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ANNOTATION:

DESIGN: A 15-month study of the effectiveness of restorative justice schemes conducted between July 1999 and November 2000. Seven schemes were examined across England. Two dealt primarily with adult offenders and the other five with juveniles. Schemes include diversion, caution, and victim offender mediation. For sites working with juvenile offenders, reconviction rates were compared between youth going through a restorative justice scheme and a control group of similar offenders who had not. In the adult schemes comparison were made between predicted and actual reconviction rates.

REASONS AND SATISFACTION: A small number of victims (23) and offenders (43) were interviewed.
Victims were "well disposed" toward restorative justice.
Direct mediation occurred in a small number of the referrals.
Victims pointed to the humanizing impact of meeting and hearing about the offender as desired effect.
Victims and offenders valued mediation sessions that were expeditious, responsive to their views, and resulted in clearly agreed upon outcomes.
Offenders welcomed opportunity to meet victims and apologize.

RECIDIVISM AND COST: "The only scheme that routinely involved victims (West Yorkshire) was for the most part both lower cost and more effective than the other schemes." West Yorkshire Victim Offender Units deals primarily with adults. The West Yorkshire scheme had a significant impact on reducing further reconviction and seriousness of new convictions.

The authors note: "There was considerable variation in the nature of the schemes' work with victims and offenders. They engaged in activities ranging from, on the one hand, full-scale family group conferences and face-to-face meetings between victims and offenders to, on the other, general 'victim awareness' sessions and initiatives in which offenders write letters of apology. Where contact with victims was not a high priority there are serious doubts as to whether they could reasonably be called restorative justice schemes at all."

VOM
ALL AGES
MIXED CRIME TYPE
REASONS, SATISFACTION, RECIDIVISM, COST
VICTIM DATA, OFFENDER DATA
SURVEY, RECORD DATA, COMPARISON GROUP
UK