



# Annual Report

## 2019-2020

## Contents

1	Introduction	Page 3
2	Referrals	Pages 4-8
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Referrals by month</li><li>- Referrals by type</li><li>- Victim/Offender ratio by quarter</li><li>- Self-referrals by quarter</li><li>- Referrals by crime type</li><li>- Referrals by source</li><li>- Victim-initiated referrals</li><li>- Offender initiated referrals</li></ul>	
3	Outcomes	Pages 9-10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Positive outcomes</li><li>- Other outcomes</li></ul>	
4	Recruiting and training volunteers	Pages 11-13
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Training</li><li>- Diversity</li><li>- Volunteers by gender</li><li>- Volunteers by age</li><li>- Volunteers by ethnicity/heritage</li></ul>	
5	Awareness raising	Pages 14-16
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Victim Support</li><li>- Met Prosecutions Witness Care Unit</li><li>- Local borough services</li></ul>	
6	Partnership working	Pages 17-18
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Restorative Justice Council</li><li>- Victim Support Homicide Service</li><li>- Victim Support Burglary Pilot</li><li>- Metropolitan Police Service Restorative Justice Pilot</li><li>- Metropolitan Police Service Turning Point</li><li>- National Probation Service</li><li>- Why Me?</li><li>- South London &amp; Maudesley Mental Health Service</li><li>- Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership</li></ul>	

Restorative Justice Service  
Annual Report 2019-2020

7	Challenges	Pages 19-21
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Information Sharing Agreements</li><li>- Raising awareness</li><li>- COVID Government guidelines</li></ul>	
8	Solutions and recommendations	Pages 22-23
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Information Sharing Agreements</li><li>- Raising awareness</li><li>- COVID Government guidelines</li><li>- The RJ service main priorities for Year 2:</li></ul>	
9	Highlights	Pages 24-27
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Restorative Service Quality Mark</li><li>- Annual Conference</li><li>- Crimestoppers Podcast</li><li>- RJ Service Newsletters</li></ul>	
10	Case studies	Pages 28-31
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Conference</li><li>- Shuttle</li><li>- Letter</li><li>- Restorative conversation</li></ul>	
	Contact us	Page 32

## 1 Introduction

In April 2019 Victim Support launched the London Victim & Witness Service providing a range of support services to victims of crime in London, including Restorative Justice.

Calm Mediation were commissioned by Victim Support as a key partner of the London Victim and Witness Service to deliver the Restorative Justice Service from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

The aim of the service is to offer Restorative Justice to victims of crime as an entitlement of the Victim Code of Practice and to deliver a quality, victim-led service to assist victims in finding a positive way forward from the impact of crime.

Restorative Justice is a process that empowers victims by giving them a voice. The process provides the opportunity for the victim to enter into communication with the offender, either face to face, via shuttle communication or letter, to explain the real impact the crime has had on them and others. For offenders, the experience can be extremely profound as it confronts them with the personal impact of their crime.

The Restorative Justice team consists of the Calm Mediation Director, three full time paid staff and a growing pool of volunteer Restorative Justice Facilitators:

Calm Mediation Managing Director: Responsible for the overall management of all Calm Mediation services.

Restorative Service Manager: Responsible for the strategic and operational overview, developing and implementing policy and procedure, stakeholder engagement.

Restorative Development Officer: responsible for developing partnerships at local borough level, promoting community engagement, developing and delivering a marketing strategy.

Restorative Case Coordinator: responsible for managing referrals, developing and maintaining referral pathways, promoting volunteer engagement.

Restorative Justice Facilitators: responsible for facilitating the process of Restorative Justice.

## 2. Referrals

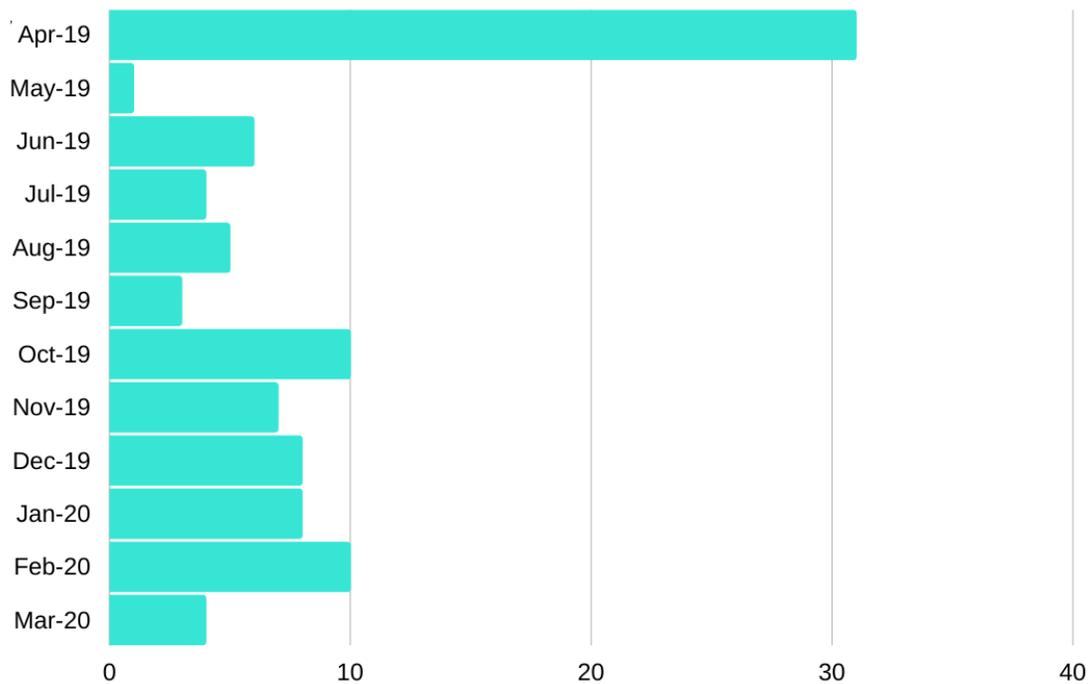
### Referrals by month

Between April 2019 and March 2020 the service received 97 referrals.

April 2019 is reflective of Calm Mediation's existing referrals transferred into the new pan-London service in addition to the referrals transferred over from the previous pan-London service provider.

Throughout Quarters 1 & 2 Calm Mediation commenced delivery of awareness sessions to services working with victims. This is reflected by an increase in referrals in October 2019 with Quarters 3 & 4 showing an improvement against Quarters 1 and 2.

Referrals decreased in March 2020 as COVID 19 began to have an impact on services in London.



### Referrals by type

Referral type differentiates between a referral initiated by the victim and a referral initiated by the offender.

Referrals are also categorised as Enhanced Priority Referrals (EPR) where there is a recognised additional need or non-EPR where there is no additional need identified.



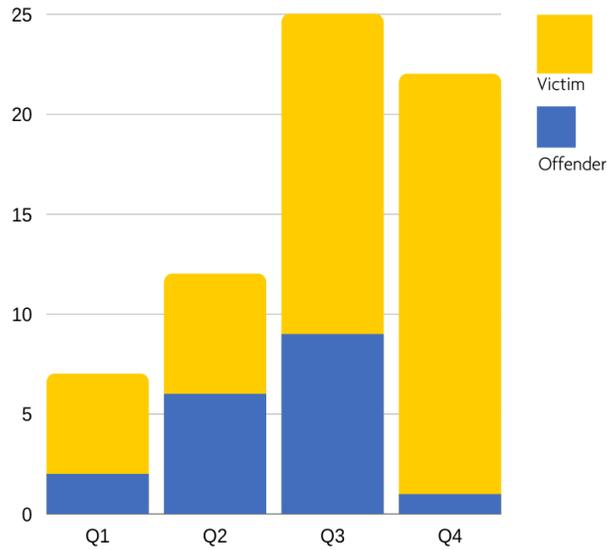
### Victim/Offender ratio by Quarter

Through liaison with Prison and Probation services it became apparent that information of and access to Restorative Justice was more readily available to offenders in the criminal justice system than to victims. As a victim led service our aim is to ensure that the majority of referrals are victim initiated.

The service launched a year-long strategy to raise awareness with services working with victims (see Section 6 Awareness raising) and to increase our use of social media platforms to encourage self-referrals:

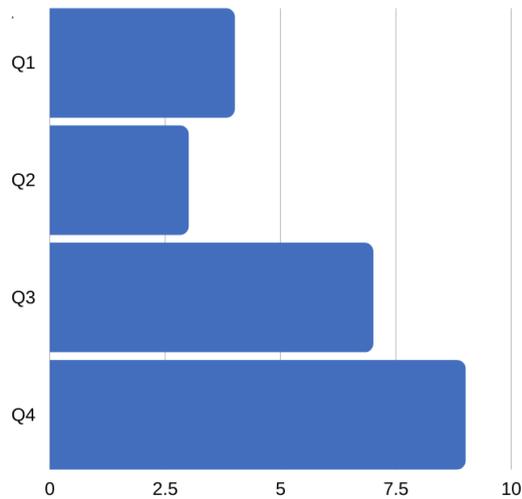
Restorative Justice Service  
Annual Report 2019-2020

The data demonstrates a significant ratio increase toward victim-initiated referrals in Quarters 3 and 4.



Self-referrals by Quarter

Self-referrals continued to increase significantly during Quarters 3 and 4.



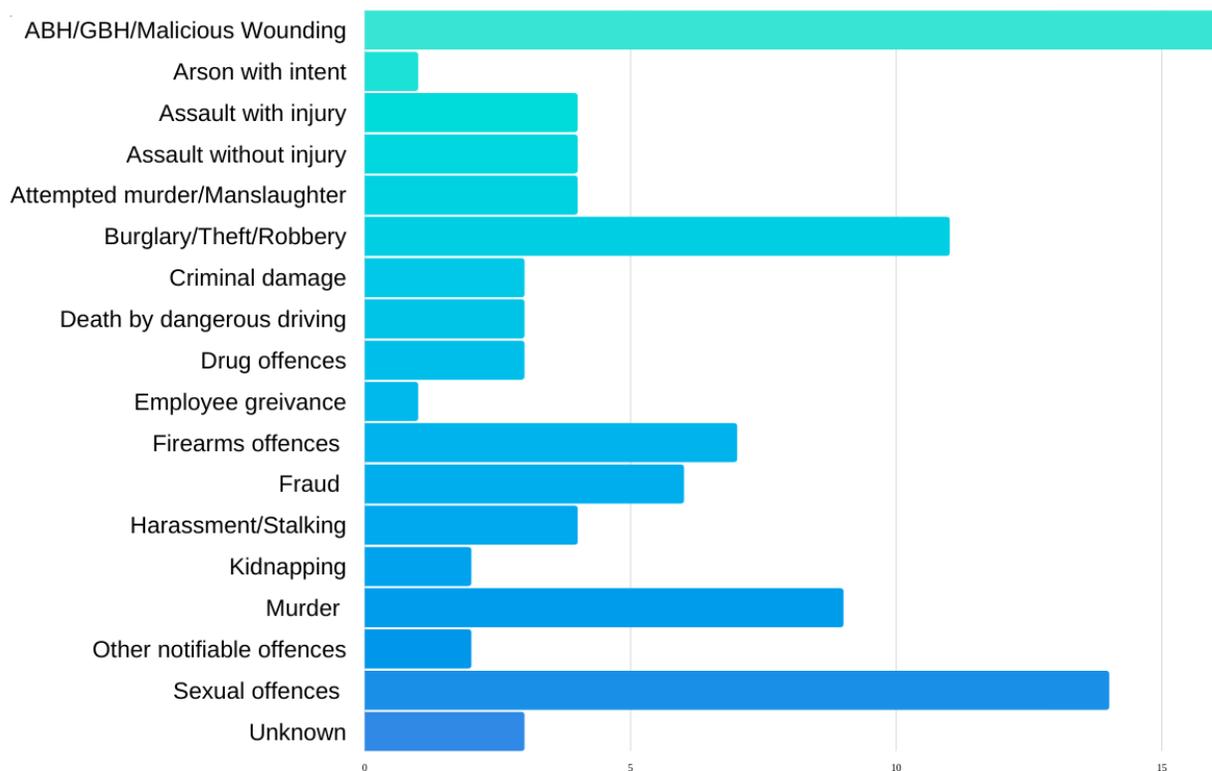
### Referrals by crime type

The service accepts referrals for all crime types.

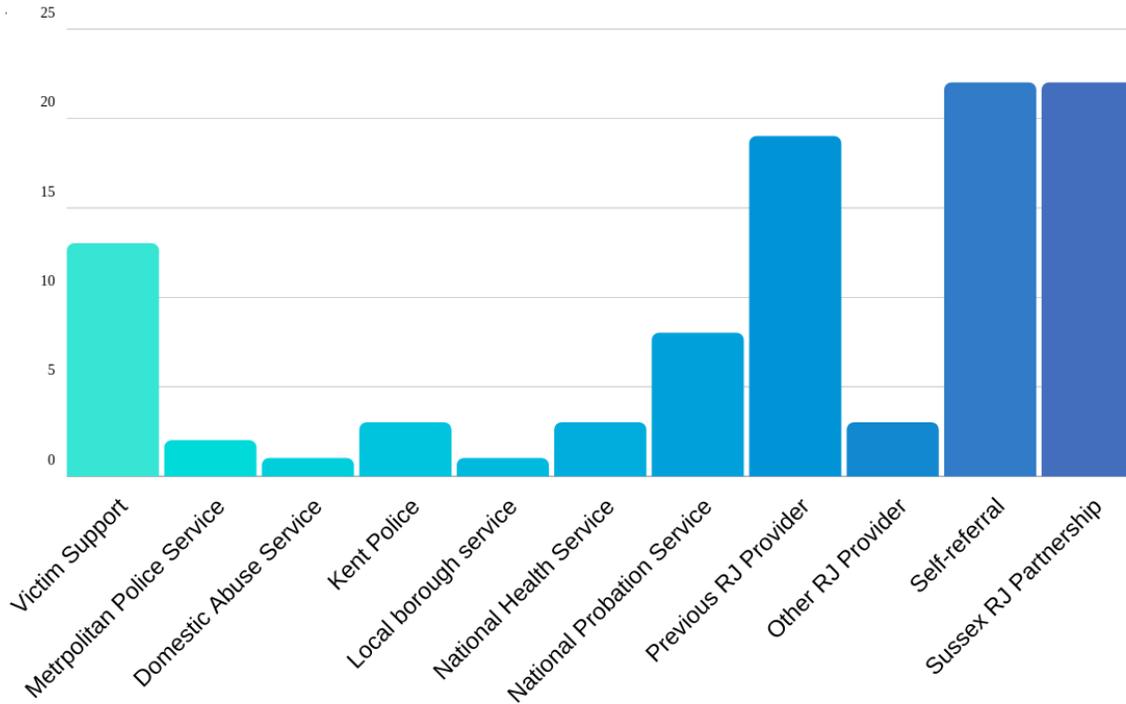
The data collated in regarding crime type will also determine if a referral is EPR or non-EPR alongside the personal data collated as explained above.

There are some noticeable trends in regards to victim/offender-initiated referrals and crime type:

- All referrals for sexual offences were victim-initiated
- All referrals for firearm and drug offences were offender-initiated
- All but one referrals for robbery were offender-initiated whilst all referrals for theft were victim-initiated
- All referrals for harassment and stalking offences and those where domestic abuse was identified were victim-initiated
- In the case of referrals for offences which resulted in the death of the victim 71% were initiated by the deceased victim's family



### Referrals by source



### Victim-initiated referrals

As a key partner of the LVWS, the service has built a strong working partnership with Victim Support who, along with self-referrals continue to be the main source of victim-initiated referrals received into the service.

### Offender-initiated referrals

Prior to the launch of the LVWS pan-London service, Calm Mediation had an existing service level agreement with Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership (SRJP) to deliver a service for offender-initiated referrals from 3 prisons in Sussex. In all cases referred the victim is identified as living in London. This partnership continues and accounts for the majority of offender-initiated referrals received into the service.

### 3. Outcomes

Of the 97 referrals received, 74 are completed cases with 21 cases ongoing. 2 cases were re-opened as a new referral, given the time elapsed since the last contact, but only have one recorded outcome.

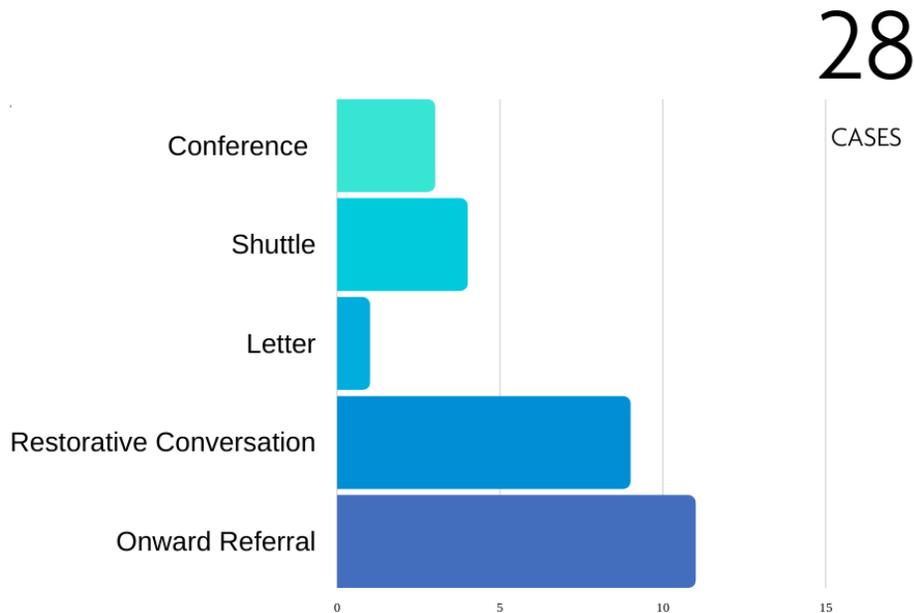
The following analysis pertains to the 74 completed cases.

#### Positive outcomes

28 cases concluded with a positive outcome for the victim, where needs were identified and met.

There are a number of cases where the service user had more than one outcome. The following data shows the primary outcome only.

Onward referral pertains to specialist support including Victim Support, counselling and domestic abuse services



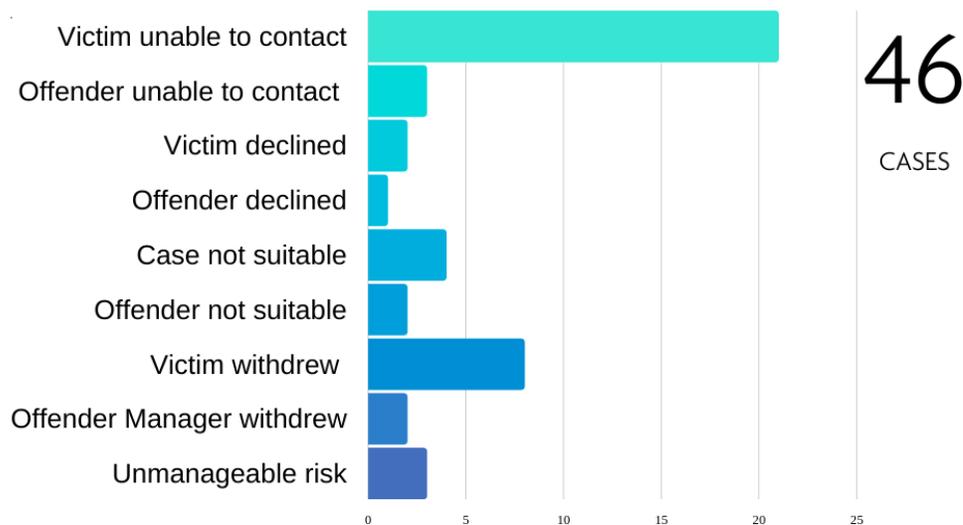
Other outcomes

46 cases were unable to be progressed to conclusion.

21 of those 46 were due to not being able to make contact with the victim to offer them the opportunity to engage in the restorative justice process (see Section 7 Challenges).

3 of those 46 were due to not being able to make contact with the offender. In all 3 cases the offender was residing in the community and not subject to current probation conditions.

Of the cases where an identified unmanageable risk was presented, 2 were domestic abuse offences and 1 had an element of gang affiliation.



#### 4. Recruiting and training volunteers

In order to respond to the needs of a pan-London service, the Restorative Justice Service planned and implemented two recruitment drives in November 2019 and January 2020.

The aim was twofold: to ensure the service had the capacity to respond to an increase in referrals and to ensure the Restorative Justice team reflected the diversity of service users. This was to be achieved by ensuring a diverse group of individuals were aware of and had access to RJ Practitioner training.

##### Training

Calm Mediation deliver the 4-day Restorative Justice Practitioner Training course. The trainer is a Restorative Justice Council (RJC) registered Advanced Practitioner and RJC accredited trainer.

The training course is funded under the current contract, enabling Calm Mediation to offer quality training to applicants free of charge. This was important to the recruitment strategy as it provided access to volunteering opportunities to a diverse group of applicants, ensuring the process was inclusive.

The service received 31 applications following the first recruitment drive in November 2019. The applicants were shortlisted and interviewed, with 16 successful candidates invited to attend the training in January 2020. All those invited accepted the offer, with 15 individuals completing the training course. Of the 15, one is the service Coordinator and one is the lead prison officer for a partnership project (see 6 Partnership working). 13 are now actively volunteering for the service.

The service received 16 applications following the second recruitment drive in January 2020, resulting in 12 successful candidates. The training was scheduled to commence on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, however due to Government COVID guidelines the venue cancelled the booking and the training has been postponed until such time appropriate training venues re-open or the RJC are able to recommend that quality training is able to be delivered via a virtual platform. The service maintains regular contact with the RJC and the training provider, to ensure delivery of the training course commences at the earliest opportunity.

In the meantime, the service has continued to engage the recruited volunteers by offering regular service updates and volunteer engagement activities. All 12 volunteers remain engaged with the service.

The service has built an ongoing relationship with Greenwich University who are the only London borough to offer a Restorative Justice qualification. Via this relationship we have established open communication with the course tutor and students who have completed their RJ training externally and are seeking practical volunteering experiences.

Restorative Justice Service  
Annual Report 2019-2020

In addition to the 4-day RJ Practitioner Training, the service has developed an existing process whereby those trained externally are able to access a 1-day skills refresher course, inclusive of an assessment process, to ensure they meet the high standards of Calm Mediation facilitators. A further 7 RJ practitioners have joined the service as a result of the partnership working with Greenwich University and delivery of the 1-day training,

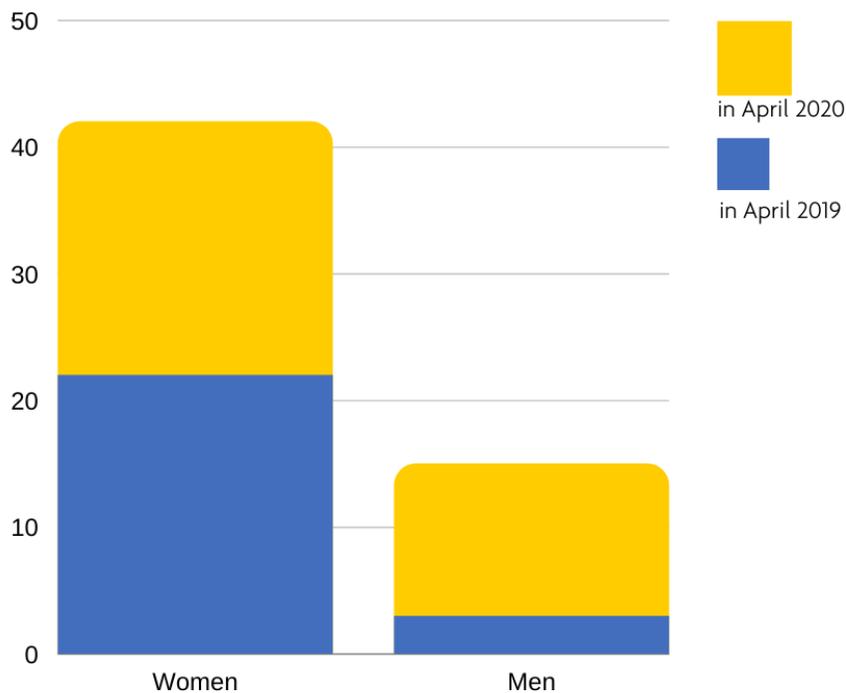
The number of volunteers has exceeded expectations with an increase from 25 in April 2019 to 57 in April 2020.

Diversity

The service raised awareness on a much wider platform than previous years, reaching out to Community Leaders and specialist organisations to achieve the aim of creating a diverse team to meet the needs of a pan-London service.

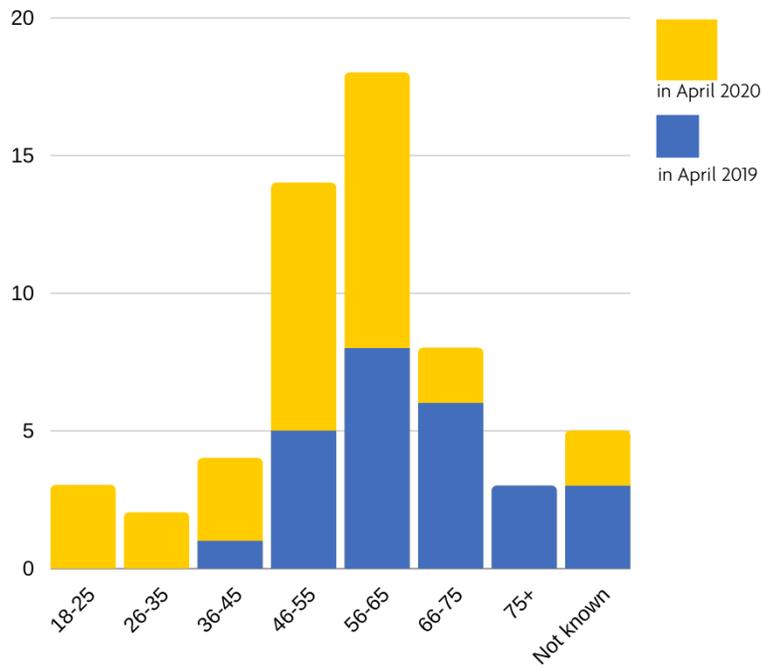
The following data reflects the growing diversity of the Restorative Justice team.

Volunteers by gender

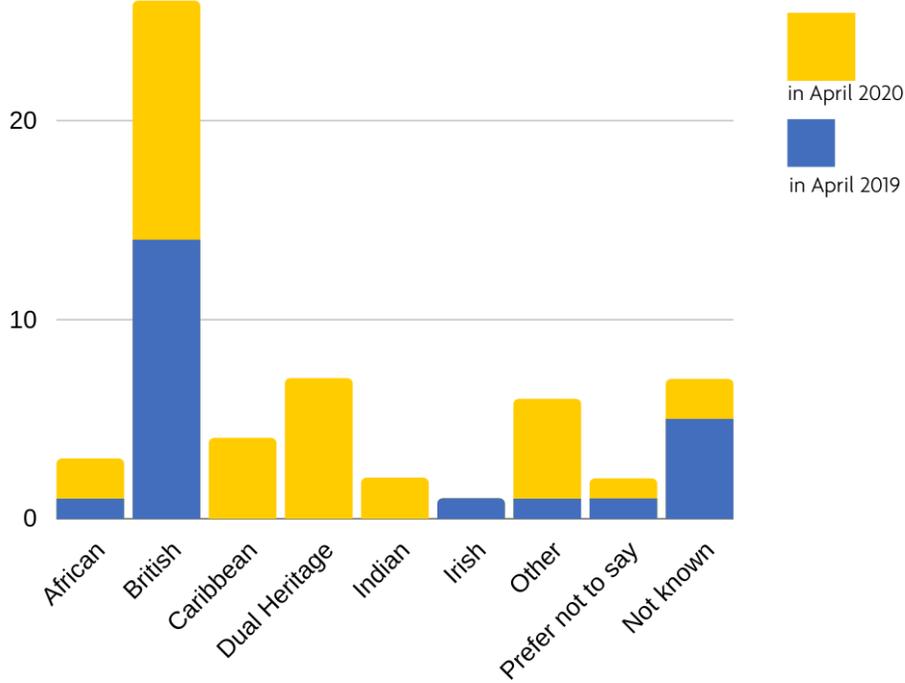


Restorative Justice Service  
Annual Report 2019-2020

Volunteers by age



Volunteers by ethnicity/heritage



## 5 Awareness raising

### Victim Support

The support the service receives from Victim Support has been a key factor in the ongoing strategy to raise awareness and generate referrals. Throughout June to August 2019 the service delivered awareness sessions for staff in each of the four Victim Support areas in London.

Attendees to the sessions held a range of different roles within Victim Support: Operations Managers; Hub Managers; Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA's) and IDVA Team Managers; Independent Victim Advocates; Anti-social behaviour and Hate Crime Workers; Casual Workers.

Each office was provided with an RJ folder comprising of the operating procedure, presentation slides, referral forms and information sheets for victims and professionals working with victims. The referral form, service information and resources were also sent electronically to the Victim Support Senior Operations Managers for circulation among all London staff.

52 members of staff participated in the sessions with 34 providing an evaluation of the presentation. The feedback provided enabled continuous improvement of the content of future presentations and accompanying resources:

- 83% stated the session was relevant to their role
- 97% stated they felt more confident discussing RJ with victims
- 90% stated they were clear about the referral pathway
- 21% stated they would like some follow up information
- 6% stated they still had some concerns around referring victims

As a result of the feedback received, additional resources were provided, including a desk aid to identify the different stages of victim contact where RJ can be introduced and a scripted guide to verbally introduce RJ to service users at an appropriate time in response to identified needs.

### Met Prosecutions Witness Care Units

Met Prosecutions Senior Managers have been instrumental in providing access to Police premises to deliver awareness sessions to Met Prosecutions staff and ensuring all Witness Care Unit communications sent to victims include details of the RJ service.

In September and October 2019 the service delivered awareness sessions in each of the five Witness Care Units in London.

Attendees comprised of Witness Care Officers and Witness Care Managers from the area Witness Care Units for London and the Serious Crime Witness Care Unit.

The referral form, service information and resources were sent electronically to the Witness Care Managers for circulation among all London staff.

79 members of staff participated in the sessions with 29 providing an evaluation of the presentation:

- 100% stated the session was relevant to their role
- 97% stated they felt more confident discussing RJ with victims
- 100% stated they were clear about the referral pathway
- 14% stated they would like some follow up information
- 11% stated they still had some concerns around referring victims

As a result of the feedback received, additional resources were provided, including a referral flow chart to identify the different stages of victim contact where RJ can be introduced and an amendment to the Victim Support referral form to include a free text section on RJ. The purpose of the amended Victim Support form was to prompt Victim Support to continue the RJ conversation with the referee, thus reducing the onus on Witness Care Officers to complete two separate referral forms to two different services for the same victim.

#### Local borough services

With the aim of raising awareness of Restorative Justice at local borough level, the service has delivered presentations to and/or attended meetings with the following services:

- Brent Community MARAC & Hate Crime Panel
- Camden Community Partnership meeting
- Croydon Black History event
- Croydon Community Partnership meeting
- Croydon Independent Advisory Group
- Croydon Over 60's Social Group
- Hammersmith & Fulham NHS Specialist Midwifery Team
- Hammersmith & Fulham Youth Offending Service
- Haringey Exodus Project – Tackling Crime, Serious Violence and County Lines
- Havering Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Hounslow Serious Crime Delivery Group
- Islington Community MARAC meeting
- Islington Community Partnership meeting
- Islington Kingsland Hub (Housing)
- Newham Youth Offending Team
- Sutton Community Safety Problem Solvers event

Restorative Justice Service  
Annual Report 2019-2020

- Sutton Integrated Offender Management Team
- Wandsworth Drug and Alcohol Consortium
- Westminster Offender Board meeting
- Advance
- Area West Offender Board meeting
- Pan-London Youth Offending Service
- Redthread
- South London's Women's Hub meeting
- Stay Safe East

## 6 Partnership working

### Restorative Justice Council

The RJC is the independent third sector membership body for the field of restorative practice. It provides quality assurance and a national voice advocating the widespread use of all forms of restorative practice, including restorative justice.

Calm Mediation is a registered member of the RJC and as such is driven to maintain the quality standards set by the RJC. The service continually reviews its processes to ensure the National Occupation Standards are being met and ensure that the facilitators are given the support they need to meet the competency framework of the role.

The RJ service is in regular contact with the RJC and attends the quarterly RJC London Networking Forum, providing an update on the pan-London service to RJ providers and stakeholders who attend the meeting.

### Victim Support Homicide Service

The Homicide Service and Calm Mediation entered into a contractual agreement on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 for Calm Mediation to provide restorative justice services to victims bereaved by homicide.

### Victim Support Burglary Pilot

Victim Support and Calm Mediation are in the process of planning the implementation of a Restorative Justice pilot in Victim Support's North London Hub, area with the purpose of making a meaningful offer of restorative justice to victims of domestic burglary. The intended outcome of the pilot is to increase the level of referrals into the RJ service being delivered as part of the overall London Victim and Witness Service.

Victim Support and Calm Mediation are utilising dual-trained volunteers to facilitate the practical delivery of the pilot.

### Metropolitan Police Service Restorative Justice Pilot

Key contacts in MPS have been very supportive in driving forward an idea for a restorative justice pilot within MPS. Several meetings have taken place and the RJ service has been actively involved in agreeing the wording for a new victim leaflet, outlining the victim's rights and entitlements including Restorative Justice, to be provided to all victims who report a crime to MPS. The service will continue to liaise with MPS key contacts in regard to the pilot going into year 2.

### Metropolitan Police Service Turning Point

Turning Point is a police-led deferred prosecution scheme. The scheme works with victims and offenders, enabling referrals to be made with consent of both parties. A referral pathway has been agreed and the RJ service awaits the first referral.

### National Probation Service

NPS Victim Liaison Officers and Probation Officers are proactively supporting the delivery of restorative justice by gaining consent from victims and offenders in order for them to be offered the opportunity to take part in the process. The Head of the Victim Contact Scheme is supportive of the RJ service and plans to deliver awareness sessions to NPS staff in London will continue into Year 2.

### Why Me?

Taking the Conversation Inside is a project to be jointly delivered by Why Me? and Calm Mediation. HMP Wandsworth will identify and refer offenders who wish to repair the harm caused to victims by their offending behaviour. The restorative process will be delivered using a co-facilitation model, with Why Me? and Calm Mediation facilitators pairing up on cases. An Information Sharing Agreement has been formalised and Calm Mediation provided RJ Practitioner Training to the HMP Wandsworth lead for the project.

The RJ service have an agreement with HMP Wandsworth to continue to provide an RJ service after the time limited, jointly delivered project has concluded. The project is currently on hold due to COVID restrictions within the Prison Service.

### South London & Maudsley Mental Health Service

The RJ service has a good working relationship with SLAM mental health service – a SLAM member of staff is also an active RJ facilitator for the RJ service. SLAM provide advice and guidance on cases where participants have identified mental health needs.

### Sussex Restorative Justice Partnership

Calm Mediation have a long-standing relationship with Sussex RJ Partnership who refer the majority of offender-initiated cases received into the service. In all cases referred the victim lives in London, with the crime reported to the MPS.

## 7 Challenges

### Information Sharing Agreements

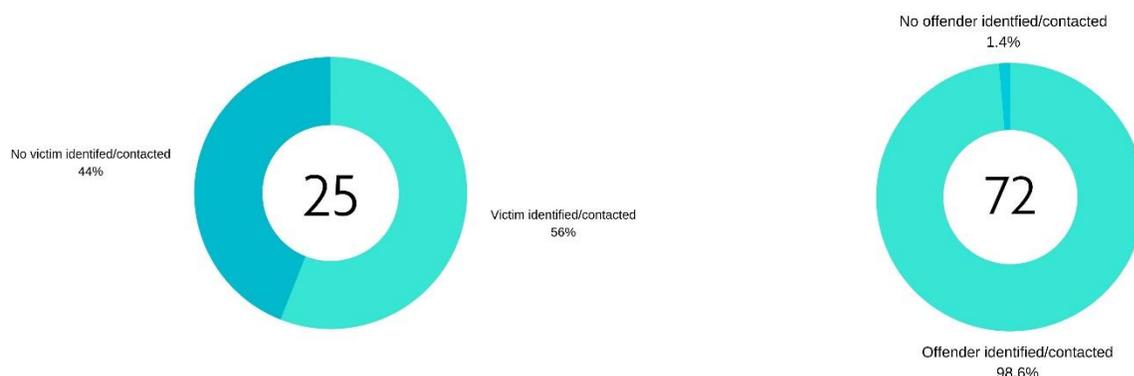
Information Sharing Agreements were written and submitted to Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in June 2019 and to Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) in July 2019.

The delay in partner agencies review and agreement of ISA's has presented challenges in terms of accessing victim and offender data to progress cases, despite continuous support from key stakeholders and partner agencies.

With regard to victim-initiated referrals, NPS have supported the RJ service in identifying offenders known to NPS, making contact to discuss RJ and gaining consent to make a referral into the RJ service. This is in accordance with the proposed terms of the pending NPS Information Sharing Agreement and there is a team of Victim Liaison Officers and Probation Officers to support this task. 1 case was closed due to not being able to identify and/or contact the offender via this process.

With regard to offender-initiated referrals, MPS have supported the RJ service by committing to identifying victims, making contact to discuss RJ and gaining consent for the RJ service to make contact with them. This is outside of the proposed terms of the pending MPS Information Sharing Agreement and there is one individual supporting this task. 11 cases were closed due to not being able to identify and/or contact the victim via this process.

It is not possible to accurately evaluate this data whilst there is no available comparison to the current methods for identifying and contacting victims. However, on comparing the two sets of data, it is reasonable to conclude that an Information Sharing Agreement would enable a more robust process and ease pressures on MPS personnel.



The delay in finalising the Information Sharing Agreements has also had an impact on the number of expected referrals. A lack of clarity around the legal basis for information sharing has impeded referrals from partner agencies and the RJ service continues to seek referrals from alternative pathways (see Section 8 Solutions and Recommendations).

#### Raising awareness

As is to be expected, staff turnover and relocation of staff to new roles has an impact on the momentum of any awareness raising strategy. There may also be a staff team who are not based in London (in the case of Victim Support's Supportline) but are actively involved in delivering services and information to victims. This has been recognised by Victim Support and Calm Mediation and a strategy to address this issue has been discussed (see Section 8 Solutions and Recommendations).

#### COVID and Government guidelines

Toward the end of quarter 4, the impact of COVID became evident and in response, Calm Mediation brought into effect their business continuity plan (see Section 8 Solutions and Recommendations).

- Volunteer availability decreased as individuals began to prioritise personal safety over other commitments. The RJ service updated risk assessments to take into account the new organisational COVID policy
- The training venue cancelled the booking for the 4-day RJ Practitioner training and other training venues were also closing, forcing the decision to cancel the training course until further notice
- Organisations began to advise of limited services and in some case suspension of services highlighting concerns that referrals would decrease significantly
- Providing a physical presence within services to promote RJ and generate referrals was no longer feasible
- It became apparent that COVID was having already having an impact on services and that it was likely the impact would become significant, especially if a lockdown was imposed.

## 8 Solutions and Recommendations

### Information Sharing Agreements

The RJ service continues to regularly liaise with the National Probation Service lead and RE:Hub lead in regard to the proposed Information Sharing Agreement with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

Following staff changes at Community Rehabilitation Company, the RJ service continues to pursue the progression of the proposed Information Sharing Agreement and are actively seeking a meeting with the newly appointed Head of Interventions.

The RJ service will be meeting with Metropolitan Police Service HQ Strategy & Governance in April 2020 to establish what information the RJ service can provide to support the progression of the proposed Information Sharing Agreement and to schedule regular updates on any such progression.

In the interim, the RJ service are implementing a strategy to promote the use of Out Of Court Disposals where front line officers will be able to refer both victim and offender on the legal basis of consent.

The RJ service have developed a simplified referral form specifically for front line officers to submit fast and easy to complete referrals for victims and offenders to participate in RJ as an element of an Out Of Court Disposal. To accompany the simplified referral form is a feedback form, the data from which can be easily cut and paste into a case record. Referrers can receive as many or as few updates on case progression as required.

The RJ service has written and submitted an article for the RJ blog on the MPS intranet to encourage referrals. Future recommendations are to submit a 3-minute RJ video to be uploaded on MPS intranet channel, Metflix and to continue conversations with key contacts in MPS with regard to an MPS RJ pilot.

In addition to the above, the RJ service plan to re-launch the RJ Freephone number on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 as a Referral Advice Helpline. The helpline will operate Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm for referrers to discuss cases, identify suitable referrals, receive case updates and general RJ advice and support directly from the RJ team.

The impending merger between Calm Mediation and Southwark Mediation will present an opportunity to utilise existing contacts in Southwark to promote the use of mediation and restorative justice as a package of support to local Safer Neighbourhood Teams. The RJ team and Mediation team are developing a strategy to jointly deliver presentations locally in Southwark to

enable front line officers to recognise when a situation escalates from a neighbour dispute to criminal behaviour and make referrals into Calm Mediation based on this knowledge.

#### Raising awareness

Raising awareness of RJ within large organisations and services who have significant staff turnover and movement of staff to new roles, has proven challenging with regard to ensuring all staff members are aware of the RJ service, have a reasonable level of knowledge of RJ and are familiar with the referral pathway.

Victim Support and the RJ service plan to collaboratively produce an RJ e-learning module, inclusive of accessible resources. Victim Support plan to add RJ to their mandatory e-learning programme for all staff members and volunteers.

Calm Mediation plan to explore the feasibility of the design and development of their own e-learning programme that could be accessed by partner agencies and interested parties, via Calm Mediation's website, using a member log-in facility.

Victim Support and the RJ service regularly review the implementation plan, which includes a schedule for future awareness sessions for Victim Support and National Probation Service.

#### COVID Government guidelines

Following the public announcement of lockdown measures on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 Calm Mediation immediately implemented a business continuity plan to ensure the continued delivery of services.

- All RJ service staff members were equipped with the necessary resources to work remotely, ensuring continued service delivery
- A strategy was devised to maintain volunteer engagement including webinars and social events via a virtual platform
- Discussions commenced with the RJC in regard to delivering our training schedule via a virtual platform
- All available volunteers were trained to use Zoom as a virtual meeting space for initial meetings with victims
- All volunteers were briefed on managing the expectations of victims with regard to timeframe of case progression in unprecedented times
- Victims where case progression was on hold due to COVID restrictions, were offered the opportunity to be updated at regular intervals of their choice
- All offenders were updated on their case progression via liaison with RE:Hub, the RJ Lead for HMPPS
- In response to the number of cases on hold due to restricted access to offenders detained in prison, the RJ service implemented a plan to further promote the use of Out Of Court

Restorative Justice Service  
Annual Report 2019-2020

Disposals, where both victim and offender are residing in the community and the referrer is able to provide consent for both parties, enabling case progression

- Anticipating a decrease in general crime rates alongside a rise in anti-social behaviour during lockdown, the RJ service began collating a list of all ASB teams in London and plans to circulate RJ information are underway.

The RJ service main priorities for Year 2:

1. Work with partner agencies to progress Information Sharing Agreements
2. Raise awareness, seeking innovative methods of delivery
3. Respond to a rapidly changing environment to generate referrals and identify new referral pathways

## 9 Highlights

### Restorative Service Quality Mark, August 2019

The Restorative Justice Council (RJC) is the voluntary professional body for the restorative practice field and one of their core functions is to provide quality assurance.

In August 2019, Calm Mediation was awarded the 3-year RJC Restorative Service Quality Mark for the second time, in recognition of our high-quality restorative justice interventions.



### Annual Conference, November 2019



Calm Mediation held our annual conference with the focus on restorative justice to celebrate National Restorative Justice Week. The theme for the conference was RJ for the Modern Day: Strengthening Communities Through Restorative Justice and we led with a clear message of promoting empathy and understanding.

Presenting our core values that talking does work and relationships do matter, the aim of the conference was to encourage the recognition that we each have a role to play in creating a restorative society. That we each have an opportunity to take positive action in situations where harm has been caused, to lead by example in facilitating communication and creating a foundation on which to build empathy, resolve conflict and find a positive way forward.

The event was a resounding success, with a lineup of guest speakers whose compelling speeches gave various insights and perspectives of restorative justice.

Victims' Commissioner Claire Waxman commenced proceedings with a keynote speech detailing the inspirational work she is undertaking to improve services and outcomes for victims.



Claire was followed by Metropolitan Police Service Chief Inspector Roger McMillan, Alexandra Johnson and Yvonne Alphonse, Senior Probation Officers from the National Probation Service Victim Contact Scheme and Why Me's Linda Millington who delivered presentations on the work

undertaken within their respective organisations, highlighting the importance of multi-agency working and effective partnerships to improve outcomes for victims.

Breda Marcel, an experienced facilitator who gives her time to the community through volunteering with Calm Mediation, shared her wealth of knowledge and passion for restorative justice and finally, Sophie Barton-Hawkins brought silence to the room by sharing her poignant and powerful account of how restorative interventions led the way from prolific offending to her rehabilitation and re-integration into society.



Question & Answer panel

L to R: Senior Probation Officers Yvonne Alphonse and Alexandra Johnson; Ex-offender and RJ Advocate Sophie Barton-Hawkins; Chief Inspector Roger McMillan; Calm Mediation RJ Practitioner Breda Marcel and Calm Mediation RJ Service Manager Julie Clark.

Joining the conversation.

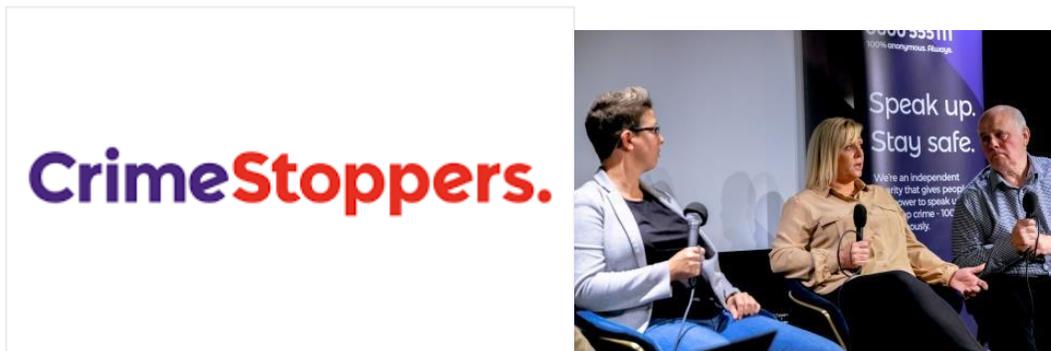
L to R: Calm Mediation Managing Director, Corinne Rechais; SLAM RJ Practitioner, Finlay Wood; Calm Mediation Restorative Development Officer, Carol Beckford; Why Me? RJ Development Network Officer, Linda Millington and Peter Woolf, self-proclaimed ex-career criminal and author of *The Damage Done*



The final word was kindly provided by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime on behalf of the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan.

The conference was a resounding sold out success with 89% of attendee evaluations stating that the event exceeded expectations. Lawrence Kershen, QC who is ranked as one of the world's leading mediators wrote a letter to the RJ service to congratulate the team on an outstanding conference.

#### Crimestoppers Podcast, December 2019



Crimestoppers have produced a series of podcasts called Community Conversations where a panel and audience discuss the impact of knife crime in local communities. Each episode focuses on a specific issue and Calm Mediation RJ service were invited to take part in the Community Conversation exploring restorative justice.

Barry Mizen, OBE and founder of the Forgiveness Project following the murder of his son Jimmy Mizen in 2008 and Sophie Barton-Hawkins, ex-offender and RJ advocate joined Calm Mediation Restorative Service Manager Julie Clark on the panel.

It was an engaging event discussing the impact crime has on victims and local communities and exploring what is being done to address the issue. The audience consisted of those affected by violent crime, ex-offenders, service providers and community leaders. The event also provided a great networking opportunity for Calm Mediation to reach out to those working in our local communities to improve the lives of others and facilitate discussion as to how groups and individuals can work together to promote change.

You can listen to the podcast on our website:

<https://www.calmmediation.org/crimestoppers-podcast/>

#### RJ Service Newsletters

The service introduced 2 quarterly newsletters, one for Calm Mediation volunteers and one for partner agencies, stakeholders and other interested parties.

Restorative Justice Service  
Annual Report 2019-2020

The aim of the newsletter is to keep all interested parties informed of the development of the service, publicise upcoming RJ events, highlight any changes to RJ practice guidance and celebrate the positive impact of restorative practice generally,

You can subscribe to receive our newsletters via our website:

<https://www.calmmediation.org/subscribe/>

## 10 Case studies

### Case Study – Conference, February 2020

Offence: Murder

Source: Self-referral

Background to offence: The victim is an adult female who has been bereaved by homicide. Her brother, aged 16, was murdered outside his school.

The process: This was a complex offence involving 5 offenders. The RJ service worked in partnership with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service to ensure the offenders received sufficient information to make a decision as to whether they wanted to participate in the process. 2 of the offenders came forward to say they would meet with the facilitators to discuss the process further. The facilitators undertook 14 separate meetings with the victim, the victim's family and the offenders. During the process one of the offenders moved to another prison which caused a delay whilst the RJ service re-commenced the process of contacting offender managers and arranging prison visits.

The outcome: Following the preparation meetings the victim's family and one of the offenders met face to face at the prison for a restorative conference. The victim's family explained to the offender the impact the crime had on their lives and asked some questions about what happened on the day of the offence. It was an emotional meeting, with the offender acknowledging the harm that had been caused and the victim's family came away from the conference feeling they had taken positive action to prevent other families from being harmed in the same way.

Follow up support: The victim and her family feel they have taken positives from the process and wanted to move on with their lives as best they could. They declined an onward referral as they were already engaging in counselling and felt the process had enabled them a platform to move forward from.

### Case study – Shuttle, October 2019

Offence: Murder

Self-referral: The victim is an adult female whose father was murdered when she was a child. She contacted the Restorative Justice Service as she had become increasingly anxious since being told by her mother that the offender had been released from prison after serving only 8 years. The victim had concerns that she did not know whether the offender lived near her or what he looked like, she wanted to know if she had seen or was likely to see him in her community. She also felt she needed to know whether the offender felt any remorse about the offence that he had committed.

Background of offence: The victim explained that she was 11 years old at the time of the offence and lived in a public house in London with her father who was the landlord. On the night of the offence the offender was asked by the deceased to leave the pub after insulting staff members. The offender left and then returned, armed with a knife and fatally stabbed the victim's father. After her father's murder the victim was rejected by her father's family who moved back to Ireland, sending her to live with her mother. The victim described how she struggled to come to terms with the violent death of her Father and this had a huge impact on her over the years including poor attendance at school and the onset of an eating disorder. The victim stated that she married and had 3 children but continued to find life difficult and made numerous attempts to take her own life, despite receiving support from medical professionals and counsellors. The victim stated that she had unanswered questions that she felt could help to resolve some of the anxiety and depression she had experienced over a long period of time.

The process: Facilitators made enquiries with probation services in order to locate the offender and explore the possibility of Restorative Justice. An initial meeting was arranged but the offender was reluctant to engage in the process initially, stating that the victim could get information about the case from the family of the deceased and that he did not understand what the victim could gain by communicating with him. With the victim's consent the facilitators shared the information that the victim had been rejected by her father's family and that she had not had any contact with them since the offence. The offender stated that he was shocked by this as he had assumed that she had been supported by her father's family. He disclosed that he had thought a lot about the harm he had caused and expressed his remorse that the victim had grown up without a father or her paternal family's support. He stated that he would be happy to answer any questions that the victim had.

The outcome: Shuttle communication was facilitated between the victim and the offender and the victim felt re-assured to be provided with information that the offender did not live in the same area as her, that there would be no opportunity for them to meet, intentionally or incidentally and that the offender felt remorse for his actions and the harm he had caused.

Follow up support: The victim was referred to the Victim Contact Scheme and she was allocated a Victim Liaison Officer. The VLO will update the victim on any changes to the offender's licence conditions. The victim stated that this has contributed hugely to her ability to manage her anxiety levels.

#### Case Study – Letter, August 2019

Offence: Actual Bodily Harm

Self-referral: The female victim contacted the Restorative Justice Service as she was feeling anxious and unsafe. The victim felt as if she had been living with anxiety and fear for some time and wanted to resolve the situation and move forward with her life.

Background of offence: The victim explained that she had been physically assaulted 20 years ago by a male she was friends with at the time. The offender was arrested on suspicion of Actual bodily harm but released without charge. The victim stated that since that time she has

periodically received unwanted messages, calls and items through the post that she believes to be from the offender. The victim had reported this to the police but there was no record of the offence from 20 years ago and no criminal offence had taken place since. Events culminated recently when she was contacted directly by the offender who stated he wished to meet with her to apologise for assaulting her. The victim's family believe the offender to be a risk to the victim and advised her not to respond. However the victim wanted to relieve the anxiety and fear that she had felt building up over the years.

The Process: The facilitators focused on the victim's need to find closure whilst not wishing to build any rapport with the offender. The facilitators met with the victim and offender separately several times to manage expectations and decide a way forward. After careful consideration it was decided that the victim would write a letter (typed not handwritten) to the offender and that the letter would be a statement that did not require a response. The letter provided the victim with the opportunity to explain the personal impact of the offender's actions and how this had affected her life over several years. The letter also contained an outcome agreement to the restorative justice process.

The outcome: An Outcome Agreement was reached via the letter that the offender would not make any direct or indirect contact with the victim at any time in the future and any contact attempt would be responded to with criminal proceedings. The offender accepted this.

Follow up support: Calm Mediation Restorative Justice Service are working with Met Police to ensure there is a CRIMINT entry recording the RJ process and the outcome agreement. The victim has stated this has made her feel safer as she now has a clear idea of how to proceed if the offender does not adhere to the Agreement. The victim now feels that the personal trauma and fear that developed over time as a direct result of the incident and subsequent occurrences has been recognised and addressed. She reported feeling listened to and said she now feels able to put the incident behind her and move on with her life. The offender was identified as having his own support needs and the facilitators enabled the offender to access and engage with relevant support services.

#### Case study – Restorative Conversation, November 2019

Offence: Grievous Bodily Harm (Domestic Abuse)

Self-referral: The victim explained that her ex-partner had received a custodial sentence for assaulting her 7 months previously. She had heard about Restorative Justice via the Witness Care Unit and referred herself as she wanted to ask the offender why he had assaulted her.

Background of offence: The victim explained that she endured a sustained attack whilst she was holding her baby and the assault resulted in injuries including 5 stitches, bite marks and a black eye.

The process: The victim was given the space to talk about the attack, how she had felt at the time and what effect the attack had on her and those close to her. The victim explained that she had been left feeling hurt and confused as to why the attack had taken place and that she was having

difficulty coming to terms with the abrupt ending of the relationship. It was sensitively explained to the victim that due to the increased risk of exploring a restorative process where domestic abuse has been identified, it was unlikely that the case would progress to offender involvement. The victim was asked if she was receiving specialist support and she disclosed that she was engaging with an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). The victim provided explicit consent for Calm Mediation to contact the allocated IDVA and share relevant information. Calm Mediation ensured the victim understood and agreed what information would be shared between the two agencies. The IDVA shared relevant risk information, advising that the victim had received support and safety advice to reduce the risk and that the IDVA support was due to conclude now that there was a no contact order in place.

The outcome: It was explained to the victim that whilst there was a no contact order in place, it would present an unmanageable risk to engage in a restorative process that involved the offender. The victim stated that she was upset as she wanted answers from the offender in order for her to get closure. A discussion was had around what closure meant to the victim and how that might be achieved without the involvement of the offender.

Follow up support: The IDVA agreed to continue to support the victim while she worked through her feelings of wanting to contact the offender to gain answers, ensuring that she was able to follow her safety plan. The IDVA made provision for longer term support for the victim by arranging for the victim to engage in the Freedom Programme, a 12 week programme with the aim of helping domestic abuse victims to make sense of what has happened to them and to move forward from their experience of abuse. After the case was closed the IDVA expressed her gratitude for the sensitivity demonstrated by Calm Mediation in responding to the needs of the victim whilst ensuring that the relationship between the victim and IDVA was not compromised.

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