Restorative justice: From the margins to the mainstream?

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Promoting quality restorative practice for everyone
About the Restorative Justice Council

• The independent third sector membership body for the field of restorative practice
• Sets standards and provides quality assurance for the restorative practice field
• Provides a national voice advocating the widespread use of restorative practice
• Our ultimate aim is to drive the availability and take-up of safe, high-quality restorative practice
What is restorative justice?

• Gives victims a chance to meet or communicate with their offender in a controlled environment to talk about the harm caused and how to repair it
• Led by a facilitator who prepares the people taking part and makes sure that the process is safe
• Can be used for any crime and at any point in the criminal justice system
Why restorative justice?

- A major driver of victim satisfaction and engagement
- Helps to reduce reoffending and cut crime
- Has the potential to be cost effective
- Public support – 75% think victims should have the right to meet the offender
“If someone else was considering restorative justice, I would tell them to go for it. It offers you emotional closure and it puts perspective on a crime – it seems less sinister”
‘For me, restorative justice has been incredibly empowering. I’ve regained control by turning a negative, frightening experience into a positive, life-changing one. I’ll always be grateful for that.’
“As I left that room I felt on top of the world. Meeting him gave me closure, because I had said everything I had wanted to say and I had taken back some kind of control over my life. I know it had an impact on him. I’m not a victim any more, I’m a survivor. I’ve been able to make sure something good has come out of something bad”

http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/rj-in-action/jo/
“I felt absolutely empowered – it was more than I could ever have hoped for and to witness his genuine remorse was an immense and invaluable feeling ... For the very first time, he had no choice but to listen to me.”
‘I came out as happy as anything. I felt like I’d got a chance to explain my situation, and they’d got a chance to explain their feelings towards me, which helped me to understand how wrong it was. All in all, that was brilliant.’
‘Every time, it kind of broke me, but it made me as well’
Restorative justice in a changing environment

- A national Restorative Justice Action Plan published by the government in 2012
- A new Code of Practice for Victims published in 2013
- Significant government funding for victim-led restorative justice, distributed through PCCs
- Funding for YOTs, via the Youth Justice Board
Restorative justice in a changing environment

- Pilots for pre-sentence restorative justice
- Pilot of a new approach to out-of-court disposals and greater use of Neighbourhood Justice Panels
- Broader use of restorative approaches, e.g. in schools

But

- Provision remains patchy and largely unco-ordinated
- Significant changes to the probation landscape
Why standards matter

• Essential to ensuring positive outcomes for everyone involved in restorative processes
• Help to maintain the integrity of what restorative justice is and how it should be done
• Provide a framework that underpins good practice
• Give commissioners confidence that restorative justice will be delivered safely and effectively
• Standards underpin innovation, rather than hindering it
Agenda for the new government

• Embed restorative justice throughout the criminal justice system, giving all victims of crime the right to access restorative justice
• Establish a multi-agency restorative justice hub in every area to coordinate the provision of restorative justice
• Establish the use of restorative practice within every institution in the custodial estate as an effective way to resolve disputes and respond to conflict
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