

Restorative Justice

Information for people who have caused harm through a crime



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Männystrie o tha Laa

www.justice-ni.gov.uk



If you commit a crime,
you may have the
opportunity to meet
or communicate with
the person you harmed
through a process called
Restorative Justice.



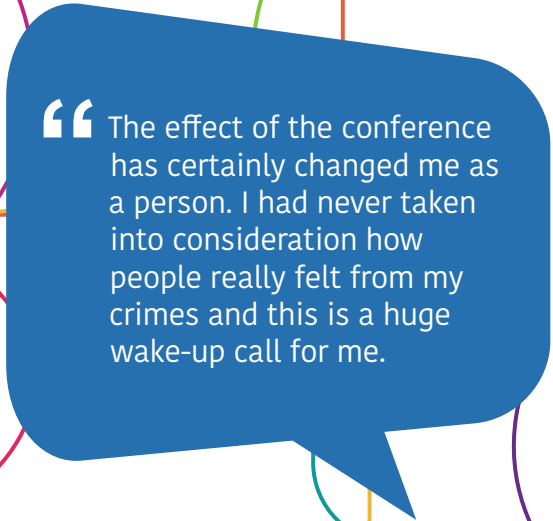
What is Restorative Justice?

What you did might have had an impact on you and you could feel regret, guilt, shame, anxiety or a mixture of emotions. Restorative Justice gives you the chance to meet or communicate with the person you harmed to take responsibility for what happened, to show remorse, and to find ways to make things right. Restorative justice is not a soft option and it takes courage to face the consequences of your actions. However, it can help you heal from what happened and move forward positively with your life.

“ It was eye opening for me.

“ It's made me realise that I've most likely affected a number of people (including family and friends) over the years.





“ The effect of the conference has certainly changed me as a person. I had never taken into consideration how people really felt from my crimes and this is a huge wake-up call for me.

A Restorative Justice Process

A restorative justice process can take place in two different ways. You and the person you have caused harm to may meet face-to-face or communicate without meeting (indirect).

Face-to-face meeting

A face-to-face meeting will be arranged by a restorative justice practitioner who will prepare you beforehand to make sure that you are ready and willing to take part. You can bring support to this meeting, which could be a family member, a friend or a professional you are involved with. They too will have contact with the practitioner beforehand so that they understand their role in supporting you.



Indirect communication

If the person you harmed chooses not to meet with you face-to-face, the practitioner can arrange another way in which they can share their thoughts and feelings with you. This might be done through what's called 'shuttle mediation' (where you are both in separate rooms), or through a letter, a video recording, or hearing from someone they have chosen to meet with you on their behalf.

In either case you must give your full consent to take part and be aware that you have the right to withdraw at any time. The person harmed has the same right.

“ I was nervous about taking part, quite panicky, but after I started to relax I felt really good to be there and see the person I troubled. I felt we had achieved something - both myself and the victim.



How does it work?

Before any meeting or communication takes place you must take responsibility for the crime and agree to be involved in this process. A specially trained restorative justice practitioner will have a first meeting with you to discuss your offence, who was harmed and how. They will also explain how restorative justice might be of benefit to you. If you decide to continue, and the practitioner considers it suitable, they will describe what will happen every step of the way and answer any questions that you might have.

The practitioner will make further appointments to help you prepare. They will help you think through what you need and wish to say and hear, and what the person harmed might expect from you.

They will work at your pace, until you both feel that you are ready to meet, or communicate with, each other.



What happens next?

You will receive a letter from a Restorative Justice practitioner offering an appointment to meet with you at your home or choice of location. Should you prefer not to meet, or wish to change appointment details, please contact the practitioner on the number provided.

“ I came away feeling good about the meeting. I'm glad I had the opportunity to say what I needed to say...

“ ...very reflective on how I made her and her family feel.



