

Case Study #7

RESTORATIVE APPROACHES - NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL (UK)

There is a disproportionate number of looked after children in the criminal justice system. According to the Department for Education, 24% of 15-18 year olds were looked after before entering custody.



APPROACH

As part of their role as a corporate parent, Norfolk County Council has implemented a new approach to both support children to do their best, but also to learn to deal with difficult situations appropriately by developing emotional resilience and problem solving skills. They introduced the practice of restorative approaches within residential care homes.

Restorative processes bring together those harmed by crime or conflict and those responsible for the harm, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing harm and finding a positive way forward.

Training was offered to 100 members of staff in residential care. To help control costs, the police agreed to provide free training on the basis that improved outcomes would cut the time spent dealing with antisocial behaviour and crime. This was part of a wider cultural change within residential care, making sure restorative approaches were embedded into the everyday running of each unit.

Additionally, the police and managers of the residential are meeting on an ongoing basis to create a better understanding of when police intervention is most appropriate, but also to jointly facilitate restorative conferences when required.



IMPACT

Aiming to reduce the number of looked-after children in the youth justice system, further outcomes were to reduce police call-outs to children's homes, and to develop better ways of working between carers and children.

There has been a 19% reduction in the number of Police call-outs to Norfolk County Council children's services residential homes since restorative approaches have been introduced. But also relationships between staff members and the young people have improved significantly through the practice of restorative approaches.

Based on the current success of the programme Norfolk City Council has disseminated the practice of restorative approaches to fostering social workers and foster carers.

“RA is used from the most minor incidents through to a first assault and there have been rewarding outcomes in 90% of situations”.

Residential Unit Manager

Sources

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2011/09/08/how-restorative-justice-can-improve-relationships-in-childrens-homes/#.U7Z-VfdUuv>



Department
for Education

