

# Lizzie Nelson

Director, Restorative Justice  
Council

## Where have we got to on RJ in the UK?

- Early days (1970s, 80s, early 90s) – Community mediation, first Probation projects, Thames Valley Restorative Cautioning
- 1997-2000 Labour Government:
  - Legislation introducing the referral order in England and Wales (1999) Youth Conferencing in Northern Ireland (2002) RJ as option for community sentences for adults (2003)
  - £7 million RJ research programme 2001 -2008
  - Best Practice Guidance 2004
  - Growth in restorative practice in policing, schools, care homes, innovative community based models and projects within CJ agencies

# What have we learned in the last ten years? (1)

- Comparing the impact of the Youth Justice Criminal Evidence Act (1999); the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act (2002); Criminal Justice Act (2003)
- 13% victim participation in referral order panel meetings in England and Wales/70% victim participation in youth conferences in Northern Ireland. Provisions of CJ Act 2003 only taken up in Thames Valley.
- Key lesson: Get the legislation right

## What have we learned? (2)

Where people can see immediate benefits for their work, they'll get on and use restorative practice without waiting for legislation – schools, care homes, community projects, restorative policing

## What have we learned? (3)

Sheffield University evaluation reports: huge development in the evidence base

- Pre- and post-sentence, serious adult offenders – 70% victim participation
- 80% victim satisfaction
- Reduction in the frequency of re-offending – leading to £9 savings for every £1 spent
- Savings across agencies

## Cost savings from RJ across agencies/sectors

Number of offenders	Number of RJ interventions (40% take up)	Net cashable CJS savings over 2 years	of which Police	of which Prisons	of which Legal Aid	Net cashable NHS savings	Non cashable net savings
75,000	29,000	£185m	£65m	£56m	£14m	£55m	£741m

## What have we learned? (4)

- For offences later on in the criminal justice system –where the cost-benefits come much further down the line – Government does need to step in – eg to ensure RJ is offered consistently to all victims, including victims of serious offences



## 2010 Coalition Government

"We have a historic opportunity to look at how restorative justice can be introduced into the criminal justice system ... I'm a maximalist when it comes to restorative justice – I want to get it into our system at every stage."

*Crispin Blunt, Minister for Prisons and Probation*

- Review of research evidence – stronger view of the evidence base
- RJ as part of current Sentencing Review – leading to Green Paper this December 2010



## Role of the RJC

- Restorative Justice Consortium founded 13 years ago as independent third sector membership body
- Key roles to date: advocacy and policy development for RJ; work on standards and accreditation; events and resources for membership
- As restorative practice expands quality assurance becomes essential – for safety of participants; to ensure principles are upheld and evidence for benefits is replicated; and for public confidence

# Restorative Justice Council

- Three key roles: Professional, Public, Practice
- Professional: Development of practitioner Code of Practice and registration. Quality marks for trainers, practitioners, services
- Public – continuing our advocacy/policy role and providing information to public and media through our website and publications
- Practice – consultancy to encourage development of quality restorative practice at local level

## Hull workshops: developing the quality assurance framework

- Key questions as we develop quality assurance:
  - How to ensure the quality of restorative practice, whilst continuing to encourage innovation in an emerging field?
  - What are the essentials of quality assurance for restorative practice?
  - How can we learn from other models internationally?

## References:

- Restorative Justice research reports published by Home Office/Ministry of Justice at:  
<http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/?Resources:Research>
- Youth Crime Commission Report at:  
<http://www.youthcrimecommission.org.uk/>
- Key pieces of UK legislation at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/>
- UK national occupational standards in restorative practice at:  
[http://www.skillsforjustice-nosfinder.com/suites.php?suite\\_id=39](http://www.skillsforjustice-nosfinder.com/suites.php?suite_id=39)
- RJC website at [www.restorativejustice.org.uk](http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk)