

The Probation Service

The Probation Service is an agency within the Department of Justice. It works to reduce crime levels in order to have safer communities and fewer victims.

The Probation Service is conscious of the harm caused by crime to individuals, families and communities. Our Probation Officers work with offenders and their families across the country, as well as in prisons and detention centres, with the goal of supporting them to lead more productive lives, free from crime and the harm it causes.

In carrying out this work we:

- prepare pre-sentence reports at the request of the courts;
- provide court-ordered, structured supervision in the community with other criminal justice agencies;
- put in place programmes which aim to reduce offending
- work with community-based organisations to reduce offending;
- work with offenders in prison, including those serving life sentences, to support safe re-integration into the community; and
- respond to requests from victims and victim support organisations.



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Victim Services Unit

The Victim Services Unit is the central point of contact for all victims of crime where the offender is known to the Probation Service. We respond to queries nationwide.

Where the offender is not known to the Probation Service, we will support you in accessing other victim services.



What does the Victim Services Unit offer to victims?

We will:

- Listen carefully to what you have to say
- Ensure that you fully understand how our service operates
- Give you time and space to ask questions
- Provide information about the way the Probation Service manages and supervises Court orders
- Provide information about Restorative Justice

How do I find out more?

To find out more about the services we offer, please contact us by email or by phone.

For Restorative Justice

Email: restorative@probation.ie

Phone: 01 817 3600

For Victims Services

Email: VSU@probation.ie

Phone: 01 817 3600

Confidentiality

We will treat your information with care and manage it safely.

We will not discuss your information with anyone without your consent.

Personal details of individuals who have offended will not be discussed in accordance with professional ethics and data protection.



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Restorative Justice & Victims Services

Repairing the Harm: A Victim Sensitive Response to Offending

What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice is a process that involves a conversation between a victim, a person who has committed a crime against them, and an independent person who is trained to prepare and manage such conversations.

This conversation can be face-to-face or can take place through an intermediary.

Restorative Justice gives victims an opportunity to be heard and to have their say in resolving the harm caused to them.

For people who have offended, Restorative Justice provides an opportunity for them to face the consequences of their actions and recognise the impact of their offending behaviour.

The Probation Service has a dedicated Restorative Justice and Victim Services Unit.



The Unit offers a variety of Restorative Justice models, including:

- Restorative Conferencing
- Offender Reparation Programmes
- Victim Offender Meetings
- Shuttle Mediation
- Bespoke Restorative Justice



What should I expect in the Restorative Justice process?

If you are interested in pursuing Restorative Justice, the first step is to make contact with us.

We will listen to your expectations, wishes and concerns. We will answer your questions and explain the process.

We will then arrange a face-to-face meeting with you to progress with the Restorative Justice process.

At the meeting, we will talk to you about the offence. We will ask you about what

happened and how you were affected. We will document any questions you may want to put to the offender and address any of your concerns.

We will explain the options available to you for Restorative Justice. If you do not want to meet directly with the offender at this stage, we can arrange a “shuttle” approach. This means that the Restorative Justice facilitator will go between you and the offender.

The Restorative Justice process can take anywhere from 3 to 18 months to complete. The length of time depends on many factors, which we will explain to you when you make contact.



Do I have to take part in Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice is a completely voluntary process. It can only proceed if both the victim and the offender agree to participate.

The person who has offended also needs to take responsibility for their behaviour for this process to be successful.

All aspects of the process will be discussed and agreed before moving forward.

The key aim of Restorative Justice is to repair the harm caused and find a positive way forward.



Will taking part in Restorative Justice impact the offender's sentence?

This is for the Court alone to decide. It is not the purpose of Restorative Justice to influence sentencing decisions. This is explained to both the victim and the person who has offended at the start of the Restorative Justice process.



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