



PRESS INFORMATION

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Police Authority Hails Restorative Justice a Success

The introduction of Restorative Justice in Bedfordshire has been hailed a success by Bedfordshire Police Authority following feedback from both officers and those involved in the process.

Restorative Justice gives victims the chance to tell offenders how their crime has impacted on the lives of others, to get answers to their questions and to receive an apology. In doing this, it gives the offenders the chance to understand the real impact of what they've done and to do something to repair the harm.

Restorative Justice holds offenders to account for what they have done, personally and directly, and helps victims to get on with their lives.

Since the Force started to use Restorative Justice at the end of 2009 as opposed to costly and time-consuming court procedures, 319 crimes have been dealt with in this way and it is known to be effective at cutting crime and reducing re-offending.

Approximately half the offenders who are brought to justice using Restorative Justice are under 18 and the Youth Offending Service are reporting that it is making an impact in reducing the number of young offenders entering the Criminal Justice System.

The types of crime for which Restorative Justice is typically used to address are shoplifting, minor assault and criminal damage and research has proven that it reduces reoffending rates and increases victim satisfaction in the criminal justice system.

Peter Conniff, Chair of the Police Authority, said: "Restorative Justice has proved a great success in other parts of the Country and we are very pleased with the early results in Bedfordshire.

"It focuses on repairing the harm caused by crime and making criminals face up to what they have done. It enables the victim to see the person who has committed a crime against them and hear them apologise, which helps them move on with their lives.

"It also frees up valuable time putting the perpetrators of minor crimes through the criminal justice system and hopefully persuades them not to commit other crimes in the future. We do know that elsewhere, reoffending rates have fallen when Restorative Justice is used."

While Restorative Justice can be used as an alternative to prosecution for less serious crimes it can also take place when the offender has already been sentenced, in prison or in the community. It can take place when an offender has pleaded guilty in court, but before the judge passes sentence.

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