



Jonathan Whiffing
Clerk to the Justice Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

7th June 2016

Dear Jonathan,

Restorative Justice Inquiry

I am writing to you with additional evidence, following the final morning sessions of the Justice Select Committee, held on 24th May 2016.

1. Assessing Restorative Justice

In the first session of the morning there was debate regarding the measurement of performance regarding RJ and it seemed to conclude with a suggestion that victim satisfaction was the most appropriate measure. Why me? would like to draw the Committee's attention to the Victim Services Commissioning Framework, published by the Ministry of Justice, 2013 which refers to the most appropriate outcome assessment for victim services.

Victims' service providers are expected to achieve two outcomes as set out in the Government consultation "Getting it right for victims and witnesses": helping victims first to cope with the impact of crime and subsequently to recover from the harm they have experienced although not all victims will return entirely to the lives they had before. It is open to commissioners to consider further outcomes in addition to cope and recover if appropriate. An outcome based approach to commissioning victims' services aims to improve the experience of victims and demonstrate the real benefits services provide to victims of crime.

<http://www.academyforjusticecommissioning.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Victims-commissioning-framework-MoJ-2013.pdf>

Why me? supports this view, as we are aware that victims can benefit from support from trained practitioners even in cases which do not progress to conference. There is value for some victims in the preparation process where they get to talk about the crime, the impact it has had on them and their family and their current needs. It is important for Police and Crime Commissioners to recognise this and to evaluate the success of RJ on the wider outcomes for victims as well as the smaller number of outcomes from actual conferences.



2. Police and Crime Commissioner funding and expenditure on RJ and Victims' Services

In the second morning session you will be aware the discussion centred on the MoJ allocation of funding to support PCCs in the commissioning and/or provision of victims' support services during the period 2013/16. In particular the Committee asked the Minister for details of how this allocation had been spent by PCCs and the Minister committed to report back to Committee.

You may recall also Why me? has been active in obtaining this information and publishing it for every PCC in England and Wales. We believe it should be transparent to victims, particularly in the period prior to the election of PCCs, about where they can get RJ Services and how the money has been spent. As part of our Valuing Victims campaign we undertook research with each PCC regarding their use of this funding and committed to provide the information via our website for public scrutiny.

The Ministry of Justice provided us with full details of individual PCC funding allocation for the year 2013/14 but could not produce the figures 2014/15 and 2015/16 until after the PCC election date. We now have this information from MoJ, provided on 10th May, and have revisited our Valuing Victims research (published on 28th April) and have requested *expenditure* information again from all PCCs. We anticipate we will have returns by 10th June and will update our website with this new information. We will be very interested to note if our information corresponds to the information the Minister provides to Committee.

3. Detail about indicative funding for RJ

On a broader point we would wish also to raise the discussion towards the later part of the same Committee session regarding future RJ funding. For clarification purposes the Committee should be aware that indicative funding for RJ was allocated to PCCs only for the years 2013-2016, ending in March 2016. The current position is that PCCs have allocated funding for Victim Services and RJ funding has to be found from this overall allocation.

4. Valuing Victims' Report recommendations

It is for this precise reason we have made the following recommendations within our Valuing Victims report (the report and our PCC map can be found here <http://www.why-me.org/valuing-victims/>)

1. There needs to be transparent, publicly accessible information on PCC commissioning processes and RJ spending so that the public can see how money is being spent and if value for money is achieved. Reporting on these two key elements of the commissioning process - transparency and accountability - are the joint responsibility of the MoJ and PCCs and should be in place for the 2016/17 round of allocations.



2. Long term funding for PCCs to deliver victim-led RJ services should continue. Indicative or ring-fenced funding for RJ from the Victim Services funding would facilitate transparency and accountability. Alternatively it should be a category of spend from the larger Victim Services grants, and should be reported annually by PCCs to MoJ, with statistical data held centrally and published annually by MoJ.

3. We see the provision of clear and accessible information to the public as a duty for PCCs under their responsibility for the provision of victims' services. The PCC website, Police websites, local RJ service providers, Courts and Youth Offending Services should all provide accurate and consistent information on what RJ is and on how victims can access a service which is right for them. The information provided should also give details of the type of RJ service being offered for particular crimes, for example burglary, assault, domestic violence, and whether there are any exclusions for certain offence types.

4. We recommend mandatory publication of performance information from PCCs, to include the number of requests for information or a RJ service received from victims, the type of RJ requested, through to outputs and outcomes. The MoJ should publish this information and it could be released alongside national crime information.

5. High quality safe RJ should be available at all stages of the criminal justice system. In order to achieve this, it is essential that PCCs are aware of the required standards for RJ provision and that those dealing with victims and offenders at different points in the system are educated in RJ and aware of their duty to provide RJ for victims should they want it and that they are also aware of how this can be achieved. We consider the Restorative Justice Council has achieved a great deal in setting out national standards and we support the Restorative Services Quality Mark (RSQM) award. The maintenance and delivery of RJ services to these standards is extremely important and should be encouraged and supported by MoJ and the PCCs.

Why me? very much welcome the commitment from Government towards establishing national RJ provision however, as stated within our report, it is essential for all victims that the momentum is maintained and that there is appropriate transparency and accountability about services being delivered.

We thank you the opportunity to express our views and we very much look forward to the Committee's recommendations.

Yours Sincerely,

Lucy Jaffé
Director