



Making  
justice  
happen

# HMP The Mount Restorative Approaches Service Evaluation Report Jan 2018 – Dec 2020



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# Introduction

**Belong: Making Justice Happen is a registered charity that enables hope, rehabilitation and recovery amongst people who have been victims or perpetrators of offences. Belong and HMP The Mount established a Restorative Approaches service at the prison in June 2017.**

The service is funded by HMP The Mount as part of the prison's commitment to preventing custodial violence and antisocial behaviour (ASB). In May 2019, the restorative approaches work at HMP The Mount was awarded the Restorative Services Quality Mark by the Restorative Justice Council, in recognition that the service is delivered safely, effectively and to a high standard. In this evaluation report, we outline how the restorative approaches service is delivered, exploring its outcomes between June 2017 and December 2020.

As part of the service, Belong's trained restorative justice facilitators offer people involved in ASB and violent incidents in HMP The Mount the chance to take part in restorative processes. Our facilitators then facilitate communication between the individuals involved. Communication can be in person, via shuttle mediation or via letter. The focus is always on resolving and moving forward as constructively as possible from conflicts.

During restorative processes, facilitators encourage individuals to communicate with each other in response to four themes:

1. What happened from their point of view during a conflict
2. The thoughts and feelings of those involved in a conflict

3. The impact of a conflict on those directly involved and on the wider community
4. Actions that can be taken to resolve issues and avoid future problems occurring

When facilitating restorative processes and helping individuals prepare to take part, our team work in line with the following key principles of restorative justice (Zehr, 2014):

- Balancing concern and respect for all
- Seeking to put right wrongs and harms
- Addressing the causes of harmful behaviour
- Involving victims, offenders and communities
- Focusing on responsibilities (the offenders', and the communities')

Substantial research evidences the positive outcomes of restorative processes in the community. Randomised controlled trials evaluating the impact of restorative approaches have demonstrated high victim satisfaction and a reduction in reoffending (Sherman & Strang, 2007). A large-scale evaluation of three UK based restorative approaches schemes reported that victims and offenders responses to restorative meetings were positive, and that offenders reoffended less frequently than those who did not undergo restorative meetings (Shapland et al., 2007).

# Service delivery and design

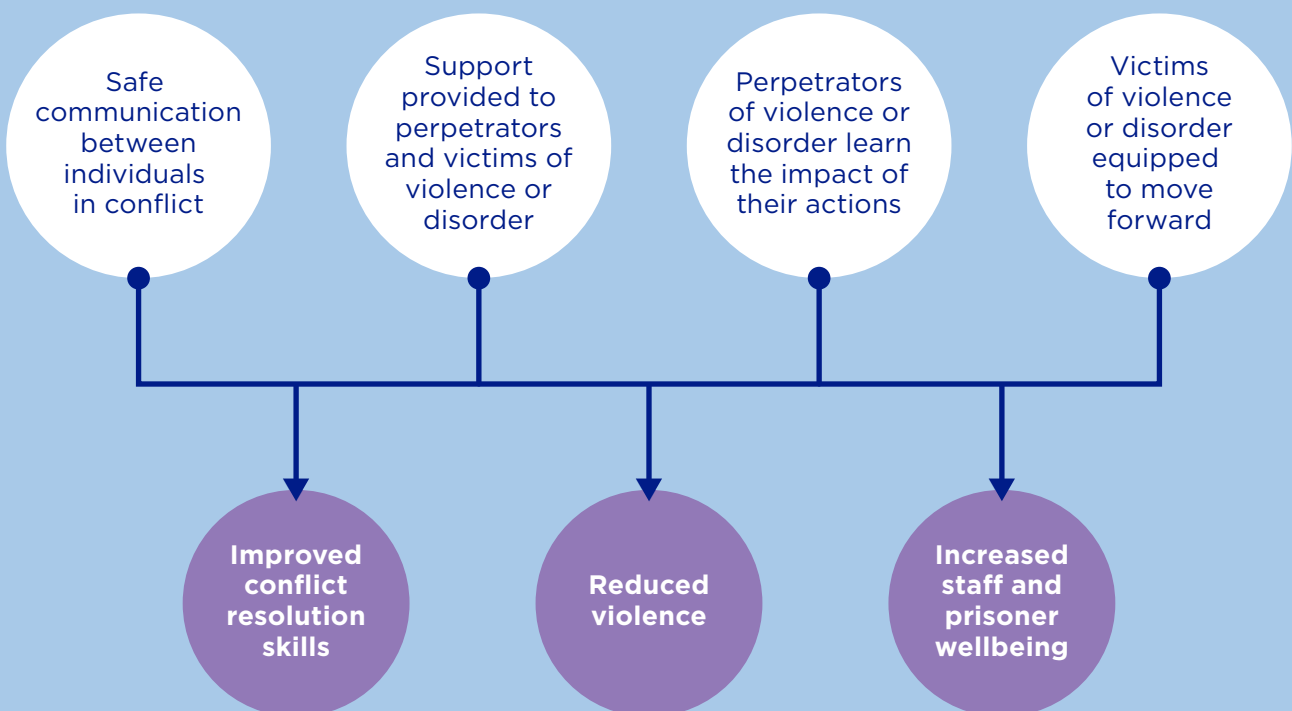
In designing the service, HMP The Mount and Belong aimed that it would achieve:

- Reduced re - occurrence of violence and ASB amongst prisoners who had committed violence or ASB in the prison
- Increased wellbeing amongst staff and prisoners at HMP The Mount due to a lower occurrence of violence and antisocial behaviour
- Increased skills amongst staff and prisoners at HMP The Mount in resolving conflict

At the start of work with participants, a confidentiality agreement is made between facilitators and participants, which sets out that some details of restorative processes can be kept confidential. It outlines that facilitators will share with prison authorities any information that participants disclose to them relating to breaches of prison security, individuals being at risk of serious harm or the prevention and detection of serious crime. In addition, summary information about participant's engagement is disclose-able to prison and probation service teams. Facilitators also share information from participants with other prisoners and prison staff as part of restorative processes where participants consent to this.

Before restorative processes, facilitators meet separately with those involved in an incident, sometimes over several sessions. This helps facilitators to explore what happened during the incident, and understand people's feelings and attitudes to the situation. During these sessions facilitators also seek to understand individuals' circumstances before and since the incident, and clarify whether individuals may be vulnerable due to substance abuse, mental health issues, language or communication difficulties, physical or learning disabilities, ill health or intimidation by a third party. In addition, facilitators provide individuals with further information about the restorative processes and confirm whether they would like to take part in a restorative process. Facilitators then undertake a thorough risk assessment in relation to each restorative process and decide on steps that can be taken to manage any risks.

During restorative processes, facilitators acknowledge each person's situation and specific needs; treat each person fairly, with dignity and with respect; recognise any harm that has been caused through violence or antisocial behaviour;



## The project delivery team at HMP The Mount



### One Director

Employed by Belong, the Director dedicates a proportion of her working time to developing and leading the training programme for staff and prisoners; evaluating the service; overseeing the allocation of cases to the service and overseeing the delivery of restorative approaches in relation to complex and sensitive cases.



### One Service Manager

Employed by Belong, the Service Manager conducts risk assessments; delivers restorative processes and one to one support; engages participants in evaluation activities; facilitates training for staff and prisoners; reports on the service; and provides case supervision for restorative justice trained prisoners.



### 1 or 2 Restorative Approaches Reps

Serving prisoners employed by the prison, the reps are trained and supervised by Belong. They support the restorative approaches volunteers; promote the project within the prison; deliver informal restorative process and one to one support; and engage participants in evaluation activities.



### 8 to 15 Restorative Approaches Volunteers

Serving prisoners who volunteer to undertake their role, the restorative approaches volunteers are trained and supervised by Belong. They promote the project within the prison; deliver informal restorative process and one to one support; and engage participants in evaluation activities.

and encourage an open exchange of views. Facilitators pay particular attention to risk of harm, safeguarding and security issues. They take action to protect participants and uphold prison security as necessary, for example submitting mercury intelligence reports and liaising with the prison's safer custody team. Facilitators also submit updates regarding each prisoner's engagement with the service at least fortnightly, via the NOMIS database, to each prisoner participant's case file.

Where individuals do not wish to take part in a restorative process, a restorative process would be unsafe, or participants would like further support after restorative processes, facilitators offer one to one support to individuals. For those who have been on the receiving end of violence or ASB, this support aims to help them to cope and recover in the weeks and months following this. For perpetrators of violence, this support aims to help them improve their conflict resolution skills, decrease their impulsivity and improve their understanding of others.

Belong has a partnership working arrangement with the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) so that participants who want to improve their conflict resolution skills can receive one to one support from their restorative facilitator to complete the six week distance learning "Facing up To Conflict" (FUTC) Course. AVP designed the FUTC course to help participants handle conflict more effectively through using nonviolent conflict resolution techniques, reflection on past experiences, personal development and increased self-awareness. It focuses on five "core conditions" of non-violence:

5. Enhanced self-esteem and self-awareness
6. Improved communication skills, including listening and assertiveness
7. Greater willingness to trust others and cooperate
8. Stronger sense of own values
9. Better ability to handle conflict and solve problems in relationships.

# Participant selection

At the start of the service's delivery, briefings were held for all prison staff, providing them with information about restorative approaches, how the service would apply these within the prison, and that staff could refer cases to the service by direct email or phone call to the delivery team.

Members of staff were also encouraged to apply to take part in restorative approaches training. The service was advertised to prisoners using leaflets and posters which were displayed within residential, healthcare, education and chaplaincy areas. Prisoners can contact Belong's delivery team directly by using the prison's application system or speaking to the team on the prison wings.

The service works with up to fifteen conflicts at any one time. Conflicts sometimes involve multiple participants, for example groups of prisoners. Cases are selected after incident reports on the prison's daily briefing sheet, or referral from a prisoner or

staff member. Incidents that have resulted in injuries requiring hospital treatment, or involve participants with a history of violent behaviour in or outside of custody are given greater priority than incidents where these factors are not present. A chance to take part in restorative processes and/or one to one support is offered to everyone involved in the incident. Where a prisoner involved in an incident is due for release or transfer within seven days, restorative processes aren't offered in response to the incident but one to one support is offered to the other people involved, whether victims or perpetrators. Engagement with the service is voluntary for both prisoners and staff members.



**DEAL WITH IT... A BETTER WAY.**

Restorative justice at HMP Coldingley gives you the chance to voice concerns and talk through problems. It can stop conflicts leading to violence.

- 1 DO YOU OF KNOW OF A SITUATION THAT COULD BECOME VIOLENT?**
- 2 HAVE YOU BEEN IN A VIOLENT SITUATION AND WANT HELP TO PREVENT IT NEXT TIME?**
- 3 DO YOU WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS IN RESOLVING CONFLICT?**

**GET IN TOUCH:**

**STAFF** email: [restorative.coldingley@hmps.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:restorative.coldingley@hmps.gsi.gov.uk)

**PRISONERS** can contact **Belong London** by completing an application form and handing it to their wing officer

**Belong**  
Making justice happen  
registered charity number 1172269

# Restorative Justice Reps

**As part of the Restorative Approaches Service, Belong developed paid and volunteer Restorative Justice Representative roles within HMP The Mount. These roles were advertised within the prison and the candidates were interviewed.**

The nature of individual's offending background was taken into consideration in the risk assessment stage, following standard recruitment guidelines that every employer, both within and outside criminal justice settings, uses when recruiting new staff. Successful candidates progressed onto a three-day training course. They meet with the Belong staff who work in the prison daily for coaching and mentoring help and guidance. The roles are overseen by Belong and candidates are paid directly by the prison.

16 residents at HMP The Mount trained in Restorative Justice techniques and two were appointed into the paid role as Restorative Justice reps. The

others continued to use their skills on a voluntary basis in their current roles and on the wings.

The Restorative Justice reps are at hand to diffuse conflict and provide ongoing support to their fellow service users, holding restorative justice conferences where necessary and highlighting the importance of communication as a means of understanding and resolution. The skills that they gain help build pathways to employment through-the-gate as they may choose to uptake a similar restorative justice role within a charity on release. The current candidates have been working for several years within these roles and are praised for their diligent, hard-working manner.

## Focus on Lucas's career journey as a Restorative Justice rep at HMP The Mount

As soon as Lucas arrived at The Mount, work was important for him as he wanted to keep busy and use his time productively. Whilst working in waste management, he decided to do Restorative Justice training on the side and apply for the rep role.

He thoroughly enjoyed the management side of things and used his own experience to benefit others in peacekeeping and resolving conflict.

Typically, he will see around 4-6 people daily during the week. There are approximately 10 ongoing cases who he will visit weekly to check up on as they need ongoing support.

**I really enjoy my job; it honestly couldn't be better. I'm busy all the time, there is never a day where there isn't people to see or revisit and check up on.**

**Lucas, Restorative Justice Rep  
at HMP The Mount**

**It felt very rewarding to be able to do that training and help others that way. It was so worthwhile. It made me feel useful and like I could do and learn something whilst I was here.**

**James, Restorative Justice Rep**

One case he recently worked through involved a fight. He saw both people individually and asked them about the situation, their thoughts and feelings, what had happened, the impact of this and what they wanted to happen now. He also consulted his manager from Belong before deciding to bring them both together in a neutral place to talk through the issue, confronting any emotional distress and ultimately ending in peace with a handshake. Without this meeting, their relationship would most likely be subject to further break down which would lead to more conflict. Instead, Lucas was able to intervene and help them work through and resolve the situation.

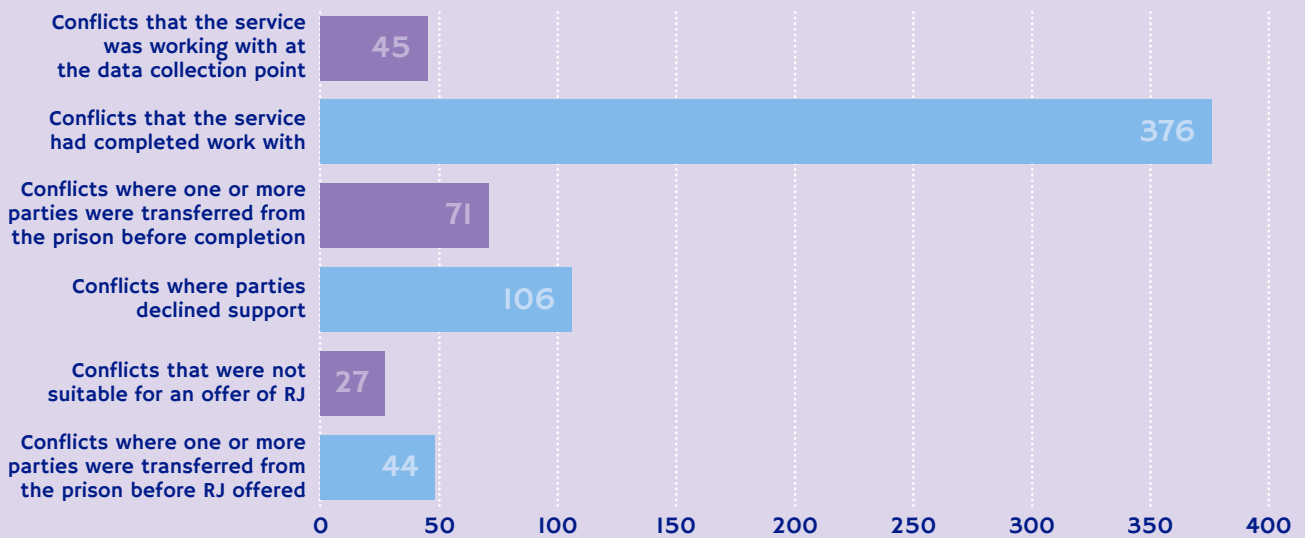
# Service outputs

During the two years of delivery at HMP The Mount, the service engaged with 796 prisoners and 81 staff members who were involved in 421 conflicts.

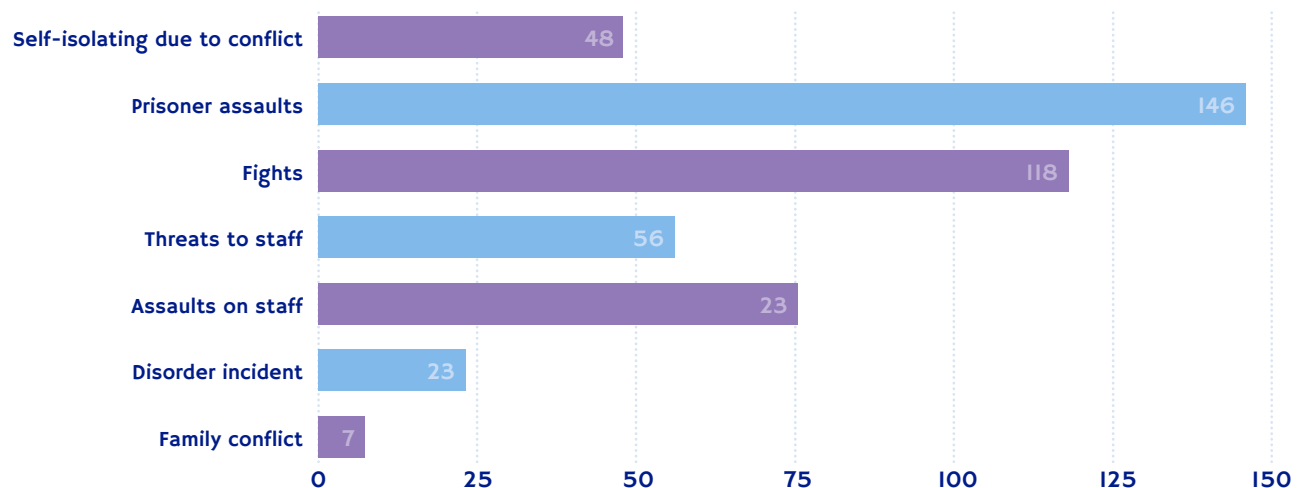
A breakdown of the conflicts dealt with by the service is shown in Table 1 below. Summarised also are the numbers of cases in relation to which restorative approaches interventions began but couldn't be completed due to prisoner transfers,

and those where the people involved in a conflict declined to engage with the restorative approaches team. Restorative interventions were delivered in response to various types of incidents. These are shown in Table 2 at the bottom of this page.

**Table 1: Conflict types worked with | Jan 2018 to 31 Dec 2020**



**Table 2: Incident types leading to a response | Jan 2018 to 31 Dec 2020**



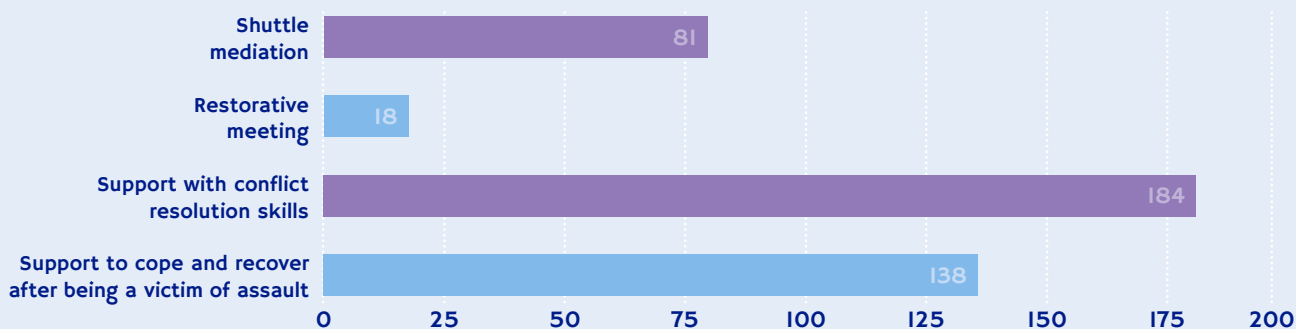
The average cost per person who engaged with the service was £169. This reflects the costs associated with offering the service to non-engagers but does not reflect operational and security costs absorbed by the prison, the costs of prison or prisoner staff training or the costs of internally evaluating the service.

Where restorative processes were offered, individuals in many cases took up the opportunity to communicate with each other directly or indirectly, with support from a restorative facilitator(s). As shown in the following chart, communication was most frequently taken up in the form of shuttle mediation. In some of the cases dealt with,

individuals declined to communicate with others involved in incidents, or this was deemed unsafe. Individuals therefore engaged instead in one to one support from the restorative approaches team. One to one support was provided to perpetrators of violence, to help improve conflict resolution skills, and to victims of violence, to assist individuals to cope and recover in the aftermath of assaults.

For all participants, there is a formal restriction of twelve weeks during which the service offers one to one support. In practice, for a proportion of prisoners who have particularly complex needs, the service provided one to one support to them for several months.

**Table 3: Types of interventions provided | Jan 2018 to 31 Dec 2020**



# Responding to the coronavirus pandemic

During the Coronavirus pandemic, Belong's restorative approaches work was deemed as essential by the prison service. We therefore continued to work with service users at HMP The Mount in line with government guidelines.

In order to help meet some of the emerging service user needs at HMP The Mount during this time, we took several additional actions:

- We researched, designed and produced a variety of in-cell resources, themed around emotional coping, creative distractions and conflict resolution.
- We provided distraction resources to shielding, quarantined and vulnerable prisoners at HMP The Mount. These have included a range of resources, including puzzles, games, and other creative tools.
- We designed, developed and distributed hygiene release kits to people being released from HMP The Mount during Covid-19. These included items essential in keeping people safe and healthy as they leave prison, such as face masks, hand gels, food vouchers, and gloves.

We also ran a creative competition at HMP The Mount, encouraging people to explore and express their feelings during lockdown. On the following pages, we have shown some of the inspiring artwork and poetry that were created during this time.



# My Covid Existence

It was the 2nd from last Tuesday in March the actual date was 23,  
The government put out a nationwide news bulletin, addressed to all and sundry  
That due to the threat of Covid-19, we'll all have to go on total lock-down,  
No more visits from any friends or family, would we see.

My last oral parole review had been adjourned from the 10th of February,  
So I instinctively know this new situation could add at least a few more years,  
Before I'd likely to be freed.

On July 13th, I would have already served 15 years in jail on a 2 and a half year tariff, IPP.  
They say we're all in this together but already what seems to be clearly evident  
About this new disease is that it seems to be most deadly to those of BAME, like me.

I came away aged 35, and last October reached the tender age of fifty,  
Doubt I'll be seeing freedom til I reach the age of 53,  
Locked up inside, with no fortune nor fame,  
When will they release me? When I'm broken bald and lame?

I still have a dream of becoming something in life,  
Success is my most prominent aim  
My Achilles heel of getting high and drunk and into social strife,  
Is a part of my past I now truly must tame

While Covid-19 runs rampage throughout society like the silent killer,  
no one knows yet what's fully in store,  
It's capable of killing the wealthy, though takes a higher toll amongst the poor,  
I try to remember I'm not alone as I lay down to bow, kneel and put my forehead  
to the floor.

God I pray, when might you enable me to walk out those prison gates?  
So glad to close behind me, my old prison cell door.  
Or will I be buried from her in a box, put 6 ft down below amongst the destitute & poor  
Covid-19 has worsened my daily plight,  
Diminishing what light had been in sight,  
Yet I refuse to be crushed and will never give up my fight.

Though this unfortunate vile virus has surely on my shoulders extra stresses are piled  
I wish I could go back to my old self when I awoke up cheerfully with a get go and a smile  
But sadly my good spirit at times now has deserted me, at times  
I feel like I'd be better off to walk the condemned man's green mile,  
But I know I have to find inner strength now, after all I'm a grown man now,  
and no longer a child

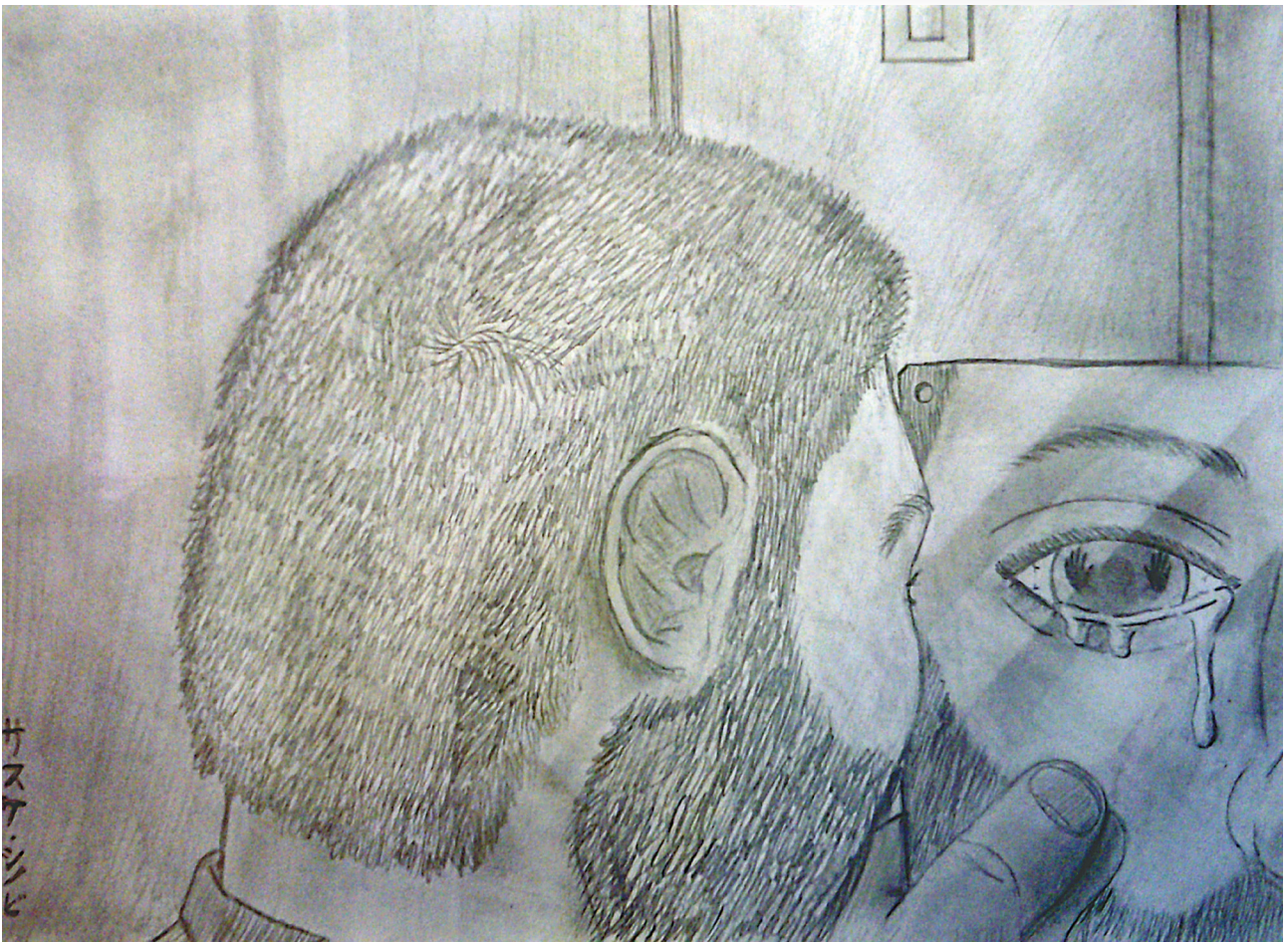
05/06/20

The Mount went silent and ghostly  
Nobody walking about, staff mostly  
The usual hum had disappeared  
No noise except birds it feels weird

Looking out seeing no planes  
Kites and Crows having free range  
Nature enjoying the peace and quiet  
Crows the only things causing a riot

The virus has changed the world forever  
It's something we thought would happen never  
People have died, the count is rising  
Trees the only things moving on the horizon

The view outside has just stood still  
Luckily I'm healthy and haven't been ill  
This virus is deadly that we know  
But hopefully a cure will make it go





## Fallen on strange times

As you know the regime is changing  
On Fowler wing the staff are amazing  
There empathetic, considerate with lots of patience  
Considering times have fallen the strangest

It's not segregation but more separation  
We stand united clapping for carers with appreciation  
Unprecedented times and loads of speculation

23 hour lockdown is hard being an understatement  
Missing family on visits having to use imagination  
Mental health affected with no exaggeration  
Getting wages without being at my work placement  
But won't complain with the pandemic raging  
One day we will look back having made it

Jail ain't great but the Mount is safe  
Well done to staff and residents for being brave  
With our friends made on the spurs we stay  
Everyone is caring being here is a safe place  
We conquered a virus face to face  
Together we stood tall as one race  
All knowing the light is at the end of the tunnel

Now we rebuild without no more trouble  
It's crucial the economy builds without rubble  
So everyone pray together and also  
Remember no matter how hard times got  
We were all in the same bubble

# Case studies

As part of our evaluation, our delivery staff provided examples of face to face and shuttle mediation restorative process that they completed with participants. In presenting these case studies, names have been changed and distinguishing features removed to protect confidentiality.

## Majid and Paul

Majid and Paul were referred to Belong restorative services after having had a fight in their shared cell during which Majid was injured. In order to ensure both their safety Paul was moved out of the cell immediately onto a different area of the prison.

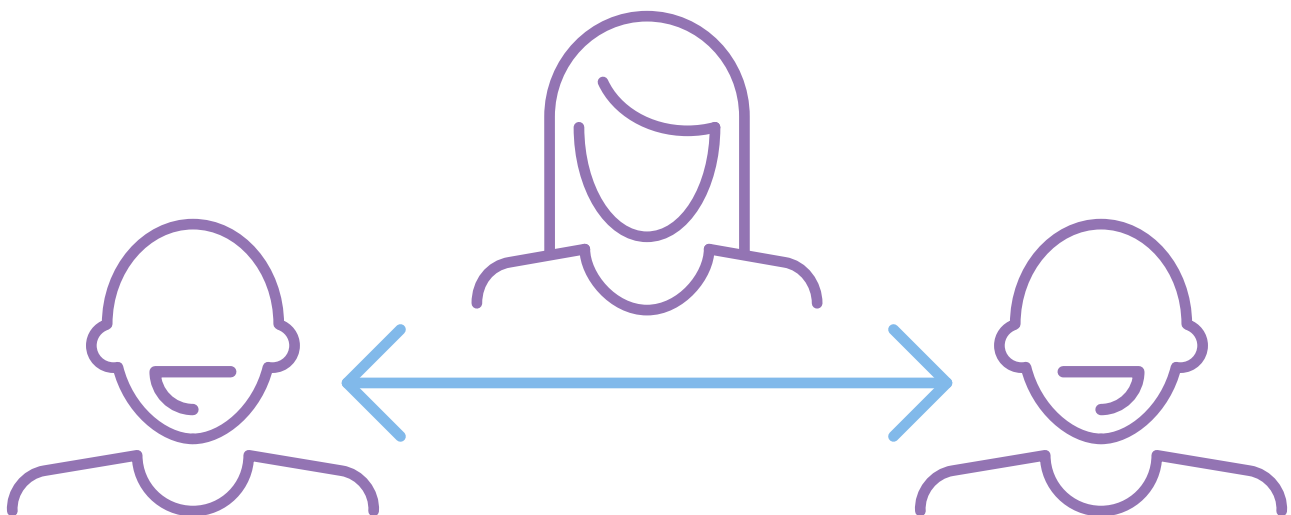
Belong were able to speak to both Majid and Paul about what had caused the fight and the events leading up to it. We discussed how they both felt about it and what needed to happen now to repair the harm. Paul felt that the fight was Majid's fault and that it was over a misunderstanding. Majid also said it was over a misunderstanding that he felt was his fault, but he had been seriously injured and felt Paul had taken this too far.

Due to Covid-19 it was not appropriate for Paul and Majid to have a face to face restorative meeting even though both would have liked this. They did however want to pass on messages of apology to each other as they had previously been friends. Paul was upset that he had not managed to take everything from the cell when he was moved so was missing important things to him such as photos of his family. He was concerned that Majid would now not give these back and would throw them away.

Belong were able to help both Paul and Majid work through the situation. Majid was happy to get together a list of Paul's possessions. Belong obtained the list by calling him on the in cell pin phone so he could locate these as we talked. We were then able to get these from Majid and return them to Paul. Paul asked for us to apologise to Majid for his injuries and wanted him to know he did not mean for it to go that far and had never intended to hurt him.

We were able to refer Paul to the mental health team and he has been working with them since as he recognised that when he gets angry he often resorts to violence and this is due to his own past trauma. Belong were able to support Majid with referring his injuries to the Police and having photos of these taken so he could have a crime number. He did not want to take this further than that as he was happy with the apology from Paul and stated that he had done things wrong in the lead up to the fight and was not blameless but wanted this logged.

Both were happy staying on the same wing on different spurs and have reported that when they have seen each other they are happy to acknowledge each other and get along peacefully.



## Steven and Officer Obote

Belong were asked to intervene after an incident where a prisoner had threatened a member of staff following him being asked to leave a wing he had gained access to without permission. Steven and Officer Obote had been in conflict in the past and this time it was considered more serious. Officer Obote felt that Steven did not understand that he was just doing his job and ensuring everyone's safety by making sure the rules of the prison were adhered to. He wanted Steven to understand the impact some of the threats had on him as Steven had made comments about Officer Obote's family.

Belong were able to talk to Steven about what he had said. He stated that at time he felt Officer Obote picked on him and that he had 'seen red'. He stated that he had never intended to threaten Officer Obote's family and he could see how much this would impact him. He wanted to apologise to Officer Obote as he did not mean the things he had said in the moment and understood the effect this

had had on Officer Obote. Steven was also able to see that if he had not broken the prison rules in the first place he would not have been in a position where this member of staff had to challenge him.

We were able to talk to Steven about his experiences with authority in the past and how he found it difficult to listen to those in authority now without being angry. In order to support him working more on this we provided Steven with a mentor from Belong who could meet with him weekly to talk about his experiences with authority and how this often led to conflict.

We were also able to support Officer Obote in processing how the threats had impacted him and talk about how to manage seeing Steven at work in the future. Following the intervention Officer Obote reported seeing Steven in his duties in the jail, but stated that as he knew he had apologised and Steven knew Officer Obote had accepted this, they did not have further conflict.

## Lawrence and Officer Jonas

Lawrence was in custody for a violent offence. He was diagnosed with learning difficulties, autism, ADHD, mental health issues, and was addicted to spice and other substances. He has been in and out of custody and other institutions for the majority of his life. We began working with Lawrence after he was placed in the care and separation unit for assaulting Officer Jonas. We met with Lawrence and engaged him in a restorative process, beginning by talking to him about what had happened, how he felt about it, and what he felt needed to happen now. Lawrence valued the space to reflect on the incident. He described how he was in debt, and had agreed to assault Officer Jonas as his family had been threatened. He spent time reflecting on how the Officer may have felt in this situation. He expressed regret, and agreed that he would like the opportunity to meet with Officer Jonas in order to apologise and find out what their experience was. In the meantime, whilst we were reaching out to Officer Jonas, he agreed to engage in 'Facing up to Conflict' with Belong. During his time in the CSU, we explored topics such as identity, believing in yourself, and alternatives to violence.

We met with Officer Jonas, who reflected on the event with Belong. Our initial meeting included Officer Jonas describing the event, how he had felt afterwards, and what he would like to happen now. He agreed he would like to engage in a restorative

process, including meeting with Lawrence. He had a number of unanswered questions, including 'why had it happened?', and 'who else knew that it was going to happen?'.

Belong liaised with the Police Liaison Officer, Jacob's case team, Psychology, and the CSU Governor. We arranged and facilitated a restorative meeting. During the restorative meeting, both parties had the opportunity to reflect on the incident and its impact, including on the wider community in the prison. Officer Jonas was able to ask questions related to the assault, and Lawrence was able to express that he regretted his actions and to explain the factors behind him committing the assault.

A number of commitments were made during the course of the meeting, including for Lawrence to be moved to the 'Wellbeing Wing', and sign up for a drugs recovery course. A personal progression plan was written, in order to involve the wider prison staffing group in Lawrence's progress plan.

In the months following the intervention, Lawrence maintained motivation to work towards his goals. However, he struggled to continue to stick to them, and needed high levels of support to overcome a number of crises. Officer Jonas stayed involved in Lawrence's progress, and over time became a role model to Lawrence. Lawrence completed the 'Facing up to Conflict' course with Belong.

## Mr Bradley

Mr Bradley had been transferred recently to the prison. He was in debt on his new wing because of an issue that had occurred at his previous establishment. He told wing staff that due to this issue he feared for his life, but he wouldn't discuss this further with them. Wing staff called Belong and asked if we could support this individual.

When we talked to Mr Bradley he explained that he had been the victim of a sexual assault and rape in the establishment he was in previously. He had reported this to the police, which had led to him being held in debt to the person who had committed the assault and other prisoners associated with this person. He was still faced with this debt when we met him. Mr Bradley was struggling to cope. The prison took steps to keep Mr Bradley in a safe location. Belong staff supported him to talk through his feelings, to cope and to start to recover after the trauma he had experienced.

He had questions he wanted to ask the person who had committed the rape and sexual assault.

We listened to his questions and discussed with Mr Bradley the pros and cons of asking the person these questions. Mr Bradley decided to write a letter to the person who had assaulted him and decided that this letter would not be sent. He found that this helped him to have a safe outlet for his questions and feelings. We supported Mr Bradley to engage with the police officers that were conducting his investigation and to seek updates from them. We also gave him practical support with gathering paperwork about the incidents, and with contacting solicitors.

Throughout this process, Belong liaised with specialist mental health and drug rehabilitation services at the prison. With Mr Bradley's agreement we shared information with them to ensure that he was receiving consistent support. Mr Bradley needed to be transferred to a different prison in order to start rebuilding his life. We helped to provide a thorough handover to the receiving prison, explaining his support needs.

## Officer Franks and Tayo

Officer Franks was in charge of setting up a family visit day for residents. There were only limited spaces for this. He made the application process fair by creating a list of the applicants and randomly selecting prisoners by assigning them a number and then using a random number generator. Tayo was not selected for the family visits day. He felt that the system used for selecting residents was unfair and that he was being discriminated against.

He made formal complaints and spoke to many different people expressing his frustration and how unhappy he was with the way Officer Franks was doing his job. Officer Franks was upset by this when he heard and felt that he had done nothing but try to make the situation as fair as possible. Both men agreed to engage in a face to face mediation process. They both engaged in preparation sessions

with the Belong facilitator and a risk assessment was completed before the mediation. During the meeting our facilitator prompted both men in turn with questions about what happened from their perspectives, what they thought and how they felt, what the impact had been for them and what they felt needed to happen now to move forward.

During the meeting, Tayo accepted that the system used had been as fair as possible and he made some suggestions about how it could be improved moving forwards. Officer Franks was happy to consider Tayo's ideas for this. It was a positive meeting and both men left feeling like a weight had been lifted from them. There were no further issues between them and Tayo was clear that he could now approach Officer Franks directly if he had any concerns.



# Evaluation methodology

The evaluation aimed to assess how restorative processes impacted prisoner's behaviour, attitudes to violence and pro social skills in resolving conflict or dealing with problems non-violently.

It also aimed to explore the extent to which victim's needs were met by the restorative justice service. The evaluation was carried out internally. A mixed-

method approach to data collection was used to support the validity of evaluation findings. As part of this data was gathered through:



**Qualitative questionnaires completed by prisoners at the end of work with them.**



**Qualitative questionnaires completed by prison staff who engaged with or referred cases to the service.**



**Qualitative summaries from Belong's delivery staff about their work with prisoner participants.**



**Incident reports held on the prison's Incident Reporting System (IRS)**



**Prisoner adjudication and case notes held on the prison's NOMIS database**

It was key to ensure that service users and staff members gave informed consent to participate in the evaluation, understood what their participation would entail, were not penalised for declining to participate and were aware of how their data would be used should they agree to participate. Participants were given verbal and written confirmation on how their data would

be used, and reminded that any data obtained during the interviews would be collected and stored securely at HMP The Mount and on Belong's external, secure servers and devices. Participants were also informed that all names, places or distinguishing characteristics would be anonymised in evaluation reports in order to protect confidentiality and anonymity.

# Prisoner feedback

We gathered feedback from prisoner victims and perpetrators who had engaged with the service. All of the prisoners who gave feedback said that they would recommend the service to others who were in a similar situation.

Many participants reflected that the service had helped them reflect more on the consequences of their actions and manage conflicts and anger non-violently:

[The support] influenced me to take a further look at my actions. It's something I will never forget.

It made me aware of my wrong-doing.

It was useful... I thought about the impact of my actions.

I enjoyed the restorative justice process as it made me sit back and reflect on my actions and [see that] behind [my] anger fuelled behaviour there was only a small issue that was easily resolved.

It has taught me methods to control my anger.

I liked talking about how to resolve my pride and how to... control my anger.

[The support] has made me sit back and think about my actions.

Participants also said that engaging with the service helped to develop their wider relationships, improve their identity and move forward with their rehabilitation;

They help you with more than just conflicts [in prison] but... also improve your relations with family and [friends outside].

The restorative justice process made me think "what am I doing". I am trying to recreate myself, and having someone to talk to helped that.

It has influenced me to go on and do better. It enabled me to work through, openly and honestly some of the issues I was facing

It was really helpful knowing there was someone to talk to that could support me and listen to me [talk] about the conflicts with my family.

You are the best people I've met in prison, the only part of my [time in] prison that has been helpful or anything to do with rehabilitation at all. I really thank you from the bottom of my heart.

[The facilitator] helped me see I'm a good person.

It makes you a better person, makes you realise things about your life... it made me realise I needed to change.

Prisoner victims of violence reported that the support helped them to cope and recover after being on the receiving end of violence from another prisoner(s):

I would have felt extremely alone without Belong.

I appreciated that [the facilitator] kept coming to see me and kept me up to date with everything ... [the support] made my mind a bit at ease.

I think [the facilitator] has done the best job in helping me with overcoming so much pain ... I was raped and needed big support ... I feel like I am stronger than I think due to the support from [the restorative justice service]

It made me think positive

Prisoner participants also expressed that engaging with the service helped them to develop positive relationships in prison and see other people's point of view about conflicts:

I liked how it lets you see things from a different point of view.

It helped me feel better about talking about my past and helped me reflect [about getting on] with officers, instead of me just lashing out.

It helped me to see things from everyone's point of view.

It's helped me because it has avoided escalating violence and also retained calm on the wing. It is also because of [the facilitator] I've built a good relationship between myself and [the prisoner I fought with].

Having someone to talk to really helped. It definitely influenced me, and it did help my relationship with [the] Officer.

It helped to sort [the conflict] out. It was alright at the end and [they] didn't have it in for me after. I liked it because we got back together and got a chance to explain it. [The officer] said [their] part, I said mine and it was sorted then. It was good. It was good to sort things out.

Lastly, participants fed back how valuable it was that the facilitator(s) built a trusting and respectful relationship with them during restorative processes:

Someone to support you when something bad happens and not just there to tell you off and [say] that .... it's all your fault so you have to live with the consequences. [The facilitator] encourages you to do better in a positive way.

[The facilitator was] really supportive and helpful, good at challenging you when what you're saying is not going to help you.

[The facilitator's] influence on the situation, being [someone] that we both respected, was key to resolving the situation.

My facilitator [was] patient with me and was understanding my reasons of how I ended up where I am right now and [made] me see the positive I bring in life instead of my negatives.

I liked that they took the time to understand my situation and was really patient with me about opening up.

I felt safe, [there was] no judgement.

# Prison staff feedback

We obtained feedback from operational and non-operational prison staff who had engaged with or referred cases to the service. Staff members of all ranks and from a range of departments gave feedback, including security, healthcare, activities, offender management, catering, and chaplaincy.

All of the staff members who gave feedback said that they would recommend the service to a colleague who was on the receiving end of violence or antisocial behaviour in the prison, and/or to a prisoner who was involved in conflict in the prison.

Staff members expressed having found the service beneficial for both themselves and prisoners.

I have found them to be capable, caring, committed and very helpful to my clients who have been in great need of support.

Belong staff have been helpful and insightful, something that definitely made working with them during restorative justice easier. I felt I was supported and treated fairly.

My experience with Belong has been nothing but positive. When working with them regarding RJ between myself and a prisoner I felt supported, listened to and consistently reassured. The [RJ meeting] was conducted in a way which allowed each of us to speak and be listened to and the outcome was really positive.

There have been many occasions where I have contacted [Belong], asking for advice or referring an individual to the service. I have always felt supported and there has been a quick response to my request/referral.

The service has been able to support staff and residents to air their views regarding an incident which has resulted in a positive outcome.

Thank you for the on-going support that you provide to staff and residents.

My team has been involved with the RJ Service when we had an angry prisoner. They helped us liaise with the service user so that he was able to continue with treatment.

I found them very helpful with conflict with a prisoner and would recommend [them to] prisoner for help with anger management.

The feedback has been positive and the RJ team are very approachable in regards to taking referrals for both residents and staff who have been involved in incidents. The prisoner RJ rep is also very polite and is always around the wings helping people.

All [my] interaction with the Restorative Justice Manager at HMP The Mount is supportive and their communication with me is clear. The Restorative Justice Manager also holds a wealth of prison knowledge and therefore interaction [with them] can cover a number of topics and issues within HMP The Mount.

Staff members also suggested that awareness raising sessions could be increased and that the restorative approaches training offered to them could be further rolled out within and beyond the prison.

[Belong] could run training for other departments.

Perhaps [Belong] could run awareness raising sessions with our group of staff.

A full staff meeting presentation could be useful for the service.

# Impact on reported custodial anti-social and violent behaviour

The prison's Incident Reporting and NOMIS systems were used to explore whether behavioural changes had taken place regarding individuals who had perpetrated violence in custody and engaged with the restorative approaches service.

Data was collected on individual's reported involvement in custodial violence during the three months before engagement with the service, and compared with data on their reported involvement in custodial violence during the three months after they had finished engaging with the service. The relatively small sample group of participants (twenty in total) for whom it was possible to gather this data had perpetrated violence at HMP The Mount and

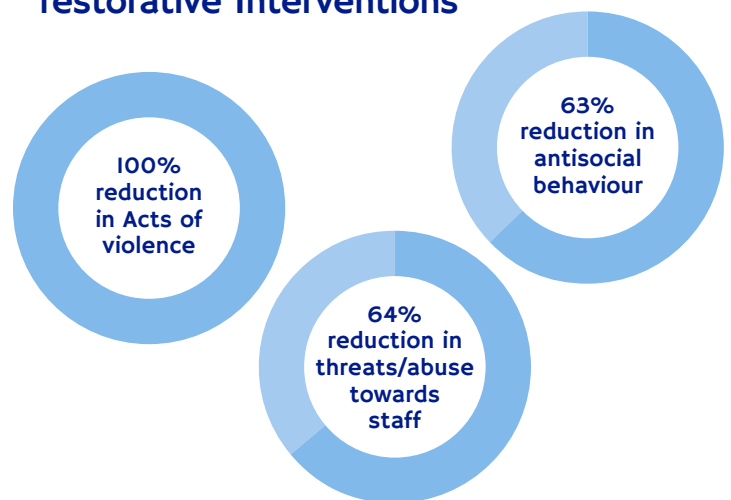
- served their sentences at HMP The Mount for at least three months before the restorative approaches team had come into contact with them
- remained at HMP The Mount whilst the restorative approaches team worked with them, and
- continued to serve their sentences at HMP The Mount for at least three months after the restorative approaches team had completed work with them

The number of participants who remained at HMP The Mount for three months after engaging with the service was limited due to planned transfers for sentence progression and releases that took place soon after individuals had completed restorative interventions and follow

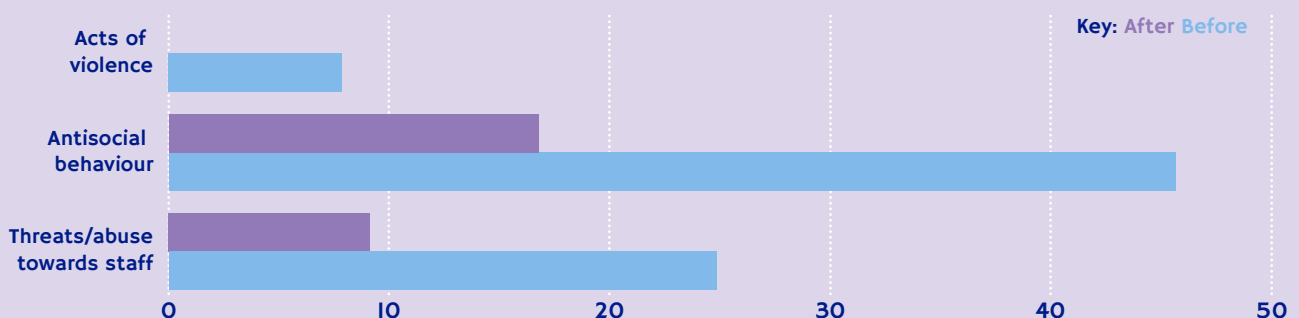
up support. Many individuals were relatively new to HMP The Mount at the start of work with the service, hence baseline data relating to the three months before their engagement was not available.

As shown in the charts below, the number of recorded violent and antisocial behaviour incidents perpetrated by individuals in the sample group after restorative interventions decreased significantly. indicates that reductions in violent, threatening and antisocial behaviour are associated with engagement with the restorative approaches service.

## Incident reductions after restorative Interventions



## Incident reductions after restorative interventions



# Recommendations

The information presented in the previous sections has generated recommendations that are summarised here, both in terms of service delivery as well as ongoing research and evaluation. These may be of use to Belong, HMP The Mount and other organisations or establishments considering developing such a service.

1

The service provides good value for money, costing approximately £169 for each person who engaged with the service. Consideration could be given to commissioning an in depth cost benefit analysis of this work. This would help determine the cost savings linked to the reductions in violence and ASB at the prison.

2

A larger sample of participants would facilitate an opportunity to gather quantitative data with greater statistical power, in relation to each of the areas targeted by the service.

3

Where possible, resources could be allocated in order to provide analysis of a matched control or waiting list comparison group to help further ascertain whether behavioural changes can be attributed specifically to the service.

4

Greater resourcing of evaluation of this work would enable prisoners to be followed up once their engagement has finished, and explore whether positive behavioural changes remain, particularly after the transition from custody to community or from one custodial establishment to another.



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