

Valuing Victims:

A Review of Police and Crime Commissioners' Delivery of Restorative Justice 2021/22

February 2023



Transforming lives through
Restorative Justice



Introduction

This is the eighth annual Why me? report in the [Valuing Victims series](#). Each year, Why me? requests the data supplied to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) by the 42 police areas in England and Wales via a Freedom of Information request in order to review the financial investment into Restorative Justice (RJ) and the impact this has had on victims.

Although the Ministry of Justice provides a reporting template to monitor Police & Crime Commissioners' delivery of overall victim services, including returns for Restorative Justice, our report this year has drawn many of the same conclusions:

- Data entries are incomplete, with values missing from several areas.
- The quality of the data is unreliable. The data is not subject to quality assurance processes that would be applied to formally published Ministry of Justice statistics, and there are considerable variations between areas.
- There is very little data that is collected and so we have a limited understanding of the impact of Restorative Justice.

In the last year, Why me? has continued to work across the sector to develop solutions for improved data collection and sharing. This has included hosting a network of Police and Crime Commissioners' offices to discuss Restorative Justice and in our capacity as an advisory board member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice. We believe that a National Action Plan on Restorative Justice and a National Reporting Framework would help to improve the reliability of data regarding the provision of Restorative Justice. In turn, this will enable the cost-benefit of RJ to society to be better understood as demonstrated in [our Economic Evaluation](#) research last year.

The Data

Spend on victims

The data received by Why me? broke down funding for Restorative Justice services into three streams: 'MoJ spend', 'Co-commissioned spend', and 'Spend outside MoJ'. A quarter of Police and Crime Commissioned areas did not report any spending on Restorative Justice services. Only six areas reported co-commissioned spend, and nine areas reported spend outside the MoJ. No additional information was provided on the source of this spend.

Number of PCC areas	Amount
5	£0 - £50k
7	£50k - £100k
7	£100k - £150k
5	£150k - £200k
5	£200k - £300k
3	£300k +

The table shows an anonymised summary of the total spending data. It indicates a substantial difference in funding for restorative services in different areas, with the lowest reported spending at £6,250 and the highest at £397,412.

Supported victims

The disparity in spending on restorative services means that victims face a postcode lottery when accessing services. This is reflected in the number of victims that are being supported by services.

The data provided by the Ministry of Justice includes the number of new referrals, new victims, and existing victims supported by Restorative Justice in the reporting period. An anonymised summary of the total number of new and existing victims supported in the reporting period is below:

Number of PCC areas	Total no. of victims supported
13	0 - 100
6	101 - 200
7	201 - 300
7	300 +

One area reported only 6 victims supported, compared to another area which reported 1,705 victims supported. This indicates that different PCC areas have different counting rules in regard to support for victims. Some areas may record telephone and/or e-mail contact with victims as support, while in other PCC areas, they may only record direct face-to-face restorative meetings as victims supported. The victim support data requires further breakdown to be meaningful and there should be a focus on redefining this to accurately capture the type of support provided to victims.

Universal access

The total number of referrals split by gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and disability do not total the same across each PCC area. For example, one PCC area's referrals split by gender totals 530, but the referrals split by age totals 528.

There is anecdotal evidence that people from Black, Asian, and mixed heritage communities are underrepresented in the take-up of Restorative Justice, despite being disproportionately and adversely affected by crime and by institutional responses to crime. Without insight into who is being supported by Restorative Justice services, we are unable to improve access for those who are not being referred.

Recommendations

1. We recommend that the Ministry of Justice works with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime Commissioners to ensure accurate expenditure reporting on Restorative Justice is provided as a data return for all Police and Crime Commissioner areas for 2023/24.
2. We recommend that the Ministry of Justice work with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and Police & Crime Commissioners to redefine and clarify the data return for victims supported by Restorative Justice services for 2023/24.
3. We recommend that the Ministry of Justice work with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and Police & Crime Commissioners to redefine the 2023/24 outcome measures within the data set using the above suggestion as a proposal for consultation.
4. We recommend that the Ministry of Justice capture data from National Probation Service regions that invest in RJ as an intervention so that impact can be monitored and evaluated.
5. Public reporting of the data is recommended. Victims of crime and the wider public should have access to performance information on the local provision of Restorative Justice services.

Why me? supports the recommendations made in the most recent APPG briefing papers. These include the introduction of a National Reporting Framework; standardised information sharing; and ring-fenced funding for Restorative Justice.

Conclusion

Why me? fully supports the principle of collecting key national data for Restorative Justice services. However, the data needs to be accurate to allow for any meaningful comparisons to assist the development of Restorative Justice services and deliver accountability, especially to victims of crime and the public. Why me? has identified and reported on this issue over a number of years and, whilst some improvements have taken place, the time is now for grasping this issue and delivering real improvements. Victims of crime deserve better.

If you want to discuss our findings or discuss how to improve data collection in your PCC area, or if you would like a copy of the data we have analysed then please get in touch via info@why-me.org.