

What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative justice brings those harmed by crime, and those responsible for the harm, into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward.

Restorative justice gives victims the chance to have their say, to get answers to their questions, and to move on with their lives.

Restorative justice gives offenders/the person that caused harm an insight into the real impact of their behaviour, and an opportunity to make amends.

Restorative justice is not designed to replace criminal justice proceedings; alongside and integrated with criminal justice it can deliver benefits that traditional criminal justice on its own cannot.

Types of Restorative Justice

Restorative Conference – A planned meeting where the harmed person is able to ask the harmer questions in a safe venue. Each conference will have two facilitators and a robust assessment of risk will have taken place prior to the meeting.

Restorative Shuttle – A facilitator will carry messages back and forth between the harmer and the harmed.

Letters – Facilitator arranges for both parties to exchange letters.

Facetime/Skype – Facilitator can arrange for harmer and harmed to talk through social media. Facilitator's will sit in with the harmer and harmed.

Video message – A planned video message will be shared between the harmer and harmed.

The process

A trained facilitator will arrange to meet you, to talk about the impact of what has happened, the consequences this might have, and what could be done to make things better for you.

You will be asked if you would like the facilitator to arrange a meeting for you, or some other type of communication, with the person who has caused the harm, so that you can tell them about your thoughts and feelings about what has happened.

The facilitator will talk to the offender about what happened, about the offender's understanding of the harm they have caused, and what they think they could do to personally make things better.

The offender will then be asked if they would like the opportunity to meet you, or to have some other type of communication with you.

The conference

If everyone agrees – that's you, the offender and the trained facilitator – a face to face meeting, called a conference, will be arranged.

The meeting will be guided by the facilitator, will be held in a safe place and will probably last for up to an hour and a half. In the meeting, everyone will get to have their say.

You, and the offender, can invite friends, family or other supporters to come along.

Alternatively, if everyone agrees, the facilitator can arrange another type of communication between you.

The facilitator

The facilitator will be someone who has undergone specialist training in restorative

justice. They provide a completely confidential and impartial service.

Their aim is to be supportive and to make the experience positive for everyone involved.

What are the benefits for me?

Victims often want to understand why the crime happened to them. They also want to play some part in the process of what happens to the person who committed the crime.

The conference will give you the opportunity to tell the offender your thoughts and feelings about what happened. You can ask any questions you have, and agree what the offender could do to make things better for you.

Evidence shows that over 85% of victims who have taken part in restorative justice processes have come away from conferences feeling satisfied because they have had their say, because it has helped them move on from what has happened, and because the experience has reduced their fear of crime.

Being involved in a restorative process can give you a chance to:

- Have your say;
- Explain to the person who harmed you, and perhaps even for the first time your family and friends, what the real impact and consequences of their behaviour has been on your life;
- Get answers to questions and hopefully provide some element of closure;
- Have the opportunity to move forward positively with your life; and
- Help to prevent the same thing happening to somebody else.

What are the benefits for the offender?

The offender has the opportunity to listen to the person they have harmed, and can answer any questions that person might have.

They might apologise for what they have done, and can agree with the person they have harmed what they can do to personally make things better for them. That might include addressing the issues which led them to commit the crime.

Offenders who have taken part in restorative justice processes have said that the experience has helped them understand how their actions affect others, to address their feelings of guilt and remorse for what they have done, and to do something positive.

How to contact us

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We are an independent charity offering free, confidential support to people affected by crime and traumatic incidents.

For information and support, contact us by:

- calling: Supportline **08 08 16 89 111**
- using Next Generation Text (add **18001** before any of our phone numbers)
- Online: victimsupport.org.uk

To find out how you can help us, visit victimsupport.org.uk/get-involved

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What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice information for victims

Restorative West Mercia



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