



**ORIGINATOR: HEAD OF COMMISSIONING AND GOVERNANCE**

**DECISION NUMBER: 15 - 2025**

**REASON FOR SUBMISSION: FOR DECISION**

**SUBMITTED TO: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

**SUBJECT: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SERVICE – EXTENSION OF SERVICE 2025/26**

**SUMMARY:**

1. The Norfolk and Suffolk Restorative Justice Service was established in 2019 to respond to requirements in the Victims' Code of Practice. This placed a requirement on police forces to offer information about Restorative Justice (RJ) to victims, and a complementary requirement on Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to ensure a service existed to provide RJ to those victims (and offenders) who wished to explore the use of RJ to help cope with the impact of crime.
2. The service is co-commissioned by Norfolk and Suffolk PCCs and managed by the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies Joint Justice Department.
3. The commitment to Restorative Justice supports the delivery of Theme 2 in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029: Commissioning services which support victims of crime and investing in initiatives which reduce crime, disorder, offending and prevent victimisation. Provision of Restorative Justice also ensures compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.
4. This report recommends that the Suffolk PCC continues to fund the service for a further 12 months with a contribution of £63,100 to support the employment of an RJ advisor for Suffolk.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The PCC is recommended to approve funding of £63,100 as the Suffolk contribution to the Norfolk and Suffolk Restorative Justice Service for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

**APPROVAL BY PCC**

The recommendation set out above is agreed.

**Signature:**



**Date: 9 June 2025**

## **DETAILS OF SUBMISSION**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Restorative Justice (RJ) Service in Norfolk and Suffolk was established in 2019 by Norfolk and Suffolk PCCs and is delivered by Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies. Resourcing for the service was increased in 2022. The service has been funded on an equal basis until 31 March 2025.
- 1.2 Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) can commission services that:
  - a) secure, or contribute to securing, crime and disorder reduction in Suffolk;
  - b) are intended to help victims or witnesses of, or other persons affected by, offences and anti-social behaviour.This is in accordance with the provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- 1.3 In applying this provision, the PCC will ensure that the services commissioned are also consistent with the Suffolk Police and Crime Plan 2025-29. Restorative Justice is outlined within the Police and Crime Plan as one of the services which help victims to cope and recover from the impact of crime and is one way in which the PCC's commissioning can support a reduction in reoffending.
- 1.4 This report sets out the recommendation to provide continuation funding to the RJ Service for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

### **2. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SERVICE**

- 2.1 The Restorative Justice Service has been in operation since 2019 and is delivered by Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies through a dedicated team. This approach is intended to strengthen the culture of restorative justice in policing and in practice allows the RJ service to embed best practice and supports police officers to deliver Out of Court Resolutions such as Conditional Cautions or Community Resolutions.
- 2.2 To date, Norfolk and Suffolk PCCs have contributed funding to the service on an equal basis. The service currently comprises two RJ Advisors and one 0.5 FTE administrator. The advisors are trained to deal with sensitive and complex Level 3 cases. The Joint Justice directorate supports the advisors with a Sergeant (Level 3 trained in RJ) and Inspector who has oversight of the service. The Constabularies also provide additional support through a dedicated police officer who assists in the facilitation of RJ cases and raising awareness of the service and its benefits to force colleagues. A small number of RJ trained police officers, able to support 'Level 2' cases alongside their normal duties are active in each county.
- 2.3 Performance data for 2024/25 shows 289 cases were referred in Suffolk including: 26 Level 2 and 3 referrals (serious and complex), 83 Conditional Cautions and 180 Community Resolutions utilising restorative approaches.
- 2.4 The rate of referrals to the service has increased in recent years due to the inclusion of Conditional Cautions and Community Resolution. The Constabularies state that Community Resolution is not enforceable and therefore no performance data is available as to the impact of this intervention. However, successful use of restorative approaches in Conditional

Cautions, predominantly by officers guided by the service, is reflected in a recidivism rate of 10.7% in 2024. This indicates that using RJ for low level offences is a preventative measure, reducing future reoffending as well as delivering benefits for victims.

- 2.5 The number of more complex cases referred to and supported by the trained advisors has remained stable at about 15 referrals per quarter across Norfolk and Suffolk. These cases include crime types such as murder and attempted murder, serious sexual offences and violent crime and often involve offenders in custody and multiple victims. These cases can be resource intensive, often taking months to progress due to factors outside the control of the RJ service.
- 2.6 Outcomes are collected from victims and offenders where cases have been closed. Offenders were most likely to experience improvement in their sense of wellbeing and 60% of victims reported they were better able to cope with aspects of every-day life (with the remaining 40% experiencing no change). 100% of victims and 95% of offenders providing feedback in 2024/25 said their experience of RJ was good or excellent.
- 2.7 Research conducted in 2022 by WhyMe?, a national charity dedicated to delivering and promoting Restorative Justice, found that the overall cost-social benefit ratio of RJ was £14 for every £1 invested. Additionally, the direct return on investment for the Criminal Justice System was £4 per £1 invested. These figures that do not account for the broader benefits of RJ in enhancing perceptions of justice among victims and the wider public. The authors of the research conclude that: "The results of this research show that Restorative Justice can reduce reoffending, save money and help victims to recover"<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.8 In October 2024, the Constabularies proposed an expansion in the service across Norfolk and Suffolk for 2025 onwards. Norfolk PCC has agreed to fund an additional 0.6 FTE RJ Advisor to operate in Norfolk for 2025/26. This option was not pursued in Suffolk due to a reduction in victim services funding from the Ministry of Justice in 2025/26, concerns about the long-term affordability of the service and risks associated with embedding new resource within a short funding period, most notably recruitment and vetting.
- 2.9 This decision paper recommends that the PCC continues funding to allow the RJ service to continue delivery in Suffolk with the existing resource allocation. Performance monitoring will continue to be undertaken quarterly and will include a review of resourcing, funding, key performance measures and areas for development.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The proposed budget for the Suffolk element of the Restorative Justice service in 2025/26 is £63,100. This is based on 1 FTE Band E RJ Advisor in Suffolk, and an equal contribution to Norfolk OPCC to support the 0.5 FTE Band C Administrator and the shared RJ case management system. This budget factors in an estimated pay award of 3.5% for 7 months of the year.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the funding is met by the PCC's commissioning budget.
- 3.3 The Constabularies estimate match funding resource from the Offender Diversion PC (working across Norfolk and Suffolk) of £73,415.

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<sup>1</sup> An Economic Evaluation of Restorative Justice, Frank Grimsey Jones, Lucy Harris 2022

#### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

- 4.1 The recommendation of funding for 2025/26 will continue to meet the needs of victims as set out in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan and will support compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. Without the extension of this funding there would no longer be a Restorative Justice service for victims of crime in Suffolk.
- 4.2 The commitment to funding for 12 months is due to uncertainty regarding future external (Ministry of Justice) funding for victim services. It is likely this will only become apparent later in 2025 following the conclusion of the government Comprehensive Spending Review.
- 4.3 The current service has been in place since 2019 and has developed organically to support the growth of Out of Court Resolutions. The OPCCs have discussed the benefit of reviewing the service and exploring options for future service delivery.

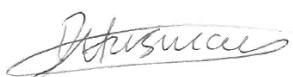
ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	Yes
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	Yes
Have human resource implications been considered?	Yes
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	Yes
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	Yes
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	Yes
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	Yes

In relation to the above, please ensure that all relevant issues have been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission.

#### APPROVAL TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION-MAKER

##### Chief Executive

I am satisfied that relevant advice has been taken into account in the preparation of the report and that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the PCC.



Signature:

Date: 20 May 2025