



Transforming Conflict

8 Recommendations for Implementation of Restorative Practices in Local Authorities

- **Recommendation 1**

Appoint a full time Restorative Approaches Advisor/ Co-ordinator/ Project manager, who in turn should establish a multi-agency steering group to oversee the roll-out of the initiative across the authority, making links with the work being done elsewhere with children and families.

- **Recommendation 2**

Ensure the whole steering group has sufficient training to do the job. Awareness-raising sessions are necessary but not sufficient for winning over sceptics. Offer an initial training course for the steering group that offers a wide range of flexible restorative skills rather than focussing narrowly on the conference process so that there is a broad understanding of the wide potential of a whole school restorative approach.

- **Recommendation 3**

Integrate restorative approaches into the Local Authority's development plan. Make explicit the links between current and developing practice and restorative approaches, so that everyone can see the potential for mutual enhancement.

- **Recommendation 4**

Ensure that restorative principles underpin how the initiative is implemented from the outset, by working *with* key stakeholders rather than imposing on (doing *to*) or taking decisions *for* them.

- **Recommendation 5**

Quality is more important than quantity. Limit the number of schools engaging in an initial project and focus effort and funding on helping these schools to embed the approach before contacting new schools. This could take from between 3 – 5 years. Early local authority pioneers have made the mistake of planting lots of seeds in lots of schools but too few in any one school, with too little 'after care' for the seeds to put down roots and flourish.

- **Recommendation 6**

Initial planning should therefore include resources for ongoing support in terms of regular network meetings and skills refreshment sessions for pioneers to share their successes and challenges and to identify training needs.

- **Recommendation 7**

Since success for the initiative is reliant on senior management support, and their own use of restorative approaches with staff, students and parents, they should be the first to be trained in any one school. Schools may need guidance and support at authority level in terms of resources for cover costs, encouragement and opportunities for networking with colleagues.

- **Recommendation 8**

Ensure that the initiative is monitored and evaluated from the outset, involving stakeholders in identifying what is it that needs to change and ensuring that all involved benefit from the on-going learning in terms of developing best practice.

These recommendations are based on Belinda Hopkins doctoral thesis - 'Implementing a restorative approach to behaviour and relationship management in schools - the narrated experiences of educationalists' (2006) as well as an ever increasing amount of practical advice being given by us to schools.

For more information, visit the website at www.transformingconflict.org or ring 0118 9331520.

drawn from Belinda Hopkins' doctoral thesis - 'Implementing a restorative approach to behaviour and relationship management in schools – the narrated experiences of educationalists' (2006)