

## Christine's story

A Victim received her first communication from her son after almost six years following support from TVRJS to facilitate this contact.

Christine was referred to Thames Valley Restorative Justice Service by the Victim Liaison Unit following her request to resume contact with her son Andrew. All the professionals working with Andrew however advised that he was not stable enough to progress a Restorative Justice process to facilitate communication between Christine and Andrew. Andrew had displayed extreme violence and disruptive behaviour in prison resulting in him being frequently moved around the prison estate.

Christine was the victim of threats to kill from her son Andrew in 2010. The threats to harm his mother followed a history of drug and alcohol abuse, aggressive volatile behaviour towards Christine and thefts of her property and money. Andrew was sentenced to an Indeterminate Public Protection sentence in 2011 with a two year tariff. A Restraining Order was also made to protect Christine which prevented Andrew from contacting her.

The RJ Facilitators assigned to this case over a two year period have supported Christine throughout and endeavoured to trace Andrew across five prison moves. Andrew was interviewed and consulted about commencing contact with his mother. It was a significant challenge to trace him and establish contact with the relevant Offender Supervisors in each prison. Andrew agreed to participate in a Restorative Justice process to re-establish contact with his mother.

Ongoing contact with Christine throughout this case has been a very important source of support for her. She was assisted in making an application to the Court to vary the Restraining Order and the Court granted the amendment to allow Andrew to communicate with his mother, via arrangements with the Victim Liaison Unit and through RJ. This outcome was very important for Christine and a long awaited progression towards a face to face meeting. Christine describes Andrew's absence as being felt deeply by his family; 'he has been absent at every gathering, absent in every family photo and absent round the table during family celebrations'.

Christine received a letter from Andrew and this began the first step towards rebuilding a relationship with her son. The RJ Facilitator continues to work with the victim and offender and the many professionals to prepare them for a face to face meeting later this year.

- RJ has provided support for the victim to embark on re-establishing a relationship with her son
- RJ is harnessing the support of the Offender Supervisor, Offender Manager, Victim Liaison Officer and the Court to ensure that a face to face meeting can safely take place in a controlled environment
- RJ has provided the opportunity for the Offender to communicate with the Victim to put right the harm caused and re-establish a relationship with his mother
- The Victim is writing to her son and hopes that her support will help to give him a reason to work towards his next parole review and eventual release from prison.