Some of the documents below are in Adobe PDF format. To view them, you may first need to download a free copy of the Adobe Acrobat reader.

July 2009

The Government's wide ranging consultation Engaging Communities in Criminal Justice asks the question of how the Government should publicise and encourage Restorative Justice.

"Q25) Restorative Justice has proved a positive experience for victims and can be effective in reducing re-offending. How could we publicise this and encourage community involvement in Restorative Justice projects, in particular as a service to victims?"

More information about the consultation is available at CJS Online the deadline for responses was the 31st July 2009.

The RJC response to the Engaging Communities in Criminal Justice green paper focuses on how – in the light of the Government’s research findings and the wealth of existing experience at local level - more victims, offenders and communities can be given access to Local Restorative Justice Services across England and Wales.

RJC renews its call for a Restorative Justice Act to establish a statutory base for Local Restorative Justice Services, a National Restorative Justice Agency to provide oversight and a statutory requirement for Restorative Justice to be considered and provided where appropriate in all cases involving a personal victim. Further RJC call for a wider cross-Government strategy encouraging the use of restorative practices in schools, care homes and work places and require requiring police forces to use restorative practices as part of their neighbourhood policing.

The RJC was pleased to receive the Criminal Justice Alliance’s endorsement of our response and thanks all our members who contributed to this consultation. The Criminal Justice Alliance response is available here.

RJC Response to Engaging Communities in Criminal Justice Green Paper

June 2009

IPPR call for more Restorative Justice in a popular, preventative Youth Justice System

The Institute for Public Policy Research, the UK’s leading progressive think tank, has recommended the Youth Justice System be reshaped to be tiered, preventative and diversionary including the introduction of Community Justice Panels, using Restorative Justice principles.

The report is supportive of Restorative Justice as a method of reducing reoffending and engaging victims & communities in a way that can be popular with the general public.

The IPPR Report Towards a Popular Preventative Youth Justice System is available at www.ippr.org.uk

April 2009

Centre for Social Justice calls for Restorative Justice Act

The Centre for Social Justice, a leading independent think-tank, established by Rt Hon. Ian Duncan-Smith MP, has called for an expansion of Restorative Justice conferencing, training of police in restorative disposals, a national Restorative Justice agency and a Restorative Justice Act.

In two recent publications, the Centre for Social Justice has backed Restorative Justice as core way in which both policing and prisons should be reformed. Political insiders indicate that the publications will be influential in shaping Conservative Party policy in any upcoming election.
Justice Committee launches a new inquiry Justice Reinvestment into the effectiveness of spending on the criminal justice system in the UK

On 31st January 2008 the Justice Committee launched an inquiry into whether the enormous sums spent on criminal justice and to cope with consistently high levels of re-offending are being used most effectively.

On the same day the National Audit Office published a report stating that lack of resources in the Probation Service is preventing offenders from accessing the services required to address effectively their offending behaviour, especially in regard to social problems such as alcohol abuse and mental health. Figures on people in custody in December 2007 show that the custodial population is continuing to rise and that at the end of last year prisons were operating at 110% of their certified capacity.

The National Audit Office's report can be found on their website
The statistics on people in custody can be found on the Ministry of Justice website

NOMS Third Sector Action Plan

In November 2007 the NOMS Third Sector Action Plan was released for consultation.

"The Government defines the third sector as non-governmental organisations that are value driven and which principally re-invest their surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives. This plan is designed to build on the achievements of the third sector's work across the country and to break new ground in recognition of the developments that have taken place between Government and the third sector since 2004. The consultation takes place within the wider context of the Ministry of Justice's third sector strategy, the overarching framework within which policy leads will develop more specific actions relative to their responsibilities."

The Consultation document is available here and the RJC response, here.

2007

Youth Justice Board Consultation – Referral Orders, Priorities for Action

On 18 September 2007 the YJB published the consultation document Referral Orders, Priorities for Action which set out proposed priorities for action on a number of key areas, including victim engagement and sentencer confidence. The YJB was keen to hear whether YOT managers, YOT practitioners and youth offender panel volunteers, as well as young people, parents and victims who have experienced the Referral Order process, felt that those were the right priorities and about any other ways in which the process could be made more effective.

In drafting our response the RJC invited those working in the field and interested in commenting on the consultation document to a dedicated discussion day (RJC Autumn Forum) focussing on the five core areas identified in the YJB document: 1) Ensuring high quality Restorative Justice, 2) engaging more victims, 3) improving volunteer training, management and support, 4) improving youth offender panel advisor training and how YOTs and volunteers work together and 5) effective liaison with courts and developing a wider range of reparations and intervention activities. On the basis of fruitful discussions on the day the RJC drafted the following response.

House of Lords Hansard - 26 11 07
Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer asked Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to develop restorative justice schemes.

House of Commons Hansard - 24 07 07
On 24th July, James Duddridge MP introduced a Short Bill to Parliament concerning the use of restorative sentences for young people creating Graffiti.

House of Lords Hansard - Written Answers 17 07 07
Lord Harries asked the Government:
What are the policy implications of the government research on restorative justice published on 19 June?

House of Lords Hansard - Written Answers 19 03 07
Lord Woolf asked Her Majesty's Government:
What action are they taking to implement their strategy to develop restorative justice?

Home Affairs Select Committee launches inquiry into effective sentencing
In February the Home Affairs Select Committee launched its inquiry 'Towards Effective Sentencing'. The purpose of the inquiry is to establish whether current sentencing practice fulfils the aims of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. It will pay particular attention to decisions on whether to use custodial or non-custodial sentences. The Restorative Justice Consortium welcomed the invitation to submit evidence and our response is posted here.

Home Office Consultation on revised Code of Practice - Conditional Cautions
In March 2007 the Home Office published their consultation document on a revised Code of Practice for Conditional Cautions. To download a copy of the consultation click here. Under the current Code, police forces can make participation in RJ a condition of the offenders' caution, or it can be used as the process by which conditions are decided. However, delivering RJ as part of conditional cautioning in either way is completely optional, and many police forces are developing conditional cautioning without RJ. Given the key importance of Conditional Cautioning as a vehicle for restorative justice within adult criminal justice for less serious offences, the RJC has pointed out in our response the need for RJ to be given much greater prominence in the revised Code, with the offer of RJ being mandatory in particular cases. The RJC response to the revised Code can be found here.

Early this year the Youth Justice Board released a consultation paper titled, 'Developing Restorative Justice, An Action Plan'. To view the Action Plan click here. To read the RJC's response click here.

2006

September 2006 - Liberal Democrats 'Crime in the Community'
Section 4.2 focuses specifically on restorative justice.
View the RJC's response to this paper here.

March 2006 - 'Rebuilding Lives - Supporting Victims of Crime'
View the RJC's response to this consultation here.

More information Consultation Document

'29. Restorative measures offer victims an opportunity to confront offenders with the consequences of their actions, receive apologies, and reparation. They potentially open the way for a change of attitudes, so that fear may be reduced for victims, and offenders may have more understanding of their behaviour, and therefore incentive to discontinue. Experience of the use of such measures is increasing and appear to be generally positive. We recommend that the draft guideline should be amended to provide that, in less serious cases and where fear or risk is successfully reduced by restorative measures, and reparation made with the agreement of the victim, this should be a mitigating factor.'
30. We further believe that in appropriate cases sentence might be deferred for restorative processes to take place, to promote the interests of victims and the prevention of re-offending. We recommend that the Council should consider adding to the guideline specific mention of such an option—which should also make clear that custodial sentences may well result in any event. If restorative measures have previously been used this may not be a suitable course of action.’

2005
‘NOMS and YJB Approach to Communities and Civil Renewal’(which includes information on RJ (page 34) and some comments from the consultation document)

'Hearing the Relatives of Murder and Manslaughter Victims'
Consultation September 2005

Restorative Justice Helping to meet Local needs
Home Office, March 2005 [ci not on home office site added to old resources]

Conditional Cautioning - RJ Guidance to Early Implementation Areas
Home Office, March 2005
RJ operational Considerations

2004
Conditional Cautioning
Criminal Justice Act 2003, Sections 22-27, Code of Practice and Associated Annexes
published October 2004

Implementing restorative justice schemes
Published 9th July 2004. A first year report on ‘Implementing restorative justice schemes (Crime Reduction Programme)’[First Year Report] [duplicated in reseach]

Best Practice Guidance for Restorative Practitioners
Published Thursday 25th March 2004 (First Edition) [duplicated in reseach]

Compensation and Support for Victims of Crime
A consultation paper on proposals to amend the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme and provide a wider range of support for victims of crime English (Cymraeg) [duplicated in reseach]

Conditional Cautioning: Code Of Practice
Covering letter from Jane Furniss Consultation
Conditional Cautioning, Criminal Justice Act 2003
RJC Response
Victim Support Response

2004 continued...

Restorative Justice the Government's Strategy
(consultation document on the Government's RJ strategy) Published July 2003
Summary of Responses (May 2004)  Code of Practice

Individual Responses
- RJC Response
- Birmingham YOT
- Connect (on behalf of Nacro)
- Derby City YOT
- Howard League
- Leap Confronting Conflict
- Leicester City
- Medway YOT
- Religious Society of Friends - Quakers, Crime and Community Justice Group
- Thames Valley Partnership
- Victim Support see below for 'victim support policy on RJ' (2003)
- Wandsworth YOT
- Wessex YOT

Lord Justice Auld's review

2003
Criminal Justice Act 2003 - Published December 2003  Link
Victims Support - Policy on Restorative Justice In Criminal Justice  (Published October 2003)

2002
Scottish Parliament Enquiry on Alternatives to custody
RJC response

Reviews by Practitioners and Academics
Martin Wright's Seminar in of of Gunnar Marnell in Stockholm 18 April 2002
"An international approach: what is restorative justice?"

2001
Review of the Criminal Courts of England and Wales
by The Right Honourable Lord Justice Auld, September 2001
RJC Response