print for all CSP's (Community Safety Partnership) in West Yorkshire who now fund pre court activity under the banner of NRP.
- 2.11 The following performance outcomes have been achieved between April – September 2014:

Number of referrals: 36 referrals – 16 cases still ongoing, 8 returned as unsuitable.

Number of outcome agreements: 12 conferences/outcome agreements

Victim satisfaction (those with a complete outcome): 100%

Victim satisfaction (no outcome but been involved in the process): 87.5% felt things had improved after involvement in RJ.

Current number of volunteers: 80 Volunteers.

Between April 2013 and March 2014 our outcomes were as follows:

Number of referrals: 62 referrals – 37 returned as unsuitable which led to extensive Police training to ensure appropriate referrals.

Number of outcome agreements: 25 conferences/outcome agreements

Reoffending rate: As of January 2014: 97%

Victim satisfaction (those with a completed outcome): As of Jan 2014: 90%

Victim satisfaction (no outcome but been involved in the process): 90% felt things had improved after involvement in RJ,

Current number of volunteer: 50

This highlights how the project has grown substantially over the past six months. Raising the profile of the project to increase referrals with the police and collectively exploring ways in which ASB cases are assessed for a restorative intervention and utilising volunteers to engage with ASB victims through the 'ring back' process within the police. Referrals can also be made through local ward officer teams.

- 2.12 It is recognised nationally that restorative approaches have a significant impact on community safety outcomes. In Bradford these have included: reduced re-offending rates from people who have gone through a restorative process, high victim satisfaction rates, reduced repeat calls for service from the Police and reduced costs to public services. The approach in Bradford has been to engage local communities (our volunteers are all local residents) in a restorative process to

resolve community issues. It is also important to note that a restorative process is not simply about achieving a conference meeting. 90% of those who are referred in where a conference is not undertaken have said that they felt their circumstances have improved by taking part in this process, and being supported by caring and impartial volunteers.

- 2.13 Of the cases that have been referred in to the project, over half (59%) have been neighbour disputes. Although some have involved a low level crime, the impact on communities from conflict within neighbourhoods and the impact upon services reacting to these disputes are immense. By using this approach, neighbours are given the opportunity to sit down with neutral, impartial and trained volunteer facilitator to talk about the impact and harm caused. Bringing both parties together in a neutral venue, when they can communicate and facilitate their own outcomes, has led to only 9% making further calls for service to the Police or Housing Organisations.
- 2.14 Bradford has been quoted nationally as being innovative when it comes to its approaches to dealing with conflict using restorative approaches. The project has been able to identify opportunities where local communities can be involved in a process so people can be heard and those causing harm, can begin to understand the consequences of their actions.
- 2.15 In December 2013 the MOJ advised Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC's) of the availability of additional funding to support capacity building for Restorative Justice Services across West Yorkshire. Capacity building can strengthen the skills, competencies and abilities of those working with RJ along with enhancing or improving service delivery and creating a sustainable environment to work in. This will include training and professional development but the fund does not cover full time employment.
- 2.16 In March 2014 Bradford Community Safety Partnership received funding from the PCC for Victims Services and Restorative Justice, Bradford received £102,425.
- 2.17 This funding has provided an opportunity to develop a model of RJ service approaches across the district, if aligned with the victims services work, will position the PCC to consider options for future West Yorkshire developments including commissioning as part of victim services.
- 2.18 It will embed RJ practices & principals across services and create a level of consistency and enable Bradford to become a centre of excellence for restorative justice. This aspiration is a restorative practice and services for victims of crime and anti social behaviour across the District and that the model that could be adopted across West Yorkshire for all victims. The RJ Hub endeavours to achieve the Restorative Justice Quality Mark by the end of March 2015, this will demonstrate the high standard of RJ interventions for victims. The aim of the project is to raise awareness of restorative justice, and this will be achieved by extensive training.
- 2.19 In June 2014 the Community Safety Partnership agreed to fund an ASB Victims Champion which will act as a single point of contact, identifying vulnerable victims of ASB and providing dedicated and specialist support for victims across the district. The post will be recruited by Victim Support but managed within the Restorative Justice Hub, embedding victim centred approaches. The post will support and train volunteers sharing the existing pool and skilled and committed volunteers within the

- RJ Hub. This will increase capacity and reach higher numbers of victims, which will have greatest impact on victim satisfaction rates across the district.
- 2.20 The Bradford RJ Hub is developing a partnership with the Police and Incommunities to deal with nuisance bikes. A restorative intervention will be available at varying points in the enforcement process to increase understanding amongst those causing harm and will involve local communities by giving them the opportunity to highlight the issues and concerns of those driving in an anti social manner.
 - 2.21 West Yorkshire has been highlighted as one of 3 pilot areas to deliver Conditional Cautions. The RJ Hub has been a key player in the development of effective conditions as part of the cautions. It was envisaged that there would be a large increase in referrals from this pilot, and therefore the RJ Hub was pro-active and recruited and trained 20 new Restorative Justice Facilitators to deliver this work. Due to be implemented in November 2014, Bradford will now be launching in February 2015. The RJ Hub will be ready and available to deliver on this piece of work at that time.
 - 2.22 From September 2014 – December 2014, over 250 people have been trained in restorative justice, and 66 attended the facilitator training. Over 30 organisations and departments were represented, including the voluntary service.
 - 2.23 In December 2014 launched the RJ Hub and invited practitioners from across the spectrum of restorative justice, restorative approaches and restorative philosophies. The launch celebrated and recognized the value and diversity of work and gave a partnership and strategic commitment to further develop the common principles which underpin restorative work.
 - 2.24 The development of the RJ Hub is overseen by the RJ Strategy Group which meets on a monthly basis and continues to support the development this work in embracing new ideas and approaches to restorative practices. The RJ project plan is a driver to combine efforts in a truly focused way which embeds restorative approaches across the district to maximise delivery and shared outcomes. The Strategy Group report to the CSP Strategy Group and CSP Board.
 - 2.25 Other districts across West Yorkshire have been allocated Victim Services funding from the PCC to develop NRP's based on the Bradford model which is a reflection of the success of the Bradford model.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Bradford Community Safety Partnership has demonstrated, over a number of years, a strong commitment to the development of restorative justice. Bradford already has a wealth of nationally and locally recognised RJ services both pre and post sentence, in Bradford Youth Offending Team and in West Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company (formally the Probation Trust).
- 3.2 Bradford has been delivering RJ interventions for a number of years which builds on the foundations of this work and strengthens the aspirations to deliver this practice across a number of crime types including Hate Crime to provide a holistic and consistent approach to supporting victims.

3.3 All of these pathways demonstrate a large development of restorative justice Work in Bradford district of a high standard, where learning and good practice can be shared. There is also a clear pathway of utilising restorative justice for very low level offending behaviour (through the police's work with Community Resolutions) to Neighbourhood Panels to Restorative Justice Clinics and for serious offenders within the criminal justice sector through West Yorkshire Probation.

4. OPTIONS

4.1 The Committee can approve the recommendations or amend them and/or make further recommendations.

5. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

5.1 The PCC has agreed to passport the current level of funding for the Community Safety Fund for the period for 2015/16.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk map has been developed for the scheme and the significant risks have been identified as: failure to recruit and train volunteers, failure to get referrals to the scheme, failure to secure funding beyond March 2016. Plans are in place to minimise the effects of these risks on the success of the scheme.

7. LEGAL APPRAISAL

7.1 Advice was sought from Bradford Council Legal Services in order to ensure that any potential legal issues which may arise from the scheme are covered.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

No implications.

8.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

No implications.

8.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

No significant impacts.

8.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.4.1 The aim of this scheme is to contribute to improving community safety outcomes across the district including reducing crime and reoffending and providing a universal service for victims.

8.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

No implications apparent.

8.6 TRADE UNION

No implications apparent.

8.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

8.7.1 This scheme may have beneficial implications for all wards in Bradford district.

9. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Bradford East Area Committee considers and comments on the progress made over the past 12 months in developing Neighbourhood Resolution Panels in Bradford district as set out in this report.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Neighbourhood Resolution Panels – performance report February 2014.

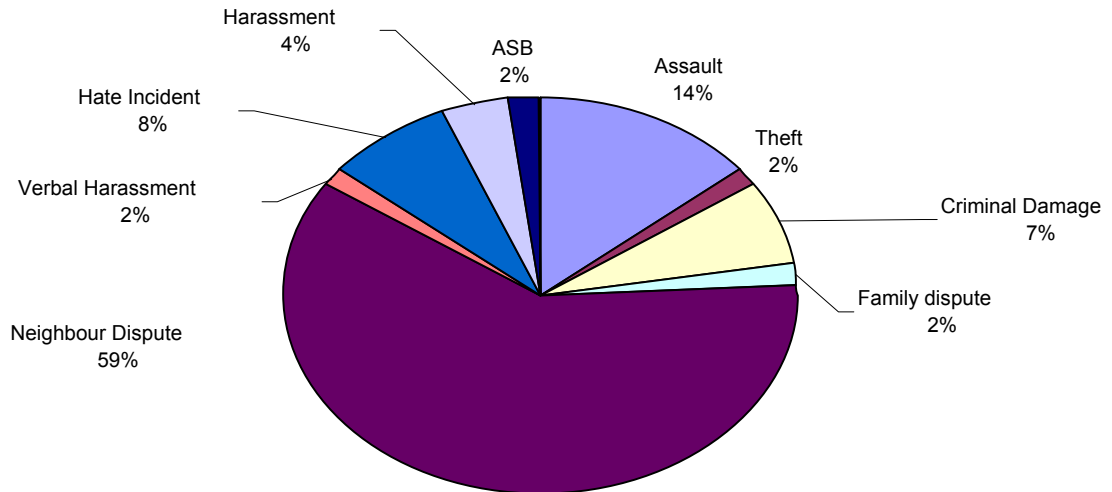
12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

12.1 None.

Bradford Restorative Justice Hub Performance Information

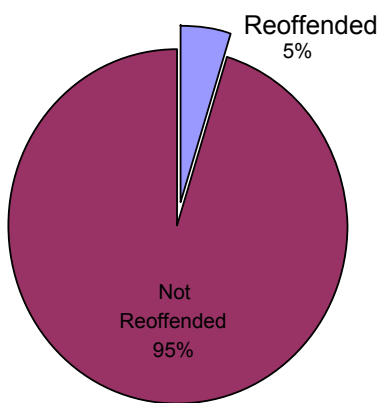
December 2014

Cases that have been dealt with via Restorative Justice (Pre-Court)



Reoffending Rates

95% of those going through the RJ process, have not reoffended



Reduction in Calls for Service:

91% of those going through the RJ Process have made no further calls for service to the Police or housing organisations.



Are victims satisfied with the RJ Process?

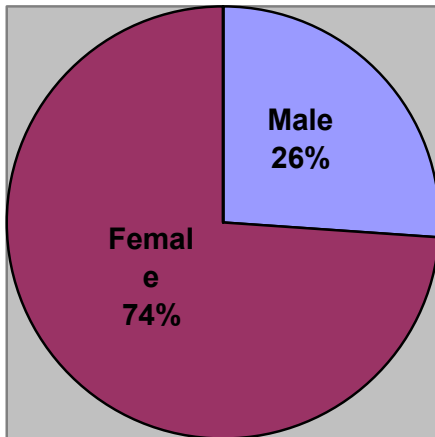
90% are either satisfied or very satisfied

Volunteers

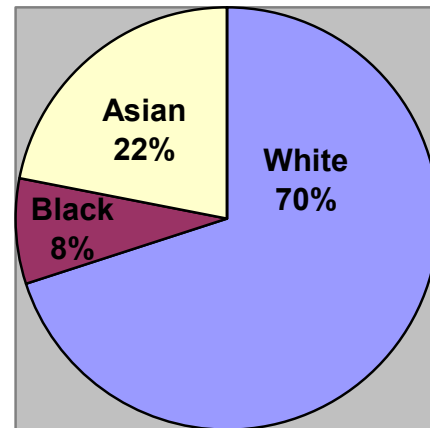
The success of the RJ Hub is down to the hard work and dedication of the 80 volunteers who are actively working within their communities to make a real difference

It is imperative that our volunteers are as representative of our community as possible

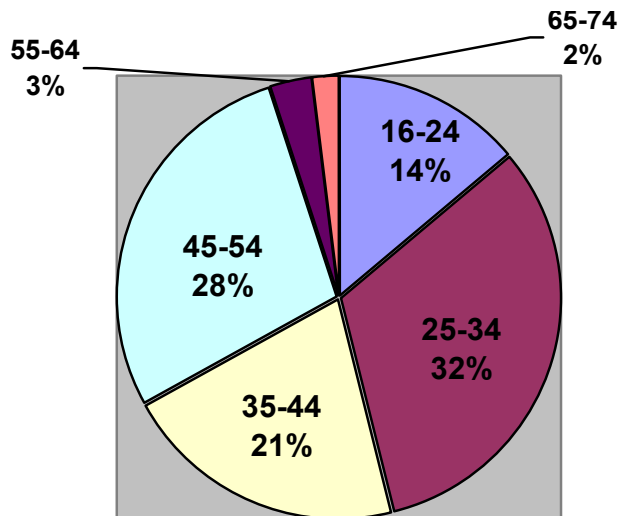
Gender of volunteers



Ethnicity of Volunteers



Age of Volunteers



Since the start of the Restorative Justice work in 2012 within local communities, volunteers have given over 3,500 hours to work on cases, attend training and development sessions

For more details please contact: RJ Hub Team: 01274 432305 or rj@bradford.gov.uk