

Thames Valley Partnership

Working for safer communities

Thanks to our main funders

The Vodafone Foundation
The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
The Henry Smith Charity
Home Office – Community Action Against Crime
The Monument Trust
Thames Valley Police
Thames Valley Probation
The Ministry of Justice (National Offender Management Service)
Arts Council England
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Milton Keynes Community Foundation



Thames Valley Partnership, Townhill Barn, Dorton Road,
Chilton, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP18 9NA
Tel: 01844 202 001 **Fax:** 01844 202 008 **www.thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk**

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**PROTECTING VICTIMS, SUPPORTING
OFFENDERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**



Who are we?

The team is a small, committed, experienced group who have worked across all sectors including Criminal Justice and the Arts.

Our Associates bring considerable additional expertise and capacity to individual projects.

The staff are supported by the **Board of Trustees** with experience at senior and chief executive level across Criminal Justice, academia, local government, the voluntary and commercial sectors. The Board is chaired by Ian Blair, Lord Blair of Boughton and former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

Our **Steering and Advisory groups** guide our programmes and support and inform individual projects. They bring in wider expertise from regional and national perspectives.

Our office and work is based in the Thames Valley region but we have recently amended our governing document to allow programmes to extend and roll-out nationally.

The Thames Valley Partnership

'protecting victims, supporting offenders and their families'

Thames Valley Partnership works in partnership with organisations operating within the Criminal Justice system and allied services to provide long-term solutions to the problems of crime and social exclusion.

Key headline themes:

- Including the excluded
- Partnership and innovation
- Intervening early
- Promoting restorative justice
- Integrating creative approaches
- Protecting victims
- Supporting offenders and their families
- Disseminating and sharing good practice



"One of the things I really like about the Partnership is that it does that really difficult work but with an interesting edge" Ian Blair (Lord Blair of Boughton, Chair of Thames Valley Partnership Board of Trustees)



Looking back on 20 interesting years



Thames Valley Partnership was established in December 1993 and registered as a charity and company limited by guarantee in January 1994.

During those years we have had some outstanding successes:

- Leading the way in the establishment of **Community Safety Partnerships** in the mid 1990's
- Pioneering a partnership approach to **Domestic Abuse**, setting up locally based domestic violence forums, sharing and developing good practice through the Behind Closed Doors network and including the No Joke! Comic Relief programme: a whole-school approach to the prevention of domestic violence and abuse. Our TecSOS project leads the way nationally in providing a technical solution to increasing safety for domestic abuse victims
- **'Never Too Early'**: research exploring what works in **early years' interventions**
- Acting as one of two delivery partners building **Restorative Justice** capacity nationwide
- **'Positive Approaches'**: working to promote problem solving and conflict resolution methods to **anti-social behaviour** including the **'Mending Fences'** Programme
- **'Rethinking Crime and Punishment'** including the **'Making Good'** project: increasing community confidence in the Criminal Justice system
- **'Family Matters'**: strengthening ties between prisoners and their families and setting up new services to provide support to and increase resilience in these vulnerable families
- **'Play It Straight'**: using drama to engage and work with young people who are outside mainstream education
- **'Transit Dance Project'**: a performance project using the ethos of a professional contemporary dancer to bring about change in attitude and increase in skills for vulnerable young people



Restorative Justice



Thames Valley Restorative Justice Service (TVRJS)

A Provider of Quality Restorative Justice (RJ) Facilitation, RJ Training and Advice and Guidance on the Development and Delivery of RJ Services.

TVRJS is built upon a partnership between Thames Valley Partnership and Thames Valley Probation. We are at the forefront of research, development and delivery of restorative justice in the adult Criminal Justice system in England and Wales. In 2010 we were awarded the Howard League for Penal Reform's prestigious Adult Community Sentence Award. We are one of two delivery partners working with a grant from the Ministry of Justice (National Offender Management Service) to develop and build restorative justice capacity nationwide from 2011-2014.

Restorative Justice helps suitable offenders address the harm they have caused to their particular victims. It involves the parties meeting in a safe environment, with family, friends and supporters on both sides and anyone else affected by the offence. This facilitated meeting involves talking about what happened; who was affected and how; and what can be done to repair the harm. Taking part in such meetings has been found to reduce the likelihood of re-offending and to enable victims to put the experience of crime behind them and move on.

Restorative Justice is one of the most thoroughly researched interventions in the Criminal Justice System. From 2001 to 2005 TVRJS was one of three research sites being independently evaluated for the Government by Professor Joanna Shapland. She found that RJ conferences result in:

- a 27% drop in the rate of re-offending
- 85% of victims being satisfied, or very satisfied with the process
- 78% of victims saying they would recommend the process to others
- Significant savings to the public purse

TVRJS have been undertaking follow-up research on over 250 Specified Activity cases undertaken between 2005 and 2010. Initial findings appear to show that the reduction in the percentage of re-offending (between predicted rates of re-offending and actual rates of re-offending, based on OGRS scores) is in the order of 33% for conference cases; 23% for victim empathy work and 15% for those completing letters of apology. This suggests we have managed to maintain the effectiveness achieved between 2001-2004 and develop successful interventions as an alternative to face to face meetings where victims are reluctant to meet.

Case study 1

Mr. Davis, under the influence of excessive alcohol, racially abused and threatened to kill a woman with her young children at local shops. He did not remember what he did or said and to whom he was abusive, and did not know the victims. However, he took full responsibility for his actions and wished to make amends by meeting the victims in an RJ meeting.

The mother, Mrs. Ahmed and her eldest son, Mohammad aged 9, had been very traumatised and went to stay with friends 50 miles away, driving back to their home town each day for school and work. Mrs. Ahmed had seriously considered moving house, stopped going to the local shops, was fearful when she went out and concerned for her son's emotional well-being. Mohammad became very protective of his mother, and at night any unusual sound in the house led to his thinking that the man was coming to kill them. The RJ worker met twice with mother and son in their home and went through the conference process in detail with them. The RJ conference was held in a venue local to both parties and attended by the victim and her son, the offender, his Offender Manager and the police officer in the case. At the beginning Mohammad was very nervous but he gradually gained confidence and gave a detailed explanation of what Mr. Davis did and how it affected him. His mother also explained the enormity of the consequences to her. The police officer also gave a detailed account of the risk Mr. Davis had posed after arrest and the amount of resources taken up by his behaviour. Mr. Davis took complete responsibility for his behaviour and apologised profusely. As the meeting progressed there was eye contact between Mr. Davis, Mrs. Ahmed and Mohammad, and the atmosphere gradually relaxed as the victims realised that the offender was not the monster they had built him up to be. They agreed that when they met in the local area, the offender and victims would greet each other and exchange pleasantries.

At the final meeting, Mrs. Ahmed told the RJ worker that their lives had totally changed and they greeted Mr. Davis on a number of occasions and Mohammad now felt safe, and she is no longer thinking of moving house. The offender remains remorseful and is pleased that, although it was not easy for him to hear the wide-ranging consequences of his behaviour, there has been a positive resolution for all parties.



Case study 2

Mr. Mason failed to stop at a pedestrian crossing and knocked down a female pedestrian. Another pedestrian helped the victim to the traffic island and called police and ambulance help. The victim was in a hurry to return to feed her young baby so left the scene after she was seen by the paramedics. She suffered cuts and bruises and severe back pain.

When he was first seen by the RJ Facilitator, Mr. Mason expressed regret and remorse for the offence, but did not accept that he had driven through a red light. The victim was Polish and, through an interpreter, she communicated clearly how aggrieved and angry she was that Mr. Mason had left the scene without trying to help her. She initially thought he should pay compensation to atone for his offence. She attended the RJ conference with the police officer in charge of the case and the pedestrian as supporters and Mr. Mason attended with his Offender Manager.

In the conference Mr. Mason gave an account of the incident in which, for the first time, he took full responsibility for his actions and expressed how remorseful he was. The victim became emotional as she revealed her fears that her children might be motherless. She also made it clear that, to her, leaving the scene was worse than the original offence. To repair the harm, she asked Mr. Mason to take extra care in driving, particularly to stop at red lights, and always to remain at the scene if he were involved in an accident. He gladly agreed to take greater care in the future and privately (during the subsequent refreshment period) asked her forgiveness, which she readily gave.

Feedback from the victim included: "His apology was good for both of us; I got closure and could start afresh. I'm sleeping much better. He is a good man, I forgive him."

The offender said that the highlight for him was the private one-to-one afterwards when the victim said that he was not a bad man, respected him and they shook hands. He felt that through the conference a burden had been lifted and he had been forgiven.

TVRJS provides:

- Skilled facilitators to deliver RJ in the adult Criminal Justice system
- Skilled facilitators to deliver RJ in community conflicts
- Experienced trainers for RJ Conference Facilitator training with particular emphasis for training in more serious crime
- RJ Associates who are able to give advice and guidance for both the development and delivery of RJ services in the adult criminal justice system

A Family Approach to Criminal Justice Services



Aims:

- To strengthen ties between prisoners and their families to aid the resettlement of prisoners on their release
- To promote positive relationships and support parenting skills and family learning
- To improve the services and support available for families visiting prisons and maintaining contact
- To improve the support services available to those families in the community

What we do:

- Provide **information and resources** to support workers and families alike
- Deliver **awareness-raising training** to different organisations – e.g. schools and education staff, family support services, probation, prison and police services
- Provide a **court desk service at the Crown Court** staffed by volunteers and designed to provide immediate crisis support at the point at which a family member is sent to prison
- Establish and support multi-agency **networks** to 'join-up' effective support to families in local communities

Family Matters Programme Headline Achievements

Over 1300 resource/information packs distributed across the country.

Over 1200 colleagues participated in our workshops - in prisons, in communities and in education and criminal justice settings including the probation service.

Awareness-raising training delivered in 10 areas of the Thames Valley - with multi-agency networks established in 6. A key factor in all these networks is the setting up of effective working relationships between all the network partners; the Probation Service has been brought into the loop for the first time.

National interest - we have delivered training into the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hounslow and Camden and run workshops and presented at national events and conferences.

Research with Revolving Doors Agency - published in June 2010 highlighted the support needs of offender families with multiple problems.

New resources developed e.g. Custody – What Now leaflet, Invisible Children, e-learning tool for schools on www.SCIE.org.uk and 'Guidelines for Working with Children who have a Family Member in Prison'.

2011 Successful bid to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to extend and develop the programme.

Case study

The R Family is a family of 5 with 3 children; both parents are regular offenders with a history of drug and crime problems. They manage the children reasonably well when both are out in the community and in reasonable control of their drug and alcohol problems. They were taken on by one of our Family Matters networks after the father was given a 2 year prison sentence.

The Network members: probation staff, health visitors and managers, housing providers, drug/alcohol services, children centre and schools staff, debt and benefits advisers.

Results included:

- Housing Issues resolved – including lots of practical matters to do with rubbish, rats, neighbours, and rent arrears
- Debts and benefits sorted out and repayment plans put in place
- Drug treatment provided
- Improved support for the children from the school resulting in better attendance and behaviour
- More family support services provided by the local Children's Centre including budgeting and parenting advice
- Reduced offending by the parents with support from the Probation Service

Success was due to providing support at the right time, in the right sequence, in the right place and by the right organisation.



The Arts

- THE MONUMENT TRUST -



The creative arts: a core element of Thames Valley Partnership's approach to promoting community safety.

Over the past few years we have discovered the unique power of the arts to motivate, excite, challenge and build bridges. Experience shows that many different arts methods have the capacity to engage those who often find communication and participation difficult and to create new skills and opportunities.

We have worked alongside a variety of groups, including pupil referral units, youth offending teams, women's centres, the probation service, social services, youth services and voluntary groups. We have employed a wide spectrum of artists with skills in: contemporary dance, film making, drama, story-telling, visual arts, digital music, street dance, drumming, poetry, street art, lyric writing and outdoor bushcraft activities.



"Something Brilliant": an online creative resource for those who work with vulnerable groups.
www.thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk/somethingbrilliant

We make no compromises on artistic standards, believing that vulnerable people and those on the margins of society recognise, appreciate and deserve quality – and respond with high aspirations of their own. Many artists have a different and unconventional take on life - there is an argument which runs that there is a connection between creativity and crime and being on the edges of society, between a sense of being at odds with society as an artist and being at odds as a criminal. Artists can act as a different role model – one of a professional making a living by being creative rather than as someone in authority. They come with no preconceptions of the group and will treat each person like a 'blank sheet' without any associated labels.



Case study

Transit Dance Project: raising aspirations, enhancing confidence and providing an effective pathway towards a more rewarding life for young people through the discipline of a professional contemporary dancer and the process of developing dance and life skills in a safe, creative and positive environment.

"Yesterday I was thinking that Denzil and me hadn't got on since the start – I wanted to kill him most of the week! – but I'm glad you put us together in a duet, 'cos, even though neither of us knew the lifts perfectly, we tried to compromise and we did" - young participant

"What I saw over the seven days was the transformation of a group of variously disengaged teenagers into a dance company. This transformation might or might not represent a definitive turning point in each of those lives – and the company itself dissolved, of course, after the show – but there was little doubt in my mind that, in the process of developing new dance and choreographic skills as part of a focused group enterprise, each participant had been given an opportunity to develop a new sense of their own possibilities and had seized it hungrily. This result was, at the same time, both quite remarkable and entirely predictable." Evaluator Richard Ings

Working with vulnerable women

Women at the HeArt

Women at the HeArt seeks to give vulnerable women more control over their lives by identifying ways of empowering them through the use of creative arts. The project also supports emerging artists to gain skills in working with disadvantaged groups and provides training in running creative sessions for professionals who work alongside vulnerable women.

"I can't put into words the amount of confidence one participant has gained as a result of this creative project. It's too overwhelming" – support worker

New Leaf



New Leaf is a project offering help to short term prisoners returning to Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes.

Through The Gate Mentoring provided by trained volunteer mentors who will meet with the offender before release, on the day of release and weekly after release with the aim of:

- Offering mentoring and signposting to services which will promote effective resettlement and reduce re-offending
- Enabling offenders to make informed life choices
- Working alongside local statutory and voluntary agencies to offer appropriate support around issues including substance misuse, accommodation, money and debt, education, training and employment
- Establishing strong links between the scheme and local faith and community groups

Family Matters Court Desks is a volunteer-staffed service providing support to the families of those who have been imprisoned or may be imprisoned as a result of pending court proceedings. The role of Court Desk volunteers is to offer initial intervention at the immediate crisis point with potential on-going work with children and families as appropriate.

49 volunteers trained as mentors
23 volunteers trained as court desk volunteers
91 offenders supported through the gate

"I am truly grateful for the help and support offered by New Leaf and would like to thank everyone who helped to try and sort my life out."
New Leaf Mentee

"I like the idea of being there to help families – there is a great need for this, especially in Aylesbury."
New Leaf Mentor and Court Desk Volunteer



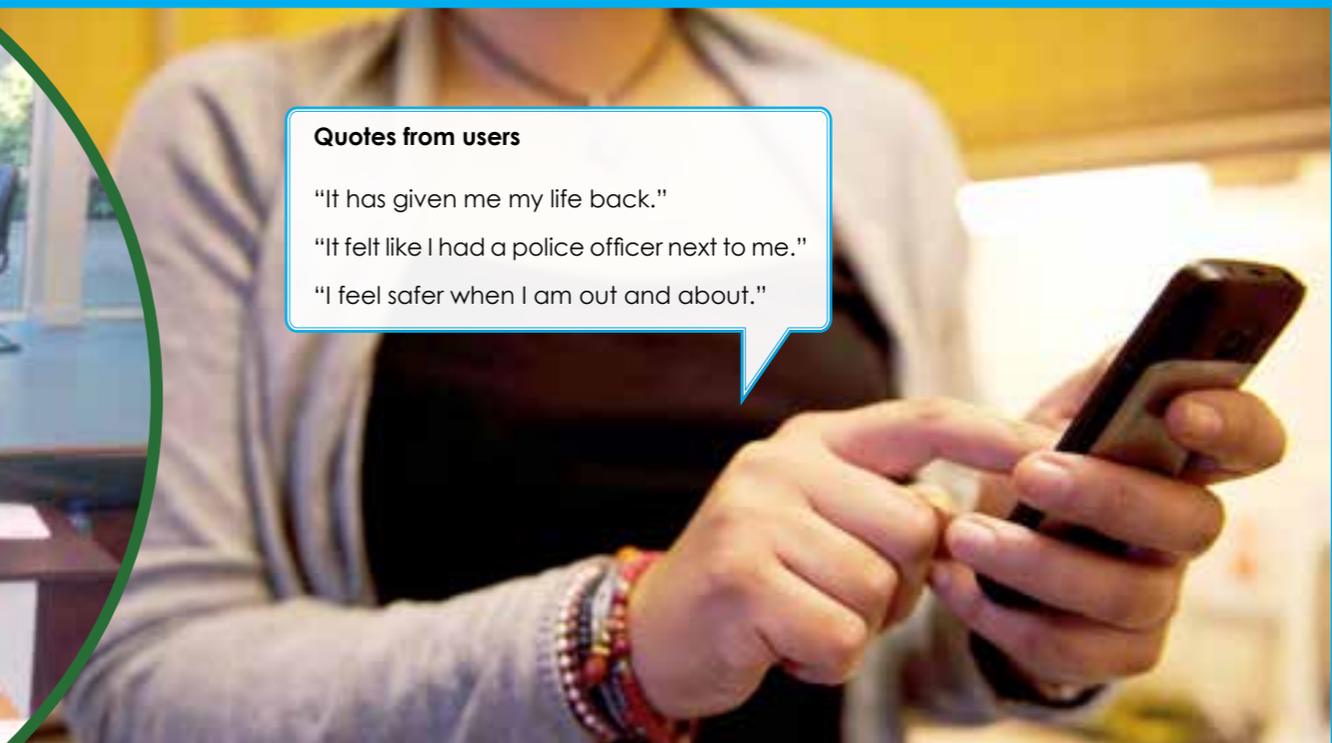
TecSOS



The aim of the TecSOS project is to introduce a new technical device which enables victims of domestic abuse to contact the police in an emergency, both in and outside the home. The device, which looks like a normal mobile phone handset, provides them with 24 hour connection to their local police at the press of a button. The project is funded by the Vodafone Foundation and was successfully piloted in the Thames Valley with a cohort of 30 high and medium risk domestic abuse victims. The project has been successfully rolled out across 13 UK police forces and additional police areas are due to come on line in 2013.

Advantages to the victim over a normal 999 call:

- **Speed and ease of use:** operated by a single press of a button
- **Subterfuge:** the handset is designed to look like a broken phone as the keys do not appear to work
- **Prioritisation:** the call is immediately identifiable as a TecSOS alert and given priority, with a police resource being deployed immediately to the callers location quickly enough to prevent serious harm
- **Mobility and improved quality of life:** the handset provides victims with the capability of contacting the police whilst away from their home address, unlike the traditional Home Office alarm which is installed in the victim's house
- **Cost:** the handset shows a considerable cost saving over the provision of house-based alarms



Quotes from users
"It has given me my life back."
"It felt like I had a police officer next to me."
"I feel safer when I am out and about."

How we can help you

A driving force of the Partnership is the desire to pool information and knowledge and share best practice: to effect maximum change for the good. Aside from the knowledge within our own staff team, we benefit hugely from the broad range of experience and insight we access via our mix of Trustees, Friends and Associates who work with us freelance and bring additional expertise. This gives us the flexibility and diversity to offer our stakeholders a range of services in addition to the varied programme of projects and initiatives we run. We can therefore help in a range of ways including :

- Advice and consultancy services
- Practitioner development opportunities
- Event organisation
- Expert trainers
- Creative approaches and resources
- Research, evaluation and dissemination
- Partnership working and brokerage



Looking forward

In a climate of uncertainty for the voluntary, charitable sector, Thames Valley Partnership has reshaped and reconfigured its services to respond to changing times. We have shifted priorities in line with developments in national policy and new directions for Criminal Justice and have moved to more direct delivery of services in collaboration with and to compliment the work of our key partners. We therefore look to the future with confidence as we establish our new programmes, build on and consolidate existing work and continue to work effectively with our partners and funders.

'The country is coming increasingly to realise that it cannot leave the problems of crime and criminality to the criminal justice system to deal with on its own. Preventing crime and helping communities and individuals to repair the damage and recover from its effects requires a range of more preventive, reparative and enabling approaches, both from the criminal justice services and from other services and communities themselves. The Thames Valley Partnership has for 19 years worked with services and communities in the Thames Valley to devise and develop those approaches and to help put them into practice.'

David Faulkner CB, founder Trustee of Thames Valley Partnership, Senior Research Associate at the University of Oxford Centre for Criminology and formerly a Deputy Secretary at the Home Office.

Co-author of 'Where next for Criminal Justice?'

