

## What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice (RJ) brings together the person who has suffered harm and the person who caused it, with others affected by the incident, to talk about:

- what happened;
- who was affected and how;
- what can be done to repair the harm.

It is an empowering process which enables participants to work towards a restorative outcome through a safe face-to-face meeting.

Research tells us that over 85% of victims are satisfied with RJ meetings and that they lead to a significant reduction in re-offending.

Where people do not wish to meet face-to-face other methods of communication can be agreed.

## How do I make contact to make a referral or get more information?

Contact us:

Geoff Emerson, Manager, or  
Maria Hebden, Administrator  
Phone: 01869 328 500  
Mob: 07944 880170 (Geoff)  
Email:

[restorative.justice@thames-valley.probation.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:restorative.justice@thames-valley.probation.gsi.gov.uk)



*A collaboration between Thames Valley Partnership, Thames Valley Probation and Victim Support*

*Funded by the European Union*



Thames Valley Restorative Justice Service also works alongside Thames Valley Police and HM Prison Service in the delivery of restorative justice.

# Restoring the Balance

Find out about a Restorative Justice Project that Starts with the Needs of Victims



## What is this new project about?

Most restorative justice has started with offenders. Victims have then been approached once offenders have agreed to take part.

This project starts the process by talking with victims first and identifying what they need.

We offer the opportunity to victims to initiate the RJ process by taking referrals from victims and the agencies who support them.

Victims of violence and household burglary and other victims who have suffered personal harm have been shown by research to gain most benefit from RJ.

Victims of domestic abuse are not included because of a lack of such evidence.

We are designing a model of good practice which promotes and safeguards the rights of victims and offers them appropriate support.

This work will contribute to the preparation of guidance which can be used across Europe.

In particular, we want to ensure that meetings which take place in prisons

give priority to the needs of victims.

We also want to identify what is helpful to those victims whose offenders do not wish to meet face-to-face and will design RJ processes which meet their needs.

## How does it work?

Victims are able to refer themselves. Agencies who work with victims of crime, including Victim Support, the Police, the Crown Prosecution Service, and Probation Victim Liaison Units are also invited to refer suitable victims to the service.

We will develop a public profile through media interviews and stories about the benefit of RJ to victims, so that the public will know what we are doing.

Victims are eligible to take part if they have suffered an offence causing personal harm, including sexual offences and the families of homicide victims will also be included.

Victims of domestic abuse between partners, or ex-partners are not included.

Once a referral has been made, we will visit the victim and explain in detail what is on offer.

Victims will then be able to decide

whether they want to proceed and, if so, how.

This may lead to:

- a face-to-face meeting with supporters and family present;
- a letter of apology from the offender;
- a form of reparation tailored individually to meet the victim's needs.

The project will be evaluated to see what the benefits are to victims and offenders and which methods produce the best outcomes.

## Who are the project partners?

Thames Valley Partnership is working with Thames Valley Probation and Victim Support in a collaboration funded by the European Union.

The project partners have taken part in government-funded research which demonstrated high quality practice, very high levels of victim satisfaction and reduced levels of re-offending.

Our trained facilitators have a wide range of experience working in criminal justice, education and international settings.