

## Restorative Justice: Case Studies

Provided courtesy of the Professional Judgement Project Team

A man reported that a youth had stolen his cycle out of his very hands as he was pushing it home. Once it was established that a theft and not a robbery had occurred the enquiry was allocated to a PCSO. The suspect was originally unknown, but with the PCSO's local knowledge, the offender was quickly identified.

Employing the principles of restorative justice, the PCSO organised a payment of £200 in compensation. Payment was supervised and the case filed. The victim was satisfied and the suspect showed remorse explaining that he was drunk at the time and apologised for his actions. Events were recorded in a pocket notebook to get each party to sign the relevant entries.

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**21/06/09:** A community park bench was vandalised by three known suspects. All were spoken with in the presence of their parents and accepted their part in the damage. An agreement was made with a member from the local community that the suspects would repair the bench.

The suspects have repaired the fence and also re-varnished it to the communities satisfaction. Everyone is very happy with the outcome.

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A school had damaged caused to a window by a young person, by kicking a football recklessly against the windows outside of normal school hours. The damaged caused was a large pane of glass which was shattered.

The suspect was identified and spoken with in the presence of his parents and the school headmaster and an agreement was made that the youth would pay the money back for the damage caused.

Money has been paid and all parties are very happy with the resolution.

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A verbal only argument occurred between a male and a female over a set of keys located within her vehicle. As a result, the male deliberately broke the passenger window of the vehicle in order to retrieve the keys.

The victim supported a Restorative Justice approach and was happy for her crime to be resolved in such a manner, if the offender paid compensation in order for the window to be repaired.

The suspect went one better than this and purchased the aggrieved a new car instead! The aggrieved is very happy with how the situation was resolved to her benefit.

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Female adult whilst walking along the street is bitten on the inner thigh by a Collie dog causing a slight injury. Restorative Justice was explained to the victim who agreed that she would like an apology from the owner, compensation for her trousers and to see the Dog muzzled whilst in public. The suspect agreed to the victim's demands and the officer arranged a supervised meeting.

The victim stated she was really happy with meeting the dog owner on more friendly terms. She also had the chance to explain how the dog bite had affected her and the last thing she wanted was for the case to go to court and have the dog put down.

The suspect was also pleased with the action the police took over this matter. He agreed to all the terms and stated "In the last 18 months I have lost my home, my wife and my job. The dog is all I have left".

Both the victim and suspect stated they were very happy with the outcome.

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A Taxi driver picked three men up from a pub. When the Taxi driver stopped to drop the males off, one of the males got out of the car and damaged his car aerial. The suspect was identified and it was agreed that the suspect would apologise to the Taxi driver, both verbally and in writing and pay some compensation for the damaged aerial to be repaired. All actions have now been completed.

The victim said "He was only a young lad and I didn't want him to have to go to court for this. I wanted him to tell me he was sorry and I wanted a letter from him saying it as well. The police were brilliant and it has saved a lot of hassle for him and for me so I am very happy with the outcome. It was all resolved very quickly."

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A victim reported that four known youths ran over his garden and damaged his fence causing £100 worth of damage. The Restorative Justice principles were explained to the victim who agreed he would like compensation from the offenders. The officer in the case visited all four offenders who admitted to their actions, apologised and paid £100 to the victim.

Two days later the victim re-contacted the police to express how pleased and satisfied he was with the way the police dealt with the matter.

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A 16 year old girl was disembarking a bus when someone pinched her bottom. She turned to see the suspect, and immediately suspected that this male was suffering some form of learning difficulty. She discussed her experience with her mother and they decided, reluctantly, to report the matter to the police. The victim, unaware of the Professional Judgement process, told the officer in charge that if the suspect turns out to be of sound body and mind, then they

wanted them prosecuting, but if they are suffering some form of mental illness, then they wanted the officer to take a more proportionate approach.

The officer realised that this case, although strictly in the red according to the traffic light system, appeared suitable for Restorative Disposal and called his Divisional Champion.

The male was traced through the buses CCTV footage. It transpired that this man had been the victim of a serious motorcycle accident in 2001, which had left him with a degree of brain damage and personality problems. He no longer possesses the same interpersonal skills, and the boundaries around inappropriate behaviour have become blurred. He is in 24/7 social services care and has no previous disposal history. His mother attended the meeting and fully supported the action being taken. She was full of praise for the method of disposal and both she and her son expressed thanks to the victim for consenting to the process. Both the victim and her mother have also made positive comments about the system.

The mother has agreed to contact her son's case worker, who is in charge of rehab. He is very supportive and she believes further work on counselling his behaviour, certainly in terms of rules and conduct on a bus, will be enacted as soon as possible.

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Police were called to a verbal argument between mother and son over him not tidying his room when asked. During the argument the son grabbed his mum's left arm and pushed her backwards leaving no visible injuries (Common Assault reported).

Upon police arrival the mother asked attending officers simply to speak with son and advise him about his behaviour in an effort stop any future incidents occurring between the two. She did not support a formal prosecution and was horrified at the thought of him actually being arrested. The son had no previous convictions and had never come to the attention of the police before. The crime was resolved by son apologising to mum and showing genuine remorse for his actions and both parties agreed to attend a parenting course together as well as work in conjunction with the Youth Offending Prevention Team.

The mother was extremely happy with how the crime was dealt with, as she wanted help with her family rather than a Criminal Justice outcome.

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A male reported the theft of several cheques and the subsequent fraudulent cashing of these to the value of £1200.00. In the early stages of the police investigation it came to light that his 19 year old step-daughter was responsible.

Upon finding this out, he attempted to withdraw the complaint and refused to cooperate with the police. The investigating officer spoke to the victim who explained that he would like an apology from his daughter and an explanation as to her actions. Although he realised she would never be able to pay the amount back in full, he stated he would be happy if she could make some attempt to re-pay him.

She was spoken to and admitted the offence. It was evident that she was truly sorry and was adamant that she would attempt to make amends with her step-father.

The job has been disposed of as a Restorative Disposal. Under the traditional investigation process and without the complainants assistance many police hours would have been spent on this enquiry with an almost guaranteed NFA result.

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A male juvenile offender entered a supermarket and stole sweets from the display. He was detained by security who called the police. Restorative justice was explained to the staff who agreed that the male should be banned from entering the store and offer an apology. The offender apologised to staff and was subsequently banned for one year before being taken home and the circumstances explained to his parents.

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A male entered a store, selected a bottle of cider from the shelf and was detained by security trying to leave the premises without offering payment. Police attended and explained the restorative justice options. Staff stated they would like the unopened bottle returned and an apology. The offender returned the bottle to the staff and apologised for his behaviour.

The victim was later contacted by a Divisional Champion who spoke with the store manager. He stated this was a positive and proportionate approach to the incident and he is pleased with the outcome.

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An elderly male victim had problems with the local youths hanging around some waste land at the rear of his property. He witnessed two young youths kicking his fence, damaging it. He shouted out and attempted to detain the youths but they ran off. As they did, one lad shouted out a name and address of a possible offender.

The victim passed the details onto the local PCSO and stated that if they would agree to pay for the damage he would not prosecute. The youth was spoken to and admitted their part in the offence. A co-accused was also named, who again admitted causing the damage. Both parents agreed that they would go halves in reimbursing the victim for the cost of the damage.

This was relayed to the victim who appreciated the offer but his neighbour had given him a piece of wood and that he was able to fix the fence himself at no cost. However, he did state that he would like a written letter of apology from both youths. The two lads agreed to this and instantly wrote their apology. They handed it in person to the victim and they shook hands.

Since that date, the victim has not received any further problems from the local youths. In fact the two lads have occasionally been to his house, spending time with the victim by looking after his fish in the pond in his garden. One of the youths have even lent a video of a film to the victim's wife.

The victim has been spoken to and stated he couldn't be happier with the result.