

Restorative Justice

The national Restorative Justice Council defines Restorative Justice and its processes as follows:

Restorative processes bring those harmed by crime or conflict, and those responsible for the harm, into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward.

RESTORATIVE RESOLUTION

When a Police Officer attends an incident they will use national guidance to deliberate the severity of any offence that has occurred, they will discuss the harm caused with the victim and ascertain the victim's wishes. If the wrongdoer has been identified and accepts responsibility for the harm caused, then the officer will include all those involved in their decision as to an appropriate outcome. Circumstances may allow for that wrongdoer to be dealt with by way of Restorative Resolution and if so, all concerned will be involved in deciding appropriate and proportionate ways in which the wrongdoer can make reparation. It may be that the victim only wants that person to make some form of apology for what has occurred or to offer some appropriate practical help.

COMMUNITY NEIGHBOURHOOD CONFERENCING

In Criminal Cases

If however, the correct outcome involves the wrongdoer going through the criminal justice system then it is essential that the victim can still access a restorative intervention alongside that criminal justice process.

A formal restorative conference may be offered which allows the victim the chance of asking questions directly of those responsible. Allows the victim to describe how they have been affected by the offence and how it has affected others. During a conference, the wrongdoer will have the opportunity to accept responsibility for their behaviour and recognise how they have affected others. It gives them the chance to see the victim as a person and to consider the possibility of making amends. The same criteria will usually apply; the wrongdoer must accept responsibility for the harm caused and be willing to enter into communication with the victim either directly or indirectly. The conference affords the opportunity for all of those involved to meet in a safe emotional environment. The conference and all participants are

risk assessed and the meeting is facilitated by a person trained in restorative justice conference facilitation. *In no way does a restorative conference interfere with the processes of the criminal justice system.*

It is important to recognise that a victim may wish to access this process of a restorative intervention at very different stages of their journey through dealing with the harm caused to them and Lincolnshire Police aims to be there whenever that time occurs. If whilst the matter is being dealt with by the police the victim wishes a conference to be considered then trained volunteers in all areas of the county, supported by local officers will take that forward for them.

In Neighbourhood Issues

The benefit of this conferencing process may also be used to great effect when given to a group of people in a neighbourhood who are experiencing issues such as anti-social behaviour or conflict between parties who are struggling to live in harmony. A trained facilitator in Restorative Justice will risk assess those persons involved, consider the harm that is being caused and invite all involved parties to a neutral community venue where the structured meeting can help them move forward and explore constructive solutions to the issue.