



**AVON &
SOMERSET
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**



Would you meet with the offender of your crime and tell them how their actions have affected you?

Restorative Justice (RJ) gives victims the chance to meet or communicate with their offender to explain the real impact of the crime. It empowers victims by giving them a voice, and holds offenders to account for what they have done and take responsibility for their actions.

If you've been the victim of crime or anti-social behaviour the thought of meeting the person responsible might be a daunting prospect. For many people however, talking about what happened and how they were made to feel helps them to move on from their experience.

"For the first time, I was given a voice and the chance to make decisions"

In Avon and Somerset there are three Restorative Justice Coordinators based in each of the Lighthouse victim and witness care hubs. The RJ Coordinators have been funded by the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner to provide a safe and streamlined service for RJ and increase the use of RJ across the area.

Enquiries are sent to the RJ Coordinators who conduct thorough suitability and risk assessment checks before passing the details onto a trained RJ facilitator. The facilitator supports and prepares people taking part and makes sure that the process is safe.

You will have the opportunity to talk about the impact of what happened and what could be done to make things better for you. The perpetrator is also visited to talk about the harm caused and what could be done to make amends. If both of you agree to meet, you will be given the opportunity to talk about what happened in a meeting.

"I wanted them to know what they'd put me through"

The meeting is called an RJ conference and it can be used in everything from neighbour disputes to serious crimes. RJ is voluntary and only takes place if everyone agrees to it. The meeting is held at a neutral location at a time which is convenient to you and led by the RJ professional. You may be able to bring along relatives, friends or other people to give you support. Sometimes, when a face-to-face meeting is not the best way forward, the facilitator will arrange for the victim and offender to communicate via letters, recorded interviews, or video.

For any kind of communication to take place, the offender must have admitted to the crime, and both victim and offender must be willing to participate.

"After meeting my offender I felt such relief – it meant I could finally get to sleep at night"

Restorative Justice is available to all victims of crime and anti-social behaviour at any stage of the criminal justice process.

Restorative Justice increases victim satisfaction by 85% and reduces the likelihood of offending by 27%

"I'm so determined to change. I know that's down to the RJ – it's the only thing I've done that's different." – prolific offender

If you would like to speak to an RJ Coordinator for more information, you can email restorativejustice@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk or visit www.lighthouse.org.uk