Who are we?

The team is a small, committed, experienced group who have worked across the Criminal Justice sector.

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 Kenneth MacRitchie, who has had a long career in law firm management and brings a blend of commercial and legal skills.

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
- 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, Thames Valley Partnership Patron)
Looking back on 24 years

Thames Valley Partnership, established in December 1993 and registered as a charity and company limited by guarantee, has a strong track record. During those years there have been some outstanding successes:

- Leading the way in the establishment of **Community Safety Partnerships** in mid 1990’s
- Pioneering a partnership approach to **Domestic Abuse**, setting up locally based domestic violence forums, and sharing and developing good practice through the Behind Closed Doors network. Our current **TecSOS project** leads the way nationally in providing a technical solution to increasing safety and protecting domestic abuse victims
- Acknowledged as a market leader nationally and internationally in developing policy and delivering **Restorative Justice (RJ)** with successful RJ practice dating back to 2000
- ‘**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 including a Court Desk in Thames Valley Crown Courts; to provide crisis support and effective local signposting to foster greater resilience
- ‘**Women at the HeArt**’: using creative arts to engage vulnerable women and the staff who support them and ‘**Modelling Change**’: working with vulnerable girls to enhance their confidence and self-esteem, providing them with new skills and reintegrating them back into their families and schools
- **New Leaf mentoring project**: set up in 2010 to provide volunteer mentor support to offenders coming out of prison, initially in Buckinghamshire and has since grown to cover the whole of the Thames Valley. A recently published **HM Inspectorate of Prisons** report looking at through-the-gate resettlement services cited New Leaf as one of only three examples of good practice in an otherwise very bleak report.
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 partnerships with Thames Valley Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner in Thames Valley, Victim Support and Thames Valley Rehabilitation Company (formerly Probation). We are at the forefront of research, development and delivery of RJ in all aspects of the adult criminal justice system. We are developing specialised knowledge and experience with serious and complex cases, especially those involving sexual harm and abuse. In 2010 we were awarded the Howard League for Penal Reform’s prestigious Adult Community Sentence Award, and we have held the Restorative Justice Council’s accreditation (the Restorative Service Quality Mark) since 2013.

Restorative justice brings victims and offenders into communication with each other to address the harm that has been caused by a criminal offence. Often this can involve a face-to-face meeting which enables the affected parties to meet in a safe space, with family, friends and supporters on both sides, and anyone else who is affected by the offence. The meeting is facilitated by a trained and skilled facilitator. It involves the participants in 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 shown to reduce fear and anger for victims, enabling them to put the crime behind them and move on. It has also been shown to reduce an offender’s likelihood of reoffending.

Restorative justice has a strong evidence base. From 2001-2005, our Probation-led RJ work was one of three research sites being independently evaluated for the Government by Professor Joanna Shapland. She found that RJ conferences resulted in:

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

TVRJS research on offender-initiated RJ cases shows that: RJ conferences led to a 33% reduction in re-offending; victim empathy work to a 23% drop; and writing letters of apology to a 15% drop. This indicates that we have maintained the quality and effectiveness of our work with RJ conferences, and we have developed successful interventions as alternatives to face-to-face meetings, giving victims greater choice in how they might engage with RJ. We are now engaged with a PhD researcher at Oxford University, Diana Batchelor, who is undertaking an independent evaluation of victims’ experiences and the impact of RJ.

Victims of crime are increasingly requesting access to RJ, and TVRJS deliver victim-initiated RJ funded through the Police and Crime Commissioner, as well as offender-initiated RJ funding from Probation and Prison services. We continue to strive to maximise access to RJ across Thames Valley, at all stages of the Criminal Justice System, and to support the development of restorative approaches in response to conflict and harm in communities and institutions. We have recently been appointed by HMP Bullingdon to develop restorative approaches to reduce violence within the prison, in addition to our ongoing RJ work with prisoners and their victims in the community. HMP Bullingdon was recently granted the Restorative Prison award by the Chris Donovan Trust for the work they have developed with us. We are building links with community organisations to develop restorative practice in response to community conflict. We are linked with the Mint House Centre for Restorative Practice in Oxford, and are developing restorative approaches to anti-social behaviour with the Community Safety Partnerships in Oxford and Aylesbury.
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

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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 to enable them to maintain 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 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 1500 resource/information packs distributed across the country.

Over 1480 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 14 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 across our region, The Thames Valley and some London Boroughs 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 our work and to set up the new Court Desk service.

2015 Further funding from the Henry Smith Charity to sustain the programme.

2017 Building Bridges project established - the project is a Family Group Conferencing/Family Mediation approach to enable an offender, with support and if appropriate, to return home to their family. Working in Oxfordshire this project hopes to be key to meeting the accommodation needs of some offenders.
Case study

R is a 14 year old girl at secondary school and has two siblings both currently in prison; she and her family are being supported by Buckinghamshire Family Resilience Service which works with particularly vulnerable children and families using a voluntary early intervention and support model. FRS received an initial referral from R’s school as they had noticed a change in her behaviour. A joint visit with our staff to see R at school was arranged with FRS; this involved R airing her concerns about her sister and brother both being in prison and never being able to visit as her mum refused to escort her. She was also worried about her mother no longer being engaged with her life and her feelings. In-depth work was carried out with R using resources designed to support children with a family member in prison. FRS and our staff are currently negotiating for R to visit her siblings in prison, to be escorted by a support worker. We are also aiming to rebuild and cement the relationship between R and her mother as R feels she no longer has a family left given that her siblings to whom she was closest are in prison. We hope that the family will be a stable unit should either of the teenagers in prison return to the family home. R’s behaviour and attendance at school has improved over the 3 month period of intervention, her understanding and awareness of life in prison has increased, she is working to trust those around her and has the confidence to open up and express her feelings in a positive and constructive manner.
New Leaf is a project offering through the gate support to prisoners over 18 years old, returning to the Thames Valley and who have been classified as representing a low or medium risk of harm to the public.

We support people during their prison sentence, collect them from prison and offer them support in the community for a minimum of 12 weeks. We can also provide a pack of essential toiletries and basic clothing donated by members of the community.

**New Leaf Support Works.** Evaluation of the individuals we supported in 2013 found:
- A reduction in new offences committed during the first two months and 12 months after release
- A reduction in the average frequency of reoffending from 6.6 offences per year per offender before intervention compared to 2.6 offences per year post intervention as well as a 59% reduction in the total number of offences committed in the year post release.
- A 58% reduction in the number of days spent in custody

*A cost saving of £3.57 per £1 invested in the project*

- 47 active volunteers
- 35 volunteer mentors
- 299 people referred in 2016

“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 personally would like to thank both you and Trish for the support and time you have given H. He has really benefitted from having someone remote that he can work with; in particular helping him with appointments, support when dealing with agencies”

Probation Services Officer, Milton Keynes

www.newleafproject.co.uk

@NewLeafProject1

facebook.com/newleafprojectmentoring
Out of the Box (OOTBox) is a new social enterprise producing hand-made individualised luxury items of home décor and fashion accessories from up-cycled materials destined for landfill.

We work with people with multiple or complex needs, providing training and employment opportunities and enabling them to become ‘job ready’.

We use a two pronged approach:

1) Craft sessions for vulnerable women
   - Weekly sessions currently
   - Creation of up-cycled products from ‘end of life’ materials
   - Participants sell items at craft sales

2) Design and production of items for high street retail
   - Concept design and development of novel items for mass production
   - Producing items and manufacturing at our workshop premises
   - Offering apprenticeships, training and employment opportunities to vulnerable people
   - Selling through retail partners

If you would like to see more of our products or collect or donate items for OOTBox please get in touch

info@ootbox.co.uk
www.ootbox.co.uk
@outoftheboxse
facebook.com/outoftheboxse

Quotes from users
“Excellent.
The staff explain it well and helped us if we got stuck”
“Really enjoyed making stuff”
The aim of the TecSOS project is to provide high risk victims of domestic abuse and child sexual abuse with a specially adapted mobile phone which enables them to contact the police in an emergency. The device, which looks like a normal mobile phone, provides victims with 24 hour connection to their local police at the press of a button. The project is supported by the Vodafone Foundation and is currently live in 40 police forces. A number of other forces are in various stages of preparation for go-live. Over 13,000 domestic abuse victims have benefited from having the device. The handsets are provided to the police on a ‘not-for-profit’ basis. The project includes a holistic implementation package which has been validated by Christ Church Canterbury University.

A series of independent evaluations have identified a number of benefits:

- **Speed and ease of use:** operated by a single press of a button
- **Tracking:** the system can provide precise location details of the caller
- **Prioritisation:** the call is immediately identifiable as a TecSOS alert and given priority, with a police resource being deployed immediately to the caller’s location.
- **Improved response times:** the Metropolitan police demonstrated an 11% improvement in response performance
- **Mobility and improved quality of life:** the handset provides cover to victims both inside and outside their homes.
- **Cost:** the handset shows a considerable cost saving over the provision of house-based alarm.
- **Reduction in fear:** victims feel safer and their perception of fear reduces on average from 9.7 to 3.0
- **Successful interventions:** there have been numerous interventions by the police which have led to arrests and successful prosecutions.
- **Cross border cover:** the device works across the whole of the UK and victims receive reciprocal cover regardless of which area they are in when they activate.

The project is also live in Spain, Hungary, Portugal, Germany, Southern Ireland and Jersey. Work is on-going to provide victims with reciprocal cover internationally as well as in the UK.

**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 on a self-employed basis 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 in recent years to respond to changing times. We have shifted our 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 have in the last three years been successful in tendering for contracts through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (Restorative Justice) and secured a contract with Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company for restorative justice and New Leaf mentoring. Funding opportunities through trusts and foundations remain challenging and limited within a hugely competitive environment and continuing to fund our core services remains significantly difficult.
‘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?’
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