



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Mánnystrie O tha Laa

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Restoring Relationships, Redressing Harm

ADULT RESTORATIVE JUSTICE STRATEGY

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2023/24

12 September 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Restorative interventions in Northern Ireland began in the 1990s, however, prior to the publication of the [Adult Restorative Justice Strategy](#), only minimal progress had been made in the application and use of restorative justice in the adult system through community-based interventions in particular. These were largely driven by individual organisations, with no over-arching strategic or co-ordinated approach. This is in contrast to the youth justice system where restorative justice is used extensively and has been legislated for both pre-court and court-ordered disposals.

The 2022 Adult Restorative Justice Strategy builds on an ongoing programme of work being delivered by the Department of Justice ('the Department') and its partners across the Executive, local Government, law enforcement and civil society. With an ever-evolving criminal justice system, criminal justice agencies are continually looking for alternative methods of addressing harm and an effective means of reducing re-offending, which complements the current punitive options, and which better meet the needs of victims of crime. While the criminal justice system focuses on whether or not a crime has been committed or the criminal law has been broken, restorative justice provides an opportunity to focus on repairing the harm and reducing the impact of offending on victims.

The Strategy is set in a human rights framework and is underpinned by a number of basic principles which are informed by international standards and best practice. It recognises the importance of having a victim-centred approach to restorative justice and a desire to better meet the needs of victims. This is evident from its aim:

“To restore relationships and redress harm through building an effective and efficient victim-centred restorative practice culture within the Northern Ireland criminal justice system and in partnership with the community.”

Following publication of the Adult Restorative Justice Strategy, the Department has continued to work with delivery partners to fulfil its long-term commitment to embed restorative justice as a key principle within the adult criminal justice system. The Strategy is accompanied by a five year Action Plan, which sets out key milestones which the Department and members of the Restorative Justice Working Group have identified as being crucial to the implementation of restorative justice throughout the whole justice continuum in Northern Ireland. This Action Plan was divided into three distinct, but interrelated, parts:

- 1) The overarching themes or issues which sit across the entirety of the Strategy and which are essential to enable its successful delivery;
- 2) Options for delivering restorative justice at specific stages of the criminal justice continuum; and

- 3) The delivery of restorative approaches aimed at meeting recommendations from a number of independent reviews.

Within each theme, a number of key actions were identified, of which their delivery will be an important part of ensuring restorative justice's sustainability within the adult criminal justice sphere.

Implementation of the Strategy, and delivery against the actions contained in the Action Plan, is monitored by the multi-agency Restorative Justice Working Group. The work is also reflected in, and reported through, the Department's Annual Business Plan and the Reducing Reoffending Strategic Outcomes Group, amongst other fora. Aspects of the work are also included in the respective business plans of some RJWG partner organisations.

Finally, in terms of reporting, an undertaking was given in the Strategy to develop an annual progress report to update the Minister, the Justice Committee and other relevant stakeholders. This document is the second annual progress report to be published, and provides information on the work that has taken place over the second year of the Adult Strategy's Action Plan i.e. April 2023 – March 2024.

The following sections mirror the three distinct parts of the Action plan (overarching themes; restorative justice as part of the criminal justice continuum; and relationship with other justice reviews) and set out the progress made against the actions within each. Restorative Justice is commonly abbreviated to RJ in the following sections.

2. ACTION PLAN PART 1: OVERARCHING THEMES

Part 1 of the Action Plan relates to a number of overarching themes which straddle our approach to restorative justice and provide a framework and context within which the work takes place. In total, **four overarching themes** were identified through consultation and discussion. Each is considered below, along with a summary of actions falling under each theme and an end of year progress update.

(i) A Victim-Centred Approach

One of the most significant, and oft-repeated, views received throughout the consultation process was the need to ensure that an Adult Restorative Justice Strategy was victim-centred. The ever-increasing focus on, and use of, restorative justice is driven by the desire to better meet the needs of victims of crime and to provide redress for the harm caused to them, as well as to find an effective alternative to punitive responses.

The Strategy provides the mechanism by which delivery partners will seek out opportunities to raise awareness of RJ with victims and to help them gain a greater understanding of all aspects of the justice system and provide more effective outcomes, influenced by their decision. Any RJ process will need to ensure it is a safe, structured and supportive environment where victims and communities feel confident their voices are being heard. Wherever possible, we wish to see victims not only proactively engaged in restorative justice, but also taking the lead in its use through the development of victim-initiated pathways.

Many of the actions from this theme were completed in Year 1 of the Strategy, with Restorative Justice Working Group (RJWG) members continuing to deliver on the remaining actions. Progress is updated below:

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| <p>Engagement with victims and victim organisations.</p> | <p>RJWG partners have continued to progress this action in Year 2, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PBNI has continued to increase the number of victims registered with their Victim Information Unit and at 31 March 2024 there were 483 victims registered with the PBNI scheme. • VSNI has delivered a full programme of accredited RJ training throughout the year bringing PSNI officers, voluntary providers, victim organisations and probation officers together to train as RJ practitioners. In this year, 80 individuals completed the training with a further eight completing Serious and Complex training. |
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| <p>Engagement with the Commissioner Designate for Victims of Crime.</p> | <p>Officials from Reducing Offending Division met the Commissioner Designate for Victims of Crime and a range of issues were discussed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the use of RJ generally; ➤ how to develop a victim-centred process for NI; ➤ how to achieve value for money; ➤ restorative approaches as part of, or an alternative to, the formal justice system; and ➤ the use of Restorative Practice in cases of domestic or sexual abuse. <p>Representatives from PBNI's Victims service user forum also met the Commissioner Designate to discuss their experiences of the criminal justice system, the benefits of registering with the Victim Information Scheme and to share their views on restorative justice for adults.</p> <p>VSNI also engaged with the Commissioner Designate in showcasing the benefits of restorative justice for victims of serious crimes.</p> |
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(ii) Capacity Building and Effective Delivery of Restorative Justice

One of the key aims of the Strategy was to extend the reach of restorative justice, both in terms of location and in the range of its use across the justice continuum. A clear message coming from stakeholders was the need to ensure equality of opportunity to all parties that are affected by offending, whether as a perpetrator, victim, family or community. Whilst community context is particularly important given that crime disproportionately affects disadvantaged communities, we want to enable a consistent geographical and standardised service provision across Northern Ireland, along with effective referral mechanisms for criminal justice and other organisations.

Following the completion of the comprehensive review of the 2007 Government Protocol that governed the use of restorative work in the criminal justice arena, focus shifted to the publication and the implementation of the new operationalised 2023 Protocol. One of the key recommendations from the report was the introduction of an Interim Protocol Lead (IPL) who will hold responsibility for designing and delivering a new accreditation process.

Progress update:

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| <p>Review of 2007 Protocol governing the accreditation and operation of Community Based Restorative Justice.</p> | <p>The Review report was published in February 2023 and the new agreed Protocol was published in July 2023. The revised Protocol includes new staged processes for formal accreditation to deliver restorative interventions both within the community and as part of the justice continuum.</p> <p>This action is completed and can be closed.</p> |
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| <p>Support for capacity building.</p> | <p>A key recommendation in the Review report was the appointment of an Interim Protocol Lead (IPL) on 20 February 2024, who will play a critical role in progressing the new arrangements set out in the revised Protocol, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Setting training standards and establishing a training framework appropriate to the level of RJ work being undertaken; ➤ Promoting an understanding of RJ across all sectors of NI; ➤ Working with practitioners and organisations to adopt new accreditation processes, to increase capacity and availability of RJ as a justice intervention; and ➤ Monitoring and reporting on the number and outcome of referrals. <p>A longer-term funding strategy is necessary to support increased capacity. Recommendation A9 of the Fresh Start report tasked the Executive with establishing a dedicated fund for RJ to allow its expansion in NI. However, a range of issues, including ongoing budgetary constraints, mean that this has not happened. In the absence of a cross-Executive fund, the Department will continue to do what it can to support accredited organisations and individuals to engage in the delivery of restorative justice.</p> |
| <p>Promotion of revised Protocol & associated arrangements to encourage & increase accredited services.</p> | <p>The Interim Protocol Lead has held opening discussions with many key stakeholders regarding training and practice standards which will help inform the new accreditation process.</p> <p>Awareness of the Protocol was raised at a dedicated workshop, hosted at the first Northern Ireland Restorative Justice Council conference in September 2023. This work will continue in earnest once the new accreditation process is agreed.</p> |

(iii) Legislative Issues

There are differing views on whether or not restorative interventions should be legislated for locally. The absence of legislation here has not prevented the small-scale use of restorative justice in adult disposals, with some operational practice evolving to incorporate restorative elements in existing orders, most notably in [Enhanced Combination Orders \(ECOs\)](#) and more recently Community Resolution Notices (CRNs). Those in favour of a statutory basis see it as a driver for mainstreaming the use of restorative justice, as well as a commitment to its use.

The Strategy identified two further issues under this overarching theme of legislation: the need to deliver any legislative change arising from the new 2023 Protocol and the need to

regularise an existing anomaly relating to the transfer of accreditation legislation from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to the Department.

Progress update:

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| Establish and agree the need for, and extent of, formal statutory provision required to deliver adult restorative justice. | Initial high-level discussions on this issue have taken place with a small number of key stakeholders, including the new Interim Protocol Lead and Commissioner Designate for Victims of Crime. Members of the RJWG will consider this action in detail in Year 3. |
| Consideration of legislative changes that may be required as a result of a review of the 2007 Protocol. | The Minister has agreed a legislative programme for the remaining three years of the current mandate. There is no possibility of any legislative changes, if required, to be taken forward in the medium term. This being the case, it is proposed that any issues that are identified as requiring legislation once the new accreditation process becomes operational, should be taken forward in the longer term, with the benefit of operational experience to inform any changes. |
| Transfer of accreditation legislation | Now that the Executive has returned and a new legislative programme has been agreed with the Justice Minister, this action will be progressed in Year 3 as part of the first Justice Bill (the Modernisation of Justice Bill) to be introduced to the Assembly. |

(iv) Communication and Engagement

The fourth and final overarching theme in the Action Plan was the need for effective communication and engagement across all sectors, and with the public in particular, to promote the understanding and use of restorative justice as an agreed alternative to, or an integral part of, the formal justice system.

An effective communication strategy is vital to ensuring RJ reaches its full potential within the adult criminal justice system. It is important to inform and educate the wider public of the positive benefits of RJ so victims, offenders and communities will have an understanding of the process and the positive outcomes it can have for all parties involved.

Delivery partners have continued to promote a consistent supportive message about RJ to their service users and to the wider public, with perhaps the most successful public awareness-raising coming from the first Restorative Justice Council Conference in Northern Ireland, held on 15 September 2023, with guest speakers including The Princess Royal.

Alongside any communication strategy, consideration will need to be given to resource implications, as awareness-raising is likely to mean an increased demand for services. If

this demand cannot be met, there is a risk that it will negatively impact on positive restorative justice messaging.

Progress update:

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| <p>Development of a public awareness approach to inform and educate on issues around restorative justice.</p> | <p>PBNI Victims Unit staff and the Assistant Director have delivered community workshops with other criminal justice partners to raise awareness of the Victims Charter. This included information as to how victims could engage in a restorative process.</p> <p>Events such as the publication of the Protocol and first Annual Progress Report in July 2023, along with the Education Authority conference in May 2023 and the Restorative Justice Council conference in September 2023 (which was reported in the Belfast Telegraph), have provided opportunities to inform and educate on the positive message of RJ.</p> |
| <p>Deliver a co-ordinated approach across all sector organisations to raise awareness of restorative justice/practice.</p> | <p>This is an ongoing action, with RJWG member organisations engaged with criminal justice organisations and partners from other sectors to raise awareness through, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ RJWG members continue to be represented on the Restorative Practices Forum NI, where members explore how to raise awareness of this way of working. ➤ NIA and CRJI continue to deliver restorative interventions to Aspire, police referrals and to deliver training in schools to raise awareness. ➤ Through PBNI, young men who are part of the Aspire project access community-based restorative justice and are referred via NIACRO to community-based projects. ➤ In October 2023, members attended a seminar facilitated by Tim Chapman and Matt Casey on the application of restorative justice in cases of historical clerical abuse. |
| <p>Promotion of RJ work and celebration of successes.</p> | <p>This is an ongoing action, with RJWG member organisations engaged in a range of work to promote their involvement in restorative approaches and celebrate success. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ RJWG and Restorative Practice Forum members were represented at the first inaugural Restorative Justice Council conference in Belfast in September 2023. ➤ Belfast Police and Community Safety Partnership commissioned NIACRO to undertake a study on the impact of hate crime across the city and at a conference in October 2023, a recommendation was made that restorative justice could be an effective way of tackling this type of offending. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ PBNI have had initial discussions with the Victim Support hate crime advocates to explore opportunities for them to participate in restorative meetings with PBNI service users in these cases. This will be taken forward on a case by case basis where PBNI are working with service users who have been involved in this type of offending.➤ VSNI has been involved in RJ Forum events and planning and has also highlighted good restorative practice with the Commissioner Designate for Victims of Crime. |
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3. ACTION PLAN PART 2: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AS PART OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE CONTINUUM

Part 2 of the Action Plan focuses on formalising and increasing the use of RJ approaches across the full justice continuum and how RJ providers across statutory, voluntary and community sectors could creatively work together to repair harm done by offenders and meet the needs of victims of crime and the community at all stages.

We need to ensure that a restorative approach at any stage of the justice continuum does not relax the application of the law to those involved in wrongdoing, but should address this wrongdoing without recourse to formal prosecution where appropriate, or complement more formal proceedings to improve outcomes.

Progress update:

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| <p>Early Intervention and Prevention - Agree and establish the role of the Department in the promotion, delivery and monitoring/governance of restorative approaches as part of Early Intervention and Prevention of offending.</p> | <p>The Protocol Review report clearly places responsibility for early intervention with communities, community based restorative justice (CBRJ) organisations, the voluntary/community sector (VCS) and PSNI, along with community bodies such as schools and churches. Other than being supportive of, and encouraging/promoting its use, RJWG members have agreed that the Department has no direct involvement in the use of RJ as part of early intervention.</p> <p>This action is therefore complete and can be closed.</p> |
| <p>Diversionary Disposals</p> | <p>A separate, PSNI-led, workstream developed a pilot to introduce restorative interventions as part of Community Resolution Notices (CRN). The pilot, which commenced in April 2024 in North and West Belfast, will deliver on the Strategy’s aim of developing adult diversionary disposals to reduce the need for formal justice interventions and improve outcomes, learning from the success of earlier stage diversion in the youth justice system. PSNI is also working towards expanding the list of offences suitable for a CRN; it is envisaged the new list will be introduced in Year 3 and will include low-level hate crimes.</p> |
| <p>Court Ordered Community Sentences</p> | <p>In the medium to long term, the intention is to explore opportunities for the formal inclusion of restorative justice in community sentences, in line with recommendations of the Department’s Sentencing Policy Review. In the meantime, pockets of work are still progressing. For example, PBNI continue to facilitate restorative justice in community sentences on a case by case basis and in response to requests from registered victims, subject to availability of resources.</p> <p>In year funding challenges for PBNI have impacted on the delivery of ECOs and the level of intervention / supervision that is delivered</p> |

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| | <p>post six months in the community. However, as part of the Victim Awareness intervention which is delivered to all PBNI service users, a letter of reflection/apology is written to demonstrate the service user's understanding of the impact of the offence on their victim. Where appropriate this letter will be shared with the registered victim.</p> |
| <p>Custody, Resettlement and Reintegration</p> | <p>Progress was impacted by the unprecedented increase in the prison population in Year 1, which continues to be an issue in Year 2. However, an exercise has been undertaken to baseline the restorative work currently taking place in the three establishments, Developing a strategic approach to the use of restorative practice will build upon this work, through the implementation of the NIPS Restorative Practice Framework and the training and standards framework developed by the Interim Protocol Lead. The intention is to explore how best to identify and implement opportunities to grow the use of restorative practice throughout NIPS in the coming year, as demonstrated by a commitment to develop a strategic approach to restorative practice in prisons.</p> <p>The baseline exercise has identified pockets of work, such as, support provided by the two accredited organisations to a small number of individuals in custody, at their request. Northern Ireland Alternatives has also delivered training to residents and staff in some establishments. In addition, Prison Fellowship has delivered the Sycamore Tree programme at the three establishments to 146 people in Year 2.</p> <p>Aspects of restorative approaches are also being employed as part of a return to communities forming part of the licence element of custodial orders. Where service users are failing to comply with the requirements of their supervision, PBNI staff and managers will engage with them in a re-contracting process, to support them to understand the consequences of failing to comply with supervision or licence conditions and the impact on their family, the victim and wider community. Using restorative approaches, staff will work with the service user to re-contract them and agree additional actions to reduce risk. Where someone is recalled to custody, or a breach of licence is initiated, the victim will be updated if they are registered with the Victim Information Scheme.</p> |

4. ACTION PLAN PART 3: RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER JUSTICE REVIEWS

Part 3 of the Action Plan was driven by three key reviews affecting the justice system in Northern Ireland which, although focused on diverse subjects, have a common denominator: they each contain recommendations relating to the potential use of restorative justice in the delivery of change.

The majority of actions within this section of the Action Plan were for consideration and implementation in the medium term. However, progress has been made in some areas, building on the groundwork that was established in Year 1; further consideration and development is need to advance other actions.

(i) Hate Crime

Judge Desmond Marrinan’s report, published in December 2020, contained a dedicated chapter on restorative justice (Chapter 11) and the opportunities for its use in addressing hate crime and providing support for victims. It included seven recommendations on how and when restorative justice might be used for instances of hate crime, and what the governing architecture surrounding its use might be, including a statutory framework for hate crime to be dealt with restoratively via both diversionary and formal court schemes.

Progress update:

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| <p>Consider implementation of restorative justice recommendations published in Marrinan review, including developing opportunities for using a diversionary scheme for hate crimes and need for a wider adult RJ statutory scheme</p> | <p>Officials presented a policy paper to RJWG members in November 2023, which explored the model of diversion in Scotland (as mentioned by Judge Marrinan in Recommendation 22), along with a summary of the views of keys stakeholders on the use of restorative justice in hate crime offences. Members agreed that the Scottish model of diversion was not a good fit for Northern Ireland and that current plans to develop restorative diversionary approaches in Northern Ireland, with the expansion of Community Resolution Notice (CRN) criteria to include hate crime, would be a suitable tool to deal with such offences without the need for a separate system, as proposed by Judge Marrinan.</p> <p>PSNI introduced the CRN pilot in April 2024. The pilot will operate in North and West Belfast and will ultimately include low-level hate crime offences once the expanded CRN list goes live. It will run for one year, with future plans for a staged roll-out across all police districts if it proves to be successful.</p> <p>At the RJWG meeting in November 2023, members also discussed Judge Marrinan’s six other recommendations, in particular, the proposal for a new statutory scheme for RJ. RJWG members agreed that if developed, such a scheme should be open for all offences and not designed exclusively for hate. It was agreed that a separate working group would be established to have a more detailed focus on</p> |
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| | the merits and challenges of introducing formal statutory provision for diversionary and/or court ordered sentences. |
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(ii) Serious Sexual Offences

The second independent review that informed the development of this part of the Action Plan was undertaken by Sir John Gillen and focused on the law and procedures in serious sexual offence cases in Northern Ireland. Recognising that the use of restorative justice for victims of sexual offences is a highly emotive subject, the final report nevertheless included two recommendations for consideration in relation to the use of victim-led RJ as (i) an additional support for, and (ii) an alternative to, the formal criminal justice system. Although identified as a medium to long-term action, we are pleased to report some progress throughout the second year of the Action Plan.

Progress update:

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| <p>In partnership with statutory and third sector organisations, consider recommendations published in Gillen review relating to the use of restorative justice for serious sexual offences.</p> | <p>Departmental officials met the Gillen Review Implementation Team and the PhD student undertaking research into the use of restorative justice in sexual offending cases throughout the year to provide updates on work. The PhD student has undertaken interviews with several victims, perpetrators, criminal justice practitioners and support organisations and will soon begin to analyse and write up the findings. The final report is expected by May 2025. A number of PBNI's registered victims volunteered to be part of this research and shared their views on the potential use of RJ for sexual offences.</p> <p>Officials are working on a policy paper to present to the RJWG incorporating New Zealand's position, as set out in Sir John Gillen's final report.</p> <p>While VSNI provided restorative justice to a limited number of victims of sexual violence over the year, this practice had to be suspended in December 2023 due to the lack of available resources.</p> <p>VSNI has also developed a document outlining the main learning points that have emerged from the past three years of their restorative justice work with victims of serious sexual violence. All victims of serious crimes engaging with this programme were supported by a facilitator accredited to Advanced Practitioner level by the Restorative Justice Council.</p> |
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(iii) A Centre of Restorative Excellence (CORE)

The proposal to develop a Centre of Restorative Excellence, or CORE, was contained in the 2016 Fresh Start Panel’s report on the disbandment of paramilitary groups, informed by both the Department and the current CBRJ groups who advocated for such a development. The establishment of such a Centre was also the subject of one of Judge Marrinan’s recommendations on restorative justice. The Fresh Start report also recognised the importance of restorative approaches more generally, and the role they could play in communities by helping to, *“develop constructive relationships between the police and the community, encourage community support for the rule of law, support effective rehabilitation of offenders and, importantly, address the needs of victims”*.

As a result, Recommendation A9 of their report recommended that the Executive should put in place a dedicated, long-term fund for restorative justice, and that it should be used to resource a CORE for Northern Ireland. Having agreed to conduct a feasibility study to identify best options for a potential CORE, it was agreed that consequential actions falling to the Department would be incorporated into the Adult Strategy’s Action Plan, as an acknowledgement of the interrelatedness of the work.

Last year it was reported that Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan was appointed as an independent expert to re-evaluate the options for a CORE. Her report, which was approved by the Minister, set out a potential approach and addressed the issues as far as they can be progressed in the absence of cross-Executive support and funding. While the original action was considered complete, a revised action was developed to reflect ongoing work by the Department, and in particular by the Interim Protocol Lead, as set out below.

Progress update:

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| <p>Work with Executive Departments on the delivery of Rec.A9, including a Centre of Restorative Excellence; Progress those elements that are within the DoJ’s gift through the work of the Interim Protocol Lead</p> | <p>Cross-Executive support and funding (led by) TEO, is required before a CORE can be delivered. However, the work of the newly appointed Interim Protocol Lead will enable some elements of a CORE-type model to be progressed, such as a training standards framework. This work will be taken forward in Year 3.</p> |
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5. CONCLUSION

This is the second Annual Report published following the development of Northern Ireland's Adult Restorative Justice Strategy and it provides detailed information on the progress made in implementing Year 2 of the Strategy's Action Plan during 2023/24.

It may appear that progress was slightly slower in Year 2 compared to the range of actions taken forward in the first year of the Strategy. However, the actions that were progressed this year are essential in laying the foundations for Restorative Justice to be successfully integrated into the adult criminal justice system. Delivery partners have worked extremely hard to raise the profile and awareness of restorative justice not only to their service users but also to the wider public. The most successful awareness-raising initiative was the Restorative Justice Council first annual Northern Ireland Conference held in September 2023. The conference brought together a wide range of stakeholders from the statutory, non-statutory, voluntary and community sectors to discuss the importance of RJ in creating sustained change and resilient communities and looked at the importance of ensuring high-quality, safe and effective practice.

Perhaps the most significant development by the Department in Year 2 was the appointment of an Interim Protocol Lead (IPL) in February 2024. The independent panel who reviewed the 2007 Protocol felt this role was crucial to embedding RJ in the criminal justice system. The IPL will hold responsibility for a range of functions including designing a formal accreditation process of non-statutory RJ organisations and independent practitioners; setting training and practice standards for RJ organisations and individual practitioners and ensuring these are met; and assisting with raising awareness of RJ among the wider public. This role will also aid the development of justice aspects of the Centre of Restorative Excellence in the absence of a cross-Executive agreed way forward.

Since taking up post, the IPL has held constructive conversations with many key stakeholders to ascertain important information on the RJ landscape, not only in Northern Ireland, but also looking to best practice in other jurisdictions. The information gathered will inform many aspects of the IPL's work programme, to be delivered in Year 3.

The Adult Restorative Justice Strategy is committed to delivering RJ at each stage of the criminal justice continuum and there has been significant developments in Year 2 at the diversionary stage. The development of the PSNI-led Community Resolution Notice pilot scheme in North and West Belfast will bring the introduction of RJ at a diversionary level and give PSNI officers a valuable insight into how useful a tool RJ can be. Following the year-long pilot scheme, PSNI envisage a full roll out of the scheme to all parts of the jurisdiction, dependent on the availability of accredited services.

Finite resources and a difficult budgetary position for the Department may impact on the speed at which some actions can be progressed, but there has been substantial goodwill amongst Restorative Justice Working Group partners to deliver against many of the actions. Northern Ireland Alternatives, Community Restorative Justice Ireland and the Probation Board NI have made important progress in the introduction of RJ in the custody,

resettlement and reintegration stage of the justice continuum, while Victim Support NI continues to deliver RJ training to both statutory and non-statutory organisations and individuals.

The Adult Strategy is a finalised document; however, the Action Plan is a living document which can be adapted to ensure it remains up to date and captures relevant changes in an ever-evolving criminal justice system. Members of the RJWG are focusing on reviewing the Action Plan in light of the progress made in Year 2 alongside organisational priorities for the coming year, with a view of agreeing priorities for Year 3 actions.