

PFCC Decision Report

Report reference number: 083-23

Classification: Not protectively marked

Title of report: Case Management System Change in the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service

Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide

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Chief Officer: Greg Myddelton (Strategic Head of Partnerships and Delivery)

Date of report: 6 June 2023

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the intention of and rationale for the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service (ERMS) replacing its current case management system, 'MyRJ', with a new system, 'FIRsT'
- 1.2 The contract with Orcuma for the 'FIRsT' system will be for a period covering October 2023 - September 2026 at a total cost of £11,550.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the PFCC approves the allocation of £11,550 in the form of three annual payments of £3,850 from the PFCC's Victims Fund (2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26) to Orcuma for the provision of the 'FIRsT' case management system.
- 2.2 That the PFCC signs the Agreement for the Supply of Services attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Background to the Proposal

- 3.1 The Essex Restorative and Mediation Service (ERMS) has been using the “myRJ” case management system since 2016. During a procurement process at the end of the current contract, Orcuma was identified as an alternative option and found to have benefits to both financial cost and functionality.
- 3.2 Both 7 Forces Procurement and Essex Police Information Security have reviewed and approved the proposal to change systems.

4. Proposal and Associated Benefits

- 4.1 It is proposed that the ERMS replaces the current case management system, ‘MyRJ’, with a new system, ‘FIRsT’, for a three-year period covering October 2023 to September 2026.
- 4.2 The FIRsT system is hosted by Orcuma and is a flexible and robust, cloud-based security model that allows cases to be assigned to different teams and partners so that they only have access to clients and data fields that they need to carry out their role.
- 4.3 The FIRsT system is endorsed by the Restorative Justice Council.
- 4.4 The costs associated with the ‘FIRsT’ system include licences for employed staff as ‘frequent users’ and 45 volunteers as ‘infrequent users’. The cost also includes access to Microsoft Power BI for efficient and interactive reporting.
- 4.5 The cost per year for the ERMS team is £3,850, totalling £11,550 over the three-year contract. This represents a saving compared to the current system cost of £13,200 over the three-year period. As the current contract comes to an end in November 2023, there are no exit fees to consider.
- 4.6 The ‘FIRsT’ system has intuitive and tailored reporting and search functionality which will improve the efficiency of the ERMS team’s current processes. With future proofing in mind, it is likely that restorative justice reporting requirements will become standardised. Orcuma has worked with the Restorative Justice Council to ensure that the ‘FIRsT’ system allows for quick, easy and bespoke reporting and data analysis.
- 4.7 Information Security has reviewed the ‘FIRsT’ platform and has provided formal approval for ERMS to use the system.
- 4.8 ‘FIRsT’ allows the secure sharing of case information with the ERMS’s volunteers, without the need for them to have to access police equipment or buildings.

5. Options Analysis

- 5.1 The PFCC could choose not to approve the change in case management system and remain with the current system, which would cost £24,750 over three years (an additional cost of £13,200 over the three years), as well as forfeiting what are likely to be substantial resource savings derived from FIRsT's more dynamic functionality.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1 This decision is taken following discussion with the ERMS team of paid staff and volunteers and the Restorative Justice Strategic Group. Advice was also sought from and provided by 7F Procurement and Information Security leads.

7. Strategic Links

- 7.1 The Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024 commits to “promote and expand the use of Restorative Justice across the county as a proven method to aid recovery for victims and reduce reoffending”. This proposal allows the service to manage cases efficiently and to share information securely across the team as well as complying with relevant GDPR legislation.
- 7.2 The Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024 also commits to “Invest in those who volunteer for the roles embedded in the PFCC’s Office, including Restorative Justice Volunteers, to ensure they feel skilled, valued and appreciated”. The case management system allows volunteers access to the technology they need to perform their roles to a high standard. Volunteer facilitators were also consulted on, and supportive of, this proposal.

8. Police operational implications

- 8.1 An efficient restorative justice (RJ) service means that more referrals can be processed and managed by the team, the majority of which come from Essex Police. This may lead to a reduction in workload for Essex Police officers as RJ can reduce escalation and repeat offending. RJ is proven to increase victim satisfaction and reduce reoffending.
- 8.2 An efficient and effective RJ service can also improve the public perception of, and confidence in, the Police and PFCC.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 The PFCC will allocate annual grants of £3,850 over three years in 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26, with a total investment of £11,550. This funding will be allocated from the PFCC’s Victims’ Grant to Orcuma. The funding is already factored into the annual ERMS budget for 2024/25, at the higher level of £8,250 per year and therefore there will be a budget saving of £4,400 per year.
- 9.2 The costings for this system are broken down as follows:

5 x frequent user licences	£300 per user per annum
45 x infrequent user licences	£50 per user per annum
Microsoft Power BI licence	£100 per annum

10. Legal implications

- 10.1 An Agreement for the Supply of Services between Orcuma and the PFCC will be in place to cover the provision of the software. This is attached for the PFCC's approval at Appendix 1.

11. Staffing implications

- 11.1 The 'FIRsT' system provides an effective and efficient process for staff and volunteers to log, monitor and share ERMS case information.

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications

- 12.1 All victims of crime are entitled to access Restorative Justice to aid their recovery from the harm they have experienced. Anyone can be a victim of crime and the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service seeks to make itself as accessible as possible, encouraging and facilitating referrals from a wide range of partners including Essex Police, local councils, housing associations and the probation service, as well as promoting self-referrals through a dedicated website, publicity activities, and marketing materials. The service tracks demographic information on referrals to monitor how well it achieves its goal of making RJ available to all.
- 12.2 The 'FIRsT' system is securely accessible from any location with internet access and therefore enables staff and volunteers to access the software on their personal or work computers for their ease of use.

13. Risks and Mitigations

- 13.1 The ERMS has more than 2,000 cases logged onto the current system and time will be allocated to moving relevant cases onto the new system. This will be supported by both Orcuma and Ivstitia (the providers of MyRJ) to minimise the resource requirement from ERMS.
- 13.2 ERMS volunteers are widely supportive of the change in system. There is, however, a small amount of resistance and concern around getting familiar with a new system. To mitigate this, Orcuma has offered both virtual and in-person training and the ERMS team will support with extra training and drop-in sessions.

14. Governance Boards

- 14.1 This proposal has been discussed at the Restorative Justice Strategic Board and received support.

15. Links to Future Plans

15.1 This proposal supports the ERMS in contributing to plans and strategies including the Police and Crime Plan, its own RJ Strategy, and various local criminal justice strategies. It also allows the ERMS to remain in line with changing national policy and best practice around restorative justice.

16. Background Papers and Appendices

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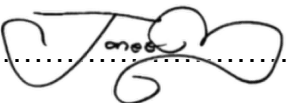
If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

The Agreement for the Supply of Services is commercially sensitive so not to be published.

Date redaction carried out: 31/07/2023

Chief Finance Officer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign: 

Print: Janet Perry

~~Chief Executive~~ / Chief Finance Officer

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Print: Roger HIRST

PFCC

Date signed: 28/07/2023

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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Sign:

Print: