

The Jersey Probation and After-Care Service is confident that Restorative Justice can build on the promising work that already exists at Parish Hall Enquiries.

It offers victims, offenders and the community an opportunity to resolve conflict by recognising the impact of offending and repairing the damage caused.

### **Jersey Probation Service**

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**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

**General  
Information**



**Jersey Probation and After-Care Service**

A key aim of the Jersey Probation and After-Care Service is to recognise the needs of victims throughout its work. In February 2002 a scheme began whereby victims of crime could, in appropriate cases, either meet the people who have committed offences against them or make their views known to them through a Restorative Justice Officer (R.J.O.) appointed by the Probation Service.

The aim of the Project is that victims receive explanations and apologies from the offender who will be encouraged to make reparation for the harm caused.

## WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

Restorative Justice is based on several principles which differ from those of more formal criminal justice systems.

- The process attempts to be as inclusive as possible with the victim in particular given the opportunity to play a more active role. This is important as victims report greater satisfaction with the criminal justice process when they have been included in the process and have received information, explanations, apologies and/or reparation.
- The main goal of restorative justice is not punishment but producing an agreement between the victim and offender whereby the offender can make amends for the harm caused to the victim and the community.
- Offenders accept responsibility for their actions as a precondition to addressing the harm they have caused.
- Proceedings and agreements are voluntary for all parties.

## WHAT DOES RJ OFFER VICTIMS?

- An explanation as to why the offender chose them.
- An opportunity to ask questions of the offender and to explain how the crime has affected them.
- An apology and some form of reparation, if appropriate.

- International research has demonstrated that a Restorative Justice process leads to high rates of victim satisfaction and a reduction in the fear of crime.

## ... AND THE OFFENDER?

- An opportunity to own the responsibility for their offence.
- Greater awareness about the effect of their crime on the victim.
- A chance to reassess their future behaviour.
- An opportunity to apologise and/or offer appropriate reparation e.g. repairing damage or cleaning graffiti.

## HOW IT WORKS?

The Restorative Justice Officer works in cases involving young offenders who are either on a Probation Order or on Voluntary Supervision from Parish Hall Enquiries.

In such cases where there is an identifiable victim, the R.J.O. will read the case papers and speak with the offender in order to explain the potential of Restorative Justice and the different options available.

Where the offender has acknowledged responsibility for the offence and has indicated a willingness to meet with the victim, the R.J.O. will contact the victim and explain the choices available.

Where both parties indicate a willingness to meet and this is thought to be appropriate by the R.J.O., a meeting can be arranged either with just the parties or with the parties and their families.

Alternatively, where either of the parties does not wish to meet or it is thought inappropriate to do so, the R.J.O. can, with the agreement of the parties, meet the offender and victim separately in order to pass on concerns, the impact of the offence and possible ways to repair the harm.

Progress can be relayed to the Courts and Centeniers in the usual way.

## BUILDING ON GOOD PRACTICE

Restorative Justice is not a new concept. Centeniers, through the Parish Hall Enquiry system, have for many years been practicing Restorative Justice Initiatives.

Examples include mediating in neighbourhood disputes and arranging for young people to apologise to victims and repair acts of vandalism. It is not intended to replace one traditional and successful justice initiative with one from overseas. The intention is to complement and build on the practices that are established in our society.

Similarly, we would hope that the Courts do not place more youths on Probation solely in order to partake in Restorative Justice. Research shows that a Probation Order can be an ineffective sentence for those who do not need such supervision, e.g. because their risk of re-offending is low.

**In summary we would urge Centeniers and Courts to dispose of cases in the usual way.**