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**Hobson, Jonathan ORCID logoORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8081-6699>, White, Niki Jana ORCID logoORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1277-9157> and Banwell-Moore, Rebecca (2026) Restorative Justice in Prisons and Probation. From Local Practice to Systemic Change. In: 13th International Conference of the European Forum for Restorative Justice Echoes of Restorative Encounters: Voices, Evidence, and the Ripple Effects of Restorative Justice in Action, 11-13 June 2026, SWPS University in Poznań (Poland).**

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# ECHOES OF RESTORATIVE ENCOUNTERS

VOICES, EVIDENCE, AND THE RIPPLE EFFECTS  
OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN ACTION



13<sup>th</sup> International Conference Poznań, 11-13<sup>th</sup> June 2026



# Restorative Justice in Prisons and Probation

## From Local Practice to Systemic Change

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**Project team:**

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# What we are covering...



**1**

**The project**

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**2**

**What is emerging**

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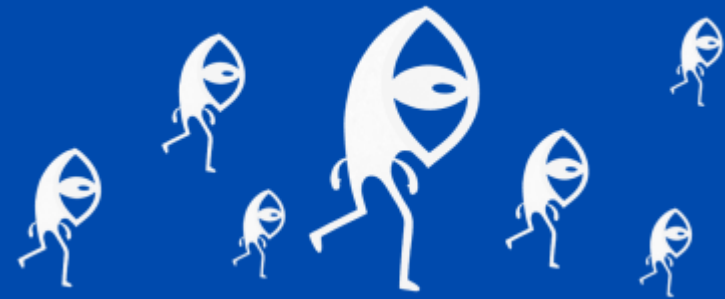
**3**

**A framework for understanding how RJ is embedded**

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**4**

**What next**



1

# The Project



EUROPEAN **FORUM**  
FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

# Our Purpose

**How can restorative justice help deliver better outcomes for people within prison and probation systems?**

## 01 Understand

How is RJ spreading in prisons and probation across Europe, and what does that look like on the ground?

## 02 Share

What practices and approaches are being used, and what can we learn from each other?

## 03 Compare

How can we compare RJ in prisons and probation cross-nationally?



# The partners



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE  
AND DIGITAL AFFAIRS



Estonia



UNIVERSITY OF  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



England & Wales



An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh  
The Probation Service



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,  
Gnóthai Baile agus Imirce  
Department of Justice,  
Home Affairs and Migration

Ireland



Finland



Centre of Expertise  
**Safe & Resilient Society**

An initiative of *avans*

Netherlands





## **Phase 1 2023–2024**

*3x prisons*  
*2x RJ services*  
*1x Community project*  
*2x MoJ/Prob./ Govt. teams*  
*Academics, practitioners, policymakers*



## **Phase 2 2025–2026**

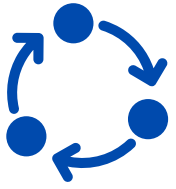
*2x prisons*  
*3x RJ services*  
*3x Community projects*  
*3x MoJ/Prob./ Govt. teams*  
*Academics, practitioners, policymakers*



2

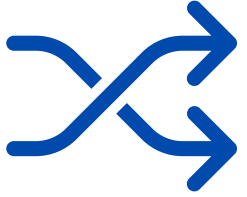
# What is emerging





**i**

**Insights on RJ as a research method**



**ii**

**Comparative policy reports**



**iii**

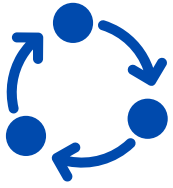
**A framework for understanding how RJ is embedded**



**iv**

**A cross-national data analysis**





i

## Insights on RJ as a research method

### Circles as data collection

Each visit included opening and closing circles alongside traditional methods

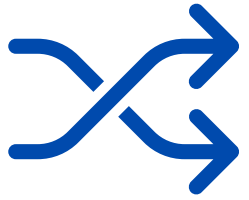
### Structured reflection

Three questions per circle exploring similarity, difference and transferability

### RJ studied through RJ

The method itself reflects the subject, and produces richer, more relational data





ii

## Comparative policy reports

- 1 Inconsistent access**  
Too often limited by geography, offence type or commissioner priorities
- 2 Fragmented commissioning**  
Short-term funding cycles undermine continuity and quality
- 3 Inequitable provision**  
Access should reflect need — not where someone is held or for what
- 4 Awareness gaps**  
Limited public and political understanding of what RJ is and does
- 5 Limited evaluation**  
Shared metrics and outcome frameworks still underdeveloped
- 6 International learning underused**  
Cross-national exchange offers critical, still-undervalued insight





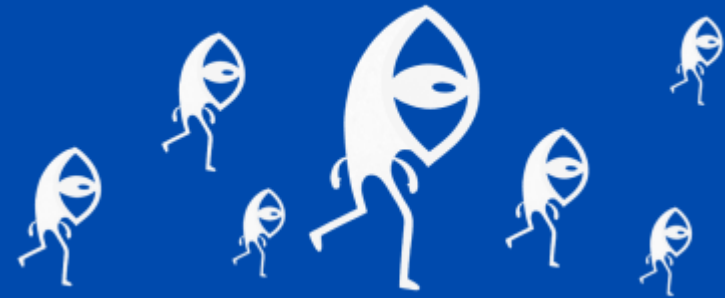
**Do you recognize those challenges from your own contexts?**

**Is there anything missing?**



3

# A Framework for understanding how RJ is embedded



## INSTITUTIONAL

### *External and statutory*

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RJ embedded in policy frameworks external to and cutting across organisations. Statutory, system-wide mandate.

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- Legislative or statutory
- Cross-organisational

## FORMAL

### *Systemic but choice-driven*

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Systematic adoption within an organisation or sector, driven by internal priorities rather than statutory mandate.

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- Not externally required
- Organisational policy

## SHAPING

### *Cultural not structural*

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Embedded relationally and culturally rather than as a discrete service or programme

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- Behaviors and approaches
- Restorative practice as opposed to policy



# INSTITUTIONAL

## Youth Justice Service, England and Wales

### What it is

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) sets national performance standards for all 154 Youth Justice Services in England and Wales. From April 2023, services report on 10 new KPIs covering accommodation, education, substance misuse, out-of-court disposals, and more.

### The RJ dimension

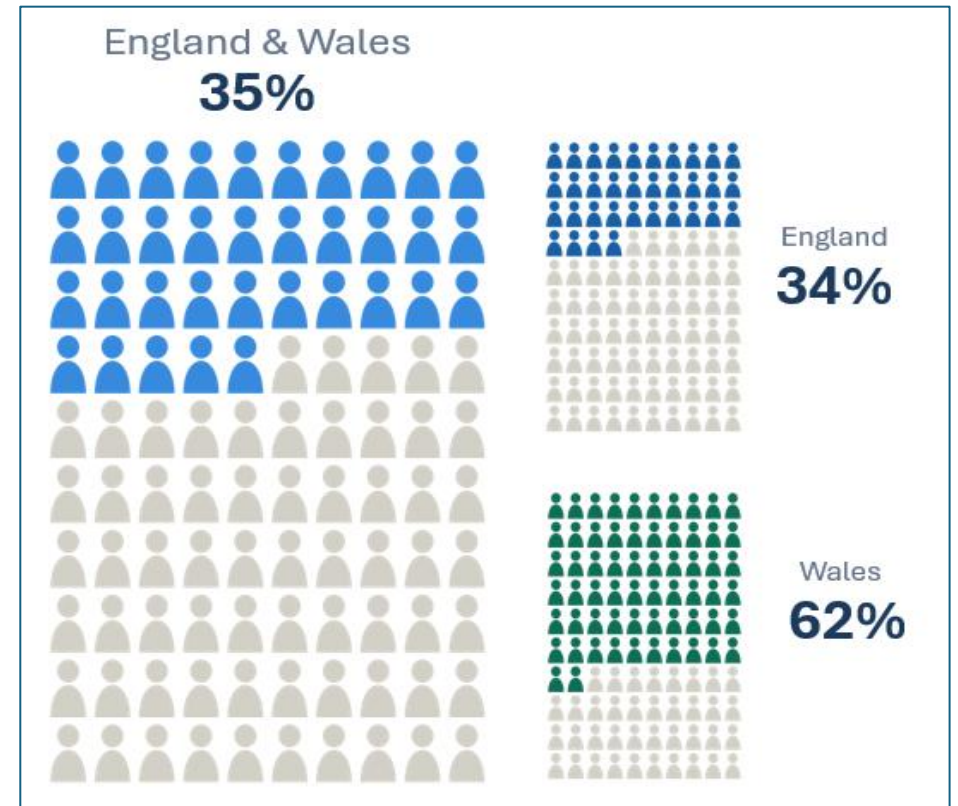
KPI 10 — the only indicator focused on victims — was added following advocacy from the sector. It records the number of victims engaged in restorative justice opportunities as a proportion of those who consented to be contacted.

### Why it fits 'Institutional'

RJ is embedded in a national statutory performance framework. Reporting is mandatory for all Youth Justice Services, making this one of the clearest examples of RJ institutionalised at system level across the five countries.

See [YJB](#) and 'Why Me'

### 2023/24 - Victims: Proportion of victims engaged with Restorative Justice (KPI 10)



## FORMAL

# Puinruimen, Netherlands

## What it is

- Voluntary restorative program in the penitentiary about recovery and restoration (4 layers): ‘Clearing up the mess’
- Everyone can participate (except people convicted of sexual offenses)
- Bottom up, but already 15 years

## The restorative dimension

- Main goals of the training: creating an environment in prison where people can speak freely, and focusing on personal recovery as well as restoring relationships with victims, family members and society
- 10 sessions, involvement people with lived experience

## Why it fits ‘formal’

- From informal practice in several prisons and a small group of trainers
- into Handbook and possible country wide implementation



## SHAPING

# Lootuse küla - Village of Hope, Estonia

### What it is

A therapeutic community in rural Estonia (Laitse), providing long-term residential support for people with addiction and serving as a halfway house for people released from prison or as an alternative to prison. Founded on Christian values and a belief in community as the context for healing.

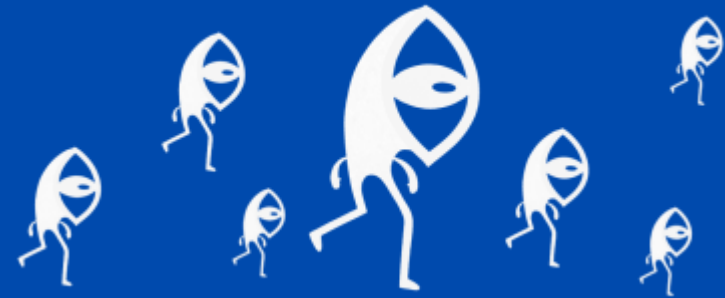
### The restorative dimension

Not a formal RJ programme, but restorative in character. Residents and volunteers live together, share work and responsibility, and relationships of repair and trust are central to the model.

### Why it fits 'Shaping'

Community-rooted, relational. Restorative practice is embedded in daily life and culture rather than delivered as a discrete service or programme.





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**What next**

# Writing

- 1. Paper: Theory** (summer 2026)
- 2. Paper: Method** (late 2026 submission).
- 3. Paper: Cross-National data** (2027)
- 4. Policy report Phase 1:** available
- 5. Police report Phae 2: 2026/27**

# Doing

- 1. Phase 3:** some continuation funded (hopefully)
- 2. Funding:** Mapping larger opportunities
- 3. Expanding:** new partners and/or visits...?

