

Effective Interventions in the CRIMINAL JUSTICE SECTOR

FACT SHEET

EXPANDING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

2006

New approaches are needed for reducing and preventing crime and reducing repeat offending and ensuring that victims have a real voice in the Criminal Justice system.

Justice and social sector agencies have been looking at a range of interventions aimed at reducing both the crime rate and the prison population.

EXPANDING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Crime reduction policies, while addressing the underlying causes of crime, take time before their full impacts are realised. In the short to medium term, appropriate alternatives to prison for some offenders will reduce the prison population and prove more effective at reducing re-offending. Expanding restorative justice is one alternative.

WHAT IS IT?

The restorative justice initiative includes four proposals to expand the availability of restorative justice processes in the criminal justice system and to develop a national performance framework. The proposals are:

- Staged national provision of restorative justice processes for less serious offending;
- Staged national provision of restorative justice processes for more serious offending;
- Staged increase in provision of restorative justice in conjunction with prisoners' re-integration into the community;
- Development of a national performance framework linked to quality processes.

WHY WILL IT WORK?

Restorative justice processes require offenders to face their victims, redress the harm caused to victims and the community, and address the causes of their offending.

Restorative justice gives victims a voice in the criminal justice system and enables them to receive reparation, apologies, and answers.

The judge, at sentencing, will take into consideration, the restorative justice outcome agreement. This may have an impact on the custodial sentence received. Good quality restorative justice processes can reduce the number of offenders sentenced to imprisonment, shorten their sentences, and reduce re-offending.

Participation by Māori in current restorative justice processes shows positive results in terms of impacts on re-offending and victim satisfaction.

WHEN WILL IT HAPPEN?

The Government has agreed to initial funding in 2006/07 to enable preparatory work to be undertaken on the national performance framework, so it is ready to be implemented when the expanded restorative justice programmes commence in 2007.

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

Restorative justice is already used in New Zealand, but access by offenders and victims is limited. Not all regions have restorative justice providers.

A three-year project to provide restorative justice nationally for less serious offending will involve incorporating restorative justice processes as an option within the existing Police Adult Diversion Scheme. This will reinforce the diversion process, and help offenders address the causes of their offending.

A three-year project to provide restorative justice nationally for more serious offending will seek to replicate the results of the Ministry of Justice's court-referred restorative justice pilot. The project will work over the next three years to establish national coverage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.justice.govt.nz/effective_interventions/

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

A three-year project to increase the provision of restorative justice in conjunction with prisoners' re-integration into the community will involve funding restorative justice processes in prisons as part of prisoner re-integration. Initially, it would involve funding 100 restorative justice conferences in two prisons for three years. If successful, the project would be rolled out to all prisons over a three-year period.

A three-year project to develop a national performance framework for restorative justice will ensure quality, consistency and integration in the provision of restorative justice in New Zealand.

WHAT WILL IT COST?

Establishing a national performance framework for restorative justice before the expanded restorative justice projects commence will cost six million dollars in operating expenditure along with a small capital injection in the 2006/07 year. Funding for the other three proposals will be sought in Budget 2007.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

There are no legislative changes required for implementation of the restorative justice proposals. All will require new funding.

The proposals have the support of Victim Support, The Ministry of Justice, the Department of Corrections, the New Zealand Parole Board and Police.

MORE INFORMATION

Monitor the websites of the government agencies concerned, e.g. the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Corrections. Check out other websites, such as Victim Support.

Visit www.beehive.govt.nz to monitor the latest media releases on effective interventions and speeches from the relevant Ministers.