

Restorative Justice Newsletter

November 2025

Our Service

The Kent and Medway Restorative Justice Service is delivered by a partnership between Restorative Solutions, a nationally recognised provider of restorative justice, and Salus, the Kent based community interest company that has provided support to children, young people and their families since 2011.

The Service consists of three teams:

- **Restorative justice for criminal justice cases, including out-of-court disposals and post-sentence cases. We will take both victim and offender-initiated referrals.**
- **Adolescent to Parent Violence/Conflict (APVC) service for families in conflict.**
- **Mediation Service for neighbours who are in dispute and there has been police involvement.**



1000
People
Supported



500

Referrals



88%

Reports of
Wellbeing
Improvement

Restorative Justice - a personal view

After a chance meeting with a police family liaison officer and two of our facilitators at a local shopping centre, Jason was referred to the Kent and Medway Restorative Justice Service. Jason was 15 when his dad had been killed by a hit and run driver – Anthony. Both men wanted to take part in a face-to-face meeting with each other. In this interview, Jason tells us about his experience of restorative justice.

How did you find out about restorative justice?

After all the court proceedings and stuff like that, I had an idea that I wanted to at least meet this person [Anthony]. I was very young when it happened, and I contacted our police family liaison officer first and we tried to find him through 'Find a Prisoner' [A service to locate which prison a person is in]. Then we were in touch with a victim liaison officer from the Probation Service who was kind of communicating between everybody and it kind of got passed around about restorative justice. I'd say we found out about it by chance.

Could you tell us about why you wanted to meet Anthony?

I had lots of reasons for wanting to do this and it did change over time. I've got a little one and he started asking a lot of questions. My partner's dad is around, but mine wasn't. And he was like, where's my granddad? It was like how do I explain to a six-year-old what happened? Me, even at 15 years old hearing about what happened – that was hard to comprehend. I would always just say he died. I would never go fully into it like. That was probably the baseline of why I wanted to do restorative justice, so I could overcome something to then explain more to my son about what happened.

The facilitators ask the questions they need to ask to make sure that when you get into that room, you're as most prepared as you possibly can be. As I spoke to them more and more, there were so many more reasons. It was about getting closure that Anthony had actually changed and he's not going to come back out of prison and re-offend. And it's having that peace of mind that the justice system has done it's job in turning around someone's life. I also wanted to know what led up to that night.

The facilitators met with you several times before the restorative meeting. What was that like?

The facilitators were really understanding, working at my pace. I won't lie as I did think during the process – is this really what I want? Can I do this? I think it was the case that I'd take two steps forward, one step back a little bit. But we'd have an amazing conversation about the questions I'd want answered and every little detail, how you enter the building, where do you want to sit in the room, is mapped out. It was prepared to the point that it wasn't staged but it had a structure in which I knew I would be comfortable going into that room with which made me feel a lot better.



What was the meeting with Anthony like?

You don't know even up until the moment before what it will feel like. I don't get nervous, but I remember turning to the facilitators and said that I'd got a weird feeling in my stomach.

We both did just sit there for a second and then the facilitators prompted us. It was really good because we knew that if it ever did go quiet, we had that; luckily it didn't. I forgave him for what happened. I said I was proud that at least something has come from my dad's death, that he has changed his life around, which is what I wanted.

I remember at the end of the meeting, we had a few minutes of informal talking. The easiest way I can explain it, was it was like speaking to a normal person. I didn't feel anger. I didn't feel sad. I couldn't imagine in a million years this was the same person as who was responsible for what happened. He told me about his time in prison and what he's done; it made me think to myself that this person made a truly horrible mistake one night and now he's living his life with that pure guilt. It didn't make me necessarily feel better knowing this, it just made me feel better knowing that he actually felt sorry and that there was remorse.

And afterwards, how did you feel?

On the train home, I was smiling because it was the outcome I wanted. He was brutally honest and that's what I wanted because I knew that the answer I got was real. It was one of those things where it's like, you can't put into words how you feel but it was just such a great feeling knowing that I had the answers that I needed.

It's now a few months since you met Anthony, has anything changed for you?

When my little one asks questions, it's a lot better now. I can explain it to him, not the detail, but I can say that grandad was involved in an accident. And I've showed him a lot more photos of my dad, which I never really used to do and tell him about very fond memories I have.

Even my partner knows when I've had a memory of my dad and it's a lot nicer because I'd kind of suppressed those emotions a lot. I'm a lot more open now with other people when they ask me what my dad was like.

And finally, what would be your key message about restorative justice?

People will think what they think of it. It's not for everybody but it should at least be brought to them. It's certainly something which people need to be prepared that when they go into that room, it might not be the outcome that they want it to be. I had an amazing experience, and I got the answers I needed. You don't know what somebody's reaction is going to be to the process until they go through it, so at least speak to them about it and go, this is one of your options.

Thank you, Jason, for sharing your experience of restorative justice. All names have been changed.



Our achievements over the past 12 months



Between 1 September 2024 and 31 August 2025 we have:



Received almost
500 referrals,
with over half of these
for our APVC service.



88.5% of service users reported
an overall improvement in their
health and wellbeing and feelings of
empowerment.



Supported over
1000 people
across the three teams.



Worked with colleagues across a
number of different agencies, including:
Early Help Teams, housing providers,
HMP Prison and Probation Service,
Kent Police, the NHS, schools,
social services, victim support services
and youth justice services.

Focus on Mediation

In October 2023, Matthew Scott, the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, extended our funding to include mediation.

Working with Ashford Mediation Service, Maidstone Mediation Scheme, West Kent Mediation and our own in-house team, mediation is now available across the county for neighbours in dispute and where there has been police involvement. All parties must agree to take part.

Our referrals are largely from the police, and we have also had contact with housing providers and local authorities. The cases have covered a wide range of issues including planning and boundary disputes, harassment including hate related harassment, noise complaints and parking disagreements. We have facilitated both face-to-face meetings between neighbours and shuttle mediation with the parties agreeing a variety of outcomes, which often focus on respect for each other.

“Mediation allows each party a voice to speak from the “I” perspective and for them to be heard in a non-judgemental, impartial and confidential way. We offer a safe space for resolution to conflict to be found. I am always amazed at the length of time that neighbours have been engaged in disputes before mediation is introduced.

My role involves passing information, exploring needs and letting each party know the impact of the situation and their actions on each other. When parties do wish to sit face to face this is done in a very controlled, bounded way to allow all to feel safe and confident in being able to voice their concerns and issues. For me this is the beauty of mediation – a space for all parties to have their voices heard and to find solutions.

After taking part in mediation, participants have told us that they feel heard and listened to, enabling them to find some resolution to their long-standing issues.”

Nigel White, Mediation Practitioner



Case Study: Adolescent to Parent Violence/Conflict Service

We received a referral from social services (Adolescent Support Team) where the relationship between a young person and his parents had broken down. He'd moved away from the family home as a result of his criminal activity but was now back after an unplanned return. Mum had been particularly harmed by her son's actions.

Breakdowns in trust and communication within the family had led to a rift that was proving difficult to mend. Mum and young person wanted to engage with the APVC service to discuss the harm that had been caused and find ways to move forward with their relationship.

Both took part in a restorative meeting, where the young person recognised the emotional impact on his mum. They shared their feelings of pain which helped them to heal emotionally, moving to a position of empathy and better communication. There was recognition that it would take time to build trust again. The meeting ended with them setting future goals.

After the meeting, mum said that her relationship with her son had greatly improved, with both much more aware of each other's feelings. The young person said that he found the restorative process really useful; it had been good to talk about his feelings which he hadn't done in the past. He felt that he could now talk to mum in a much calmer way.

"A [the facilitator] definitely got us closer. She stopped us fighting and arguing."

I feel like sometimes I can't speak openly to my Mum but I felt I could talk to A to help me put it into words to talk to my Mum. She wasn't judging me and I felt I could trust her. I'd like to thank her."

A young person who participated in our Adolescent to Parent Violence/Conflict Service



Meet the Team

Our service has achieved Restorative Justice Service registration status awarded by the Restorative Justice Council, meaning that we deliver our service to national standards. Members of the team are also registered at Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced practitioner levels recognising their good practice.



Our Service structure is:

Head of Service: Jacqueline McHugh
Administrator: Jazz Bloomfield

Adolescent to Parent Violence/Conflict Service

Family Restorative Justice Practitioners:

Clarisse Fuller, Vanessa Paganga,
Sarah Ward, and Nigel White

Mediation Service

Mediation Practitioner:
Nigel White

We also work with our partners:

- Ashford Mediation Service
- Maidstone Mediation Scheme
- West Kent Mediation Service

Restorative Justice Service

Restorative Justice Practitioners:

Alice Hebditch, Linda Millington,
and Amy Wallace

Volunteer Restorative Justice Practitioners:

Dave Austin, Shaughna Flynn,
and Nola Garavaglia-McGann

Please contact us if you would like more information on the opportunities to be involved in this increasingly growing area of work.

Want to know more?

If you are interested in us presenting to your organisation, team or community group, please do contact us. We can provide introductory sessions on what is restorative justice to full training to be able to deliver restorative justice.

Contact us for more information about our service or if you would like to make a referral, please go to our website www.rjkent.org.uk, call us on 01303 817470 or email us at RJKent@restorativesolutions.org.uk

 @restorativesolutionscic

Contact:

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