

Essex Restorative & Mediation Service



Annual Report 2017/18

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Our Year at a Glance

43%
increase in
referrals

426 referrals
received

594 victims
contacted

25
NEW
volunteers

81,000

volunteer hours logged

96%
participant
satisfaction

RJ Firebreak wins
European Social
Fund Innovation
Award

Reduced Police callouts to Aspire
by
40%

300+ people
received
awareness
training

100%
of referrers
would
recommend

Volunteers
rated the
service

4.7 / 5
stars

Volunteer rating for support
they receive

**4.8 / 5
stars**

Our Annual Report



1

**We Delivered
an Effective
Service**

3

**We Raised
Awareness**

2

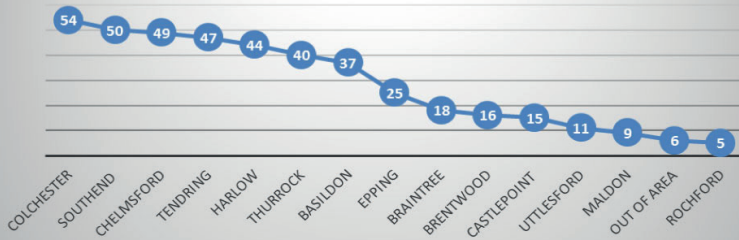
**We Valued
Our
Volunteers**

4

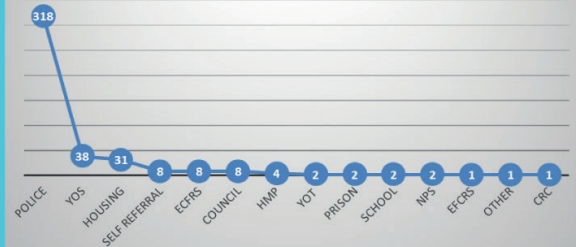
**We Were
Innovative**

Annual Performance Dashboard

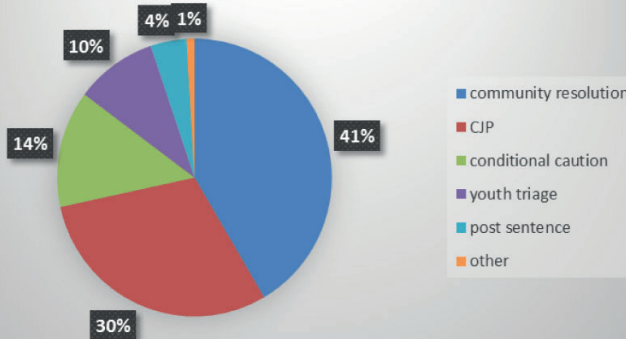
Referrals by area



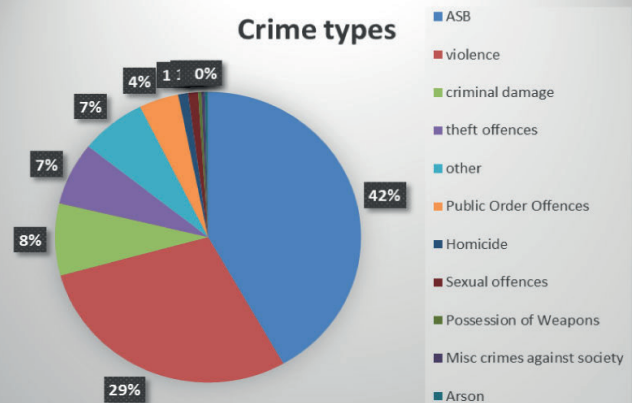
Referrals by organisation



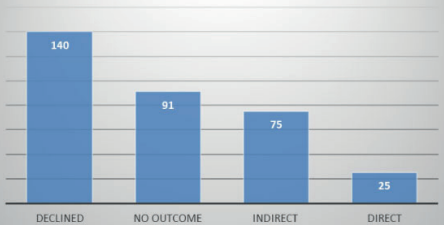
Referral Type



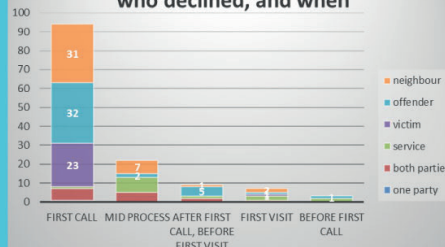
Crime types



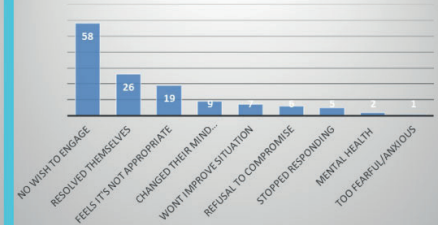
Closed cases outcomes



who declined, and when



Reasons for declining



Total Referrals This Year
426

Top Referrers
Colchester Police 40
Southend Police 39
Thurrock Police 37

Top Organisation
Police

Top Area
Colchester

Evaluations Returned
26%

Participant Satisfaction
96%

Participants who would recommend
91%

Participants who said they felt better
86%

Referrers who would recommend
100%

“They made me **open up** to a lot that I had been bottling up, and **gave me the confidence** to ask questions I hadn’t asked before.”
- a participant

We Delivered an Effective Service

From April 2017 – March 2018 we received 426 referrals, an increase of 43% on the same period from the last year.

We saw an increase in referrals from sources such as Police (49%), Essex Youth Offending (46%) and councils (14%) and welcomed new referrers in Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and prisons. Some referral sources decreased such as CRC who only referred 1 case (2 last year), self-referrals (who went down from 10 to 8 referrals) and victim support who didn't send any referrals this year. Part of the business plan for 2018 is to monitor and challenge when referral numbers are low and identify potential new areas of business.

We contacted 594 victims and 366 perpetrators to offer them a restorative outcome. 278 people took up the offer, resulting in 100 positive outcomes. This conversion rate of 23% is an increase from 14% last year.

Of the cases that were declined by one party or another, 69% declined at the first phonecall, inferring that the referral may

not have been appropriate.

In looking at Police referrals in more detail, we received and completed 40 conditional cautions. 65% of these were declined, and all of these either declined at first call or were not contactable at all. Of the 10 declines, 7 of these were due to the Police Officer already having completed the process before referring. To address this, we amended the conditional caution form to read 'will engage with the restorative and mediation service' instead of 'will hand a letter of apology to a police officer'. This allowed our trained and qualified facilitators to make a decision on the best restorative outcome and reduced workload for Police.

Community resolutions had a more positive outcome, with only 54% declining.

The 2018 business case states that we will challenge poor quality referrals as the above figures demonstrate that a lack of explanation to victims and offenders taking part in out of court disposals causes further and unnecessary work for the

restorative and mediation service and Essex Police.

We introduced the use of community justice panels to very positive effect (See page 6 for case study).

In April 2017, we introduced online feedback forms as our evaluation returns were very low. Returns improved by 23%.

Feedback has been very positive with 95.6% of respondents rating the service 4 out of 5 or higher. 93.9% rated facilitators 5 out of 5 and 86.1% said they felt better as a result of speaking with facilitators. 90.5% people said they would recommend the process to others.

We also measured referrer feedback; 100% would refer to us again.



CJP Case Study: Southchurch Hall Gardens

In Summer 2017, we were called to work with an issue of street drinkers in a park in Southchurch. Local residents and staff had concerns that people drinking in the park was affecting the wildlife, causing mess and driving the local community out of the park. This had escalated and evidence of drug use and prostitution was beginning to appear.

We spoke to all parties involved, including council staff, local shop owners, residents and those who regularly used the park to drink in. We invited

them all to a community justice panel, which we held in the park itself. 19 people attended to discuss the issues and an action plan was created.

6 months later, we received the following feedback from a resident:

"I have to tell you that you would not recognise Southchurch Hall Gardens, we only now get the lone drinker from time to time. The duck families have started to return to the pond and people are seen daily happily strolling around the park, from dog walkers to whole families even in the middle of this very cold winter."

"The volume of our weekly litter picks has reduced from 6 full sacks on first pick [Jan 2017] to half a sack today, the contents has also changed as we rarely pick condoms, drug bags or vodka bottles."

"The council have also done a lot of work with yet more to be done and of course the police are still working closely with us."

"I can't thank you enough for your very positive input, we get some wonderful feedback from people, thanking us and one person saying that the park has not been this inviting for years. It has also been suggested by a councillor that they might use it for walking talking council sessions with clients. Lots of positive stuff ahead"

Before



After





We Raised Awareness

Part of our aim is to strengthen our links with Community Safety Hubs. To achieve this, we aim to attend each hub's monthly anti-social behaviour meeting.

In order to save resource, it was decided that a dedicated volunteer would attend their local anti-social behaviour meeting. This had not been achieved by the business case evaluation, however is now evident. Volunteers have been assigned to Harlow, Brentwood, Thurrock, Southend and Tendring meetings. This allows staff to form new relationships with other districts and as a result have recently started attending Basildon and Chelmsford meetings.

To raise awareness and to increase our volunteer pool, two messages were sent out using Essex Community Messaging. This is a service which delivers emails to 13,781 Essex residents and 412 Essex businesses to update on local issues relating to crime and anti-social behaviour.

Through these messages, along with word of mouth and promotion of the volunteering opportunities by Essex Police, we were able to increase our volunteer pool by 113%.

Awareness sessions were delivered to almost 250 new Police recruits, 20 Probation staff and 50 university students. We also visited a youth offending team in Colchester, a team of ASB and housing staff at Basildon council, Harlow local demand and Risk management team and have worked on RJ cases with 8 different prisons.





We Valued Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are our most valuable resource, having logged over 81,000 hours since April 2017.

This year, we trained 25 new volunteers to be restorative and mediation facilitators, an increase of 113% on last year's volunteer pool. Due to delays in Essex Police vetting, only 9 of the 25 have been able to get started.

We think it's important to keep volunteers up to date with training. This year we have delivered the following:

- 5 volunteers attended refresher training. This will now be rolled out to all volunteers annually.
- Due to the level of neighbour dispute cases we receive, 15 volunteers attended mediation specific training. This has now been added to the initial training they receive which has increased from 3 to 4 days.

- A handpicked selection of the most experienced volunteers attended training on complex and sensitive cases. This includes cases such as serious assault and homicide. Extra skills are needed to effectively manage these cases and this will allow services such as CRC and NPS to have greater confidence in our service and may encourage referrals.

- An even smaller number of volunteers and staff attended training on working with sexual and domestic violence cases. Prior to this, the service rejected cases of this nature due to a lack of skills. In order to adhere to the Victims' Code, we are now able to accept any referral, regardless of offence type.

- 11 volunteers took the opportunity to visit Chelmsford Prison and 15 volunteers visited the Force Control Room at Essex Police Headquarters

Keeping our volunteers engaged is very important, and we try to ensure the work they receive is varied. This year we have enlisted their help in a number of events including the annual PFCC conference, a week-long project in a pupil-referral unit, posing for our posters and leaflets and attending community safety hub meetings. When asked if they find the work interesting, challenging and rewarding, 100% said yes.

We offer as much support as possible, and have arranged 4 group meetings this year for volunteers to meet as a team and discuss cases, issues and best practice. 20 individual annual supervisions have been completed and countless hours talking through cases with volunteers on the phone or over coffee. 83% volunteers rated the support they receive as 5 stars, the rest rating it 4.

Volunteer Feedback

Our volunteers are essential to the effective running of our service. We asked them to give us feedback on how they feel about the role

OVERALL SERVICE

How would you rate the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service as a service to volunteer for?

4.7 / 5 Stars

IN VOLUNTEERING WITH ESSEX RESTORATIVE AND MEDIATION SERVICE, I FEEL...

"Trusted" "skilled" "Worthwhile"
"Valued" "Recognised"

FEEDBACK

Do you feel that you receive sufficient feedback on your performance from staff and co-facilitators?.

61.1% Yes, from both
22.2% No
16.7% Yes, from staff but not co-facilitators



"All such friendly people who couldn't do more to help and support each other."
"Everyone seems totally dedicated to the cause"

"Anytime I attend team meeting it's like a family gathering"
"we are always thanked for what we do"

"Keep on doing what you are doing. It is infectious".

Volunteer feedback is very important to us and we will be repeating the feedback questionnaire every year.

It's very pleasing to see such a high rating for the service from our volunteers.

We gave them a list of words to select which ones they felt being a volunteer for the service. "Trusted" and "valued" were chosen by 100% of respondents. "Recognised" was chosen by 94.4% and "skilled" by 72.2%. Only 66.7% and 55.6% chose "confident" and "equipped" respectively and a third of respondents said they felt fairly treated. 16.7% said they were frustrated and followed this up with comments relating to referrers not responding and mobile phones being not fit for purpose.

Answers to the questions "what do you like best about the role" ranged from being able to make a difference to people's lives to the variety of the work. We also asked "what could we do to make your volunteering experience better?" responses demonstrated frustration with admin tasks, delays in co-facilitator availability and resources such as mobile phones.

The results of this questionnaire will be discussed with volunteers during a group meeting, and a plan to address any issues will be drawn up.

We Were Innovative

There have been many exciting projects and events undertaken by the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service this year.

Community Justice Panels

This report has outlined the Southchurch Hall Gardens community justice panel, which has sparked interest in other areas, such as Tendring, who would like us to get involved in a similar project.

Youth and Police Forums

Schools work has been a big part of our workload this year. We began working with the Restorative Engagement Forum as part of a project to improve relationships between Police, the community and Young People in Harlow. The meetings were very positive with young people being offered apprenticeships with local businesses and residents were very grateful to have been offered the opportunity to take part.

Aspire Academy

As a result of this work, we and the Restorative Engagement Forum were invited in to Aspire (Pupil Referral Unit) to introduce some restorative practice and spent a week in classes demonstrating restorative conversation. Feedback was positive from the school with students showing disappointment when the week-long project had finished. Feedback from staff was also positive, one teacher said: "We are seeing [the students] police themselves a lot better, massively, because they are seeing it modelled to them." In addition to positive feedback from staff, demand was reduced for Essex Police. Callouts to the school fell from an average of 2.2 per month before our project to 1.1 after and crimes recorded fell from an average of 3.7 to 1.5 per month. Volunteers continue to visit the school on a regular basis to keep up the work.

Passmores

Hearing about the good work we did at Aspire, Passmores academy requested our input with 8 year 7 boys who were at risk of being expelled from Passmores into a pupil referral unit. We delivered 6 sessions to the boys, working in collaboration with Reach every Generation. Feedback was that the boys' behaviour improved following the sessions and one even wanted to become an RJ facilitator.

Firebreak

Restorative Firebreak courses were introduced into prisons which were designed by Essex Fire and Rescue Service with input from the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service. 91 men completed the firebreak course and 5 restorative follow-up sessions, with 10 being referred on to our service for further restorative work. Restorative Firebreak has been so successful that it won the European Social Fund innovation award.

Business Case Review

The 2017 financial year began mid-pilot for expansion of the service. A business case had been developed in October 2016 and was evaluated in May 2017. Below is an outline of the progress and recommendations:

1 Introduce Community Justice Panels (CJP) and work more closely with Community Safety Hubs

- CJPs introduced to tackle anti-social behaviour and continue to be part of the service provided by the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service.
- Volunteers began to represent the service at Local Action Group meetings to discuss local ASB issues.
- 128 CJP referrals received
- 19% resulted in communication between parties
- 60% of completed cases have had no further incidents.
- 85% CJP participants said it had a positive impact on them

2 Increase Resources

- In September 2016 we recruited a full-time coordinator.
- This increased resource facilitated a 51% increase in referrals and 55% increase in positive outcomes.
- In December 2017 we made this position permanent.
- Volunteer resource increased, with a further 25 volunteers having been trained.
- More office resource has allowed the service to upskill and supervise volunteers more effectively, in order to gain the positive results we have seen in the last year.
- A volunteer has been undertaking some administrative tasks for the service.
- We suggested reviewing the need for an administrative member of staff in December 2017, however, given office restrictions and the potential for the service to change models this is on hold but will continue to be reviewed

3 Broaden RJ referrals from Police

- Different options for Essex Police Referrals were explored.
- Discussions have been had with Integrated Offender Management teams in relation to prolific offenders, Out of Court Disposal teams to improve the quality of these referrals and Rural Engagement teams to address issues such as hare coursing, fly tipping and unlawful encampments.

4 Case Management System

- In December 2016, a new case management system was introduced
- This enabled the service to better comply with the Victims' Code of Practice and the Restorative Services Quality Mark accreditation which the service holds.
- Feedback was positive in that this system made administrative tasks easier to complete.
- We continue to request feedback from volunteers and pass on suggestions for improvement to the MyRJ team.

Forward Look

In February 2017, we held a business planning workshop to review our work up to this date and inform our priorities for our 2018 strategic plan which will be published shortly.

The event was attended by representatives of our partners including Police, Victim Support, Essex County Fire and Rescue, OPFCC staff, local authorities and our volunteers.

Delegates were given an overview of 2017, and an explanation of the proposed work in schools and GPs surgeries. They were then split into 3 groups with a mix of organisations and asked the following questions:

- How does RJ fit with your service / role?
- What do you think about the areas of focus proposed for 2018?
- What will the challenges be for the RJ service and/or partners in 2018?

The feedback received can be split into 6 broad themes: Business as usual, new business, training and development, partnerships, profile raising and resource.

The main points are outlined overleaf:



New Business

- Support for the proposal that we could implement RJ in GP surgeries as they were very community focused. Work on a GP surgery pilot will begin mid-2018 and will be funded by CCGs.
- Further suggestions for areas of work in future were:
Accident and Emergency
Night-Time Economy (security & door staff)
Small businesses
- Due to resource, this will be noted for future, but not pursued in the 2018/19 business plan

Training & Development

- Support to develop work in schools as an early intervention.
- Appetite to see facilitators' upskilled and delivering RJ with serious, domestic and sexual offending cases.
- Support for charging for training and projects outside the scope of the MOJ funding to reinvest into the service
- Consideration should be given for using volunteers to deliver paid projects
- Suggested areas for delivering paid training were housing, security services and NHS

Partnerships

- Suggestions for co-location to strengthen relationships and encourage collaboration
- Use existing work to implement and promote RJ (i.e. firebreak)
- Build stronger links with Community Safety Hubs

Resources

- Improve mobile phone facilities for volunteers
- Ensure an effective case management system is in place
- Ensure sufficient resource (paid and voluntary) to deliver an effective service

Profile Raising

- Do more to promote the work we do
- Have stronger social media presence
- Add links to our service from partners' websites

Business As Usual

- Overwhelming support for the work the service currently provides.
- The service should be stricter with rejecting referrals with no restorative element, such as letter of apology with no victim engagement.
- There should be stronger challenge to areas with low volume / quality of referrals.



**Essex Restorative
& Mediation
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