

A review of the use of restorative justice in children's residential care



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Acknowledgements

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1 Introduction

In recent years there has been a growing interest and use of restorative justice approaches in work with children and young people, particularly in dealing with offending behaviour and conflict in children's lives (Littlechild & Sender, 2006).

Restorative justice is a term used to describe processes that aim to address the harm caused by a criminal offence or a non-criminal incident. At the heart of restorative justice is the principle that via a method of structured communication, victims and perpetrators can discuss how they were affected by an incident and can explore what needs to happen to repair the harm caused (Youth Justice Board, 2004). Marshall (1999) has proposed a definition of restorative justice which is frequently cited in the literature. Restorative justice is defined as:

"...a process whereby all the parties with a stake in a particular offence come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future". (1999:5)

Within the wider literature there is a range of descriptions and practices that come under the umbrella of the term 'restorative justice' including:

- Victim/offender mediation
- Restorative conferencing
- Family group conferencing
- Healing/problem solving/sentencing circles

(Adapted from Graef, 2002)

Restorative justice approaches can be used in a variety of ways to encourage and facilitate communication between parties; however common features of restorative justice practices include:

- The use of a trained facilitator; a neutral person who can bring all parties together who have been affected by an offence or incident
- A process whereby everyone affected has an opportunity to have their say
- A focus on reparation and helping all parties involved to move on from the incident
- A focus on finding ways of agreeing mutually acceptable outcomes to deal with the harm caused

(Adapted from Hopkins, 2004)

Hopkins (2004) outlines the four key questions at the heart of any restorative justice approach:

- What happened?
- Who has been affected and how?
- How can we involve everyone who has been affected in finding a way to put right the harm caused?
- What have we all learnt so as to make different choices next time?

(Adapted from Hopkins, 2004:29)

Restorative justice approaches have been used in a range of settings including the youth justice system (Crawford & Newburn, 2003), in child welfare and in schools (Youth Justice Board, 2004). As restorative justice approaches have been established in these settings, recently attention has turned to the potential use of such approaches to address both criminal and challenging behaviour within children's residential care settings (Littlechild & Sender, 2006).

In particular, concern has been expressed about the over-representation of looked after children in the criminal justice system and the rates of police call outs to residential units for behaviour and disputes which outside of the care setting would not normally attract police attention (Nacro, 2003). As concern about the over representation of looked after children in the criminal justice system has grown, the potential for restorative justice has been acknowledged; as Nacro note:

"The use of restorative justice techniques may well provide a course of action to resolve incidents, with the appropriate recognition of the interests of all involved and without the need to seek recourse through the formal criminal justice process." (2003:5)

The Green Paper, Care Matters (DfES, 2006) has also recently acknowledged that children in care are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system. It has made recommendations on the use of restorative justice as an alternative form of behaviour management and for local protocols between residential services and police to try to prevent unnecessary call outs relating to minor offences. Recent developments in the use of restorative justice in children's residential care, including the first pilot of restorative approaches in the East of England in 2003, have also drawn attention to the potential of restorative justice to resolve conflict, challenging behaviour and the everyday living tensions that exist in residential settings (Littlechild & Sender, 2006).

The purpose of this report

In light of the emerging use of restorative justice within children's residential care, the National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care (NCERCC) commissioned a short scoping review to determine current knowledge on the use and effectiveness of restorative justice within children's residential care.

The aim of this work was to determine, by way of a short literature review and discussions with key contacts, current knowledge on the use of restorative justice models within children's residential care and any available evidence as to the effectiveness of these approaches.

This report provides a summary of findings from the scoping review, drawing on a short literature search and information provided from telephone discussions with contacts. Because of the small-scale nature of the scoping work, this review makes no claim to be an exhaustive and comprehensive account of developments in this field. Instead this review provides a 'snap-shot' of the use of restorative justice within children's residential care settings.

2 Methodology

The overall questions this review addressed were:

- What is known about the current use of restorative justice approaches within children's residential care?
- What is known about the use and/or effectiveness of the models of restorative justice being used within children's residential care?

Information on the use and effectiveness of restorative justice models was obtained from the following sources:

- A review of available literature (including library and internet searches)
- Discussions with key contacts (identified through NCERCC and via a request for information sent out to all Children's Residential Network members (900+ members))

Each method of data collection is outlined below.

A review of available literature

A number of electronic databases and other resources were searched to determine the extent and range of published information on the use of restorative justice within children's residential care. Databases searched included:

- **NCB Library and Information Service**
Contains details of books, reports and journal articles (over 60,000 entries), all with abstracts covering the literature on children and young people.
- **SwetsWise**
Web-based service provided by Swets Information Services. 8262 full text publications from 305 publishers currently available. Subscription service available to publications subscribed to by NCB Library and Information Service.
- **COPAC [<http://copac.ac.uk>]**
Union catalogue, providing access to the merged online catalogues of members of the Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL). 30 million plus records available on COPAC representing the merged holdings of 26 CURL members, including the British Library.

Searches of each of the above databases were conducted twice between October 2006 and January 2007. The following key search terms were used in combination with each other to capture relevant materials:

Restorative justice/restorative justice model
Reparation/ reparation model
Mediation
Group conferencing
Children's residential care
Residential homes

Looked after children
Secure units
Children homes

Internet searches, using Google, were also conducted during this timeframe, to try and locate relevant documents, including information available on local authority and other websites. Due to the high numbers of materials available on the internet, strict limits were set on these searches (using combinations of key words and viewing the first 25 hits or hits with a relevance rating of between 90-100 per cent).

Only a small number of articles, reports and other sources of information were identified from these sources during the search period. Subsequent discussions with key contacts confirmed that whilst there is a growing amount of development work underway, much of the learning relating to the use of restorative justice in children's residential care has yet to be widely reported or published. It was decided in light of the limited amount of published literature to hold some short telephone discussions with key contacts who were currently using restorative justice approaches in residential settings.

Telephone discussions with key contacts

In order to ascertain the extent to which children's residential settings are using restorative justice approaches in their work, a request for information was sent out, via email, to all members of the Children's Residential Network in January and again in February 2007 (page 22).

Those using restorative justice in their work were invited to contact the researcher with a view to taking part in a short 15 minute telephone discussion to explore their use of restorative justice and its success to date.

Twenty-five email and telephone enquiries were received. After a review of the enquiries received it emerged that some contacts were not currently using restorative justice in their work. Due to the short timeframe of the review and the availability of contacts it was difficult to follow up all the enquiries received. However thirteen telephone discussions were conducted between January and early March 2007. Ten of these discussions related to restorative justice schemes which had already started, and three related to schemes due to start in the coming months.

What follows is a summary of the use of restorative justice in children's residential care based on the above sources. It is important to note that this summary should be seen as a 'snapshot' of the use of restorative justice in residential settings rather than a representative assessment of the wider national picture.

3 Summary of findings

The use of restorative justice in children's residential care

This short review has found that the introduction and use of restorative justice within children's residential care is a relatively recent development. The review has identified ten residential settings, local authority, and Youth Offending Teams who are currently using restorative approaches within children's residential care settings. Seven settings have been using a restorative justice approach for between two to four years, whilst three are in the process of implementing restorative justice schemes in their settings.

The recent nature of restorative justice work within residential settings means there is currently little published information about how restorative justice models are being implemented and the effectiveness of these approaches. The use of restorative justice principles in children's residential care was first piloted in the East of England in 2003; the evaluation of this pilot remains the only independent and formal evaluation of restorative practices within such a setting that this review was able to identify.

The majority of restorative justice programmes this review identified are very recent, with the bulk of the work starting between 2004 and 2006. Much of this work to date has focused on introducing the principles of restorative justice to staff, via training courses and awareness raising events, and developing restorative practices and programmes. As this work is in its early stages of implementation, there are currently no formal evaluations of these programmes.

Despite the lack of formal evaluation evidence, discussions with contacts, and the literature available has identified some details of how these restorative justice programmes work and some assessment of their effectiveness to date. Tables 6.1 to 6.10 (pages 24-33) provide a summary of this restorative justice work based on either telephone discussions with contacts or on available literature.

The table below provides a brief description of each setting and its use of restorative justice approaches (for more details on each setting, please refer to pages 24-33).

Table 3.1: Settings and use of restorative justice

Area	Start of work	Setting	Brief description of restorative justice(RJ) model used
Setting A*	2003	East of England - Local Authority Residential unit	Trained all staff in the use of RJ/conferencing and use RJ more informally.
Setting B	2003	South West - Youth Offending Team project covering locality	Trained residential staff to offer RJ conferencing/mediation in residential units. Set up a Resolve and Repair scheme (RJ conferencing) for looked after children charged with an offence.
Setting C	2004	South West - Local Authority Residential unit	Introduced RJ in the unit. Refer young people to local YOT for RJ conferencing and use RJ more informally.
Setting D	2004	West Midlands - Youth Offending Team project covering locality	Take referrals from residential units for RJ conferencing. Also have a community payback team to work with young people to make reparation if an offence is committed against a unit.
Setting E	2005	East of England - Local Authority children's home	Introduced RJ practices including conferencing and mediation.
Setting F	2005	East of England - Local Authority children's home	Trained staff in the use of RJ. Staff use the principles of RJ in one to one discussions with young people to calm down situations and informally to settle minor disagreements.
Setting G*	2005	South East - Ten local authority residential units & staff across children's and young people's services	Trained all practitioners across county in the use of RJ conferencing.
Setting H	2006	North East - Five local authority residential units & staff across children's and young people's services	Trained all practitioners across locality in RJ principles/conferencing.
Setting I	2006	North East - Training for a cross section of staff, including residential staff in locality	Trained all residential staff in RJ principles/conferencing.
Setting J	2006	West Midlands - Youth Offending Team project covering locality	Takes referrals from residential units for RJ conferencing and mediation.

* Information on the work in settings A and G was obtained from literature and internet searches only.

Planned use of restorative justice within children's residential care

During the course of the scoping work, the researcher received a number of communications concerning possible future work and use of restorative justice in children's residential care. Table 3.2 below highlights some details of

restorative justice work within children's residential care due to start in the coming months.

Table 3.2: Planned restorative justice schemes

Area	Setting	Proposed use of restorative justice (RJ) principles
East Midlands	Residential unit	<p>Providing training to staff in one residential unit starting March 2007 on the principles and use of RJ. Training to be provided by a residential care manager and an educational psychologist.</p> <p>After training, anticipate that staff will pilot the use of RJ principles for three to six months. During this time, the unit will monitor the impact of their RJ work via a number of indicators including rates of police call outs to the unit, incidents of criminal damage, staff absence etc.</p> <p>If the pilot is successful, hope to train staff in nine other homes and roll out the use of RJ countywide.</p>
West Midlands	Two residential units	<p>About to start a pilot in the use of RJ in two residential units. Partnership between children's residential services and local Youth Offending Team (YOT). Looking to train residential staff in restorative justice and pilot this approach in two residential units. Will evaluate the success of the pilot with a view to rolling the scheme out to all six children's homes in the area.</p>
North West	Residential units locality	<p>Planning to introduce RJ in residential settings in the area.</p>

During the course of this review a bid was submitted by the Youth Justice Board, a partner local authority and Nacro to the Treasury's Invest to Save budget to set up a restorative justice and mentoring project in children's homes (YJB, 2006). The key objective of this bid was to pilot restorative justice and mentoring projects led by eight YOTs in England. The project aimed to introduce restorative justice to local authority residential children's homes as a means of improving behaviour management and to reduce offending levels and police call out rates to units. At the time of writing this review the parties involved learnt that this bid had been unsuccessful.

Other enquiries received by the researcher during the course of the review suggested that others working in children's residential care were not currently using restorative justice, but were very interested to find out more and whether there was any evidence of its impact. It appears that the email sent out to members of the Children's Residential Network, requesting any information on the use of restorative justice practices itself generated a certain amount of interest in such approaches.

This section now provides a summary of the ten restorative justice programmes identified in the review; including the reasons for adopting restorative approaches, the models currently in use, and any evidence and individual's assessments of their effectiveness to date.

Reasons for adopting a restorative justice approach

The review identified a number of reasons residential settings and other organisations introduced restorative approaches in their work with young people. Analysis of information provided by contacts and the literature available found that, for the most part, restorative approaches are used to resolve issues such as:

- Criminal damage against residential units (for example breaking windows or kicking in doors)
- Assaults on staff
- Assaults on other residents
- Disagreements or disputes between residents
- Disagreements between residents and staff
- Bullying
- Problematic or disruptive behaviour (for example play fighting)

Both contacts based in residential settings and within Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were keen to identify strategies to reduce the offending rates of looked after children (LAC). All of the contacts we spoke to were concerned about the wider issues surrounding looked after children and their over-representation within the criminal justice system. Through the use of police call outs to residential settings, many expressed their concern about the potential for young people to be criminalised for behaviour which if it occurred within a non-care situation, or within a foster placement, would not necessarily attract police involvement (for example, breaking windows or kicking in a door). In these instances contacts were hoping that restorative justice approaches could be a possible alternative to police involvement and the potential criminalisation of looked after young people.

Contacts were also interested to explore how restorative justice approaches could provide them with alternative ways of dealing with non-criminal harm or conflict within their settings. Many hoped that the introduction of restorative justice techniques would provide residential staff with another means to deal with a range of issues including disagreements between residents, or between residents and staff and issues around bullying.

Residential settings were also looking to explore different approaches to behaviour management and resolving disputes between residents. Restorative justice approaches were seen as one way in which staff could respond to young people and help them to look at their own actions and take responsibility for their behaviour. Contacts also hoped that by introducing restorative approaches in residential settings, young people would develop more awareness of their actions and staff and young people would communicate better, improving the whole residential experience.

Models of restorative practice within settings

During telephone discussions, contacts were invited to define how their practices were restorative and how they currently worked. Tables 6.1 to 6.10 on

pages 24 to 33 provide a detailed summary of each of the ten settings use of restorative justice practices.

In summary, discussions revealed that the principles of restorative justice were adopted in a variety of ways depending on the remit of the restorative work, the nature of the incident and the needs of the parties involved. Restorative practices ranged from formal processes, such as convening a restorative conference, to more informal and impromptu discussions that drew on the principles of restorative justice. In summary, the main types of restorative practice identified in the discussions/literature were:

Restorative conferencing

This often involved a trained outside mediator or trained member of residential staff meeting with the perpetrator(s) and victim(s) of an offence or conflict. The aim of the meeting is for all parties to explore what has happened, how each party has been affected and to come to a mutual agreement as to how the harm caused can be repaired. Other parties may also attend the meeting, for example a young person's key worker, along a similar line to family group conferencing.

Many of the conferences involved face-to-face meetings with the parties involved. On some occasions parties did not always meet face-to-face, instead the facilitator mediated between the parties, along similar lines to shuttle mediation techniques (where a mediator meets the victim and perpetrator separately and mediates between the two without either party meeting).

Informal restorative discussions or meetings

Restorative principles of conferencing were applied in a more informal, impromptu manner, with trained residential staff mediating and resolving situations between parties as and when they occurred. This could involve quickly calling a restorative meeting or dealing with minor conflicts, such as disagreements between peers at an appropriate time for all parties concerned, such as around the dinner table.

As with restorative conferencing, these discussions could involve face-to-face meetings between the parties or shuttle mediation, with the facilitator going back and forth between the affected parties.

Individual restorative discussions

This often involved face-to-face discussions between a member of residential staff or other facilitator and the perpetrator of an offence or conflict. The aim of the meeting is to discuss the incident/situation that has occurred and to help the young person to reflect and to find a way to move on. The meeting draws on the principles of restorative justice, using some of the questions a mediator would use in a more formal restorative conference.

In practice, many of the contacts reported that they used a combination of both formal conferences and more informal discussions that drew on the principles of restorative justice.

For example, almost all residential settings and YOT project teams had either held or referred young people and staff for a restorative conference. These conferences usually involved the victim and the perpetrator meeting together with a trained facilitator, although on some occasions other parties were

included in the process, for example a young person's key worker. The review found that the restorative conferences that were held explored a wide range of issues including criminal damage to the home, assaults on staff and disagreements between peers. Only one residential setting (setting F) had not held any formal restorative conferences. Instead this setting uses the principles of restorative justice and the concept of non-directive questioning in one-to-one discussions when a young person was threatening to self-harm or was upset or angry.

Equally restorative justice approaches were viewed to be a useful tool for residential staff in their everyday practice with young people, and contacts provided a number of examples of how restorative approaches were used more informally in their settings.

For example, a contact in the South West (setting C) reported that staff had adopted some of the principles of restorative justice when dealing with minor conflicts and disputes within the home (for example, staff mediating between young people when they have had a minor disagreement). In these instances formal conferences were not held. Instead a neutral member of staff, not involved in the incident, used the principles of restorative justice to help sort out minor disagreements in an informal and comfortable environment for the parties involved. In this instance, the contact noted how restorative justice training for staff had been 'empowering' and had provided them with an alternative set of tools when dealing with everyday conflict and disagreements within residential settings.

The evaluation of a restorative justice pilot scheme in the East of England (setting A) (Littlechild, 2003) also found that staff applied their restorative justice training in more informal ways. Whilst staff had made use of formal restorative conferencing, they tended to resolve most situations satisfactorily in informal settings at an appropriate time for staff and the young people involved. A contact (setting F) also reported how staff used the principles of restorative justice in a more informal way when dealing with problematic behaviour, such as play fighting, and how restorative approaches had been very effective in this instance.

For many of the contacts, the use of restorative justice had been part of a wider package of work aiming to reduce the criminalisation of young people, to support positive behaviour within the home and to generally improve the residential experience for young people. This work included incentive schemes (settings C & F) and reviews of care planning (setting E). Another example of restorative justice being provided as part of a package of interventions was provided by a YOT led project in the West Midlands (setting J). In addition to taking referrals from residential units for restorative work, the project workers also held drop in sessions at units for young people to talk about any issues of concern (for example substance misuse or criminality) and also provided group work for young people.

Some of the restorative justice work has involved residential settings forming strong partnerships with other agencies, such as the police, local Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and representatives from children's services,

education and health. Some of this work has resulted in local protocols on police call outs being adopted by residential units. For example, a number of contacts (settings B, C, D, H, & J) reported how they have worked together with other partners, to develop protocols on when to call out police to incidents in units and when to refer cases for restorative conferencing or other interventions. Work in the North East (setting I), the South East (setting G) and the South West (setting B) has also involved raising awareness of restorative justice approaches and the issues facing looked after children with other agencies, including local magistrates.

Impact and effectiveness of restorative justice approaches

As highlighted early in this report, currently only one formal evaluation has been conducted which examined the implementation of restorative justice in a residential unit in the East of England (Littlechild, 2003). This section provides a summary of the findings from this evaluation. Whilst contacts we spoke to had not yet formally evaluated the implementation and impact of their own restorative work, this section also provides a summary of the contacts own assessments of their restorative work to date.

Summary of findings from the pilot evaluation

One setting in the East of England (setting A in the appendices) has been the subject of an independent evaluation of the implementation of a restorative justice approach (Littlechild, 2003). The evaluation involved interviews and group discussion sessions with staff prior to and six months after they had received their restorative justice training to examine how attitudes and practice had changed. At the end of the implementation period a young representative from each of the younger and older units at the home were interviewed to hear their views on the use of restorative justice at the units. The evaluator also examined monitoring data from both the police and the unit relating to rates of police call outs and incidents recorded within the residential unit prior to and six months after implementation.

Overall the study concluded that the introduction of restorative justice principles in the residential unit had been successful. The evaluation found that the training in restorative justice approaches had changed the way in which most staff dealt with both criminal behaviour and conflict in the unit (such as arguments between residents and issues around bullying). Staff generally felt that restorative justice training had provided them with a better way of dealing with such conflicts. Fifty per cent of staff thought that both young people and staff were increasingly using restorative justice techniques in dealing with everyday living tensions and difficulties.

During the course of the evaluation, five formal restorative conferences had been held; however most situations were resolved to everyone's satisfaction in more informal settings, at an appropriate time for staff, the perpetrator and the victim. The evaluation found that some young people responded better to the more informal model of restorative justice, as more formal meetings could make some young people anxious. Some young people had refused to take part in

formal restorative meetings; nonetheless only one formal meeting was reported to have broken down.

The evaluation concluded that restorative justice approaches had changed the way in which most staff dealt with conflict in the unit, both in relation to criminal offences and bullying and arguments between residents. The restorative justice approach worked well with a number of young people and situations in the unit, but not all; for example, some young people did not wish to be seen as 'collaborating' with staff. Restorative approaches were viewed as a valuable tool in helping young people to think about and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Staff and young people felt that restorative approaches placed the focus more on the needs of the victims and in turn gave them the opportunity to have their say.

Interviews with staff and young people found that their general view was that the introduction of restorative justice approaches in the unit had led to a reduction in the number of police call outs. Indeed the views of staff and young people were confirmed by police call out figures for the unit. The evaluation found that during the twelve months of the pilot, police call outs both to and by the home had decreased by 39 per cent compared to the eight months prior to the introduction of restorative approaches.

There was also a reduction in the number of incidents recorded in the incident book at the unit. During the pilot period, incidents recorded as 'alternative measures of control' decreased by 54 per cent. Analysis of the incident book data found that staff were dealing with offences and conflict differently after the introduction of restorative justice. Staff's recorded responses of 'left to calm down' and 'spoke to/reasoned with the young person' increased.

However during the evaluation period the incidents of recorded violence did increase. Further analysis of the figures revealed that the behaviour of one resident in particular skewed the overall figures.

The evaluation also found that issues concerning bullying were the most difficult to resolve. The issues involved sets of relationships between residents and there could be negative repercussions for the victim by reporting the bullying to staff. Creating a sense of closure was viewed as particularly difficult, in one instance where bullying had been dealt with, the group of residents concerned turned on the young person who had initially carried out the bullying. Residential staff noted the challenges in applying restorative justice to the issue of bullying and identified this as an area for further consideration.

Contact's feedback on the effectiveness of their restorative justice work to date

Overall all the contacts reported that they were pleased with the impact of their restorative justice work to date. Whilst for some contacts the training of staff and the embedding of restorative justice work was on-going, all felt that they were experiencing some success already as a result of their work.

Impact on police call outs, offending behaviour and use of restraint

A number of contacts reported that since the introduction of restorative justice within residential settings they found that there had been a decrease in the number of police call outs to residential settings and the numbers of young people entering the criminal justice system.

For example a contact in setting C reported that restorative approaches were proving to be very successful in dealing with conflict (between young people and between young people and staff), minor criminal damage (for example breaking windows), and issues around bullying. Since the introduction of restorative practices the unit had recorded a decrease in the number of police call outs.

Another contact in the East of England (setting E), where restorative justice training is still on-going, also reported some 'significant improvements' in police call out rates to their residential unit. Prior to the introduction of restorative justice, the residential setting concerned had high levels of young people being or becoming involved in crime and criminal damage was an issue within the home. Data from the local police suggests that since Nov 2005 to July 2006 there had been a 66 per cent decrease in the number of offences reported and a 54 per cent reduction in police call outs to the home. The home has also seen a 67 per cent decrease in missing from care episodes. The home also reported that since the introduction of restorative justice approaches there had been a significant reduction in the number of restraints, with no use of restraint since April 2006.

A contact in the East of England (setting F) also reported a reduction in the use of restraint since staff had received restorative justice training. They reported that staff were feeling more able to resolve situations without resorting to restraint and as a result no use of restraint had been recorded in the unit for over a year. They also reported that criminal damage to the unit and staff assaults were no longer major issues within the unit. The contact felt that one measure of this success was that they could not recall the last time police were called to the unit for such an incident.

Protocols on police call outs were also highlighted by some contacts as an effective way of providing guidance to residential staff on when to use other approaches such as restorative justice and when to consider a police intervention. For example, contacts in the South West (setting C) and the East of England (setting E) have worked together with a range of stakeholders, including staff, managers, police, and children's services to devise protocols, and these contacts felt that these can have a positive impact on call outs.

In the North East (setting H) a restorative justice scheme across a range of professionals, including residential staff, is currently being implemented. Whilst the scheme is in its very early stages, already staff are reported to be using restorative justice principles to good effect in dealing with issues such as racism and bullying. In addition, some units are experiencing a reduction in the number of 'violence at work logs' (where incidents against staff are recorded).

Other contacts reported how their restorative justice work was diverting some young people from the criminal justice system. YOT projects in two areas in the West Midlands (settings D & J) both felt that their work was proving to be highly successful, on numerous occasions preventing young people being criminalised for their behaviour within a residential setting.

Most restorative justice work identified in the review took place prior to a young person entering the criminal justice system. However one scheme in the South West (setting B) focused on providing restorative conferences for looked after children at the point where they had been charged with an offence. If restorative justice conferencing was viewed to have been successful, magistrates would then have the option of dropping the charges against the young person concerned. This project had dealt with around 46 cases since July 2006 and was viewed as having a positive impact in diverting looking after children, including those in residential care, from the criminal justice system.

Impact for staff and young people

Reports from contacts indicate that the use of restorative justice approaches within residential settings can have a positive impact for both residential staff and the residents themselves. Many of the contacts described restorative justice approaches as being 'empowering' for all parties involved, helping all sides in a conflict or dispute to have their say on what had happened and giving them a stake in how the situation might best be resolved and reparation made. For example, in the North East (setting I), a three -month post-training survey of residential staff found that staff are already finding restorative justice a useful tool in resolving a range of difficulties with young people.

One contact in the South West (setting C) felt that restorative justice was empowering for staff because it provided them with more options to consider when dealing with challenging behaviour. Whilst the home had made use of a local restorative conferencing service run by the YOT, the contact reported that staff themselves had adopted the principle of restorative justice when dealing with minor conflicts in the home. This had resulted in staff keeping 'mediation in mind' when dealing with conflict, and had led to compromises between staff and young people.

Many contacts reported that the use of restorative justice was starting to have a positive impact for the young people concerned. It was felt that young people were starting to take more responsibility for their own behaviour. Indeed some contacts noted that there were now occasions when the young people themselves used some of the principles of restorative justice in sorting out their own minor disagreements with other residents or staff.

A small number of contacts reported that sometimes young people were initially reluctant to engage in restorative processes, assuming that the process would focus solely on apportioning blame for an incident. However, as a contact in the South West (setting C) noted, their experience to date suggested that once the young person started working through the issues with a facilitator they often feel more positive about the situation, finding the process is not all about blame but working with all parties to explore and resolve issues.

Some contacts we spoke to reported that they felt that some residential staff could also have reservations about the restorative justice approach, particularly that taking part in a restorative justice conference might be viewed by young people as an 'easy option', compared to sanctions or contact with the police, and that they therefore might get away with bad behaviour. There was also a concern that some staff might feel that the use of restorative justice in a residential setting might prevent them taking a matter to court, such as a serious assault. These contacts felt that once staff had been introduced to the principles of restorative justice they would start to see how it might help them in dealing with incidents within the home environment and some of these reservations would be quickly dispelled.

Aware of the reservations some staff may have about the introduction of restorative justice, some contacts steered away from terms such as restorative justice and instead referred to 'restorative practice' to highlight the more 'therapeutic' aspects of the approach, enabling dialogue between parties and the resolution of conflict. Discussions with contacts suggest that from their experiences staff appear to appreciate the potential benefits of restorative practices more when it is presented to them as a holistic and therapeutic practice for resolving conflict and harm.

Some contacts were also keen to stress that introducing a restorative approach in working with looked after children did not and should not deter residential staff from calling the police to a serious incident. Some contacts noted that there would be occasions where it was appropriate to involve the police, for example a serious assault on a member of staff or another resident. Some contacts talked about a 'balancing act' where on the one hand they did not wish to criminalise young people but on the other hand recognised that a criminal justice route might be the only appropriate way of dealing with a serious situation.

Future plans for restorative justice work

All of the contacts we spoke to were very clear that they intended to continue using restorative justice as an approach within residential settings to address issues around the criminalisation of looked after children and as an alternative behaviour management approach. Some contact's work was still very much focusing on rolling out training programmes to residential staff and in some cases other professional groups, and they hoped to complete this work in the coming months.

All the contacts stated that monitoring and evaluating their restorative justice schemes was very much on the agenda for the coming months. Some settings were exploring the possibility of commissioning independent evaluations, whilst others were looking at how best to evaluate their own work.

4 Conclusion

This short scoping review has highlighted ten restorative justice programmes currently underway involving children's residential settings in England. Whilst the review is not exhaustive it has highlighted how the use of restorative justice within children's residential care is still in its infancy, with much of the work undertaken within the last four years.

Whilst there has been one independent evaluation of the introduction of restorative practices in 2003, this review has been unable to find any other published evaluations of such programmes operating in children's residential care settings. Discussions with many of the contacts revealed that their restorative justice work to date had focused on introducing the principles to staff, through training and awareness raising events, and assisting them in applying these principles in their everyday work with children and young people. For many of the contacts we spoke to, formal evaluation of the impact of restorative justice is very much part of the next phase of their work and one that many programmes are moving towards over the coming months.

The first evaluation of restorative approaches in 2003 points to an overall successful introduction of restorative justice principles within this unit and subsequent literature relating to this setting reports that this work has continued to go from strength to strength.

Contacts we spoke to during the review were also very positive about restorative justice and felt that it could bring real benefits to both young people and staff in residential settings. A key driver to introducing restorative justice practices was to address the wider issue of the over-representation of looked after children in the criminal justice system, particularly for offences that would not attract police attention if committed in a non-care setting. Contacts were very keen to reduce the numbers of cautions and convictions looked after children may receive because of minor criminal offences committed in a residential environment. Contacts were also keen to find effective ways of dealing with criminal behaviour, challenging behaviour and conflict in residential settings with a view to providing looked after children with a positive, safe, and secure care experience.

Discussions with contacts found that restorative justice schemes incorporated a range of practices, from convening formal conferences to more informal or 'on the hoof' meetings which drew on the principles of restorative justice to resolve low level conflict or tensions between parties. In practice, many schemes involved residential staff or YOT workers applying the principles of restorative justice in an adaptable, interchangeable way depending on the situation, the offence or conflict and the needs of the young people themselves.

Whilst this review was able to identify some examples of restorative justice approaches being implemented within children's residential care, it was more difficult to explore the impact and effectiveness of these practices due to the very recent nature of these developments. Much of the work to date has

focused on introducing and implementing the restorative justice approaches, with detailed monitoring and evaluation of the work a future phase of development. As a result it was difficult to make any assessment as to the effectiveness of any one model of restorative justice work.

However, the discussions with contacts have identified some encouraging signs from their initial monitoring data and the feedback they had received. Contacts all felt that the feedback they were receiving so far suggests that restorative justice practices are having a positive impact for staff and young people and in many cases is contributing to a reduction in police call outs to units and diverting young people away from the criminal justice system.

All of the contacts we spoke to were planning to evaluate the effectiveness of their restorative justice work over the coming months. As the number of residential settings introducing restorative practices increases and settings start to look at evaluating their work, hopefully, an evidence base on the effectiveness and impact of restorative justice practices within children's residential settings will emerge over the coming years.

Recommendations for future research

In light of current situation, this review recommends that NCERCC continue to monitor the emergence of restorative justice practices within children's residential care over the coming months, with a view to conducting another review sometime in the future. Such a review could determine whether any new evaluations or evidence on the effectiveness of restorative justice has emerged since this review.

There is also scope for NCERCC to conduct case study research in the future, exploring the work of a number of schemes in depth to gain a more detailed understanding of the restorative justice models used. Such a study could also explore any evidence of their effectiveness, with a view to building a more detailed picture of what works and what the limitations of restorative justice approaches might be.

In any future work it would be useful for the work to focus on the following areas of enquiry:

- The type of settings involved
- The form the restorative justice work takes and the typical outcomes of such work
- The types of offences/behaviour to which RJ is applied
- The extent of victim/offender involvement and take-up
- Whether restorative justice approaches are primarily offender or victim based
- Evidence of effectiveness from a range of stakeholders including residential staff, partners and the young people themselves

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6 Appendices

Email to members of the Children's Residential Network

Email sent out in January and February 2007.

The Research and Evaluation Department at the National Children's Bureau is currently undertaking a short scoping review for NCERCC on the use and effectiveness of restorative justice models within children's residential care. The review will highlight what is currently known about the use of restorative justice, including what models are currently in use, how they work and any available evidence as to their effectiveness to date.

We would like to hear from NCERCC members who are currently employing restorative justice principles in resolving conflict within children's residential care homes.

Taking part would involve a short telephone discussion with Natasha Willmott, Research Officer, to find out more about your work in this area and your assessment of the effectiveness of this approach.

If you would like to be involved and share details of your work, please contact Natasha Willmott on 020 7843 6302 (Monday to Thursday) or email nwillmott@ncb.org.uk.

Topic guide used for short telephone discussions with key contacts

Restorative justice – questions for key contacts

Introduce NCB and evaluation

Explain purpose of evaluation and reporting

Explain confidentiality and data protection

Background

- Briefly explore main duties and responsibilities with regards to the restorative justice work

- Background/history of RJ
 - when was the programme started
 - what was the programme in response to
 - aims and objectives of RJ programme
 - who is the project aimed at/target groups
 - what training/support provided to staff, others

Current practice

- Explore current practice including
 - how RJ programme works (what form RJ takes/examples of types of behaviour targeted)
 - when would RJ be used (behavioural/criminal activities/bullying/other)
 - Has the use of RJ changed over time (and what in response to? Circumstances/feedback from staff/young people)
 - How many RJ per year (approx)

Perceptions of impact/effectiveness

- How successful has RJ been in the residential setting? Probe for examples of impact
- What challenges, if any, have you faced in rolling out a RJ programme?
- How effective has the use of RJ been? Any formal/informal evaluation of effectiveness – probe for details/figures/examples. Any feedback from young people/staff?
- Any effect on police call out rates/incidents recorded within the establishment
- Plans for future use of RJ
- Anything would like to say about the use of RJ in CRC?

Summary of restorative justice (RJ) programmes within children's residential care identified in the review

Table 6.1: Setting A* (started 2003)

Setting for RJ work	Summary of RJ approach to date	Assessment of impact to date	Plans for future work
East of England Residential unit (with a section for younger and older children)	<p>Staff at the unit received training from Thames Valley Police in restorative justice approaches. The use of RJ approaches was piloted in the unit in 2003 and the subject of an independent evaluation.</p> <p>The evaluation involved interviews with staff prior to the introduction of RJ and six months afterwards (pre RJ interviews= 9 /post RJ interviews =6). In addition two group sessions with staff were led by the evaluator six months after implementation, focusing on the process and impact of the RJ approach in the units for both younger and older residents.</p> <p>At the end of the implementation period two interviews were held with a young person from the younger and older person's units to gather their views on the use of RJ in their unit.</p> <p>In addition the evaluation monitored data relating to police call out rates and incidents recorded within the residential unit prior to and six months after implementation.</p> <p>The evaluation in 2003 found that the unit had held five restorative conferences during the pilot period and in particular made use of restorative principles in a more informal way. The evaluation found that staff and young people resolved most situations satisfactorily in informal settings at an appropriate time for staff, the perpetrator, and the victim.</p>	<p>Analysis of documentary sources revealed that police call out rates had fell by 22% in the ten month period following the introduction of RJ.</p> <p>There was also a reduction in the number of sanctions recorded, with a reduction in incidents recorded as 'alternative measures of control' (e.g. police call out) by 54%. In the post implementation period recorded responses of 'left to calm down' and 'spoke to/reasoned with young person' also increased. However, during this period the incidents of violence recorded increased, although analysis of these figures revealed that the behaviour of one young person during this period had skewed the overall figures.</p> <p>The evaluation found that RJ training had changed the way in which most of the staff dealt with conflict in the unit, including criminal offences, bullying, arguments and other non-criminal conflicts.</p> <p>Interviews with staff found that the RJ approach had worked well with a number of young people, but not all – some did not want to be seen as 'collaborating' with staff. The general view of staff and young people was that RJ was a valuable tool to get young people to think about/take responsibility for their behaviour. RJ was also viewed to provide a better focus on victims needs and gave them an opportunity to 'have their say'.</p>	<p>Since the 2003 evaluation the use of restorative justice has been rolled out across all residential units in East of England A.</p> <p>Walker Training and Research produced a bespoke training package for East of England A's residential children's homes. The training was made mandatory, with annual refresher days.</p> <p>The use of RJ has been built into the homes Statement of Purpose and Behaviour Management books.</p>

*Evidence on the work of setting A was obtained from published literature based on the evaluation of the pilot work in 2003.

Table 6.2: Setting B (started 2003/2004)

Setting for RJ work	Summary of RJ approach to date	Assessment of impact to date	Plans for future work
<p>South West Youth Offending Team project covering looked after children in the locality</p>	<p>The local Youth Offending Team set up a Reducing the Offending of Looked After Children (ROLAC) Project to address issues relating to offending by looked after children (LAC) in the area.</p> <p>Originally the project planned to train all residential staff in RJ approaches, providing staff with an alternative to police intervention when faced with problematic, aggressive, or criminal behaviour. Whilst many staff received RJ training the project found it difficult to embed the use of RJ across all of the homes in its area, due to the size of the homes and the numbers of staff involved. The project then developed two different schemes to try to embed RJ approaches across the sector, including a resolve and repair scheme and a mediation scheme in residential units.</p> <p>a) Resolve and Repair scheme. This scheme started in July 2006 and is a partnership between the YOT, a local mediation service, and the local magistrates. The scheme provides local magistrates the opportunity to divert LAC who have been arrested and charged with offences committed in their care environment to the resolve and repair project for a RJ intervention. The magistrate then orders a three - four week adjournment of the case for the RJ work to be undertaken. If the RJ is viewed to have been successful and the victim feels the young person concerned has taken responsibility for their actions, then charges against the young person are dropped.</p> <p>b) Mediation scheme. Within the last three months the ROLAC project have set up another mediation/RJ scheme being run by residential staff. The ROLAC Project have trained a team of 16 mediators who are residential staff who will then be available to mediate and provide RJ conferences in other units when required.</p>	<p>Since July 2006 the Resolve and Repair scheme has dealt with around 46 cases. The scheme has become established with protocols being developed between the Crown Prosecution Service and the local Youth Court and has the received complete support of all parties involved.</p> <p>The RJ/mediation scheme is currently being implemented across seven local authority homes in the locality. However in its first three months of operation between eight - ten referrals for mediation have been received. The work has involved mediators creating dialogue between the offender and the victim in a number of ways including victim awareness work with the offender, conferencing, shuttle mediation (where the mediator meets the offender and victim individually and indirectly mediates between the parties) and reparation.</p> <p>In addition during the project protocols and guidelines on behaviour management, the use of RJ and police call outs have been developed by the project and adopted by residential units. Feedback from the police suggests that there has been a marked decrease in the number of police call outs to units since the protocols have been in place.</p>	<p>Looking to develop the mediation scheme.</p> <p>Also looking to involve private care homes in the work.</p>

Table 6.3: Setting C (started 2004)

Setting for RJ work	Summary of RJ approach to date	Assessment of impact to date	Plans for future work
<p>South West</p> <p>Small residential unit (9-14 years)</p>	<p>The unit manager/staff received training/support in restorative justice principles and approaches within local meetings with other residential providers in the area and the local Youth Offending Team (YOT).</p> <p>The unit adopted a protocol, devised in consultation with a number of parties at local meetings, which aims to reduce the criminalisation of young people within the care setting. The protocol provides guidance to staff on when to contact the police, when a definable criminal offence has occurred and outlines how restorative justice can be an alternative to police call outs.</p> <p>The unit can refer a case to a trained member of the YOT for restorative conferencing. For issues such as minor criminal damage, the unit has good links with the local beat officer, who is available to talk to a young person about what has happened and how best to make reparation, without the need for a formal police call out.</p> <p>RJ is part of a package of work including good relationships with the local beat police officer, reparation and an incentive scheme. The unit also organises events and projects, such as a summer BBQ, to bring residents and the people from key agencies together in an informal and fun way so they can get to know each other and build trust.</p>	<p>The unit is small and reports that it does not normally have many issues around offending behaviour. However, since 2004 a small number of cases (two or three) have been referred for restorative conferencing, chaired by a trained worker from the YOT.</p> <p>Staff at the unit have adopted some of the principles of restorative justice and are now using these regularly when dealing with minor conflicts and disputes within the home.</p> <p>Since the introduction of RJ, police call outs to the home have reduced. Staff have found RJ a useful tool in dealing with conflict and criminal damage within the home.</p> <p>Staff feel that RJ approaches, coupled with the good working links with the police, have now provided them with another option to police call outs and young people entering the criminal justice system.</p>	<p>Very pleased with the effectiveness of RJ –plan to continue using this approach.</p>

Table 6.4: Setting D (started 2004/2005)

Setting for RJ work	Summary of RJ approach to date	Assessment of impact to date	Plans for future work
West Midlands Youth Offending Team project covering looked after children in the locality	<p>In partnership with the Children and Lifelong Learning Division, set up a Reducing the Offending of Looked After Children (ROLAC) Project.</p> <p>The ROLAC Project aims to address specific behaviours and issues relating to offending and re-offending by looked after children (LAC) in the locality. The project works with LAC and residential staff to look at alternative ways of resolving criminal behaviour other than reporting to the police, such as restorative conferencing and reparation.</p> <p>Originally the project focused on working with LAC who did not have an offending history (pre final warning stage) but has since been extended to all LAC. The project receives referrals from residential units for restorative work and delivers face-to-face individual work or conferencing with young people. The project adopts a flexible approach, based on the needs of the young person and the offence that has been committed.</p> <p>The project aims to work with the young person to look at the consequences of their offending behaviour and to find alternative ways to resolve issues and difficulties in the future. The local YOT also has a Community Payback Team who work with LAC. If an offence has been committed against a unit the team can work with a young person to see how best reparation can be made.</p> <p>A range of preventative work also complements the restorative element of the project. This includes a drop in service at residential units, where ROLAC Project workers are available to talk with any young person about a range of issues (e.g. substance misuse, criminality), and group work with young people.</p>	<p>Since the project was set up, it has taken on average 35 to 40 referrals from residential units per year. Many of the referrals and subsequent work has focused on resolving issues around criminal damage to units.</p> <p>In partnership with Children and Lifelong Learning Division, the police and some private providers, the project has developed a protocol outlining how they will work together to reduce the over representation of LAC. In addition the project is currently working with local magistrates to raise awareness of the issues around LAC and offending behaviour.</p> <p>Whilst no formal evaluation has been undertaken, monitoring of the project date suggests that the work of the project has reduced the numbers of LAC entering the criminal justice system and situations escalating into custody and custodial sentences for LAC.</p>	<p>The project has put in a bid with the Youth Justice Board and Nacro to be part of a series of eight restorative justice pilot projects in England. If the bid is successful it would involved the YOT providing training to residential staff in RJ approaches, training volunteer mentors for LAC and developing local protocols between the police, YOT and the residential units in the use of RJ.</p> <p>The project is planning to monitor and evaluate the impact of the project in the future.</p> <p>The project is currently working towards ways to involve private providers in the use of RJ and getting them involved in the project.</p>

Table 6.5: Setting E (started 2005)

Setting for RJ work	Summary of RJ approach to date	Assessment of impact to date	Plans for future work
<p>East of England</p> <p>Local authority children's home</p>	<p>Secured funding for a half day awareness raising event on restorative justice. Event attended by residential staff at the home, the police and staff from the local Youth Offending Team.</p> <p>Residential staff currently use restorative conferencing, mediation and reparation to deal with issues including criminal damage within the home and bullying.</p> <p>The use of RJ is part of a package of work that has been undertaken at the home. Work has included building strong partnerships with the local police, YOT, children's services, education and health and reviewing care planning and risk assessment procedures.</p>	<p>Since the introduction of restorative conferencing there has been a reduction in the number of restraints, with no reported use of restraint since April 2006.</p> <p>Since the introduction of RJ, the home has seen a reduction in offences reported involving residents, police call outs to the home and the number of 'missing from care' episodes.</p> <p>Data from the local police service for the period Nov 05 – July 06 indicates that there has been a decrease of 66% in the number of offences reported. Police events (when police are requested to attend a premises) have decreased by 54%. The home has also seen a 67% decrease in 'missing from care' episodes.</p> <p>Feedback from staff and young people indicates that restorative justice has been successful in giving young people an understanding of their behaviour, the affect it may have on others and has had a positive impact in reducing criminal behaviour.</p>	<p>Looking to provide staff with more restorative justice training and to continue the work at the home.</p> <p>Also planning to provide restorative justice training to young people and to use restorative conferencing with young people and parents, where a parent is in contact with the child concerned.</p> <p>Currently monitoring the success of the RJ work using information on police call outs and offending rates provided by the local police. Looking to evaluate the impact of the RJ work in more detail over the coming months.</p>

Table 6.6: Setting F (started 2005)

Setting for RJ work	Summary of RJ approach to date	Assessment of impact to date	Plans for future work
<p>East of England</p> <p>Small local authority unit (mixed) 11-17 years</p>	<p>All staff attended RJ training and training on Crisis and Aggression, Limitation and Management (CALM).</p> <p>The unit use the principles of RJ in one- to- one discussions/mediations between a staff member and a young person to calm down situations when a young person is threatening to harm themselves or is upset/angry.</p> <p>Staff meet with the young person in a on-to-one situation to discuss what has happened, how the young person feels and how in the future the young person might handle a similar situation.</p> <p>Staff sometimes use RJ principles to resolve peer-to- peer arguments.</p> <p>Use of RJ works alongside other policies including an incentive scheme for good behaviour and an 'outcome book' for misbehaviour.</p>	<p>Feel that the RJ principles have been very successful. Residential staff now feel that they can resolve a situation without resorting to restraint. As a result there has been no use of restraint for over a year.</p> <p>Feel that their use of RJ has had a positive impact, with criminal damage, staff assaults, and peer- to- peer conflict, to the extent that these are now no longer major issues within the unit. For example, the contact was unable to recall the last time the police were call out to the unit for a dispute or assault.</p> <p>Staff have also found RJ approaches to be useful in dealing with low level disagreements between residents and in resolving problematic behaviour, such as play fighting.</p> <p>RJ has been viewed as empowering for both the young people and staff. Both parties feel that situations and conflict can now be resolved in an amicable way.</p>	<p>Looking to undertake further training in RJ approaches and continue to use RJ in their work.</p>

Table 6.7: Setting G* (started 2005)

Setting for RJ work	Summary of RJ approach to date	Assessment of impact to date	Plans for future work
<p>South East</p> <p>Nine local authority residential homes (each with around six beds) and one secure children's home (providing secure accommodation for 16 young people aged 10-18 years)</p>	<p>A decision was made in 2004 to introduce an RJ model of practice across all ten children's residential care homes in the South East. A programme of mandatory training took place between May 2005 March 2006. This included a multi-agency launch event, three multi agency awareness raising sessions, and 21 practitioner training courses (Three days per course).</p> <p>The multi-agency launch event was held in May 2005, targeting 50 senior representatives from a number of agencies including the police and magistrates.</p> <p>The practitioner training courses targeted all front line residential workers and registered managers across ten of South East's residential units. In addition training was provided to service managers who line manage these units. Youth Offending Team (YOT) workers, the entire team for the Education of Children in Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) workers and Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP) workers also received the RJ training. In all, over 300 practitioners and other staff received this training.</p> <p>In order to maintain momentum once the training had been received each unit identified a lead member of staff to take responsibility for championing RJ and keeping the approach high on the agenda.</p> <p>In addition, revisions were made to policies and procedures within the residential units, for example to incident feedback forms, which now include a section on the use of RJ approaches including written feedback from young people.</p>	<p>A Children's Services Policy Review Committee report in July 2006 indicates that offending rates for looked after children (LAC) are reducing and that information from the residential units shows a reduction in police call outs.</p> <p>The report also indicates that there are some good practice examples of police call outs to units resulting in restorative meetings being held, rather than young people being charged or prosecuted.</p>	<p>Planning to commission an evaluation of the implementation of the RJ training and its impact on practice.</p>

*Information this settings restorative justice programme was obtained from available literature from internet searches only.

Table 6.8: Setting H (started 2006)

Setting for RJ work	Summary of RJ approach to date	Assessment of impact to date	Plans for future work
<p>North East</p> <p>Training across children and young people's services in the area, including all residential staff.</p> <p>Five children's homes in the locality, with approximately 18 staff per home.</p>	<p>Prior to 2006 some staff within residential services and other settings had undertaken voluntary training in RJ principles but work was not embedded throughout the service.</p> <p>In 2006 the head of residential services along with the referral manager of a local YOT developed a proposal to introduce RJ training to professionals across children and young people's services.</p> <p>In 2007 RJ training was provided to a range of staff including residential staff and managers, foster carers, looked after children social workers and YOT workers.</p> <p>Residential staff received a bespoke three-day training course facilitated by Walker Research and Training. Other staff receive a 'Real Justice' training course, run by the YOT.</p> <p>Children and young people's services have also recently developed a protocol for residential staff, providing guidance for when to involve police when an incident has occurred. They are currently developing a similar protocol on police involvement for foster carers.</p>	<p>Training for all residential staff was completed in March 2007 and the RJ programme is now rolling out across residential units.</p> <p>Some staff have already been using RJ practices and conferencing in tackling issues such as racism and bullying within settings. To date most of this work has involved more informal use of RJ, with staff dealing with issues as they arise in the home at the time. More formal conferences have been convened on a couple of occasions.</p> <p>In terms of the impact to date, whilst the scheme is in its infancy the contact reports that RJ principles have enabled staff to make some real progress in dealing with issues around bullying and racism.</p> <p>In addition, have also seen a 'considerable decrease in the number of 'violent acts/episodes at work logged (where incidents against staff are recorded).</p>	<p>Planning an independent evaluation of the implementation and impact of the training. Including conference numbers, conviction rates etc.</p> <p>Hoping that staff will apply the same principles to other areas of work, acting out, minor criminal activity within the homes.</p> <p>Also holding a regional conference in April 2007 to raise awareness of the use of RJ in children's residential care.</p>

Table 6.9: Setting I (started 2006)

Setting for RJ work	Summary of RJ approach to date	Assessment of impact to date	Plans for future work
<p>North East</p> <p>Training for a cross section of staff, including residential staff</p>	<p>Made contact with the manager from another residential unit in the East of England A unit who had piloted the use of RJ. Managers of residential/children's services then received a half day training session from Walker Training and Research on RJ, based on the Thames Valley Police model of scripted restorative conferencing.</p> <p>A cross section of 32 staff (including residential workers and support staff) were then trained in RJ. Twelve staff members then took part in a five day train the trainers' course, with a view to rolling out the training to all staff in North East B's residential units.</p> <p>By mid June 2007 all staff across North East B would have received a three day training course in RJ (around 120 staff in 8-9 settings).</p> <p>The use of RJ is now rolling out across all homes in the area as staff receive their three day training course. In addition each home's information pack includes information about their RJ approach for young people to read and find out more about the approach and how it will be used.</p> <p>The team have also met with local magistrates to raise awareness of RJ and the work currently underway within local residential units.</p>	<p>The restorative justice work is currently evaluating feedback from the staff training courses and the views of staff on the effectiveness of RJ in a post training questionnaire (three months after training).</p> <p>Responses from the survey of staff three months post training indicates that already staff are using RJ in their work. Feedback so far suggests that staff find it a useful tool to resolve difficulties with young people.</p>	<p>Currently developing plans to evaluate the impact of the RJ training on practice and to seek the views of both staff and young people on the use of RJ.</p> <p>Looking to provide RJ training to young people, including young members of the multi agency looked after partnership project, to provide them with the understanding and skills to deal with conflict themselves.</p>

Table 6.10: Setting J (started 2006)

Setting for RJ work	Summary of RJ approach to date	Assessment of impact to date	Plans for future work
West Midlands Youth Offending Team project working with residential units in the locality. Wolverhampton	<p>For over twelve months a team of RJ workers from a local YOT have been working with residential units in the area (all homes in the area are for young people aged 13 –16 years)</p> <p>The team have adopted the Nacro guidance on the use of RJ. The project takes referrals from residential units for a range of issues including criminal damage against a unit and assaults on staff or on other young people. The RJ team then make an assessment with the unit as to whether mediation or reparation would be an appropriate means to resolve the situation.</p> <p>In a large number of referrals the YOT worker mediates with the manager of the unit, the staff member involved and the young person to explore the issues around the incident and to look at reparation to address the harm caused.</p> <p>In addition to offering mediation and restorative conferencing RJ workers regularly attend staff meetings and care planning meetings at the units.</p> <p>A policy has also been introduced across residential units which provides guidance to managers on when to consider the use of RJ and police involvement.</p>	<p>Since the project started 12 months ago around 20-30 RJ conferences/mediations have been undertaken by members of the RJ team.</p> <p>The project feels that their work is highly successful and on numerous occasions has prevented a young person being criminalised for their behaviour. The project feel that they have now got to a point where young people in residential units are only entering the criminal justice system now for very serious assaults or criminal damage to units.</p>	<p>The project are planning to evaluate the service over the coming months.</p> <p>The service will be expanded as more children's homes are due to open in the locality.</p>