Helping victims of financial fraud through restorative justice : London charity offers victims the opportunity to contact perpetrators?

Friday 24 February, 2017

Victims of financial fraud in London can now access help to deal with the emotional aftermath of resolved crimes from Calm Mediation's restorative justice service.

Supported by the Big Lottery Fund, London charity Calm Mediation has been offering restorative justice to victims of serious crimes such as assault, robbery and murder since 2005, but has recently added financial fraud to the list in view of the growing scale and impact of this crime.

Latest figures* showed that there were over a million cases of financial fraud in the UK in the first six months of 2016 – a rise of 53% on the previous year, fuelled by a sharp rise in deception scams on consumers.

As well as losing often substantial sums of money, victims are commonly left feeling powerless, foolish and angry that they had been deceived, despite many such crimes being rapid, sophisticated and difficult to spot. Restorative justice aims to enable communication between the victims and perpetrators of these crimes, with the possibility of positive outcomes for both.

Calm Mediation's restorative justice co-ordinator Fiona Turner explains: "We are working in partnership with the Metropolitan Police to offer victims of fraud crimes, where the perpetrator has been convicted and sentenced, the opportunity to participate in restorative justice.

"Often victims of these crimes are going over and over events in their minds, questioning or blaming themselves and finding it difficult to move forward, so simply talking about the offence to our experienced facilitators who are trained to listen can be beneficial. Some victims want communication with the perpetrator – to tell them how the crime has affected them or to get answers about the crime - and we work to arrange that where possible, either face to face or in writing."

Restorative justice offers the opportunity to repair the harm caused by crime and has been shown to reduce re-offending rates. It can help victims to come to terms with what happened by giving them a voice and gaining peace of mind, and enables perpetrators to face up to the consequences of their actions and the distress caused by their actions.

Fiona continues: "The restorative justice process is voluntary for both sides. Convicted offenders who agree to participate often say to us 'I did this and want to apologise to the victim. I know an apology isn't enough but I owe it to them to answer their questions.' Some victims say 'I want to meet the person who did it because I want them to know what it felt like for me, I don't want to this to happen to someone else."

Calm Mediation's restorative justice service is accredited by the Restorative Justice Council. For further information see www.calmmediation.org/restorative-justice or contact Calm Mediation at info@calmmediation.org or tel: 0207603 4014.

Ends

An anonymised **case study** illustrating the power of restorative justice is attached.

For more information about Calm Mediation's restorative justice service contact Fiona Turner at Calm Mediation on 0207 603 4014.

Notes to editors

1. **Calm Mediation** is a registered, London-based charity which helps people to resolve conflict through restorative justice, mediation and training services. It has been operating from Hammersmith since 1996.
2. **Our restorative justice service** is funded by the Big Lottery and was awarded the Restorative Service Quality Mark by the Restorative Justice Council in 2016. We receive referrals from the London National Probation Service, the Metropolitan Police and others.

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3. As a small charity, Calm Mediation regrets that it does not have the resources to respond to those who are researching **restorative justice generally**, but journalists can contact the Restorative Justice Council for further information 020 7831 5700 www.restorativejustice.org.uk/contact-us safi@restorativejustice.org.uk .
4. ***Financial fraud figures:** https://www.theguardian.com/money/2016/sep/20/soars-53per-cent-in-year-as-scammers-get-sophisticated

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case study for restorative justice (anonymised)
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