

Newsletter



School-based officer pilot scheme

Hoax calls & inappropriate use of
999 emergency service

Diversion from prosecution

Dumfries and Galloway
Constabulary



Established 1948

Diversion from prosecution

This service commenced on the 1st February 2005.

Since the commencement of this service, there have been 285 individuals who have, and still are taking part in the Diversion from Prosecution scheme.

Those eligible for the scheme must be aged between 15.5 and 17 years old.

The offences committed are low tariff type crimes such as vandalisms, breach of the peace, low value thefts and minor assaults.

A Charge Report is submitted to the Procurator Fiscal who looks at each case individually and considers whether it would be suitable for Youth Justice intervention and the Diversion process and the relevant paperwork is then passed onto the Diversion Co-ordinator, Youth Justice Team, Dumfries and Constable Bob Rogerson who is seconded to the Youth Justice Team.

The youths that are forwarded for inclusion in the scheme are then checked to make sure that they fulfill the necessary criteria and the Procurator Fiscal's Office informed accordingly.

The next stage is an initial assessment by the Youth Justice Team who visit each individual and make sure that they fully understand, are suitable for the process and are willing to take part. Once the process begins there are group meetings held to discuss various Awareness Programmes, ie

- Offending and Victim Awareness
- Victim/Offender Mediation and reparation
- Sexual Awareness and Personal Safety
- Drug and Alcohol Issues
- Anti Social Behaviour including ASBOs (Anti-Social Behaviour Orders) and ABCs (Acceptable Behaviour Contracts)

As well as the above, the individuals taking part are given advice on careers and any other matters that could assist in their future development and possible prevention of them re offending.

At present there are Group Diversion Programmes ongoing at Ladyacre and Sanquhar Police Station with a newly formed Group beginning at Lockerbie Police Station at the beginning of September 2006. As well as group sessions individuals are seen on a one to one basis throughout Dumfries and Galloway. There are also three individuals from the Sanquhar area, one of whom has an Anti Social Behaviour Order in place and the other two who have been served with Acceptable Behaviour Contracts who are seen on a weekly basis by the Youth Justice Team.

After the sessions have taken place and throughout the intervention period of three months, if the individuals have taken part are thought to have successfully taken part, then a letter of confirmation is sent to the Procurator Fiscal. If however, an individual fails to turn up for group sessions or does not comply with the *House Rules at the meetings, then the relevant paperwork is returned to the Procurator Fiscal for consideration of prosecution.



* AGREEMENT/HOUSE RULES

I agree:-

- 1) To take part in the Diversion from Prosecution scheme, to arrive on time, on the days that I have agreed to. If I am ill, I will make sure that staff are contacted before expected appointment times.
- 2) If I have problems regarding transport then I will let the worker know and arrangements can be.
- 3) That whilst I am involved with the Diversion from Prosecution programmes, I will not engage in any violent, threatening, abusive disruptive or dishonest behaviour either with staff or others.
- 4) That I will not bring alcohol, unprescribed drugs or solvents whilst on any programme. I will not take any of these substances whilst attending nor will I arrive under the influence.
- 5) To treat people with respect, regardless of race, gender or offence.
- 6) To abide by any reasonable requests made by the workers involved in the Diversion from Prosecution Scheme.

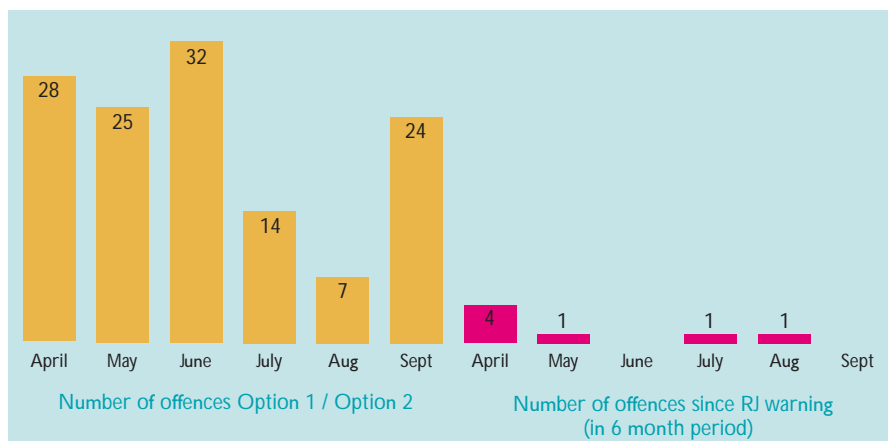
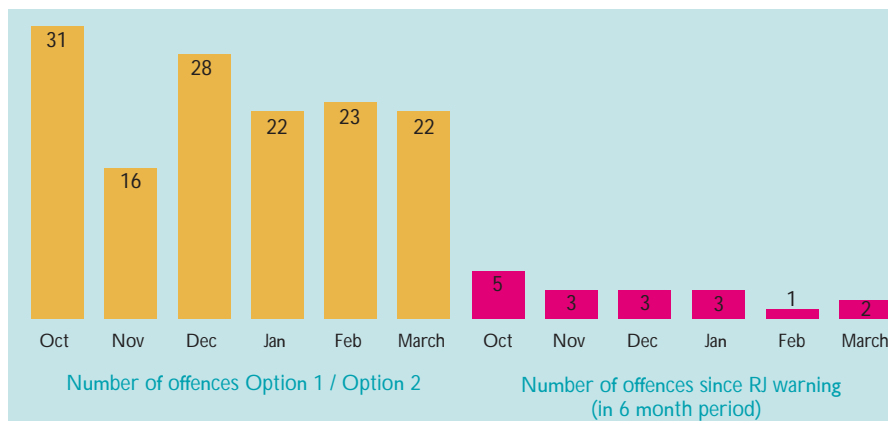
(This is signed by the individual involved and retained in their file)

PC Bob Rogerson
Youth Justice Team

How far we've come since May 2005

April 2006, saw the implementation of the ACPOS (Association of Police Officers in Scotland) guidelines in relation to police restorative warnings within all Scottish Forces. Dumfries & Galloway Constabulary introduced these guidelines forcewide in May 2005. This has afforded us the luxury of time. Time to learn and develop, whether this has been in the referral process from the reporting police officer; administration of Police Restorative Warnings; or to have the opportunity to receive feedback from participants in the restorative process. This has resulted in setting the wheels in motion to re-design and re-invent our leaflets and participant survey forms.

Caroline Clark
RJ Co-ordinator



Participant survey forms

Restorative Justice trained officers have been informing the youth who has offended, the victim, parents/carers once a Police Restorative Justice Warning has been administered that an evaluation form will be sent to them within the next 10 days, which will allow us, as a force, to evaluate the restorative process, and enable us to look at any ways we can improve delivery of this service.

Through the participants completing these forms we are re-wording the participant survey form and leaflets are also being re-designed and the text changed to suit the different age groups in which a restorative process can involve. When all the documents are complete we will be informing the participant with that particular suggestion by letter.

From April until September this year Dumfries & Galloway Constabulary have received 89 completed participant survey forms from

victims/offenders/parents and carers involved in the Restorative process. Of these completed forms we have a 96.7% satisfaction rate. Of the participants who were dissatisfied, one had not completed the comments section of the form, so there was no way we could gauge the reasons why they were not satisfied, one felt that they would have benefited from a meeting with the offender, and one was under the impression that the offender was not cautioned and charged, when they actually were. This has been addressed and the matter resolved.

Some of the comments received from the participants who completed the participant survey forms are as follows:

QUOTES

Victim: 'The process appears to be working well as the end result shows. Only time will tell if there is an everlasting effect. Thanks to everyone involved.'

Victim: I was pleased with the result - no more trouble at our house. I was kept informed throughout and my view was understood. Thank you.'

Offender's parent: 'Don't think it could be improved as the officer was very nice'

Offender's parent: 'I thought everything was explained very well, and was fully understood.'

Offender's parent: 'Lock them in a cell for 20 minutes to get a taste of what it would be like.'

Offender's parent: 'I'm just glad that you have got something like this now.'

In answer to 'how we could improve ways in which we prepare people for restorative justice warning?'

Offender: 'None, very good.'

Offender: 'None.'

Caroline Clark
RJ Co-ordinator



Mediation Service

Working in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Council, SACRO provide an independent, confidential and free mediation service for all residents of Dumfries and Galloway.

We are able to help people who are in dispute resolve their difficulties by visiting them in the privacy of their homes, listening to their views on the problems and with everyone's agreement arranging an informal meeting where the issues can be discussed in a calm, safe environment.

All of our mediators are highly trained to be impartial, not to take sides or give advice but simply to help the people involved reach an agreement, which hopefully will result in the situation improving in the future for everyone concerned.

Participation in mediation is completely voluntary and is an extremely effective manner of resolving a wide range of disputes including noise, car parking, boundaries and use of communal areas. Taking part does not prevent participants from seeking other more formal legal remedies if necessary.

HOW IT WORKS

As part of the Prevention section of Dumfries and Galloway's Anti Social Behaviour Strategy, mediation should be considered as one of the first options for most disputes in the community. Sacro's Community Mediation Service looks at each referral on its merits. Previous or current charges against a person do not automatically rule out mediation: it depends on the circumstances.

Although the service would prefer contact details of the parties involved, only one party needs to agree to be referred. They are not agreeing to mediation at this point, only that they agree to be contacted by our service. This is very important where a referrer's time is limited: it is our role to encourage parties to take part in mediation.

Many disputes can be resolved through Community Mediation, such as those between neighbours often involving noise issues, boundary or use of land disputes.

A referral to Community Mediation means that the parties involved in the dispute are usually contacted by us within five working days. We will contact the referrer when the case is closed with the reason why (upholding confidentiality) and update them if the case is open longer than one month.

The earlier that a referral is made, the better the outcome for the parties involved, and for the referrer, who is less likely to be called out by either party in the future.

Agreements are made in 90% cases where a mediation meeting is held. Older disputes can still be referred, and positive outcomes achieved in many of these cases.

Other benefits to referrers are not having to attend disputing parties as often, and where agreements are made, not having to attend at all. What seems to be the issue is often not the core of the problem; community mediators are independent and impartial and can usually help the parties to identify the real issues.

Finally, our service reminds referrers that mediation should be used as the first step to resolving disputes which may otherwise lead to more serious anti social behaviour, and more serious consequences for the parties involved.

Contact us for more details on 01387 731270 or 01776 706683, or info@dumfries.sacro.org.uk or info@stranraercm.sacro.org.uk

School-based officer pilot scheme

As stated in our March 2006 Newsletter, Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary have appointed Constable Colin Scott as our school based officer within Annan Academy. This post commenced on 24 October 2005. Through this pilot we have organized SACRO (Safeguarding Communities - Reducing Conflict) the agency, who specialize in mediation, conferences, and other restorative practices to meet with Annan Academy Guidance Teachers. Annan Academy are looking to adopt mediation practices within their school and requested an input. SACRO were contacted, and two of their staff attended and gave an overview of restorative practices. It was recommended that if the school were undertaking this kind of restorative practice, it would be beneficial that pupils trained as peer mediators and guidance teachers are trained in supporting the pupils in the process by SACRO. SACRO would also provide a service to the pupils and teachers once they were trained.

Caroline Clark
RJ Co-ordinator

Over to Constable Colin Scott

This August will be the start of what will hopefully be the first full school year that a police officer has been based in Annan Academy. A lot of the older kids have moved on and a new intake of about 200 first years will be starting their secondary education. For them having a police officer at school will just be the norm.

Over the summer holidays I took part in the Citizenship Project which involved 11 pupils from the school. This is run jointly by Annan Community Policing and the fire service. Hopefully this will have had a positive impact on the kids involved which I will be able to follow up on at the Academy.

This school year I hope to work with the school and relevant agencies in order to achieve both our own as well as common goals.

I will continue to address any crime that is committed in the school grounds as well as assist in combating bad behaviour and antisocial conduct using various methods including restorative-type interviews with the pupils responsible. It is important to remember that general discipline is still, however, the remit of the school itself.

I was asked to participate in several talks to classes on varying subjects from the Impact of Crime in the Community to Internet Safety. Funding was sourced and leaflets and a DVD were purchased by the police to assist in getting the message across re Internet Safety. This was after consultation with the school who agreed to purchase a further DVD and free up time and teachers to support the initiative.



At the invitation of the police, representatives of SACRO attended at Annan Academy to explain more about restorative practices in schools and what training is available. This is still at an early stage of discussion and any progress will require further consultation.

We continue to advise on security and crime prevention as well participate in agency meetings sharing information where appropriate.

I also took part in the Duke Of Edinburgh Awards scheme and hope to continue this into the new school year. This gives me an opportunity to meet some of the kids I would probably not usually meet and they get a positive insight into what the police are all about.

I hope this year to develop better links with the primary schools and to help during the transition period from primary to secondary school hopefully enabling the younger children gain more confidence in what is a worrying time for many, parents included.

PC Colin Scott
Annan Academy



Facts and Figures

From October 2005 until September 2006, Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary has received 272 referrals which have met the criteria for police restorative warnings to be administered. Out of these referrals there have been:

Option 1 257

(non referral to Reporter)

Option 2 15

(referred back by Reporter once fast track report has been submitted)

At the time of compiling this newsletter, from the 272 referrals 23 youths have re-offended, giving Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary a re-offending rate of 8.8% from October 2005 until September 2006 (under the Scottish Executive Guidelines re-offending is measured over a 6 month period). From the data taken from the first 6 months (October 2005–March 2006) 17 youths had re-offended compared with the next bi-yearly figure (April 2006–September 2006) of 7 youths re-offending. This gives us a reduction from 12% in the first 6 months to 5.4% in our recent figures. A reduction of 6.6%. Therefore we now have more than 94% of youths not coming to police attention since receiving a police restorative warning.

The average timing in delivering Option 1 warnings from the date of caution and charge is 23 days.

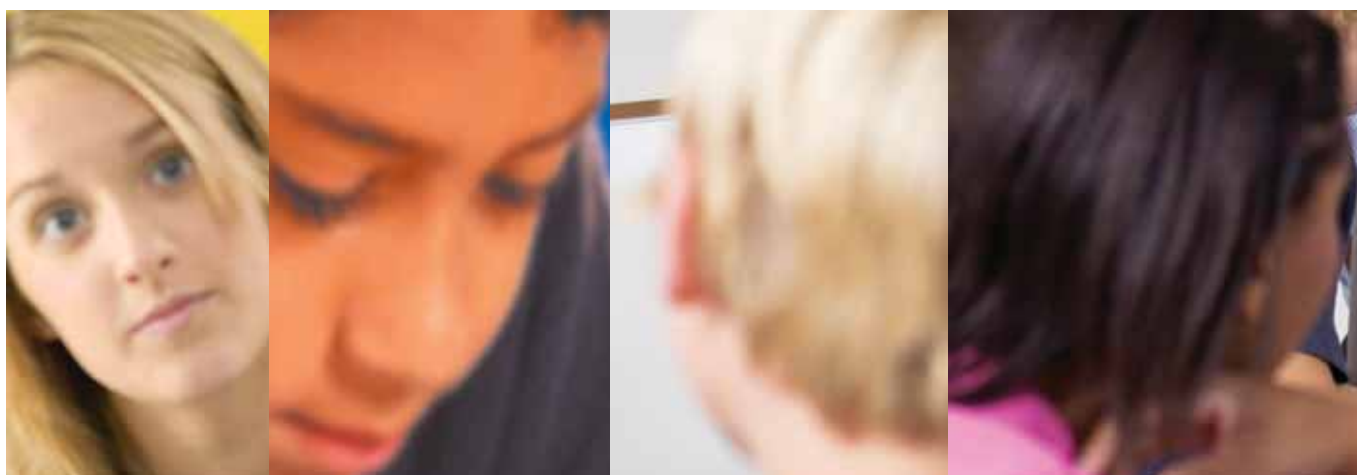
Caroline Clark
RJ Co-ordinator

Option 1/2 referrals and re-offending rates October 2005 – March 2006

Data	Month & year of offence	Total
Count of Option 1 / Option 2	October 2005	31
	November 2005	16
	December 2005	28
	January 2006	22
	February 2006	23
	March 2006	22
Count of offended since RJ Warning (in a 6 month period)	October 2005	5
	November 2005	3
	June 2006	3
	January 2006	3
	February 2006	1
	March 2006	2
Total count of Option 1 / Option 2		142
Total count of offended since RJ warning (in a 6 month period)		17

Option 1/2 referrals and re-offending rates April 2006 – September 2006

Data	Month & year of offence	Total
Count of Option 1 / Option 2	April 2006	28
	May 2006	25
	June 2006	32
	July 2006	14
	August 2006	7
	September 2006	24
Count of offended since RJ Warning (in a 6 month period)	April 2006	4
	May 2006	1
	June 2006	0
	July 2006	1
	August 2006	1
	September 2006	0
Total count of Option 1 / Option 2		130
Total count of offended since RJ warning (in a 6 month period)		7



Joint police and fire service RJ Warnings

TRYING TO IMPRESS

During August a joint warning took place at Dumfries fire station, a young girl aged twelve set fire to an open area of grass in an attempt to impress her friends. Due to extremely hot weather and a strong breeze the fire soon spread to a hedge resulting in large plumes of smoke blowing across a busy road causing concern to passing motorists.

The group quickly dispersed leaving the young girl to call the fire service for assistance, the girl remained at the scene and explained to both the police and the fire service staff what had happened.

During her time at the fire station she watched a video which involved a group of young people setting fire to dried grass which got out of control, resulting in the girl being badly burnt as she tried to extinguish a developing fire. After the input the young girl realised the dangers she had caused to herself and others. She accepted full responsibility for her actions and the damage caused by the fire.

Both the police and fire officers are confident that this young girl will have learned from her bad experience and she is unlikely to re-offend.

EASY ACCESS CAN LEAD TO ...

A young boy aged nine who had easy access to matches and lighters found himself and his father paying a joint visit to Dumfries fire station. The young boy had been asked by other youths to steal lighters from his home. The lighters were used by the boy to set fire to his best friend's homework which was then thrown into a bush at a local school. Fortunately a watchful neighbour was quick to act and called the police and fire service.

During the visit to the fire station two main issues were addressed;

The first was to make sure that the young boy understood the dangers that fire setting can cause to himself and the community that he lives in.

The second was to address the possible consequences of leaving matches and lighters lying about the home with his parents.

After watching two videos, both the boy and his father were shocked at how easy fire develops, and the damage it can cause to themselves and the environment.

John Templeton
Community Fire Safety
Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue Service

Radio Interview – Southwest Sound Radio

Constable Mark Jackson, Community Services and myself were interviewed by Southwest Sound radio in order to raise public awareness in police restorative justice warnings. In this interview Constable Jackson and I outlined the criteria the child must meet, why ACPOS have implemented these guidelines, and the benefits to the youth who has offended, the victim, and each parties families and the community as a whole.

Caroline Clark
RJ Co-ordinator

Training

On 26 September 2006, Community Services held a one day training event for police officers, which provided officers with the skills to facilitate a Police Restorative Justice Warning. Nine police officers attended. Due to officers who are trained in administering these warnings moving into new posts, this gave us a shortfall in officers trained in this field. The training, which was well received by the officers who attended, now brings Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary up to a total of 40 police officers actively administering police restorative warnings.

Caroline Clark
RJ Co-ordinator &
PC Bob Rogerson



Hoax calls & inappropriate use of 999 emergency service

Inspector Robert Togneri, Tracey McNeish, Media Officer, Fiona Neilson, Force Communications Centre Analyst, and myself have had meetings with Norrie Davis, Fire and Rescue, Tony Wood, Coastguard and Sam McNeish, Ambulance Service to discuss the structure of the interview being aired by South West Sound Radio. The format of the interview included airing of an actual call to the Fire and Rescue Service with a fire ongoing; statistics of inappropriate use of the 999 emergency service and the actual cost – v – social cost. Regrettably a joint press release of the subject before being aired was not possible although the interview was aired on 9 August 2006.

Caroline Clark
RJ Co-ordinator

A New Look!

As stated earlier in the newsletter leaflets are to be re-designed and re-worded to suit the appropriate age groups. Dumfries & Galloway Constabulary are hoping that this will be completed by the end of the year.

Process logs (which is the referring form we use and send to the officer who is administering the RJ Warning, on completion the RJ trained officer will detail the outcome of the RJ Warning and send it back to the RJ Co-ordinator) have been re-designed to make them more user friendly for our officers and enable us to e-mail them direct along with the Preparation for a Restorative Justice Warning Worksheet, which the youth can complete voluntarily going through the facts, (why they committed the offence) the consequences (the impact of committing the offence on them, the family, the victim etc) and the future (what they can do to prevent them offending again) to the Divisional Co-ordinator and a member of their support staff who will allocate the case to an RJ trained officer. Leaflets are now managed at these area stations. This has been piloted in two area stations, Annan and Stranraer from April this year, which has worked considerably well in both areas. The average days from caution and charge to administering the police restorative warning are now down to 15 days in Annan, which is a target that the whole force is striving to achieve. This month Upper Nithsdale and Community Policing Unit, Dumfries, have now been receiving referrals by e-mail. Hopefully by the end of the year all process logs (referrals) will be e-mailed to all Divisional Co-ordinators, in line with the re-designed leaflets.

Caroline Clark
RJ Co-ordinator

UPDATE FROM OTHER FORCES

Strathclyde

Within Strathclyde there are over 200 officers now trained to deliver Police Restorative Warnings, some are dedicated officers who deliver restorative warnings on a full time basis, others incorporate it within their daily duties. The different choices of officers delivering the restorative warnings will be evaluated later in the year and should there be a specific type, ie dedicated officers who show more promising results, then it may be the case that this is suggested as best practice to other divisions. Training is ongoing with the next course being delivered in Argyll and Bute in October 2006.

Inspector Eileen Taylor

Grampian

Grampian are currently reviewing their in-house training as far as Restorative Justice is concerned and have started getting a pool of trainers together. There has been an increase in the number of RJ Warnings carried out this year and the second evaluation will take place towards the end of the year.

Sergeant Carron McKellar

Lothian and Borders Police

A new Restorative Justice Co-ordinator, Ken Capewell, took over the role in March this year.

Since then, training courses have been held for Youth Action Team (YAT) officers based at stations across Edinburgh to enable them to carry out Police Restorative Warnings. Whilst most Restorative Warnings result in a verbal or written apology, a recent Warning carried out by a YAT officer in the south of Edinburgh resulted in a notable success when the offender, with the agreement of his mother, offered to repay £100 in respect of vandalism to a car. The offender worked for three weekends moving furniture to earn the money. The victim, a retired man, was surprised and delighted to receive the compensation.

A joint agency initiative to tackle anti-social behaviour is currently being planned by officers in the east of Edinburgh and as part of this it is intended to train staff from partner agencies, along with police officers, in restorative methods.

Ken Capewell

