

# BUILDING BRIDGES

An Evaluation and Social Return on Investment Study  
of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project in Limerick

**FULL REPORT 2015**



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To quote this research: Quigley, M. Martynowicz, A. and Gardner, C. (2014) Building Bridges: An Evaluation and Social Return on Investment Study of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project in Limerick. Le Chéile. Ireland

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## Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this evaluation of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project, Ireland's first and only non-statutory youth restorative justice service. The Project is a partnership between Le Chéile and Young People's Probation and aims to contribute to the development of social cohesion and harmony within communities in Limerick and surrounding areas by reducing the incidence of youth crime and anti-social behaviour, reducing fear of crime and promoting community safety.

Quality Matters, the evaluators consulted with young people, parents, victims of crime, community leaders and professionals with an interest in this work. I am delighted that the evaluation concluded that each grouping had very positive engagement with the Project and noted Le Chéile's high levels of professionalism throughout.

Overall victims found restorative justice to be more inclusive, respectful and a more meaningful approach than traditional criminal justice systems. Young people reported positive outcomes such as increased levels of empathy, improved family relationships and a reduction in criminal behaviour. Parents noted that they developed a greater understanding of what was going on for their children and significant changes in their child's behaviour, which contributed to reduced levels of stress and conflict in the home.

The evaluation found that the multi-agency approach employed by the Project has proven very successful. The project works very closely with Young Persons Probation, An Garda Síochána, as well as a range of community agencies and was highly praised for assisting in the embedding of restorative justice in Limerick City.

One of headline findings of the evaluation is that every €1 invested in the Le Chéile Restorative Justice project provides approximately €2.80 in social value. This evaluation provides evidence that Restorative Justice provides an economic as well as social and community return on investment.

I commend the staff and volunteers who have contributed vision, commitment and best practice to ensuring the success of this project. The future is bright for Restorative Justice in Ireland and Le Chéile is proud to be a lead agency in demonstrating and practicing Restorative Justice in the Youth Justice Sector.

Anne Conroy

CEO, Le Chéile

# Executive Summary

## 1.1 Introduction

The Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project ('the Project') is Ireland's first and only non-statutory youth restorative justice service. This innovative Project, based upon the well-evidenced principles and practices of restorative justice, opened its doors to young people in late 2010.

The Project is housed under the governance of Le Chéile Mentoring and Youth Justice Support Services and is based in Limerick city centre. It is closely aligned with and works alongside Limerick Young Persons Probation (YPP) having been established specifically to dovetail with existing statutory service provision, vis-à-vis YPP. The Project is also embedded within a broader range of services providing restorative practice initiatives across the city, across justice, education and community and voluntary services.

The Project's primary focus is on providing a range of restorative justice interventions to young people from the Limerick area, who have been involved in crime and are being worked with by the Probation Service. In addition to these, the Project's staff provide accredited training in restorative practices to professionals including Gardaí and staff of community-based services.

In order to achieve its goals and objectives in the direct work with children and young people, the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project, in conjunction with YPP, identified and developed a toolkit of interventions for working with young people restoratively. These interventions range in intensity, alignment with traditional restorative practices and in resource requirements. They are: Victim Empathy Programme; Victim Impact Panels; Victim Offender Mediation; Restorative Conferencing and Reparation.

After almost four years in operation, and following a positive internal evaluation, Le Chéile put out an open call for researchers or research agencies to tender for the provision of an external evaluation. This review was commissioned by Le Chéile in March of 2014 and conducted by the independent research charity Quality Matters, over a six-month period.

The research methodology employed a staged approach. Firstly, a review of literature was conducted, covering legislation and policy context, international standards, and evidence of 'what works' in restorative justice with children and young people. Additional research was also conducted to support the Social Return on Investment. The main literature review provided the context for the evaluation as well as the basis for the formulation of evaluation questions. Next, a stakeholder mapping exercise was undertaken to select interviewees who together could provide as broad as possible view of the work of the Project and its effectiveness. Qualitative interviews and focus groups were then held with a range of stakeholders including children and young people, members of their families, the victims, representatives of criminal justice agencies and other professionals, including 'host agencies'.

A review of quantitative and qualitative data held by Le Chéile was also conducted as part of the research.

## 1.2 Main Findings

### 1.2.1 Findings Regarding Young People

Young people reported very positive experiences of engagement with the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project. Those who participated in this study reported being appropriately prepared for what was going to happen during the restorative intervention, although some young people would have wanted a bit more information about the possible outcomes of the meetings. Young people reported that they were able to ask questions and that they were listened to by the project workers, with their views considered throughout the process. They felt respected and well supported by staff, who helped put nervous feelings about the process at ease. Young people found the experience of the Project emotional – especially when having to meet victims face-to-face – but felt it not to be intimidating. Only one of the young people interviewed stated that they thought the Project wasn't really for them, but even this person said they would recommend it to friends or siblings.

In terms of outcomes, young people reported that the Project has had a positive, and in some cases profound, impact on their lives. Young people reported increased levels of empathy towards victims of crime and family members (which was supported and shown to be statistically significant by quantitative data recorded by the Project); improved family relationships; decreased substance use; increased pro-social peer relationships and an overall reduction in their involvement in criminal behaviour and level of engagement with criminal justice agencies.

### 1.2.2 Findings Regarding Victims

Achieving high levels of victim participation has been noted as a common challenge among restorative justice projects. The findings of this evaluation are no different; however, it is noted that the Project has taken steps to promote victim participation as well as putting in place processes, such as Victim Impact Panels, which support the provision of restorative interventions even where there is no participation from direct victims of a particular offence committed by the young person.

Those victims who participated in restorative interventions, or who took part as victim proxies (representing the victim perspective in a Victim Impact Panel), found Restorative Justice to be a more inclusive, respectful and meaningful approach than the traditional criminal justice process and generally reported a very positive experience of their engagement with the Project. Half of those interviewed took part in Victim Impact Panels as proxy victims to explain to young people the impact of offending on the lives of those affected by their behaviour. They praised their preparation for these panels and commented on the professional approach by Le Chéile staff in the sessions. Some victim interviewees noted the importance of victim participation and wanted to see more engagement with the Project from those affected by

crime. Victims reported decreased fear of crime and associated anxiety after participating in restorative interventions as well as noting a sense of 'closure' with regard to their own experience of victimisation.

### 1.2.3 Findings Regarding Parents

Parents of the young people involved with Le Chéile all described very positive experiences of the Project, which they felt was respectful and inclusive of them as family members. Parents reported positive changes for themselves, such as greater understanding of what was going on for their children, often linked with improvements in their parenting skills and approaches. An outcome of this was parents reporting lower levels of stress or anxiety. Parents also reported learning more about issues such as the reasons for offending and the nature of addiction. It was reported that this information helped them to deal with and respond to challenging behaviours rather than reacting out of frustration. The second main benefit cited by parents was the change in behaviour of their children. This was seen as reducing stress and conflict within the home, often having a further impact upon other family members such as siblings.

### 1.2.4 Findings Regarding Interagency Working

The multi-agency approach employed by the Project has proven very successful. The Project is embedded within the youth justice network of service providers in Limerick and works in parallel to the Limerick Young Persons Probation (YPP). From the Probation Service point of view, the Project has been core to their ability to provide a range of restorative interventions in addition to family conferencing, available under the Children Act 2001. Thanks to this range of interventions, the work with young people has been able to take a more developmental approach and the models applied in the Project are more flexible and fit for purpose for work with, in particular, children and young people involved in persistent offending. The broader impact of the Project was also evident, including through the provision of highly praised training to An Garda Síochána's Victim Liaison Officers which they were then able to utilise not only in their direct involvement with the Project but also in the course of their day-to-day duties.

### 1.2.5 Findings Regarding the Social Return on Investment Analysis

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis, which was undertaken as part of this evaluation, found the Project to be very worthwhile from a value for money perspective.

As such, every €1 invested in Le Chéile provides over €2.80 in social value.

The SROI found the following proportional division of value across the various stakeholder groups, in order of the percentage of value accrued by stakeholder group:



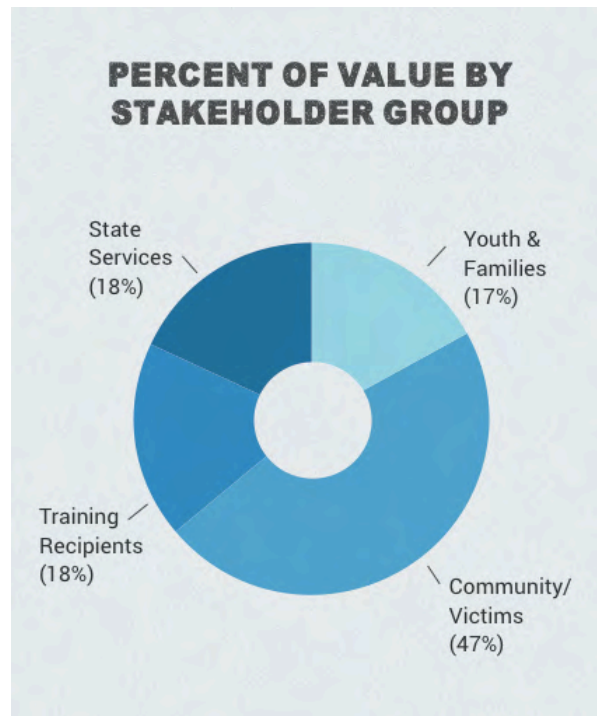


Figure 1: Percentage of SROI Value by Stakeholder Group

The SROI indicates that the best way for Le Chéile to increase the social value of the programme is to work with an increased number of young people. At the end of the current SROI, the project was working with a caseload approximately 20% greater than the average number over the whole period of the SROI. This is due to the fact that in the initial years substantial time was spent on project set-up and consolidation of the model. If the SROI map is completed using the current figures for young people’s engagement, it would show an increased return of approximately €3.50. This highlights the potential of the service to further expand its work and the positive impact this will have on the social value it generates.

### 1.3 Recommendations

From inception, Le Chéile has been very ambitious not only in providing needs-based, child-centred interventions for young people and their families, but also in creating a positive impact for victims and the wider community. The organisation has been and continues to be a key part of the interagency response promoting a wider culture of restorative practices within and beyond the criminal justice sector in Limerick City. In the four years since its establishment, Le Chéile’s Restorative Justice Project developed effective relationships with statutory and voluntary organisations in the region, which means, for example, that they can call on partner organisations to support reparation work with young people and refer to other services if needed.

The evidence collected in the course of the evaluation indicates that the Project is fulfilling its original objectives. While some of the processes may need some fine-tuning, the Project proved itself to be reflective and committed to its own development through learning from its own practice and through taking advice and direction from Project partners.

Recommendation 1: The Project should continue to provide restorative justice interventions to young people in Limerick through continued alignment with the Probation Service Restorative Justice Strategy. Specifically, the Restorative Justice Strategy (Probation Service, 2013), in goal 2, identifies a need to “Continue to build capacity and capability in the development and delivery of Restorative Justice projects/ programmes”, with specifically named action being to “Explore the opportunities for further development of Restorative Justice projects/programmes nationally as well as for specific categories of offenders including young people, adult offenders who have hurt people and members of the Travelling community.”

Recommendation 2: Each outcome of the Project, especially those for young people and victims, should have a corresponding indicator or a set of indicators which would allow the Project to review its effectiveness against each of these outcomes. This should be integrated as part of the existing processes such as the initial agreement meeting and the case closure meeting. In relation to recidivism, the Project may wish to explore agreeing a process with funders and statutory partners (Gardaí and the Probation Service) to review levels of recidivism, giving due consideration to data protection implications. Any such review of recidivism should take account not just of levels of re-offending but also severity and intensity of offending over specific timeframes. Outcome information should also be gathered for the provision of training as well as victim and family engagement in restorative processes. It is important to note that information on ancillary benefits to service users, while important to record, should not become targets or Key Performance Indicators.

Recommendation 3: One central data management system, such as a Client Relationship Management (CRM) system, should be introduced to allow for systematic collection and utilisation of the information gathered by the Project. The continued use of validated tools such as the Victim Empathy Scale, which provides rich client outcome data, is also recommended. This will allow the already considerable and consistent amount of information recorded to be better utilised by Le Chéile for review and strategic purposes. Outcome indicator tools should be considered for each key outcome for young people, such as desistance from crime, educational outcomes as well as peer and family relationships. Where outcomes are identified for other stakeholders, such as victims, family members or the community, the project should consider how best to also capture this impact.

Recommendation 4: Le Chéile should use feedback from children and young people to fine-tune its processes and consider if there are any points of the process where more information could be made available to young people, particularly if there is any delay in their case. In line with international standards, the principle of voluntary participation should be reiterated to young people at agreed points throughout the process, recognising the difference between mandatory Probation engagement and voluntary participation in the Restorative Justice Project. The Project should continue the process of case closure meetings, which promote all parties finishing the restorative process with agreement and clarity.

Recommendation 5: Le Chéile should embed a system to regularly analyse information regarding victim engagement, continue to promote victim engagement and understand what works for victims. This can be done as part of the introduction of the new data management system. This should also include the use of an agreed victim participation strategy, containing all good practice for engaging victims as outlined in this report. Victim engagement should



continue to be reviewed on a systematic basis, in conjunction with both statutory partners as well as victim support organisations.

Recommendation 6: Le Chéile should consider the continued need to raise the profile of restorative justice to the general public in Limerick, with a view to increasing victim participation in the longer term. This work should be undertaken in conjunction with other providers, particularly victim support services. This may include the use of additional information formats, such as social media, video and online content, which explain the restorative justice processes to victims and which they can be directed towards following initial contacts with the Victim Liaison Officers working with the Project. As a method of profile and awareness raising the project should continue to organise the annual Restorative Justice conference.

Recommendation 7: Le Chéile should use the findings of this evaluation to support and continue the agreement and formal adopting of written interagency protocols, which are agreed and signed by all agencies involved, including but not limited to: Le Chéile, the Probation Service, An Garda Síochána, host agencies, victim support services and any other identified organisations. This protocol should detail the existing and emerging procedures such as referral routes and criteria, working arrangements between staff and management, complaints mechanisms, gaps and blocks procedures and roles and responsibilities of all parties. Agreement should be sought with victim support services to ensure clear processes and delineation of roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation 8: Le Chéile should advocate and, in partnership with the Probation Service, explore the potential for undertaking work with vulnerable young adults (over the age of 18) involved in the criminal justice system. The Restorative Justice Project has shown promising outcomes for young people, which would likely be of similar benefit for young adults. The expansion of age limit is in line with internal Probation Service strategy documents. Subject to appropriate resourcing, there is no reason why this Project could not provide interventions to young adults over the age of 18.

Recommendation 9: Undertake a review, in conjunction with An Garda Síochána and Young Persons Probation, as to the potential for the Le Chéile Restorative Justice project accept pre-court referrals. This may involve supporting and working with the existing Youth Diversion Programme and other community projects to provide restorative interventions such as victim empathy programmes to young people waiting for a court case.

Recommendation 10: Any expansion of this effective model must be supported with appropriate resources such as core funding. The model has demonstrated value for money of at least €2.80 for every €1. As of 2014 the project is working at an increased capacity which is estimated to provide a return of €3.50 for every €1 invested. The lack of core funding, and inability to offer permanent or long term contracts may hamper the Project's ability to retain suitably qualified staff and sustain and/or expand its work in the future.

Recommendation 11: A review should be undertaken by Le Chéile in partnership with the Gardaí in relation to the potential cost benefit of making IIRP training available to Gardaí across the Limerick division. This training provided by Le Chéile has been credited with promoting awareness of restorative practices among members of the Gardaí who would otherwise not have access to this training, as well as promoting restorative practices. Any

review should consider the benefits of external training to Gardaí in relation to highlighting alternative models of work, from qualified IIRP trainers with a restorative perspective and approach. This could include training to more Victim Liaison Officers, as well as Community Gardaí.

Recommendation 12: The structural and procedural model developed by the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project, including the innovative use of Victim Impact Panels, has demonstrated its effectiveness and is primed for replication in regions with similar existing interagency structures, specifically where existing relationships and working arrangements exist between Le Chéile and the Young Persons Probation Service. The existing network and infrastructure of Le Chéile Mentoring Services across the country provide an ideal launch-pad for such roll out. Additionally, the relatively recent establishment of a network of Children's Services Committees across the country may provide an opportunity for replication of the interagency working processes developed by the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project in Limerick.

# Part One: Introduction, Literature Review and Process Evaluation

## 1 Introduction and Restorative Justice Project Overview

### 1.1 Chapter Overview

The following chapter introduces the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project, its values, its aims and objectives and models of work with children and young people. It then situates the Project within the broader context of defining restorative justice; the international standards relating to the use of restorative justice; children's rights and the rights of victims. Evidence of what works in restorative justice with children and young people is then outlined with reference to a number of selected evaluations of similar initiatives in a number of jurisdictions. Finally, the chapter addresses the legal and policy context in Ireland of the delivery of restorative justice by statutory and voluntary organisations.

### 1.2 The Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project

#### 1.2.1 Introduction to the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project

The Le Chéile Mentoring and Youth Justice Support Service was first established in 2005 with the specific remit of supporting young people involved with Young Persons Probation (YPP) and supporting the provision of mentoring as required by the 2001 Children Act. In the decade since establishment, Le Chéile has broadened its remit, becoming a national provider of services to vulnerable young people involved with the criminal justice system.

In 2010, following initial discussions between Probation and the Limerick Regeneration Agency, Le Chéile opened the doors of the country's first young person's Restorative Justice Project. The Project was born from recognition of the intensity of intervention required by certain young people engaging with YPP, namely persistent and serious young offenders. This Project was seen as an important step towards the social regeneration of Limerick, through working with the young people most marginalised by economic and social disadvantage, as well as those harmed by crime. The restorative ethos of the Project formed part of a wider regenerative approach through community based restorative practices aimed at strengthening community and reducing anti-social behaviour.

The Project works hand-in-hand with numerous other state and voluntary agencies and is closely aligned with the Young Persons Probation Service (YPP) in Limerick. The Project receives all of its referrals from, and works in tandem with, Young Persons Probation throughout their engagement with young people. This work is delivered through five key models of intervention described later in this report, as well as the provision of training to the justice, education and community sectors on restorative practices.

The Project is funded by the Limerick Regeneration Agency with matched funding from the Irish Youth Justice Service (the latter of which currently provide funding indirectly, through the YPP). The Project has also received funding through the National Lottery Fund (Department of Children), the Ireland Fund and the Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime.

### 1.2.2 Aims and Objectives of the Project

The overall purpose of the Restorative Justice Project is to contribute to the development of social cohesion and harmony within communities in Limerick and surrounding areas. Initial Project documentation identifies three overarching goals:

- Goal 1: To reduce the incidence of youth crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Goal 2: To reduce fear of crime;
- Goal 3: To promote community safety.

Under these three goals, the Project also outlines a number of more specific, key objectives, which it seeks to achieve. These are to:

- Maximise the use and potential benefits of restorative approaches;
- Increase victim participation;
- Establish dialogue between victims and offenders;
- Create opportunities for offenders to make direct reparation to victims;
- Develop avenues to enable young people to make positive contributions to their communities through indirect reparation;
- Create new vehicles for constructive dialogue and improved understanding between young people in conflict with the law and other groupings within the communities;
- Recruit volunteer reparation supervisors from the local communities;
- Develop victims panels based in the community drawn from local residents;
- Integrate the Project wherever possible with existing provision;
- Establish methods of process and summative evaluation.

One of the most unique features of the Restorative Justice Project in Limerick is that rather than working in isolation strictly within the bounds of the criminal justice system, from its inception it has formed an integral part of the multi-agency arrangements and broader restorative practice within the city. These arrangements are vital to the effective functioning of the Project and to the realisation of its aims.

The Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project is housed within a voluntary organisation. As such, the aims of the Project can only be fulfilled if and when they have strong connections to statutory organisations and other voluntary organisations in the city. The Project has created and maintains those links in a number of ways. First, the membership of the Project Advisory Group consists of key partners, including YPP, senior Gardaí, representatives of Support After Crime, representatives of the education sector and City Council and other community / voluntary service providers, enabling the organisation to forge and maintain these necessary links.

Secondly, Le Chéile is firmly established as a partner of the broader Restorative Practices project in the city, led and co-ordinated by the Probation Service under the auspices of the

Children's Services Committee and its Restorative Practices Sub-group and Implementation Group. In this role, Le Chéile went on to assist in the provision of training in restorative practices as well as supporting the ongoing development of initiatives in schools and in the community.

Thirdly, Le Chéile has established a number of connections with voluntary and statutory sector agencies (so called 'host agencies'), which can support it in the provision of reparation activities for young people involved in restorative justice. Lastly, Le Chéile takes a lead on an annual restorative practice conference, which raises awareness of restorative justice in the community, statutory and voluntary sectors in Ireland. The Project constantly develops and improves its own practices, based on learning from its implementation. The inter-agency cooperation and involvement is central to this on-going development.

While the Project works in partnership with statutory services, their existence as a community voluntary organisation allows for a level of adaptability and flexibility, free from the restrictions of larger organisations working within a fixed statutory framework.

### 1.3 Five Key Restorative Models

In order to achieve its goals and objectives in the direct work with children and young people, the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project, under the guidance of YPP, identified and developed a toolkit of interventions for working with young people restoratively. These interventions range in intensity, alignment with traditional restorative practices and in resource requirements. These five interventions are reviewed here, against McCold & Wachtel's (2002) typology of restorative practices, with results of this review presented in Figure 1 and Table 1 below, and are described in more detail in the sections that follow.

Figure 2: McCold & Wachtel's Typology of Restorative Practices (2002)

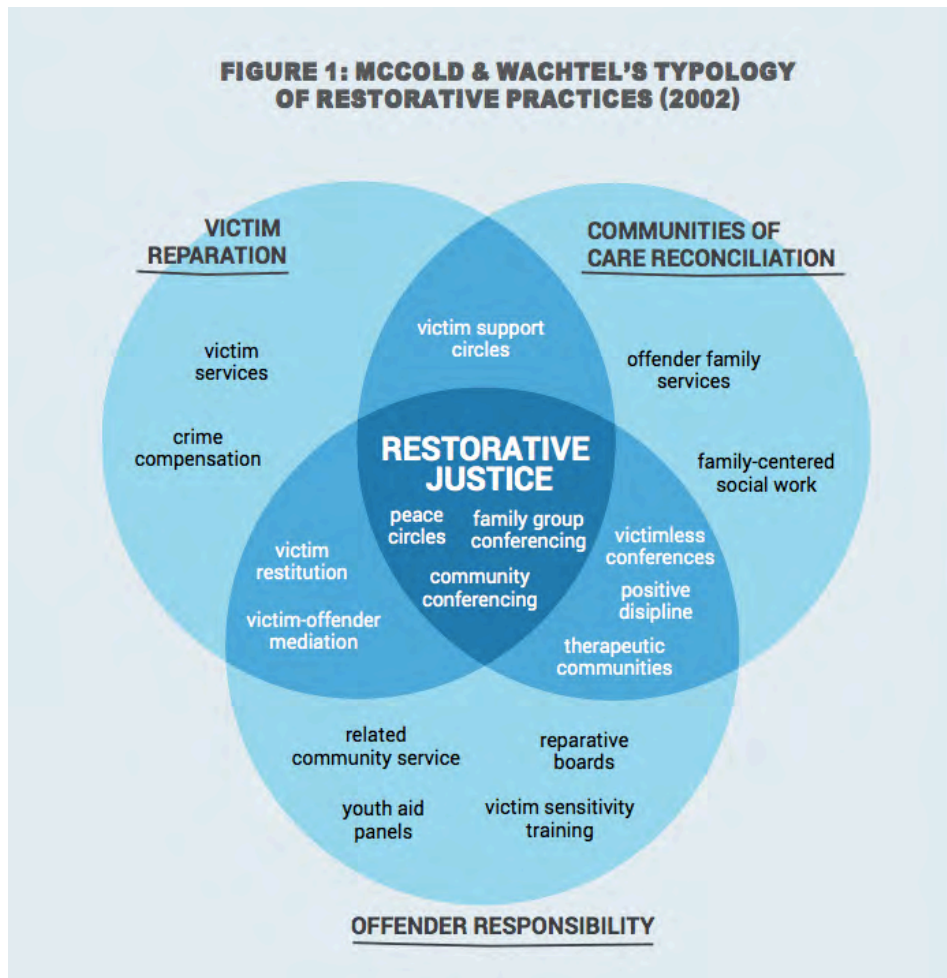


Table 1: Le Chéile Interventions by McCold & Wachtel Typology

**TABLE 1: LE CHÉILE INTERVENTIONS BY MCCOLD & WACHTEL TYPOLOGY**

Model of Intervention	Type
Restorative Conference	Fully Restorative
Victim Impact Panel	Mostly Restorative
Victim Empathy Programme	Partly Restorative
Victim Offender/Mediation	Mostly Restorative
Reparation	Mostly Restorative

### 1.3.1 Restorative Conferencing

Restorative conferencing is a structured meeting which, at minimum, includes the victim, offender and facilitator and may also involve family members, friends, and representatives of the community and service providers. Restorative conferences provide an opportunity to the victim and offender to discuss the impact of the offence.

“It’s not about coaching people... The questions are scripted, but the answers are not.”  
(Professional Interviewee)



This process also serves to increase the offender's awareness of the impact of their crime and provides a forum for agreeing a plan to repair the harm done. Restorative conferencing situates the crime within the community it has occurred and also recognises the harm or impact that crime may have on communities at large. In line with the typology of restorative interventions set out by McCold & Wachtel (2002) this form of intervention is classed as *fully restorative*.

### 1.3.2 Victim Offender Mediation

Within restorative practices there are two forms of victim offender mediation (VOM), either direct or indirect. Le Chéile provide indirect or "shuttle mediation" between victim and offender. In practice this is used when a victim does not wish to take part in a face-to-face meeting. Examples of such indirect mediation may include the giving of letters, written by offenders, to the victim and where relevant, giving any feedback from the victim to the offender. In these cases the victim has an opportunity to express how the offence impacted upon them, with the offender gaining an insight into the perspective of the victim. Indirect victim offender mediation is classified as a *mostly restorative* intervention.

### 1.3.3 Victim Empathy Programme

The victim empathy programme (VEP) is a modular programme, taking between four and sixteen sessions. Each young person is worked with on a tailored basis. Le Chéile has developed elements of the VEP in line with good practice and evidence based interventions such as those adapted from the work of Wallis (2009). The programme is offence-based, which means that it focuses on specific incidents. The programme aims to promote empathy and understanding among young people as to the impact their crimes may have on their victims, families and communities at large.

The programme is conducted via regular, usually weekly, individual meetings with the young person. Review meetings happen on a regular basis (usually every four to six weeks) and involve their probation officer and a family member (unless the young person has turned 18, in which case parental attendance is not mandatory).

A large majority of referrals to the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Programme are for the VEP. In some instances it provides a gateway into other, more traditional restorative interventions such as restorative conferences or reparation.

### 1.3.4 Reparation

Reparation is at the heart of restorative practice and refers to a structured mechanism for addressing and repairing the harm that has been caused by crime. Reparation may be direct (to the victim) or indirect (to the community). The purpose of reparation is threefold:

1. To reach agreement among all parties on how the offender can repair the harm done
2. To build and repair relationships
3. To support reconciliation between individuals and within the community.

Reparation is either an outcome of a restorative conference or VOM, which is agreed between the victim and the offender, or happens directly as a result of a referral from Probation. This often involves working in partnership with other organisations, which have been trained as reparation host agencies, where young people can undertake reparative actions, such as making something (for example, in a wood workshop) or undertaking work or volunteering.

### 1.3.5 Victim Impact Panel

The Victim Impact Panel (VIP) is an innovative restorative model, most often employed with drink driving offenders in the United States. A review search undertaken as part of this evaluation identified that the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project may be the first agency to adapt this model for young people outside of the drink driving setting.

VIPs are a space for young people who have committed a crime to meet and speak with a person who has, in the past, been a victim of a crime similar to that committed by the young person. This person takes part in the VIP as a victim proxy. The victim proxy has an opportunity to discuss the harm and impact caused by their experience of victimisation. This process aims to increase the young person's empathy and reflect upon the possible impact of their offending on potential victims.

While all other interventions are established practices, which have already been described in terms of the McCold & Wachtel typology, VIPs have not. Based on the nature of those present at the panel, as well as the impact on both the victim proxy, as well as the young person, it was found most appropriate to classify this form of intervention as mostly restorative.

### 1.3.6 Training

In addition to restorative interventions with young people, the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project also provide a range of training programmes to various stakeholders across the fields of justice, education and community youth work. This training is undertaken as joint training between Le Chéile and the Probation Service or Gardai. These programmes include:

- Reparation Training;
- 'How to Mentor Restoratively' Restorative Practice training for Volunteer Mentors - validated by the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP, 2014);
- Restorative Practice training for volunteers
- Victim Impact Panel Training (Validated IIRP, 2014);
- Bespoke training in line with IIRP theories for Garda Victim Liaison Officers;
- Facilitator skills training, one day introduction to restorative practices

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Defining Restorative Justice

Howard Zehr, often referred to as the 'grandfather' of Restorative Justice, asserted in 1990 that the traditional model of criminal justice responses to crime favoured retribution over restoration. He argued that this approach ignored the role and rights of the victim in the criminal justice process and that the harm caused to both victim and the community more generally, was not adequately addressed through the procedural state versus offender relationship. Referring to early reconciliation programmes dating back to the mid-1970s, which created an early template for another way of managing the victim / perpetrator relationship within a criminal justice setting, Zehr (1990) set out six guiding principles for Restorative Justice, posed as questions:

1. Who has been hurt?
2. What are their needs?
3. Whose obligations are these?
4. What are the causes?
5. Who has a stake in the situation?
6. What is the appropriate process to involve stakeholders in an effort to address causes and put things right?

The principles these questions represent remain central to the use of restorative practices across a variety of settings. The basis of the Restorative Justice approach is that it seeks to avoid or repair harm to individuals or communities caused through criminal behaviours.

Often associated with the Maori system of Utu or the African principles of Ubuntu, examples of Restorative Justice can be seen throughout history and across societies. Interestingly, one such historic system based on restorative principles is the Irish Brehan Laws, which espoused a compensatory approach to repairing social harm.

Since the 1970s, Restorative Justice has:

*"emerged [...] primarily as a response to calls from victim advocates for alternative approaches that expand victims' rights in justice processes and promote outcomes that address needs of victims, offenders and communities". (Choi, Bazemore and Gilbert, 2011: 35)*

Broadly, Restorative Justice is "an approach to problem solving that, in its various forms, involves the victim, the offender, their social networks, justice agencies and the community" (UNOCD, 2006: 6). It has a focus on redressing the harm done to the victim, holding the offender accountable and involving the community in seeking resolution (UNODC, 2006: 6). The importance of Restorative Justice, however, stretches beyond those directly affected by the crime as "Restorative justice programmes can be used to reduce the burden on the criminal justice system, to divert cases out of the system and to provide the system with a range of constructive sanctions" (UNODC, 2006: 2).

For the purposes of this evaluation, we follow the definition by Marshall (1999) who described Restorative Justice as a process “whereby parties with a stake in a specific offence collectively resolve how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future”. As such, this definition encompasses a range of interventions, from restorative conferencing through mediation to community justice panels.

## 2.2 International Guidance and Standards on the Use of Restorative Justice

### 2.2.1 UN Basic Principles on the Use of Restorative Justice Programmes in Criminal Justice Matters

The UN Basic Principles on the Use of Restorative Justice Programmes in Criminal Justice Matters (UN Basic Principles) were adopted by the UN Economic and Social Council in 2002. These Principles define a “restorative programme” as any programme that uses restorative principles and seeks to achieve restorative outcomes (para. I.1). A “Restorative process” is understood as any process in which the victim and the offender participate together actively to resolve issues raised following the commission of a crime. These processes may include mediation, conciliation, conferencing and sentencing circles (para. I.2). “Restorative outcomes” may include reparation, restitution and community service, which address the individual and collective needs of the victim and the community, and achieve effective reintegration of the victim and the offender (para. I.3).

The document goes on to describe a number of key principles that must underpin the provision of restorative justice in the criminal justice setting:

- Restorative interventions should only be used where there is sufficient evidence to otherwise charge the offender with a criminal offence (para. II.7).
- Participation in a restorative programme should be voluntary (both parties must have the right to withdraw consent at any stage) (para. II.7).
- Any agreements (i.e. post conference outcomes) should only include requirements that are reasonable and proportionate, and should be entered into voluntarily (para. II.7).
- If the restorative process is unsuccessful, the offender’s participation in it should not be used as evidence of guilt in any criminal proceedings that follow (para. II.8).
- Facilitators of restorative interventions should be mindful of power imbalances (for example, where the offender is a child and the victim an adult) and cultural differences between the parties (para. II.9).
- The safety of all parties should be a paramount consideration (para. II.10).
- The victim and the offender should have the right to consult a lawyer, and where necessary, have access to translation and interpretation (para. II.13.a).
- Children should have the right to assistance of a parent or legal guardian throughout the process (para. II.13.a).

- All parties should be fully informed about their rights, the nature of the process and the consequences of their decision to participate before they agree to take part (para. II.13.b).
- Neither victim nor the offender should be coerced or otherwise unduly influenced to agree to take part or to accept restorative outcomes (para. II.13.c).
- The process should be confidential (unless it is held in public) (para. II.14).
- The facilitators of restorative programmes should perform their duties in an impartial manner (para. II.18).
- Facilitators must undergo appropriate training before taking up their duties (para. II.19).

### 2.2.2 International Standards Relevant to Restorative Practice with Children and Young People

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) contains a number of standards relevant to restorative justice, including the principle of the best interests of the child (Article 3), the right to be heard (Article 12) and procedural rights in criminal justice proceedings, protected by Article 40.

According to Article 3 UNCRC, in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, or other authorities, the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration. This means that the State is required to ensure that any services are provided in a way which respects this principle (Article 3, para 3). This will also apply to voluntary organisations that provide services together with statutory organisations or on their behalf. The best interests of the child should always be agreed in consultation with the child (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009), respecting the child's right to be heard (Article 12, UNCRC). This is especially important when working with younger children or those who are marginalised and/or disadvantaged in a society and who often have limited opportunities to express their views in their daily lives (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009: 6).

Children should be able to say what they think without being put under pressure, in an environment in which the child can feel safe and secure (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009: 10). The child must be able to form his or her own view in the context of the decision to be taken and should therefore be fully informed of such context, the possible options regarding the decision, as well as its consequences for the child (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009: 10). In the context of restorative justice, this will include letting the child know what engagement with any restorative process will mean for them and what the consequences for them may be. The child's view should then be given appropriate weight in accordance with their age and level of maturity (Article 12.1 UNCRC) and they should be informed about how their views influenced any final decision (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009: 12-13).

Specifically with reference to criminal proceedings, Article 40 of the UNCRC requires that States "recognise the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed

the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which takes into account the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration and the child's assuming a constructive role in society." To this end, every child accused of or found to have committed an offence, should be provided with legal representation (Article 40.2.b.ii); have the matter resolved promptly (Article 40.2.b.iii); not be compelled to admit guilt or to give testimony (Article 40.2.b.iv) and to have his or her privacy respected at all stages of criminal proceedings (Article 40.2.b.vii).

Where children are accused of breaking the law, their cases should be dealt first and foremost with the use of diversionary measures. These can be employed without the recourse to judicial proceedings (for example, by the police) or in the context of judicial proceedings (Article 40(3) UNCRC; UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2007). Accordingly, States are required to adopt and develop a range of interventions which ensure that children in conflict with the law are dealt with in a way which focuses on their well-being, and are proportionate to both the child's individual circumstances, and the nature of the offence (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2007: 8). In recognition of the fact that children are most often accused of relatively minor offences, diversionary measures should ensure that they are removed from the criminal justice process and dealt with, for example, with the assistance of social or educational services (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2007). Where court proceedings are necessary, the judges in dealing with children should be able to avail of a range of community-based interventions. The primary aim of any intervention should be the child's reintegration into the community (Article 40(1) UNCRC).

### 2.2.3 International Human Rights Standards Regarding the Treatment of Victims in the Criminal Justice Process

The EU Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime (the Victims Directive), establishes a number of standards relating to the treatment of victims in criminal proceedings. The Directive, in its Preamble at paragraph 9, states that a crime is a violation of the individual rights of victims. It therefore requires that victims be treated in a respectful, sensitive and professional manner without discrimination of any kind. This includes their treatment when in contact with restorative justice services, which are defined in Article 2.1.d as "any process whereby the victim and the offender are enabled, if they freely consent, to participate actively in the resolution of matters arising from the criminal offence through the help of an impartial third party".

The Victims Directive, in its Preamble:

- Recognises that restorative justice approaches, such as victim-offender mediation or family conferencing, can have significant benefits for the victims.
- Names the primary consideration in any restorative justice process as being the interests and needs of the victim, repairing the harm and avoiding further harm.



- Identifies factors such as the nature and severity of the crime, degree of trauma, as well as level of maturity or the victim's intellectual capacity as needing to be taken into consideration in referring the case to restorative justice services.
- Stresses that restorative justice process should be confidential, save for circumstances where disclosure was agreed by the participants or is otherwise in the public interest.
- Highlights the importance in ensuring victims are protected from secondary and repeat victimisation, from intimidation and from retaliation.
- States that victims should receive appropriate support to facilitate their recovery and should be provided with sufficient access to justice.
- Notes that child victims must be regarded as having the rights outlined in the Directive and should be able to exercise those in a manner which takes into account their capacity to form their own views.
- Requires that victims are appropriately informed about the processes of criminal justice, including of options for restorative justice. Such information should, as far as possible, be provided through a range of media and in a way which can be understood by the victim, including being provided in an accessible language.

The Directive goes on to specify that:

- Victims who choose to participate in restorative justice have access to safe and competent service (Article 12.1).
- Restorative services should only be used when it is in the interest of the victim, subject to consideration of any safety implications, and only when the victim consents freely to taking part (Article 12.1a).
- The victim must be able to withdraw their consent at any stage of the process (Article 12.1.a).
- A condition of referral to restorative justice services should be of the offender acknowledging the basic facts of the case (Article 12.1.c).
- Victims should be made aware of any restorative options for dealing with the offence (Article 4.1.j).
- Information provided to victims should include sufficient detail to ensure that they can make an informed decision as to whether to take part in any proceedings (Preamble, paragraph 24).
- Victims must be appropriately informed about the potential outcomes of the process and any arrangements for supervision of the implementation of any agreement (Article 12.1.b).
- Such agreement must be arrived at voluntarily and may be taken into account in any further criminal proceedings in the case (Article 12.1.d).

## 2.3 Restorative Justice: Evidence it Works

### 2.3.1 Introduction

A growing body of research in recent years has highlighted the effectiveness of restorative justice for both victims and offenders, including in the context of working with children and young people in conflict with the law. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that both victims and offenders consider restorative justice to be fairer than traditional, retributive

justice (Trimboli, 2000; Poulson, 2003; Doak, 2011). Restorative justice has also been shown to have positive healing effects on those affected by crimes (Doak, 2011), including improvement for those suffering from post-traumatic stress (Angel, et.al, 2014).

In looking at what works in restorative justice with children and young people, it is worth summarising the findings of some of the evaluations of interventions undertaken in different jurisdictions in the context of youth justice. A literature search indicates that the most used models in youth justice are those of statutory youth conferencing and victim-offender mediation (VOM). The studies selected for this review have all used similar methodologies to this evaluation and included a similar interview schedules so were considered to be comparable in scope. In addition to those selected individual evaluations, a number of meta-analyses of research relating to the different programmes was also considered.

### 2.3.2 Youth Justice in England and Wales

In England and Wales, Wilcox and Hoyle undertook the national evaluation of restorative justice projects funded by the Youth Justice Board in 2004. The research looked at 46 different projects, with a wide range of practices including family conferencing, mediation (direct and indirect), reparation (individual and community) and victim awareness (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 5).

The completion rates for restorative interventions across the 46 projects have been found by evaluators to be high, at 83% (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 39). There was no statistically significant difference between the different interventions, age of the offender or type of offence (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 39). While acknowledging the difficulties in gathering the views of victims and offenders about the interventions (very few interviews were undertaken in local projects), the evaluators reported some encouraging results in relation to young people's perceptions of the process. Almost 90% of young people stated that the process made them take responsibility for their actions, with 71% declaring that they gained a greater understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the victim (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 40). Victims tended to agree that the intervention has helped the offender to take responsibility (76%), with the majority (69%) being satisfied with the outcome of a restorative intervention (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 41).

Overall, the rates of victim participation for the 46 projects were found to be at around 67%, although comparisons were made difficult due to different definitions and opportunities for 'participation' in the different settings and different types of intervention (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 31). The evaluation makes some important observations about the rate of victim participation depending on who makes the first contact with the victim. The evaluation found that police contact resulted in fewer victims agreeing to participation as compared to those contacted first by project workers (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 27-28). These discrepancies were accounted for by workloads and differences in training, with police officers reported as having less time to speak to the victim in detail and explain the restorative options available. In four projects, it was suggested that victims' reasons not to participate can be summarised as: being concerned for their safety, being too busy, believing that engaging in the process would be a waste of time and believing that the offence was too trivial to be dealt with in that way (Wilcox

and Hoyle, 2004: 30). It has, however, also been suggested that the overall participation rates should be seen in light of the fact that many victims opt to receive information and an apology, rather than engage in another process, so these rates are very much affected by victim choice (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 31).

Looking at reconviction rates after restorative interventions, the authors acknowledged the difficulty of calculating those without an appropriate control group (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 8). They compared the data available from the projects to the more general Home Office statistics regarding young offenders sentenced during 2000. The authors found that unadjusted reconviction rate for those taking part in restorative justice projects was 46.6% as compared to 26.4% in the Home Office sample (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 8). After weighing the restorative justice sample for the numbers of previous appearances in courts, they found the reconviction rate to be 28.6% (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 8). However, they also found that in the restorative justice sample, 37% were reconvicted of less serious offences, with 23% convicted on more serious charges (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 8). Levels and severity of reconviction may have been impacted by the fact that three quarters of children and young people starting restorative interventions were in the early stages of offending (Wilcox and Hoyle, 2004: 19).

### 2.3.3 Youth Conference Service in Northern Ireland

In 2005, Campbell and others evaluated the Youth Conference Service, managed and implemented by the Youth Justice Agency in Northern Ireland. The Service has been put on statutory footing in 2002, and became operational in December 2003 (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 1). The Service provides two types of conferences: diversionary (where the young person is referred by the Public Prosecution Service, PPS) and court-ordered (Campbell et.al, 2005: 2). Both require the young person (between the age of 10 and 17) admitting to having committed the offence and agreeing to taking part in the conference (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 2). Victims can choose whether or not to attend the conference in person or contribute in another way (for example, in the form of a letter). The outcome of the conference, in a form of an agreed contract and an action plan, is then presented to the PPS or the court for sign-off (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 2).

An early evaluation of the Youth Conferencing Service showed that 31% of referrals to the youth conference came from the Public Prosecution Service, with the remaining 69% ordered by the youth court (Campbell, et. al, 2005: 35). The rates of acceptance of the referral by the young person were high, with 68% accepting the diversionary conference and 56% accepting the court ordered one (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 35). The majority of referrals (75%) resulted in a conference, with a comparatively high level of victim participation (at 69%), 40% of those being personal victims (Campbell, at.al, 2005: 45). Those victims who did not wish to participate in the conference most often quoted personal reasons for not doing so (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 45).

Overall, young people and victims who took part in youth conferences reported very high levels of satisfaction with the way in which they were being prepared for the conference,

including about what to expect of the process and its outcomes (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 49-50). During the conference, the evaluators found that young people engaged well with the process and were able to explain their perspective on their offence, and the vast majority of them took responsibility for their behaviour (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 59). Both victims and young people were well engaged with devising a post-conference plan and, during the evaluation, 95% of conferences reached agreement on such plans (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 59), with 93% of all young people stating that those plans were 'very fair' or 'fair' (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 88).

The evaluation of the Youth Conferencing Service found that 91% of young people and 81% of victims preferred the youth conference over court process, with 81% of young people and 43% of victims reporting feeling better after the conference (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 95). Eighty eight percent of victims stated that they would recommend the conference process to others in a similar situation (Campbell, et.al. 2005: 95). The evaluation found that the majority of agreed plans were then accepted by the Public Prosecution Service or the courts (although with a significant number rejected or amended by the courts for a variety of reasons, mostly relating to the seriousness of the offence). A minimal number were later revoked (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 118).

Reviewing the available evidence on the impact of restorative justice programmes on re-offending rates, Campbell, et.al (2005: 24) concluded that "it is difficult to determine the overall effectiveness of restorative programs in preventing re-offending". The differences in evaluation contexts and methodologies preclude much of the comparative analysis of the outcomes of different programmes. However, some factors such as positive experience with the restorative process, absence of 'negative shaming' and offenders' belief that the process was just, can increase the effectiveness of restorative justice in this respect (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 26) Additionally, the authors state that other benefits of the interventions may be equally important, so lower re-offending rates on their own should not necessarily be the main goal of restorative practice (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 24). An analysis of re-offending rates for the youth conferencing in a 2006 cohort of young offenders found that these stood at 47.4% for court-ordered conferences and 28.3% for diversionary conferences (Jacobson and Gibbs, 2009: 10), although it has been acknowledged that this data is based on a small sample and not controlled for other factors, such as previous history of being in conflict with the law.

Campbell et.al. (2005) suggest that most evaluations of restorative justice interventions indicate overall high satisfaction levels on part of the offenders with the process; however, this varies when separated into, for example, satisfaction with the outcome (high) and satisfaction with levels of participation (lower). The authors argue that "the inclusion and active participation of the offender is vital to the restorative process and the extent to which it is achieved may impact upon their perception of fairness and justice" (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 21). One of the steps to achieving active participation by the offender is gaining their informed consent for the process – those who are coerced to take part are unlikely to commit to the process and there has been some concern expressed in literature as to whether young people faced with the choice of court process as an alternative do, in fact, 'consent' to restorative justice with full understanding (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 23). Similarly, children and young people in particular,

may feel pressurised in the process to agree to suggestions for an action plan, without full consideration of their options and especially when the restorative process includes participation of a number of professionals such as police officers (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 23). Positive practice in this respect suggests that young people should have access to independent advice, including to legal advice (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 23).

A process evaluation by Maruna et.al. (2007), undertaken with 26 young people involved in the conferencing process in Northern Ireland, assessed the impact of the youth conference on their lives and their self-understandings one year on or more from their initial involvement with the Youth Conferencing Service. The authors found that many of the post-conference outcomes for young people were positive, although in some cases desistance was caused by factors other than involvement in the restorative justice process (Maruna, et.al, 2007: 24). Most of the young people felt that "their lives were on track, had avoided any subsequent criminal justice involvement and were now desisting from crime" (Maruna, et.al, 2007: 7). Young people reported meeting face-to-face with the victim as most having most impact, together with the opportunity to repair the harm done through the conference plan (Maruna, et.al, 2007: 7).

The authors found that where young people persisted in offending post-conference, this was often linked to "a sense that they were not able to communicate their perspectives at the conference itself" (Maruna, et.al, 2007: 8). Other factors included the perception of being harangued or 'lectured' at the conference; being expected to accept overall blame where there were other people involved in the incident; having police present at the conference where young people perceived the police as having harassed them in the past and being asked to agree to routine and impersonal conference plans at the end of the process (Maruna, et.al, 2007: 8).

Discussing victim participation in restorative justice processes, Campbell et.al. (2005) note a number of reasons why victims may choose not to take part. These include wishing to move on from their experience, being anxious about meeting the offender, being concerned about retaliation or feeling that the offence was too trivial (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 17). It is also recognised, however, that non-participation may result from issues in the process itself, such as the lack of appropriate information for the victim, unsuitable timing (for example, conferences convened during working hours), lack of appropriate notice or a failure to invite the victim to take part (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 17). The latter have implications for positive practice in the delivery of restorative interventions and should be taken into consideration by practitioners. While victim participation should be completely voluntary, Campbell et.al (2005) stress that those victims who don't participate in person should be provided with an opportunity to contribute in a different way (for example, by way of a letter) and should still be informed about the outcome of any restorative process (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 18).

Participation in person can have a positive impact on how the victim perceives the process itself (this is often termed 'victim satisfaction'). Campbell, et.al. (2005: 18) point to a number of factors that could potentially contribute to the victims' positive experience, and these include: being involved in the process, being given an opportunity to discuss the impact of the offence,

understanding why the crime happened, receiving an apology, receiving a reparation and getting an insight into the offender and their background. However, the authors acknowledge that levels of satisfaction with the process may depend on factors such as the nature of the offence and the level of distress caused by the offence (Campbell, 2005: 18). Taking part in a restorative process may also have measurable negative impact on victims, i.e. make them feel worse, especially if the following factors are taken into account: lack of support in the process, intimidation, having to relive the crime, feeling that the outcome of the process was inadequate and lack of remorse on the part of the offender (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 19). The authors therefore suggest that positive practice in delivery of restorative justice should include appropriate preparation of the victim for possible outcomes and managing their expectations about what the process can deliver (Campbell et.al, 2005: 18). Overall, the amount of information received by the victim about and throughout the process impacts on victim satisfaction levels and therefore it is “imperative that victims are kept informed at all stages” (Campbell, et.al, 2005: 18). This includes follow-up information after the process has ended, for example information about the implementation of agreed actions by the offender.

#### 2.3.4 Youth Justice Conferencing Scheme in New South Wales

A 2000 evaluation of the New South Wales Youth Justice Conferencing Scheme (Trimboli, 2000: 36-37) reported that a very high percentage of conference participants viewed the scheme as ‘somewhat fair’ or ‘very fair’ to the offender (at 97.4% for victims, 95.2% for offenders and 98% for supporters of either the victim or the offender). Similarly high percentages reported on the issue of fairness of the process to the victim. The vast majority of both victims and offenders stated that their rights were respected ‘a fair bit’ or ‘a lot’ (Trimboli, 2000: 37) and agreed or strongly agreed that they were respected throughout the conference (at nearly 97% for victims and 92% for offenders)(Trimboli, 2000: 38). The vast majority of the victims and offenders also felt that they were in control of the process of the conference and that they were able to express their views and had those taken into account.

More qualitative feedback indicated that participants in youth justice conferences most valued the fact that participants could all express their feelings during the process; that the process was non-threatening and respectful and that the process was professionally conducted (Trimboli, 2000: 41). Not surprisingly perhaps, victims valued the fact that the offender took responsibility for their actions – however, only slightly below 15% identified this as the ‘best’ feature of the conference (ibid). In terms of the worst feature of the conference, it is interesting to note that 20% of offenders felt that the absence of victim in the process was the worst aspect of the way in which the conference was run (Trimboli, 2000: 42). Overall, 90% of offenders were satisfied by the way in which their case has been dealt with just slightly below 80% of victims reporting the same outcome (Trimboli, 2000: 50).

Interestingly, the evaluation by Trimboli attempted to assess the impact of the conference on the young person’s understanding of the effect of their behaviour on the victims. Asked whether during the conference they began to understand how it actually felt for the victims, slightly more than 26% of respondents felt they were overwhelmed by the victims’ statements, with a further 48% stating that they ‘understood a lot’ how it felt to be a victim (Trimboli, 2000: 52). Nearly 40% of all young people in the evaluation felt overwhelmed by their own feelings of



responsibility for their actions, with a further 46% reporting feeling 'a lot' of responsibility (ibid). Ninety-two percent of the young people stated that their experience of the conference will stop them re-offending in the future (Trimboli, 2000: 54).

### 2.3.5 Victim Engagement

As noted above, a consistent challenge faced by Restorative Justice Projects internationally is the engagement of victims in restorative processes. High victim engagement is also linked with more positive outcomes, highlighting its importance as an indicator of success. In order to promote victim engagement, a number of key recommendations can be gleaned from the literature. A summary of these is provided below:

- Victims and members of their family may be more likely to agree to participate in restorative interventions with young people when a specially trained restorative justice facilitator meets them face-to-face to explain the process, compared with when no such detailed explanation is offered. (Wilcox with Hoyle, 2004).
- Victims may be more likely to participate in restorative justice when they are given the opportunity to choose a date and time for meeting compared with when this decision is made without them and they are simply informed of when the meeting will take place (Wilcox with Hoyle, 2004)
- Victims seem more likely to participate in face-to-face restorative justice where they are assured that someone they know will facilitate the process and remain present, compared with when they are not given such an assurance (Wilcox with Hoyle, 2004; Sherman et. al, 2006).
- Victims may be more likely to take part in restorative interventions with young offenders than with adults (Sherman et. al, 2006).
- Victims in England and Wales seemed more likely to engage in restorative justice processes if they thought it will help the offender stop crime than if they thought it is merely a way to gain material benefit from the offender (Shapland et. al, 2004).
- Victims of crime and their supporters seem more likely to attend restorative justice processes if they receive follow-up reminders from the practitioners a day before a meeting, are provided transportation if needed, and provided with child care at the venue if required (Sherman et. al, 2006).
- Victims of young people who learn by post/letter that they may participate in restorative justice, without following this offer up with a phone call, are less likely to participate in the process (Wilcox with Hoyle, 2004).

### 2.3.6 Meta-Analysis – Do We Really Know 'What Works'?

One of the difficulties in assessing 'what works' in restorative justice with children and young people is that many evaluations – a selection of which was described earlier – focus on particular programmes, in a particular setting, often with other programme-specific

characteristics. At this level of evidence, “there are many possible alternative, competing explanations for any observed difference in success rates between two practices” (Sherman, Strang and Newbury-Birch, 2008: 18) which can impact on our understanding of which of those approaches constitute ‘good’ or ‘positive’ practice in encouraging best outcomes. In fact, some authors go as far as to suggest that in some instances, there is no evidence of ‘what works’, but only evidence of “what’s promising” (Sherman, Strang and Newbury-Birch, 2008).

On the latter, Sherman, Strang and Newbury-Birch (2008) suggest that young people are more willing to engage with restorative interventions when they don’t have to fully admit guilt at the start of the process. They go on to state that interventions used as diversion from prosecution attract more involvement from young offenders than those which are part of the criminal justice process. On victim involvement, the authors suggest that victims are more likely to engage if the process is facilitated and explained to them face-to-face by specially trained professionals and when the victims have control over things like the time and place in which their meeting with the offender takes place. They state that there is some evidence to suggest that personal victims are more willing to engage with children and young people than they are with adult offenders (Sherman, Strang and Newbury-Birch, 2008: 31).

Referring to the possible outcomes of restorative justice, Sherman, Strong and Newbury-Birch (2008: 32) suggest that young people are more likely to apologise to victims in face-to-face meetings. The effects for victims may include improved health and well-being, less anger and less fear, and more inclination to forgive the offenders for the harm caused (Sherman, Strang and Newbury-Birch, 2008: 33 and 35). Overall, victims involved in direct meeting with young offenders regularly report high levels of satisfaction with the restorative justice process. Offenders tend to report that the feeling of having been treated more fairly than in the more conventional justice system (Sherman, Strang and Newbury-Birch, 2008: 34).

### 2.3.7 Summary of Key Themes

A number of key themes can be drawn from the above review of these project and programme evaluations. Namely, youth restorative justice is found to have:

- Demonstrated that it promotes young people taking responsibility for their actions.
- Resulted in a more positive experience for victims and offenders than that of the traditional criminal justice system.
- High victim satisfaction rates, being an emotional yet worthwhile experience for victims of crime.
- Been ‘fair’ and respectful of the rights of both victims and offenders.
- More positive outcomes where victim participation rates are higher. However, there exist a number of difficulties with regard to defining victim participation in a consistent manner.
- Many indications that it may see a deduction in recidivism. Again however, methodological issues have made it difficult to prove a statistically significant impact on reoffending rates.

## 2.4 Restorative Justice: Context in Ireland

### 2.4.1 The National Commission on Restorative Justice

The National Commission on Restorative Justice (the National Commission) was established in 2008. The setting up of the Commission followed a report published by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights on Restorative Justice, published in 2007. In this report, the Committee acknowledged that traditional approaches to criminal justice in Ireland "are limited in the extent to which they can effectively reduce crime rates, rehabilitate offenders and, importantly, redress the harm caused to the victims of crime" (Joint Committee, 2007: 1).

The Commission's review of evidence suggested that Restorative Justice may work best when it focuses on offences with an identified victim, when the victim engages in the process, in cases of more rather than less-serious crime and where the crime is committed against the person, not property (National Commission, 2008: 19). On the perspectives of victims, it noted that "restorative justice as a process increases victim satisfaction levels, especially where victims have the opportunity to tell their story and when they feel that their hurt is not being ignored" (National Commission, 2008: 17). The process is more inclusive, and responds to the wishes of the victims to be "consulted about the processing and the outcome" of their cases (National Commission, 2008: 18). The report found that, the process can reduce the level of fear and victimisation, as well as impacting positively on emotional healing (National Commission, 2008: 18).

On the offenders' perspective, the National Commission noted that the level of recidivism is one of the main criteria of gauging the success of restorative interventions (National Commission, 2008: 18). It acknowledged that evidence here is mixed and that while research to date "would suggest that restorative justice impacts positively on recidivism in many instances, the results indicate that positive impact is not always achieved" (National Commission, 2008: 18). The Commission stressed, however, that other aspects of the process can have an impact – the fact that the offender can express remorse to their victims, issue an apology, and acknowledge the impact their actions had on the victim (National Commission, 2008: 19).

The final report of the National Commission was published in 2009. In relation to children and young people, the Commission recommended the extension of the use of restorative practices in the Garda Diversion Project and stated that more cases of adult offenders should be referred to Nenagh Community Reparation Programme (Now 'Restorative Justice in the Community') and Tallaght Restorative Justice Services (National Commission, 2009: 10). The Commission was satisfied that the Probation Service should continue as the lead agency in relation to the implementation of restorative interventions for adult offenders, in co-operation with community-based groups and organisations (National Commission, 2009: 22). The Commission also stated that any projects should be subject to regular evaluation and review of effectiveness (National Commission, 2009: 22-23).

### 2.4.2 Tackling Youth Crime – Youth Justice Action Plan, 2014-2018

In 2014, the Irish Department of Justice, the Youth Justice Service and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs launched a joint strategy entitled “Tackling Youth Crime: Youth Justice Action Plan 2014-2018 (Department of Justice and Equality, 2013). This policy level action plan identified five high level goals in relation to youth justice. The plan provided cross-departmental strategic direction for the youth justice sector, and all of its stakeholders for the next four years. The high level goals outlined under this Action Plan were:

1. To work together to ensure public confidence in dealing with young people in conflict with the law.
2. To strengthen and develop the evidence base to support more effective policies and services, having regard to the voice of young people.
3. To review and strengthen targeted interventions to reduce offending and divert young people from the criminal justice system.
4. To promote and increase the use of community measures, including restorative justice, for young people who offend.
5. To provide a safe, secure environment and necessary support for detained young people to assist their re-integration into the community.

Importantly, this document specifically identifies Restorative Justice as a model of intervention that should be promoted and increased, demonstrating commitment to the principles and practices of Restorative Justice from a policy perspective. The Action Plan goes on to discuss restorative practices and justice in greater detail, noting on page 21 that:

*“Restorative justice practices form an integral element of assessment and supervision of those appearing before the Courts and/or subject to community sanctions.”*

Further, the Action Plan notes the need to promote and drive an ethos of restorative practice within the youth justice sector and across organisations and service providers.

### 2.4.3 The Irish Probation Service Strategy on Restorative Justice

In November 2013, the Probation Service published its Restorative Justice Strategy, which built on previous experience of utilising restorative practices in probation work. In the Strategy, the Service (including Young Persons Probation) committed to a vision of maximising “the use of Restorative Justice across all areas of our work, to complement and support existing strategies and interventions to reduce reoffending and further possible victimisation, and promote and support meaningful engagement with victims and communities” (Probation Service, 2013: 5). To realise this vision, the Service committed itself to:

1. Promoting and encouraging change in individual offenders subject to its supervision, through their engagement in restorative programmes/ practices.
2. Supporting victims (and communities) to enable their meaningful engagement and participation in the criminal justice process, at all times cognisant and respectful of their needs, rights and interests.

3. Building capacity and strengthening its organisational capability through the application of best practice models and standards in the delivery of Restorative Justice Programmes and practices.
4. Developing enhanced strategic alliances with the wider statutory, voluntary and community sector, where possible, to improve outcomes for victims (Probation Service, 2013: 8).

As part of the action plan to achieve the above objectives, the Probation Service is continuing capacity building and the further development of Restorative Justice projects or programmes in the community, including those dealing with children and young people (Probation Service, 2013: 9).

#### 2.4.4 Restorative Justice for Children – The Children Act 2001

The *Children Act 2001* (as amended in 2007) is the statutory framework for dealing with children in conflict with the law in Ireland. Section 96(1)(a) of the Act states that any court, when dealing with children charged with offences, shall have regard to the principle that children have the same rights and freedoms, before the law, as adults. Section 96(2) states that a period of detention should be imposed only as a measure of last resort and, under section 143(1), a court may not make an order of detention unless it is the only suitable way of dealing with the child (imprisonment as a last resort).

Critical to ensuring detention is used only as a measure of last resort is the implementation of the range of other interventions provided for by the *Children Act 2001*, including Restorative Justice interventions. Two such interventions are provided for in the Act. Firstly, the Act (by virtue of Part 4), placed the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme on a statutory footing, and states that:

*“Unless the interests of society otherwise require [...] any child who has committed an offence and accepts responsibility for his or her criminal behaviour shall be considered for admission to a diversion programme [...]”* (Article 18). *“The objective of the programme is to divert the child from committing any further offences”* (Article 19.1).

Part of the Programme is the convening of a diversionary conference, attended by the child, family members and other persons with an interest in the intervention (Article 19.2). Such conferences may include an element of mediation between the child and the victim as appropriate (Article 29). The outcome of the conference may result in a formulation of an action plan for the child (Article 39.1), which may include provisions for any of the following:

- an apology by the child to any victim;
- financial or other reparation to the victim;
- participation by the child in sporting or other activities;
- attendance at a school or place of work;
- participation in training or educational programme as appropriate, a curfew, taking part in community activities (Article 39.3).

The most recent Annual Report about the work of the Diversion Programme (Garda Youth Diversion Office, 2013) states that during 2012, 12,246 children were referred to the Programme, with 80% of those referred admitted to it. A Restorative Justice process, set up under the Garda Restorative Justice Programme, was used in 1,036 referrals (restorative cautions), representing a 13% increase from the previous year, which had 903 referrals (Garda Youth Diversion Office, 2013: 5). Restorative conferences run during this process are voluntary, led by Juvenile Liaison Officers, and can take place in any location which is safe and comfortable for both the wrongdoer and the victim (Garda Youth Diversion Office, 2013: 16-17).

Under the 2001 Act, children charged with criminal offences can participate in a court-ordered family conference (Article 78). The conditions of such a conference are: that the child accepts responsibility for his or her crime (after appropriate consultation with parents or guardians, and a legal representative) and that it appears to the court that a formulation of an action plan in respect of the child would be desirable and that the child and his or her parents or guardians agree to participate and contribute to the conference (Article 78.2). Family conferences are convened by a Probation Officer and should be held not later than 28 days after the date of the direction by the Court (Article 79). Any action plan that follows from a court-ordered conference must be submitted to the same court (Article 81) which it then approves or amends. Where this has been agreed, the court will order supervision by Probation for the duration of the plan (Article 82.1). If a plan is not agreed, the court can formulate a plan on its own volition or resume criminal proceedings in respect of the child (Article 82.2). Similarly, the court has the power to resume criminal proceedings if the action plan is not complied with by the child (Article 83).

## 2.5 Summary

Internationally, Restorative Justice is a growing movement, which focuses on repairing harm rather than seeking retribution. While not a panacea for all criminal justice matters, it has been found to be a more beneficial process for both victim and offender than the traditional criminal justice system. The outcomes most often identified focus on satisfaction with the process and qualitative measures such as being heard and respected.

Less straightforward is the literature on outcomes such as recidivism, which has found that restorative interventions with young people may see a reduction in recidivism rates of between 32% and 0%. While studies do point to a positive impact on future offending, issues of sample size, lack of adequate control samples and the high bar required to prove statistical significance may all play a part in limiting researchers' ability to provide definitive evidence in this regard.

There exists a wealth of literature on what works in Restorative Justice and positive practice, both for young person interventions as well as victim engagement. Some of this evidence has been summarized above and will be referenced throughout this report against the working practices of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project. While there has been a growing international movement towards the increased use of restorative justice, Ireland has been slow in its uptake of it, especially with regard to community based youth justice initiatives. While the

National Commission of Restorative Justice has clearly found a strong case for increased use of restorative justice, the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project was the first, and remains the only non-statutory provider of youth restorative justice interventions in the country.

As is outlined in the chapters that follow, the Project has proven to be an effective model for the provision of restorative justice interventions with children and young people, and there is evidence to suggest that it can be replicated in other parts of the country in line with the public sector strategic objectives relating to the delivery of youth justice services and restorative interventions.

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter details the origins of this evaluation. It further outlines the methodology employed by the researchers in the study, and any limitations and challenges that this methodology presented in the course of the research.

### 3.2 Origins of this evaluation

After almost four years in operation, and following a positive internal evaluation, Le Chéile put out an open call for researchers or research agencies to tender for the provision of an external evaluation. This review was commissioned by Le Chéile in March of 2014 and conducted by the independent research charity Quality Matters, over a six-month period.

This evaluation is both a process and outcome evaluation. The evaluation seeks to analyse the impact of the Project upon its stakeholders, as well as to review and make recommendations on its operations. The evaluation also deals with issues of sustainability and the potential for replicability, with existing practices viewed through these lenses. The task set out by Le Chéile to the evaluators was summarised in the tender document as follows:

- To conduct a brief literature review and analysis of current evidence and good practice in relation to the utilisation of restorative justice/practice in the context of youth justice.
- To review and provide an analysis of the qualitative data which has been collected by the Restorative Justice Project with due regard to the goals and objectives identified by the Project.
- To review and provide an analysis of the quantitative data which has been collected by the Restorative Justice Project with due regard to the identified goals and objectives of the Project.
- To document the outcomes and outputs of the Project to date.
- To report on the learning from the Project (what works, what does not work).
- To make recommendations in relation to future data collection.
- To make recommendations in relation to the future development of the Project having regard to effectiveness and financial sustainability.
- To produce a concise, user-friendly report that clearly outlines the work carried out to date (2010 to 2014).

Following evaluation initiation discussions with Le Chéile, it was agreed that a Social Return on Investment Analysis (SROI) of the Restorative Justice Project over a four-year period will be added to the evaluation brief. This was done in order to provide a narrative of the value of the services from the perspective of the various stakeholders who are affected by the Project, including young people, victims of crime and professional stakeholder groups.



## 3.3 Research Aims

The methodology of this evaluation was designed to produce a 360-degree review of the Restorative Justice Project and associated interventions and models. The aims of the research were threefold:

- To review the processes, structures and effectiveness of the Restorative Justice Project.
- To assess the impact and outcomes of the Project on those who avail of the service, the wider community and the state.
- To undertake a Social Return on Investment Analysis (SROI).

## 3.4 Research Methodology

### 3.4.1 Development of the Methodology

To match the aims of this research, a mixed methods approach was designed, to gather data from multiple sources. The following six-phase methodology was designed by the evaluation team and agreed by the evaluation steering group. This steering group comprised of:

- Mary Henihan, Southern Regional Manager, Le Chéile Mentoring and Youth Justice Support Service
- Anne Conroy, CEO, Le Chéile Mentoring and Youth Justice Support Service
- John Brosnahan, Senior Probation Officer, Young Persons Probation.

The methodology was developed in line with the seven SROI principles, which are outlined below, and which aim to ensure that stakeholder views are central to the review process and that the logic that forms the basis of the SROI analysis of the Project is transparent.

### 3.4.2 Step 1: Stakeholder Mapping

The first step in the process involved developing a stakeholder map, which included all groups of people or individuals who were potentially affected by the Project, either positively or negatively. The stakeholder map was developed based on interviews with key Le Chéile Staff members. To ensure no groups or individuals had been left out, interviewees were asked in interviews or focus groups if there were other groups affected by Project. Appendix 1 contains additional information on the assessments of materiality that were undertaken to determine which stakeholders were included in the research.

### 3.4.3 Step 2. Review of Literature:

The second step in the evaluation was the undertaking of a comprehensive review of literature, encompassing:

1. Definitions of restorative justice and restorative practices;
2. International human rights standards pertaining to the provision of restorative interventions;
3. Good practice guidelines;
4. International and national policy context and
5. Programme evaluations of 'what works'.

### 3.4.4 Step 3: Focus Groups

Three focus groups were held in the Le Chéile offices in Limerick. These focus groups involved young people, family members, victims, volunteers, professional stakeholders and the Restorative Justice Project Advisory Group.

The focus group interview schedules were devised following a literature review and analysis of existing restorative justice project evaluations to ensure that they follow best practice. The focus groups were also used as an opportunity to develop the initial theories of change for the various stakeholder groups. The theory of change narratives were then used as the basis for the development of interview questions for the subsequent stakeholder phone and in-person interviews.

In several instances, stakeholders were contacted for a second time to clarify and / or confirm aspects of the original interview or focus group. This allowed many of those who did not attend the final stakeholder focus group to comment on the outcomes which had been identified and ensure that their comments had been appropriately contextualised. The final focus group was held with a selection of various subgroups where the findings of the report were reviewed and improved for practical purposes.

#### 3.4.4.1 Young people and their family members, and victims

Initially planned to be two separate sessions, these two stakeholder groups were ultimately brought together when only one young person presented on the day of the focus group. After careful consideration of the implications of inclusion of all stakeholders in one group, and with the full consent of the young person, these two planned groups were merged into one. To ensure the young person was comfortable, the Le Chéile staff member remained present in the room for the focus group and offered additional assistance to the young person should this be required. This focus group comprised of:

- Three victim representatives (all of whom had taken part as victim proxies in VIPs);
- Two family members of young people who had engaged in VEPs;
- One young person currently engaged with the Restorative Justice Project.

#### 3.4.4.2 Professionals

The second focus group involved a meeting with professional stakeholders who were identified through the initial stakeholder mapping exercise. The purpose of this session was to focus on identifying the outcomes for external agencies, as well as identifying what works and what could be improved in terms of the Restorative Justice Project's processes and practices. This group comprised of:

- Three Probation Officers;
- One member of An Garda Síochána;
- Three representatives of Le Chéile's mentoring programme;
- Two representatives of the secondary education sector;
- One representative of the Limerick Children's Services Committee;
- Three staff members of community and voluntary organisations.

#### 3.4.4.3 Restorative Justice Project Advisory Group

The third and final focus group was held with representatives of the Project's Advisory Group. The terms of reference for this group, updated in 2013, identify it as supporting the work of the Restorative Justice Project by:

- Providing pro-active, progressive and positive input in relation to issues that may arise in the pilot phase.
- Promoting Restorative Justice Practices in their own organisations and within Limerick as a whole.
- Discussing matters pertinent to the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project in Limerick, including victim safety and community safety issues city-wide.
- Supporting the evaluation and future roll out of the Project.
- Adhering to the ethos, mission and vision of the Project outlined in the policies and procedures handbook.
- Suggesting and providing possible avenues for reparation to occur.
- Maintaining client confidentiality.
- Keeping the strategic planning as a primary focus at the Advisory Group meetings.
- Reviewing and supporting the action plan as the Project moves forward.

All members of the group were invited and four of the eight members were present. This session focused on strategic issues relating to the Project, as well as clarifying the context in which the Project was established and currently operates.

#### 3.4.5 Step 4. Interviews

The evaluation involved conducting individual interviews with 42 people, either over the phone or in person. Individual interviewees included both those who were directly affected by the project (young people; members of their families and victims) or had a role in the delivery of the project (the project manager; the project worker; individual members of the Advisory Group, probation officers and Gardaí and representatives of reparation host agencies). Additionally, a small number of interviews were held with relevant stakeholders to place the project in the broader context of restorative practices within the region.

The possibility of subdividing the young people sample group into 'those who attended VEP only' and 'those who attended VEP plus another interventions' was considered. This however, was ultimately decided against in light of the small sample sizes which resulted from subdividing the population as well as the fact that the findings were largely similar from these two groups, with no significant differences across the range of outcomes or value of these, except where noted in the text.

While service users were initially randomly sampled, difficulty in making initial contact (i.e. phone numbers being inactive or unanswered) resulted in, effectively contacting everyone for whom contact details were available. The nine participants do however represent an appropriate mix of former and current clients, as well as mirroring the gender profile of the project. Likewise, in sampling victims, both direct victims and victim proxies were selected in order to represent the role of victim in the Le Cheile Restorative Justice project.

In the case of training participants these were randomly sampled from a list of attendees, ensuring that these were split evenly across the following categories: Gardai, justice, education and community services.

Throughout the interviews, it was considered appropriate to cease interviews when key themes from the focus groups were endorsed and new significant themes ceased to arise.

Table 2: Interview Participants

Interview group	Number interviewed	Sampling	Approx Percentage sample
Young people	9	Total population	21%
Family members	4	Random	10%
Victims & victim proxies	6	Random	16%
Gardaí	4	Purposive	38% (of VLOs)
Probation	2	Purposive	40% (of YPP staff)
Host agencies	1	Purposive	n/a
Le Chéile Staff	3	Purposive	100% (of current staff)
Other (including training attendees)	13	Random	n/a
Total	42		

#### 3.4.6 Step 5. File and Document Review

This analysis comprised a systematic review of information held by the Restorative Justice Project. This information ranged from terms of reference documents, initial project aims to case notes, mid-point evaluation documents and a limited set of outcome data. Individual case file review was limited to the files of the young people interviewed for the evaluation and a separate consent was sought for such access. Case files were reviewed in Le Chéile's offices, while other non-confidential information was made available to the evaluation team electronically.

#### 3.4.7 Step 6. SROI Analysis

Social Return on Investment analysis (SROI) is a form of cost benefit analysis. This means that in order to assess whether a project was good value for money, all the costs of a programme are reviewed against the value of the outcomes that occurred as a result of the programme. This aspect of the process analysed the outcomes of the field research and data analysis as well as undertaking further desk-based research to support the identification of relevant proxy valuations and discounts. The elements of this SROI are further explained in the introduction to Part Two of this report.

### 3.4.8 Step 7. Stakeholder Focus Group

The draft report was presented to a group selected stakeholders in order to:

1. Fact-check the draft report and give the interested parties an opportunity to provide additional information as and where appropriate or to correct any inaccuracies.
2. Discuss and provide feedback on findings and recommendations to ensure that these are specific, pragmatic and agreed, in order to support implementation.

## 3.5 Research Ethics

The evaluation process was governed by a detailed ethical protocol. This protocol addressed issues regarding consent, confidentiality, data protection and disclosures. The protocol was agreed with Le Chéile before the start of the evaluation.

### 3.5.1 Consent Forms

All participants were provided with information about the evaluation project, and given an opportunity to ask questions about it; the research methods used; plans for publication or to raise any other issues of concern. Participation in interviews and focus groups was voluntary. Consent was sought from anyone approached to take part in the project and written consent was required as a condition of interviews with young people – either from them or their parents or guardians. Children and young people were given assurances that withholding consent at any point in the research would have no bearing upon the services they receive.

### 3.5.2 Raising of Difficult Issues

It was recognised that the issues, which would be raised as part of this research, may be difficult for participants to discuss. The following steps were taken to mitigate and appropriately respond to this:

- All participants were informed in advance of focus groups or interviews, of the content of these sessions so that they knew what they were likely to be asked.
- Those directly affected by the Project's work (young people, members of their families and victims) were offered, at the interview or focus group, the opportunity to debrief with a Le Chéile member of staff.

### 3.5.3 Information Leaflets

Information leaflets were prepared by the researchers in consultation with Le Chéile management and were made available to all participants. The leaflets explained in clear, jargon-free language, the purpose of the research and what it would involve for the young people and others if they agree to take part in it. The participants were provided with contact details for the research team, enabling them to discuss the research before deciding whether or not to participate.

#### 3.5.4 Confidentiality and Anonymity

All respondents who participated in the research were given the assurance that the information they provided would not be passed onto a third party and that they will not be identified by name or otherwise in any publications arising from the research.

Generally, information shared with the researchers was treated in confidence. The exception to this, which is that information could be passed onto relevant organisations in the case that there was an identified risk of harm to self or others, was also discussed. Research participants were advised at the start of any interviews that if they disclosed information of this kind, they would be encouraged to discuss it with an appropriate person and that if they were unwilling to do so, it may be necessary for the researcher to pass the information on.

#### 3.5.5 Accessing Le Chéile Client Data

For the purposes of this evaluation, existing client data was divided into two categories: anonymous and non-anonymous.

Anonymous data, such as attendance spreadsheets or progress scales that did not include client names were analysed by the researchers off-site. This information was provided to Quality Matters in an electronic version, held securely and accessible only to the Research Team.

Client information, such as case files, was only accessed with the prior consent of the person whose information was to be reviewed. This was normally the young person's case file and the researchers sought additional and separate consent to access these files. Where consent had been given in writing, access to files was facilitated by a member of staff at Le Chéile, and within the Le Chéile offices. Client data was later anonymised for the purposes of publication.

### 3.6 Limitations of the Research

All young people who have been in contact with Le Chéile in the years 2010 – 2014 were included in the potential sample of the interviewees, the researchers made contact with nine of those on this list. All of those who agreed to be interviewed were initially approached by Le Chéile staff, and only contacted by the researcher following that initial approach. It follows, therefore, that there may be a risk of positive bias within this sample. Positive bias refers to the potential for people who have more positive experiences than others to be more likely to engage in research about this experience. A positive bias in a research sample can therefore lead to more positive commentary from the perspective of this client group.

It should be noted, however, that the positive experience is likely to not be the only determining factor in participation rates. Indeed, many young people that were out of reach by the time of the research, had simply changed their phone number and could not be contacted for this reason. Likewise, as with many criminal justice programmes, people may not wish to participate due to having moved on with their lives and not wishing to reopen the emotions of this period of their lives. Such need was therefore fully respected within the research process.

### 3.7 Chapter summary

As outlined above, the evaluation of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project employed a number of research methods to ensure a holistic assessment of the programme, its impact on young people, their families, the victims, and the wider community. While not without its limitations, in particular in relation to engaging with a larger group of young people, this methodology provides an in-depth overview of the Project, its successes and suggested areas for improvement.

## 4 The Views of Young People, Victims, Family Members and Professional Stakeholders on the Programme

### 4.1 Chapter Overview

The core strategic objectives of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project refer to specific positive impacts on children and young people who come into conflict with the law. Those impacts include reducing the incidence of young people's offending, through establishing a dialogue between them and the victims; creating an opportunity for young people to make reparation to victims and creating opportunities for their contribution to the wider community through indirect reparation. This chapter provides an overview of the views and experiences of all stakeholders, starting with young people followed by victims, family members as well as the views of professionals who have an involvement in the Project.

### 4.2 General Views of Young People on the Programme

As a core part of this evaluation, researchers sought to include the views of young people on their experiences of the Project. Nine young people were interviewed as this part of the evaluation. Young people were in all instances asked about their experiences of the programme, as well as the impact the Project has had on their lives. While information on outcomes (what happened as a result of the interventions) is discussed in later chapters, the general views of young people obtained through a series of interviews, are discussed here. Project documentation such as debrief forms, which were completed by staff at the end of programmes in order to get feedback on their experiences, were also analysed.

Young people reported very positive experiences of engagement with the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project. Young people stated that they were appropriately prepared for what was going to happen, whether a Conference or Victim Impact Panel or another session, although some would have wanted a bit more information about the possible outcomes of the meetings they were involved in. Young people reported that they were able to ask questions and that they were listened to by the Project workers, with their views considered throughout the process. As one young person stated, "Everything I said they listened to and took it on. They didn't put words into my mouth, they never did things that I wouldn't like them to do" (Young person 8). Young people felt respected and well supported by staff and one of the interviewees observed that "you could tell they were interested in what you said" (Young person 3). Those who felt nervous about the process, were put at ease by Project worker. From a review of the evidence from young people about their participation in the process, it was found that Le Chéile followed best practice in terms of ensuring that young people are being listened to and respected.

"They have been lovely, down to earth and would do anything for you. [...] I didn't know people would be so helpful."

(Young Person 2)



While young people were well informed about what the programmes were about, some reported that they did not really know what to expect of a Conference or a Victim Impact

*“It was a big deal. It’s hard to talk about that kind of stuff, talking about it makes you remember what happened and that’s not always nice.”*

(Young Person 3)

Panel. This was, however, more to do with their lack of experience of a particular situation rather than any omission in explanation of what the interventions are about; they had to experience it rather than form expectations before the meetings. Some were very clear about what they wanted out of the programmes, and mentioned wanting to understand why they behaved in

a way they did and wanting to apologise to the victim. Young people also reported that engagement in restorative interventions could be quite difficult for them on an emotional level. They therefore appreciated the support from staff and others, like those who were taking part as proxy victims in Victim Impact Panels, who ensured that the experience, while emotional, was not intimidating. Young people recognised that even if initially difficult, the experience was positive for them and others, including the victims, as this interviewee observed:

*“I was glad I did it. It was good for me to meet the victim and understand how my actions affect others. I think it was good for the victim as well, to see that I didn’t plan any of the crime; that it was just random, like.”* (Young person 6)

An analysis of data held by Le Chéile on responses from debrief sessions found a high level of satisfaction with the Project. Of the 10 young people who were recorded as having been asked the question “Leaving here today do you feel you have taken steps to repair the harm caused?”, all young people agreed that yes, they had taken these steps. Likewise, of the seven young people asked if they felt their voice had been heard throughout the process, 100% of these individuals agreed that it had been.

While their views were listened to and respected in the course of their involvement with the Project, one young person had concerns about the time it has taken for the Gardai to contact the victim. The interviewee stated that it had taken several weeks, during which he was unsure if he was going to progress to a Conference. It should be noted here that the Garda Victim Liaison Officers have assumed responsibilities for contacting the victims on behalf of Le Chéile in addition to their existing roles and duties, without specific resources allocated to the role, hence delays could have occurred for this reason. Young people also reported that they did not always know who was going to be at meetings, or knew of some participants but not others (for example, knowing that the Project worker and a parent are going to be present, but not knowing who the victim taking part in a panel will be). Where the young people and their parents agreed for letters to be sent, some were also unsure as to some of the outcomes of a particular part of a follow-up, for example they were not sure if the letter they wrote to the victim was delivered to them or not. In further development of the Project, Le Chéile may therefore, wish to review the ways in which young people are kept informed about the developments in their case, and any follow-up by continuing to ensure all cases have a closing review and that all parties receive a follow-up contact at a pre-defined time after involvement with the Project.

Of note was the fact that three of the young people (one third of those interviewed) felt like they initially did not have a choice about getting involved in the Project. They either felt that

they had to do it because of being told so by their Probation Officer, or felt that if they refused, they would be sent into custody. The Project has acknowledged from the start the potential conflict between the preferable voluntary nature of restorative justice and the non-voluntary nature of engagement with the Probation Service and has sought to minimise this tension, including through a completion of a separate Parental and Young Person Consent Form. As part of this process, all parties are fully informed of the nature of the Project and asked to give their full consent, which is then appropriately recorded and a copy is given to the parent/guardian. Follow-up interviews with the Project manager and representatives of the Probation Service made it clear that the process of seeking consent and the child-centred approach taken by both the Probation Officers and the Project workers minimise any risk of young people feeling the referral was a requirement or alternative to imprisonment. It is important to also state here that those who reported such initial feelings about their taking part in the Project reported very positive outcomes at the end of their engagement with Le Chéile. This evaluation found that the Project has put in place adequate processes to promote the best interest of the child by way of voluntary participation, while working within a structure where engagement with the referral agent may be involuntary. It is recommended that Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project continue to ensure best practice is maintained in this regard through constant reiteration of the voluntary nature of the Project.

Generally, young people spoke very highly of Le Chéile's Restorative Justice Project, its staff and the types of activities they were involved in. While most were happy at the end of their time with Le Chéile, some would have liked more time with the Project, to be able to build stronger relationships with staff after their engagement.

Young people did note the importance of other support services such as those provided by Le Chéile mentoring or other external agencies. However, two young people also noted the fact that they would like to have remained engaged in the Project for a longer time. While the Project will not automatically exclude anyone over the age of 18, current funding arrangements mandate it to work with 12 -18 year olds. Only one of the young people interviewed stated that they thought the Project wasn't really for them, but even this person said they would recommend it to friends or siblings in a similar situation.

### 4.3 The Views of Victims

In total, six individuals who had acted in the capacity of direct victim or victim representative in a restorative intervention were spoken to as part of this evaluation. The interviewees reported very positive, and in some instances profound, impact of the Project on their experience. As this sample size is relatively small, the SROI analysis presented in Part II of this report has supplemented the views of those interviewed with literature from international sources on the impact of Restorative Justice on Victims of crime.

*"It was the most profound experience of my life... I was a victim relaying my story."*

(Victim Participant 1)

When asked to compare their experience of restorative justice to the traditional criminal justice system, all those interviewed stated that Restorative Justice is a more inclusive, respectful and meaningful approach. One interviewee reflected that:

*“With the restorative process it was completely different [to a negative experience in court] and people asked me how I felt about the process... and the young person is involved and everybody gets involved in it... It’s our crime, it doesn’t belong to the state it never was, it’s ours.” (Victim participant 1)*

The traditional criminal justice process was criticized for not giving the victims the chance to participate, and sometimes making them vulnerable in the process. As the interviewee continued,

*I had an experience [of being in court]... I didn’t understand the court process really, I thought I had a solicitor there for me but when I went in I had nothing. I was interrogated by a solicitor... When I went to the court there was no one there for me, I remember being interrogated... and I said, ‘where’s my solicitor?’ I really felt stupid. Now, no one explained that I didn’t have a solicitor, they forgot about me. I was apparently a state witness... I was being disciplined for being silly. I was the victim and I felt so vulnerable... (Victim Participant 1)*

All those spoken to commented on the well-organized professional approach by staff to the restorative sessions held by Le Chéile. Of particular note to one interviewee, was the time and attention to detail that went into the preparation for a Victim Impact Panel:

*“There was a huge amount of time that went into the preparation. Looking specifically at who would sit beside who, the seating arrangements and which table was in the room. A lot of time went into getting this all in place. They were great at making sure that nothing was rushed and that everything was considered in terms of physical location and preparation for the process.” (Victim Participant 2)*

One interviewee stated that it was a shame that more victims did not participate in conferences and that victim participation should be a greater focus of the Project.

The Project had seven debrief forms available, which had been completed by victims or victim representatives in Victim Impact Panels. Of these, six people had answered the question ‘did you feel your voice was heard’; all of these six individuals agreed that they felt they had been heard.

## 4.4 The Views of Family Members

In addition to young people and victims of crime, family members (mainly mothers) were also identified as being a group who reported positive outcomes as a result of the Restorative Justice Project.

Parents of the young people involved with Le Chéile all described very positive experiences of the Project, which they felt was respectful and inclusive of them as family members. Parents reported positive changes for themselves, such as greater understanding of what was going on for their children, often linked with improvements in their parenting skills and approaches. Parents also reported learning more about issues such as reasons for offending and the nature

of addiction. It was reported that this information helped them to deal with and respond to challenging behaviours rather than reacting out of frustration.

The second main benefit cited by parents was the change in the behaviour of their children. This was seen as reducing stress and conflict within the home, often having a further impact upon other family members such as siblings. As this interviewee reflected:

*“At first I didn’t know what addiction was, I didn’t know that it was an illness...”*

(Family Member 3)

*“I didn’t even realise I needed so much help with my own son at the time, it helped everyone, there was so much trouble in the house over what he was doing”* (Family Member 3).

Internal debrief forms held by Le Chéile also contained information on the experience of family members who participated in a Conference or Victim Impact Panel. Of eight family members who were asked at the debrief if they “could speak openly, honestly and express free emotion during process”, all eight (100%) reported that they felt they could. Likewise, all eight of those asked if they felt their voice was heard throughout the process agreed that it was.

## 4.5 The Views of Professionals

### 4.5.1 Probation

The Young Persons Probation (YPP) have been the core Project partner for Le Chéile’s Restorative Justice Project. The Project is funded through Young Persons Probation and the Limerick Regeneration Agency. The current referral process requires that all cases come from YPP. Young Persons Probation performs initial screening and, following referral, provides case management and supervision. Every young person who is referred to YPP for a pre-court report, would have been screened for his or her suitability for the Restorative Justice Project. In 2010 that would have been around 220 children and young people, with that number falling recently to a few more than a 100 due to fewer court referrals (YPP Officer 1).

From the Probation Service point of view, the Project has been core to their ability to provide a range of restorative interventions rather than just using family conferencing available under the Children Act 2001. Thanks to this range of interventions, the work with young people was able to take a ‘more developmental approach’ (YPP Officer 1) and the models applied throughout the Project are more flexible and fit for purpose for work with, in particular, children and young people involved in persistent offending. It is important to state here that the model was developed with the children and young people coming through the courts locally in mind:

*“...the notion that you could have a one off, quick fix, of restorative justice, which is the way [it is] couched in the legislation, that, you know, you can do a piece of work, you can then do a short term follow-up with Probation Service really pretty hands off... that just wasn’t suitable, wasn’t fit for purpose”. (YPP Officer 1)*

The approach the Project utilises is a ‘stepping stone’ method, so as not to be subject to the same time constraints (of 28 days) as the statutory Family Conference and not be a ‘once off’

intervention. Le Chéile are therefore able to work with the young person for as long as they are willing to engage and as long as the restorative interventions are beneficial to them. This means, for example, that rather than going straight into a conference with Le Chéile – for which the young person may not be immediately ready – they can engage in a Victim Empathy Programme and if appropriate, may later take part in a Victim Impact Panel or face their actual victim in a Restorative Conference provided by the Project.

It was the view of Probation Officers interviewed for this evaluation that Le Chéile's Restorative Justice Project has not only extended the range of options available for work with children and young people, but has also provided for an extension of resources which meant that Probation Officers could allocate their time to other duties. The Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project provides an alternative avenue in cases where family conference may not be suitable at a particular time or at all.

From the point of view of the Probation Service, Le Chéile's ability to provide the Victim Empathy Programme or the Victim Impact Panels are central to the developmental approach mentioned above. While Probation Officers have a range of tools at their disposal in relation to offender management and support, such as referrals to education, drug and alcohol awareness programmes and so on, one of the gaps identified by the Service was its ability (within the resources available) to challenge young people's lack of empathy towards victims and their lack of understanding of the impact their actions had on the victims and the wider community. As one of the interviewees explained,

*"They have no idea how they are affecting people, they've no idea of the harm they are doing. The Restorative Justice Project may be the first time that somebody has explained this to them. The first time that somebody sat down and let them go through the questionnaire that gives them an understanding of how somebody, how the guy that they robbed felt. It may be the first time they got an understanding of that and that's a huge learning for them". (YPP Officer 2).*

For Probation Officers, it was also important that the Project can engage more in-depth with the families of young people. It was recognised that parents or guardians often need support and sometimes find it difficult to find a way out of a conflict situation that arises between them and their children. They are also often what can be called 'secondary victims' of their children's issues with offending. Restorative justice, and in particular the engagement of parents or guardians in the conferencing process, can facilitate the space needed for the dialogue between family members affected:

*"I think one of the things that happens where families are in difficulty for a whole host of reasons... [it] is the opportunity to reflect. They just don't, you know, there isn't the opportunity to press the button, stop, and just talk to each other, calmly, feel, listen, and I think you said it, somebody said it, this actually does that. We can stop now, and talk". (YPP Officer 1).*

This process can lead to outcomes such as affirmation for the whole family when it is firmly focused on the issues, and not the 'problematic' young person:

*"the process is for them, and for everybody, is very, very affirming, it's about what Johnny has done... but Johnny is being valued as a person within that" (YPP Officer 1)*

#### 4.5.2 Gardai

The Gardai interviewed for this evaluation spoke very highly of the training received and were very appreciative of their role in the Restorative Justice Project. Three of the Gardai noted the training and their new role in relation to victim liaison brought a different perspective to their every-day work, so the benefits for them extended beyond their immediate involvement with Le Chéile. To that end, Gardai reported utilising both the language and concepts of restorative justice increasingly in their work, which they stated made them more approachable to young people. The use of restorative language itself has been assessed as having a positive impact, “taking the sting out of a conversation” (Garda Interviewee 3) with the child or a young person in conflict with the law or involved in anti-social behaviour. By using such language, an opportunity would be given to the young person to ‘open up’, take a reflective look at their behaviour and look for solutions which may help the child understand the impact of their actions and to move away from offending.

“We’re offender-orientated, and it’s interesting to almost take a step back... and sort of re-classify the offender, if that makes sense?”

(Garda Interviewee 1)

The training of Victim Liaison Officers (VLOs<sup>1</sup>) in the Limerick and surrounding areas, where the initiative has a strong support of senior Garda management, has been unique and no similar initiatives have been taken in other parts of the country. The training, and the opportunity to train and exchange experiences with representatives of other agencies during sessions, have been described by the interviews as “excellent”, with one of them stating the training was “one of the best courses I’ve ever done” (Member of An Garda Síochána 2). They assessed trainers as easy to talk to and very approachable. Gardai interviewed for this evaluation stated that more personnel, including community Guards, should be able to avail of such training and that perhaps a restorative justice module should be provided to Garda recruits in initial training programmes.

Garda interviewees stated that the Project has been highly effective in working with some repeat young offenders who, following engagement with Le Chéile, have not come into contact with the criminal justice system and continue to desist. The effectiveness of the Project therefore “allows the services that may have to be dealing with that young person... it allows the services that are there more opportunity to deal with more issues within the community” (Garda Interviewee 1)

While some have been sceptical at first as to whether youth conferencing and other restorative interventions would work with those young people, an experience of taking part in a conference has dispelled many of the Guards’ concerns. All supported the use of restorative justice with young people, one stating that “If it keeps them out of court, I don’t mind giving my time to it” (Member of An Garda Síochána 3). All interviewees in this group acknowledged that restorative conferences in particular have a great impact on young people, in some cases much greater than a court appearance. Interviewees reported that the need for young people to take responsibility for their actions in the restorative process and to be directly

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<sup>1</sup> Victim Liaison Officers and their role in the Project are discussed in greater detail later in this report.

responsible to the victim was its greatest advantage and that this process "...cannot but change them" (Member of An Garda Síochána 2). The interviewees also stated that the fact the conference is run by a voluntary sector organisation is an advantage, as it makes easier for them to engage with the young person than it may be the case for criminal justice agencies.

### 4.5.3 Other Professional Stakeholders

Mindful of the Project's highly developed multi-agency co-operation, the researchers approached a number of stakeholders in the city to seek their views on the Project's wider impact. Appropriate representatives of a number of organisations were therefore invited to take part in a focus group, and some were also been invited to take part in individual interviews. As stated in the methodology chapter, this group included a mix of respondents, drawn from the secondary education sector, voluntary and community organisations (including host agencies) and individuals working on the wider restorative practice project in the city with schools and community groups. One of the Judges in the city was also interviewed and given the opportunity to provide their views. All participants in the focus group had established links with Le Chéile's Restorative Justice Project, either as representatives of host agencies, or through contributing to the Advisory Group or through being part of the wider restorative practice initiative in Limerick. We also include here the views of some of the mentors working in Le Chéile.

For those interviewees, restorative justice and restorative practices more broadly, was core to supporting children and young people in conflict with the law. Those young people often presented with many complex needs, from drug and alcohol abuse, through educational under-achievement to complicated family backgrounds and relationships, as this interviewee reflected:

*"...no young person that we work with just has educational needs, or just has justice needs, or just has care needs, there's a mix throughout it and sometimes that gets very intertwined." (Education professional 1)*

Some interviewees also pointed out that often families of the children need support due to the level of the children and young people's offending and its seriousness, as they may be feeling unable to intervene or vulnerable. As one interviewee observed:

*"You do as much as you can but it depends on the power that you have, in some cases, that's not all about parents not caring, or not being able to, you know, it's also about what they're capable of." (Reparation Host agent 1)*

It was the view of the various practitioners that Le Chéile's Restorative Justice Project therefore provides an opportunity to support the developmental work with the child and their family. Praising the flexibility of the Project, they underlined it as one of its core advantages:

*"...you're not in a situation where in some circumstances... a one fit fits all. When it doesn't work, you're not asking the question... that this is not going to work for this child. You're looking at one of the other models that we have that would work, you know, so it's what we are not doing that could work with that." (Reparation Host agent 1)*

The practitioners recognised also that the various processes involved in the delivery of restorative justice interventions give children and young people the opportunity to express their views, as well as their feelings, in a safe environment. One specifically mentioned that the level of protection that exists for children and young people, especially those who take part in full restorative conferences, is such that they can face the emotions brought on by their family's reactions, or those of victims, in a safe way and be supported throughout the process (Host agent 1). When the child is supported, their behaviour can be addressed without resorting to more punitive measures, including to custodial measures, as this mentor observed:

*"...it gives the child a chance to stop and work through what's happening for them in their life ... I know that there is certain percentage that youth mentoring and restorative justice won't work for, but I think that for a lot of them, it just gives them space... It's the way forward because I just don't feel we can keep putting people away and expect them to come out and never do it again."* (Mentor 1)

The practitioners often mentioned the wider impact of the Restorative Justice Project on the development of restorative practices across the city, and in a number of other sectors, including in schools. That broader piece of work has been supported by Le Chéile's Project and has been progressed through the Limerick Children Services Committee. The focus on restorative practices and language means that issues can be resolved in different contexts, without resorting to punitive solutions and with the direct involvement of the wider community:

*"... it's even just that common language to get them to say to you, ok, well, how do you think the other person might be feeling, why do you think they might have said this or why might this have happened?"* (Education professional 1)

It was also acknowledged that through the development of the wider restorative practice culture in the city, in which Le Chéile played an instrumental part, children and young people can benefit from restorative interventions earlier, before they get to the point of more serious offending. In that way, Le Chéile and others were able to contribute to the more preventative work in Limerick *"...before it gets that far, they definitely benefit 'cos they're used to that challenging and the questioning and you know, being pushed out of their comfort zone"*. (Host agent 2). That preventive angle was core to the interagency co-operation:

*"... [it's] this idea that, you know, when we're looking at Le Chéile, the restorative justice project part of work, we're looking at where young people's behaviour has moved into the formal end of the criminal justice system. And there is a lot that happens with young people who have been involved in offending behaviour prior to that ever getting to that formal end, which is being responded to restoratively here in Limerick."* (Community Representative 1)

The contribution of the Le Chéile Project to that interagency co-operation was assessed as "critical" and organization was highly praised for providing high quality training, as well as being involved in the development of the wider restorative culture throughout the city. As far as the professional stakeholders were concerned, "Le Chéile put restorative justice on a map, regionally and nationally" (Community Representative 1).



## Case Study 1: Philip's Story

Philip was referred to the Restorative Justice Project for attempted burglary and criminal damage. It was agreed that he would complete a Victim Impact Panel. At the initial restorative justice contract meeting he completed a Victim Empathy Scales (VES) to assess his levels of empathy coming into the Project. He scored 47 out of a possible 66, indicating that he had very little to no empathy.

The Restorative Justice Project Worker worked very closely with him for a number of weeks in preparation for the Victim Impact Panel. This preparation process is very specialised as the Restorative Justice Project worker has to build trust and a good working relationship from their initial meeting. The meetings focused on informing the young person and ensuring that he understood what was involved in the restorative justice process.

A victim proxy, who had himself been victim of a burglary, completed the two day VIP training with the restorative justice Project and was then also prepared for the panel meeting.

The panel meeting ran smoothly, starting with Philip telling his story of what happened, what he was thinking at the time, what have his thoughts have been since, who has been affected and in what way. The victim then had an opportunity to tell his story, detailing what happened when he was the victim of a crime as well as what impact the incident had had on his life.

It was a powerful meeting with a lot of emotion. The victim had to revisit a very traumatic experience from their past and the young person demonstrated real remorse for his actions, telling the victim how sorry he was for what he had been through.

The young person and victim subsequently completed debriefing sessions after the VIP in which they highlighted the benefits of taking part in the process. The benefits for the young person were that he now had a better insight into how his offending behaviour affected other and the impact of crime on victims. During this debrief the young person further highlighted how bad he felt for the victim. "I felt like crying... I'll never do it again... no one deserves to feel like that". His final VES was 14 out of a possible 66, indicating high levels of empathy.

## 5 Process Review and Findings

### 5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the process review undertaken as part of this evaluation. This section is concerned with the operation of the Project in the period November 2010 to June 2014, looking at who uses the service, how many people have been through its services and what interventions have been provided.

### 5.2 Who Uses the Service?

In 2005, Kilkelly found that the majority of young people before the courts in Ireland continue to come from communities with considerable levels of social and economic deprivation, especially within Dublin, Cork and Limerick. She noted; *“many young people, although not all, showed clear signs of either disadvantage (including educational disadvantage) or outright poverty; in some cases both factors were obvious”* (2005: 20). Kilkelly (2005) went on to state that this was a result of *“failure of the state agencies which have responsibility for addressing their needs”* (2005: 21).

A similar profile of young people, suffering from social and economic deprivation, was also evident among those who accessed the Le Chéille Restorative Justice Project. While offending was the main issue for which young people were referred to the Project, they often, if not always, were affected by multiple issues such as educational and economic disadvantage, addiction and mental health issues.

The Le Chéille Restorative Justice Project accepts referrals exclusively from Young Persons Probation. All young people are at the time of referral under the age of 18 and are engaging with the Probation Service. As such, all young people have pleaded guilty to a criminal offence and have been through the court system. Based on discussions with key stakeholders, the main types of clients typically referred to Le Chéille Restorative Justice are either persistent, or serious offenders. This sets the Project apart from some of the interventions available in other jurisdictions which work with lower level offending or first time offenders.

Persistently offending young people often have numerous charges for offences of varying severity. In these cases it is often the accumulation of charges that lead a Judge to impose a probation bond, as opposed to the severity of any one crime. Serious offenders may not have the same number of offences, but rather would have committed a crime of a more serious nature. These groups are reflective of the general pattern of young offenders who are sentenced to probation or imprisonment.

All young people referred to Le Chéille for restorative interventions must have admitted guilt for the offence and in the case of Restorative Conferencing must show remorse for their actions. The existence of remorse is not a pre-requisite for the Victim Empathy Programme, however if a young person did not go on to demonstrate remorse, a referral to other interventions such as Conferencing would not be made.

It is important to stress the situational context of the young people who engage with the Restorative Justice Project. In many cases ongoing engagement and immersion in offending has become normative, unquestioned and acceptable. As such, the work of Le Chéile Restorative Justice, while offence focused, aims to break this cycle of offending and address at least some of its underlying, situational causes. Therefore, the Restorative Justice Project often works not only with the young person, but also with their parents or guardians and the wider family circle, providing parenting support and other interventions. This holistic approach to creating support for the young person and their family aims to support changes in individual behaviour as well as, if needed, to the environment the young person is living in.

### 5.2.1 Offences Committed

The information on the types of offences committed by young people accessing the service was available for 37 of the Project's 61 clients. Forty percent of young people referred were recorded as having convictions for multiple charges and across numerous categories of offences. While the restorative interventions are offence specific, referrals by Probation are made based upon the holistic offending history of the young person. As such, the only figures available for the evaluation included all offence categories of previous convictions, rather than the specific offence, which was the subject of restorative intervention.

Anonymous data held by the project was analysed, and it was found that:

- 46% (n=17) of referrals had at least one conviction for car theft
- One third (n=11) of those referred had a previous conviction for theft (other than car theft)
- 16% (n=6) had a conviction for burglary and 14% (n=5) for criminal damage
- 10% (n=4) of young people referred to the Project had a history of assault
- 5% (n=2) of young people referred had one of the following convictions; trespassing, arson, abusive / threatening behaviour and public order offences
- Just one young person had a conviction for any of these remaining offence categories; shoplifting, handling stolen goods, drunk and disorderly behaviour and possession of drugs for sale or supply.

Upon analysis of this information it would appear that the majority of crimes committed by the young people accessing the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project relate to theft, burglary, or motoring offences. In 10% of cases, there was a history of more violent offending such as assault. Also of note is the low rate of young people with crimes relating to the possession or use of controlled substances.

### 5.2.2 Gender and Age

Of the 61 referrals to the programme, 56 (92%) of were male and five (8%) were female. This percentage breakdown is almost precisely what would be expected from a random sample of young people who offend in Ireland, with the rate of those before the courts at 7% female and 93% male (Kilkelly, 2005).

Information required for a full 'age upon referral' assessment was not available, however, based upon information from those interviewed, the average age of young people first engaging with the Project is 16 years.

### 5.3 Interagency Processes

The Restorative Justice Project is situated within a well-defined and agreed interagency working arrangement. This includes the input and assistance to the Project by various State and voluntary agencies and organisations across the region. This effective working relationship between Le Chéile, other service providers and agencies has often been highlighted by professionals interviewed as an important aspect in their ability to respond to the often-complex needs of children and young people.

The Project is well-embedded and established as part of the interagency response to youth crime in Limerick. Interagency working arrangements support collaborative working with other children's services such as education providers or mental health services. Receiving all its referrals from the Young Persons Probation Service, Le Chéile's closest working relationship is with the Probation Service. Not only do referrals come from this body, but also all review meetings are conducted with both Le Chéile staff and Probation Officer present. While Probation remain the Case Manager for the young person's case, Le Chéile Restorative Justice staff will take on specific areas of responsibility with the young person, either around the Victim Empathy programme or another restorative intervention.

The Project also maintains close links with An Garda Síochána, who currently have nine personnel working as Victim Liaison Officers (VLO) co-operating with the Project. The role of VLO was developed and agreed with local Garda Management as a way of providing a mechanism for making contact with victims of young people referred to the Project. Nine VLOs were identified and trained by Le Chéile and the Probation Service in restorative practices.

Where a victim is identified, the Victim Liaison Officer will make first contact with them and explain the restorative justice options which may be available in their case. In 2014, the Project has also developed a form on which information about the wishes of the victims in relation to engagement with the Project are noted by the officers. The Victim Liaison Officers will also provide information on victim support agencies. If the victim wishes to participate, this information will be given to Le Chéile who will support the victim through preparation and debriefing. If the victim does not wish to engage with the Project, any further support is then the responsibility of the Gardaí and/or other support agencies involved in the case.

A visual representation of relationship with external agencies is presented in Figure 2.



Figure 3: Restorative Justice Project Interagency Map

## 5.4 Volunteers

At the time of the evaluation, the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project was able to call upon approximately 20 active volunteers to work with young people during the different interventions. In Limerick, Le Chéile's volunteers have a dual role. Their primary focus is to be mentors for young people and their families and they are supported and trained by Le Chéile's Mentor Coordinator. As part of their induction they receive a full day's bespoke training in restorative justice, with the option of an additional two-day training that also prepares them for taking part in Victim Impact Panels as appropriate.

The main way in which volunteers could get involved in the Restorative Justice Project is through taking part in these panels and through supporting young people to complete reparation within the community. At the time of their first interview, all Le Chéile volunteers are asked if they had ever been a victim of crime. Those that had been a victim of crime in the past are asked by staff if they would be interested in taking part in Victim Impact Panels. If they agree to take part in the panels, they are provided with additional two-day training mentioned above and supported before and after Victim Impact Panels takes place.

The decision to use the existing volunteers in Victim Impact Panels as ‘proxy victims’ was made after recognising that the already trained volunteers understood the aims and the values of the organisation, and its child-centred ethos. They also already understand and are trained in Le Chéile’s policies and procedures and they have all signed the appropriate confidentiality agreement. Victim Impact Panels and mentoring are kept separate in the sense that no volunteer would be asked to mentor the same young person who took part in their Panel.

Volunteer mentors are also used to support young people in undertaking reparations which may result from the restorative justice process.

## 5.5 Working Processes

### 5.5.1 Referrals

Referrals to the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project currently come exclusively through the Young Persons Probation (YPP). The Probation Officer in charge of the particular case screens the young person for suitability for the Restorative Justice Project and may suggest that the person gets referred to it in a report presented to the court. All young people, for whom YPP prepares a report to the court, will be screened for such suitability. Before a young person can be deemed eligible for the Restorative Justice Project, they must first have pleaded guilty to the offence and / or except responsibility for the offence.

As can be seen from the analysis of referrals received, over three quarters of referrals to the Project were solely for the Victim Empathy Programme. Unlike a Restorative Conference, the presence of remorse is not a required criterion prior to referral for Victim Empathy Programme although they must have admitted the commission of the offence. It would appear that the referral criteria for each intervention may be slightly different, an issue which may benefit from increased clarification and agreement between all parties involved in the referral process.

### 5.5.2 Work Undertaken with Young People

Once referrals have been received by Le Chéile Restorative Justice, an initial meeting is held with Probation, Le Chéile staff, the young person and a family member. At this stage the young person and their Probation Officer will have agreed the type of initial intervention. Following the initial meeting, the Probation Officer remains the young person’s case manager and meets with the young person, their Restorative Justice Project worker, and often a family member at review sessions or when needed. In some cases, the Victim Empathy Programme will be the first intervention provided, followed by another model, such as a Conference or Victim Impact Panel. Ultimately this decision is the responsibility of the case manager (YPP) although the young person and Le Chéile staff can request or make recommendations regarding engagement in additional interventions.

As noted, the majority of referrals are for the Victim Empathy Programme, however Le Chéile operates from a person-centred, strengths based approach, which allows for the tailoring of interventions to suite the individual needs of young people. Initially, the Victim Empathy Programme was envisaged as a set 10-week programme, however this concept was

abandoned as it became clear that the differing needs of young people required a more individual approach.

While the experiences of Conferences and Victim Impact Panels have been positive, the evaluation team identified scope for an increased number of such sessions, and eagerness on the part of the Project for referrals for such interventions to increase.

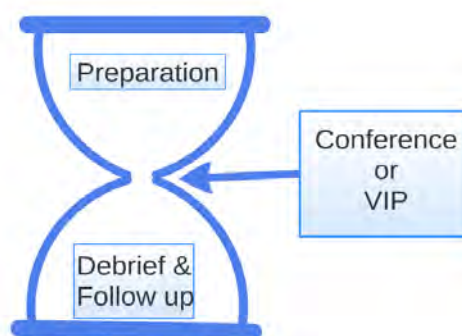
As a symbol of respect and co-decision making, staff at Le Chéile make a point of involving the young people in decisions about how, where and when they are met. Decisions are made jointly with the young person, to demonstrate that their view and preference is important. Young people and staff alike both stated that this respect and way of working contributed to the building of effective working relationships, which in turn supported positive outcomes.

A recurring theme identified by professionals involved in the delivery of the Restorative Justice Project was that no two young people require the same service. It was seen as a strength of the Project by external professionals that staff and management were flexible in their approach to working with young people. This is shown by examples of working with young people in a variety of settings and working off site in locations chosen by the young person as well as tailoring interventions such as the Victim Empathy Programme to the young person's needs.

### 5.5.3 Preparation

In relation to Restorative Conferences, Victim Impact Panels and Victim Offender Mediation, a recurring theme throughout this evaluation was the importance of taking a slow, considered approach to restorative sessions. One professional likened the restorative process to an hourglass, with the vast majority of time spent in the preparation and follow up phases, with the short intensity of the restorative intervention in the middle (Figure 3).

Figure 4: Restorative Intervention Workload



One victim representative who had participated in more than one intervention spoke about the importance of this preparation, commenting that this was undertaken down to the smallest details. This individual spoke about the importance of agreeing the seating plan and the seating arrangements, as well as how crucial it was that all parties knew the details of the questions which would be asked in advance of the meeting.

#### 5.5.4 Family Involvement

Family members are encouraged to engage actively in the restorative interventions provided to young people. Parents attend regular review sessions and have the opportunity to express, in a restorative environment, the impact that their child's offending behaviour has on them.

"The cases that have worked the best are the cases where there is parental support."  
(Professional Interviewee)

When asked about indicators of success, staff at Le Chéile identified the presence or involvement of family members as being one of the strongest early indicators of positive outcomes. This is in line with national literature on youth work (Barnardos, 2006), which identifies a strong link between family engagement in interventions targeted at young people and successful outcomes.

#### 5.5.5 Victim Engagement

International literature identifying positive practice in restorative justice is consistent in highlighting that the engagement and involvement of victims in the process is a marker of success for restorative interventions. The Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project has developed strategies for victim engagement including the training of Victim Liaison Officers as well as the development of the Victim Impact Panel model. Le Chéile's Restorative Justice Project works closely with specially trained Victim Liaison Officers who make first contact with the victims on behalf of the Project. Each of these Gardaí attends a three-day training course accredited by the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP), as well as a full day briefing.

Over the course of the Project, nine Gardaí (from the Limerick and Claire divisions) were trained and, as stated before, now support the Project with their expertise when Le Chéile needs to establish first contact with the victim. Local Victim Liaison Officers are contacted by Le Chéile following referral and initial preparation work with the young person and approach the victim with an explanation of what the Restorative Justice Project is and to ask whether they would be willing to engage in the restorative process. Prior to Le Chéile making any contact with the victim, a signed consent form must first be completed.

If the victim is willing to engage, the Victim Liaison Officer hands over the management of that contact to Le Chéile Project worker who works with the victim in preparation for the meeting with the young person. Victim Liaison Officers may also play a part in preparing the victim to take part in the restorative process and can take part in conferencing, they may also refer the victim to a victim support service such as Support After Crime. They also provide information to victims on other support agencies which may be available to them.

The involvement of the Victim Liaison Officers was assessed as "crucial" to the running of the Restorative Justice Project. As a community-based project, run by a voluntary organisation, Le Chéile would not have access to victims' details, neither would they have the right to directly contact the victim on their own. Victim Liaison Officers are therefore central to making first contact with the victims and explaining the role and aims of the Project and its work with the young people. Following that first contact, and subject to victim's consent, Le Chéile can then get involved in direct work with the victim, in conjunction with victim support agencies where appropriate. Procedures were put in place to increase victim participation and the protocols



designed to make the victims safe and comfortable in the process. The choice of whether to engage, however, is left for the victims to make, in line with best practice and victim-sensitive approaches to restorative justice. While appropriate forms recording the reasons for a decision not to engage have been used in the Project in the last year, no regular analysis has been undertaken to date of those. As part of future development, Le Chéile should embed regular analysis of the reasons for non-engagement as part of the Project's own evaluation.

There was recognition by key stakeholders that on occasion the work of Victim Liaison Officers, and that of Le Chéile, in trying to engage the victims in restorative justice interventions was hampered by systemic delays in the criminal justice system. The more time that had passed since the offence, the less willing victims were to engage in the process. As one of the Victim Liaison Officers explained, victims in many such instances did not wish to relive the experience and may simply have moved on. Another Victim Liaison Officer noted that:

*“the last thing they want to be doing is to be brought back to where they were...”*

The criminal justice professionals involved in the Project also recognised that delay had a potential effect on the young person who, months or even years after they have committed the offence, may not remember the details of a specific crime or may have moved on, including moving away from offending. In such cases, the young person may find it difficult to engage fully in the restorative justice process.

The issue of significant delays in youth justice has most recently been raised in the context of the Youth Justice Review in Northern Ireland (2011), a Review that recommended an introduction of Statutory Time Limits (STLs) for all cases concerning young offenders. While the work on the introduction of STLs in Northern Ireland has been delayed, there is considerable agreement amongst the justice agencies that this should be not more than 120 days from arrest to disposal (Northern Ireland Assembly Justice Committee, 2014). While the issue of systemic delays is obviously beyond the influence of the Project itself, it would be important for Le Chéile to continue to raise it with appropriate policy makers and practitioners through avenues such as the Annual Conference or its work on legislation and policy submissions in the broader context of youth justice in Ireland.

## 5.6 Caseload and Workload Analysis

As part of the evaluation an analysis of work undertaken to date was completed and this information has been used throughout the Social Return on Investment Analysis, described in Part Two of this report.

Like many community and voluntary services, the Restorative Justice Project has seen budgetary reductions of 12% in 2012 and another 5% in 2013. The Project currently employs one full time Project Worker, on a 37 hours per week contract.<sup>2</sup> It is acknowledged that while client engagement is the main role of the Project Worker, it is not their only work.

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<sup>2</sup> This is an increase from 35 hours per week, which was introduced in 2014 in line with the Haddington Road Agreement. For most of the time covered by this evaluation, 35 hours per week of project worker time were allocated to the project. As such, a 35-hour week has been used for the purposes of any analysis in this report.

### 5.6.1 Output Analysis

It should be noted that the work of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project includes client work, training as well as on-going project development work. The Project employs one project worker and is managed by Le Chéile's regional manager with responsibility for restorative justice. From 2010 to 2012, the Restorative Justice Project employed 2 full time staff (project worker and project coordinator). In 2013 due to budgetary restrictions the Project staffing was reduced to 1 full time project worker and recruitment for the position of project coordinator was put on hold. For the purpose of the SROI input costing, an average staff compliment of 1.7 staff was used for the 3.5 year period covered by the analysis.

While limited benchmark data is available in Ireland, the National Commission on Restorative Justice did publish the "per referral" cost of both the Tallaght and Nenagh restorative justice projects for adults in 2007. While these projects do not provide identical services to the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project, the "per referral" cost can be regarded as a somewhat useful benchmark.

Project	Cost per referral (2013 equivalent)
Tallaght (2007)	€3,789 (€3,250 in 2007)
Nenagh (2007)	€7,658 (€6,569 in 2007)
Le Chéile Restorative Justice (2011, 2012 & 2013 average)	€4,690

When compared with cost of referrals to these adult programmes, the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project appears to be of average cost for a restorative justice referral.

### 5.6.2 Outputs – Restorative Interventions

Le Chéile's Restorative Justice Project has now been in operation for four years. Between 2010 and 2014, 61 young people have been referred to the Project. Of those, two have been assessed by the Project staff as unsuitable or inappropriate referrals. Fifty-nine young people have been accepted into the Project.

Out of the 59 young people who have been accepted into the Project, 11 did not engage at all. A further seven engaged in one or two sessions with staff although failed to complete a programme of work. This means that 41 young people have engaged beyond the initial stages of the intervention. It should also be noted that a number of young people engaged in more than one model at one time or consecutively. Young people's engagement with the programme is described below:

1. Forty-one young people engaged in Victim Empathy Programme;
2. Three young people engaged in Victim Offender Mediation;
3. Five attended Victim Impact Panels;

4. Eight young people took part in a Restorative Conference (one of those was led by the Probation Service);
5. Fourteen young people undertook a Reparation.

This is shown in the table below:

Programme type	No of young people referred	No of young people engaged <sup>3</sup>
Victim Empathy Programme	59	41
Victim Offender Mediation	4	3
Victim Impact Panels	7	5
Restorative Conferencing	8	8
Reparation	16	14

## 5.7 Training

Another central aspect of the work of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project is the provision of training. During the last 3.5 years, the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project has provided a significant amount of training, primarily to those involved in working with young people. This training was targeted at justice, community and education workers, with a view to embedding restorative practice and restorative justice within the language and practice of service providers across the Limerick area. Training and awareness raising includes the organisation of the Annual Conference, which has drawn a bigger attendance year on year for the last three years, as well as training to Gardaí, volunteers and those interested in restorative practices for working with young people.

Analysis of Project documentation found that 27 training sessions had been held (some of these lasting up to three days) since the Project began. There was a total provision of 785 training days to 556 attendees (342 excluding the Annual Conference). Of note is that some people may have attended more than one session, so it is likely that this number includes some double counting. In an analysis of sessions where there was a breakdown of attendee by sector, two thirds of attendees were from the Justice Sector (66%), one-quarter (26%) community and the remaining 8% (n=34) coming from the education sector.

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<sup>3</sup> Young people were classified as having engaged where they attended two sessions or more.

Table 3: Training Outputs and Feedback

Training	Year	No. of dates	Justice	Community	Education	Total	Feedback / Outcome
1 day IIRP	2011	3	35	45	10	90	Satisfaction Survey Excellent = 51, Very Good = 35, Good = 4
Restorative Justice Conference	2011	1	26	13	6	45	Would they participate in VIP? Yes = 8, Not sure = 19, No = 18 Would they be interested in being a host agency? Yes = 16, Not Sure = 18, No = 11 Would they join a reparation committee? Yes = 19, Not sure = 15, No = 11
3 day Facilitator Skills Training	2012	2	30	3	0	33	Satisfaction Survey Excellent = 27, Very Good = 4, Good = 1, No data available = 1 Follow up feedback Excellent = 0, Very Good = 8, Good = 3, No data available = 22
VLO Training	2012	1	9	0	0	9	None available
Reparation Training	2012	2	16	7	4	29	None available
Restorative Justice Conference	2012	1	44	17	0	61	Evaluation Feedback: Met my expectations = 37, No response available = 24 Would they participate in VIP? Yes = 11, Not sure = 11, No = 15, No answer = 24 Would they be interested in being a host agency? Yes = 16, Not Sure = 8, No = 13, No Answer = 24 <sup>4</sup> Would they join a reparation committee? Yes = 18, Not sure = 10, No = 9, No answer = 24
Volunteer Orientation	2011, 2012	3	30	0	0	30	Feedback: Very Good = 5, No answer / data not available = 25
Crime Victim Helpline	2013	1	Not available	Not available	Not available	6	Not available
Restorative Justice Conference	2013	1	39	25	14	78	Not available
Mentoring Restoratively	2013	6	Not available	Not available	Not available	72	Not available
Restorative Parenting	2013	1	Not available	Not available	Not available	8	Not available
1 day IIRP	2014	3	32	2	0	34	Not available
3 day Facilitator Skills Training (IIRP)	2014	1	19		00	19	Not available
3 day Facilitator Skills Training (IIRP)	2014	1	Not available	Not available	Not available	18	Not available

<sup>4</sup> It was suggested that one reason for many respondents stating "no answer" was that they did not wish to make commitments in a professional capacity without approval from management.

Feedback on training, where it has been recorded, has been very positive with the majority of those asked stating that it was “excellent”. These interviews also highlighted the primary benefit of this training as being the positive effects on individuals practice in every day engagement with children and young people. This was certainly true of Le Chéile mentors, as well as – as mentioned before – the Gardai.

In relation to the annual conferences, around 20% (see data in table above) of people stated they would be willing to participate in a reparation committee or have their organisation become a host agency, or participate in a Victim Empathy Programme. Responses to all these questions were more positive in 2013 than in 2012, suggesting potential changing in attitudes as people attend more than one training session or conference.

## Case Study 2: Mark’s Story

Mark was referred for a conference by his probation officer after having been convicted for numerous vehicle related offences, including one where there was an identified victim. After being assessed as suitable for a restorative conference he met the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project worker for six sessions in preparation for the conference. During these sessions, the project worker explored with Mark his thoughts and feelings in relation to his offending history. Mark was very open throughout the sessions.

On the morning of the conference, Jonathan was very nervous. Attending the conference was Mark, his parents (who had been profoundly impacted by the incident) and a community worker. The young person had the opportunity to hear the stories of how his offence affected others. Mark was very respectful and engaged throughout, and thanked the other parties for attending.

The outcome of this conference was that Jonathan was to look into doing a course. He suggested himself that he would also like to volunteer with a local organisation providing support to young people. Post conference, Mark completed a further education course. He met with a voluntary support organisation, and signed up for volunteering. He engaged very positively with this reparation and was very friendly and enthusiastic with the other volunteers and those using the service.

Post conference and reparation, Mark’s Victim Empathy Scale changed from a score equal to little or no empathy to one that indicated a lot of empathy. He said about the conference: *“Hope was a feeling that came up. It restored my hope that you can forgive yourself”. “I got peace of mind from the conference. I saw other peoples’ perspectives, and it was good that everyone got to say their bit”.*

# Part Two: Social Return on Investment Analysis

## 6 An Brief Overview of the SROI Analysis

### 6.1 Overview

Social Return on Investment analysis is an evaluation methodology that seeks to establish, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, the value of the outcomes that occurred as a result of a particular intervention or series of interventions. So, if the data shows that, for example, 75% of young people experienced an improvement in their self-esteem, the SROI goes one step further to look at calculating the value of these outcomes to the young people. It then assigns these outcomes a value in financial terms. To do this, information is triangulated from stakeholder views, and desktop research.

Financial assessments are made to assist in understanding value, as these represent the most common methods that we, as a society, have of discussing, agreeing and assessing value. An SROI evaluation attempts to undertake this type of assessment on a project or programme. The ultimate aim is to assist stakeholders to assess whether the intervention is good value and, most importantly, to look at ways in which value can be maximized, for instance, by doing more of one thing and less of another when one type of intervention or action results in a more value.

To complete this assessment, those who received services were asked to identify the outcomes of the Project, later a financial value has been established for each of these. To do this, data is sought on how many people experienced a specific change as a result of the Project; this part of the analysis uses outcome data from the research process. If sufficient information was not available then information from additional desk-based research was used to create proxy valuations. Given that, within this SROI evaluation, proxy outcome data was used for one of the most significant outcomes of the programmes – recidivism or return to crime - it is recommended that this SROI be seen a starting point in a process of ongoing assessment. If data can continue to be collected over the coming years this analysis of value can be further refined.

It is further recommended that the impact map be updated with figures from future outcome measurement, as well as new national data in relation to youth crime and recidivism, in order to develop the understanding of the social value that Le Chéile generates.

It is also hoped that as further validated SROIs are undertaken in relation to criminal justice interventions, this will further extend the dialogue in relation to the value of rehabilitative and prevention-focused interventions.

## 6.2 The Principles of SROI

To achieve its aims, SROI analysis reviews the change that happened for each stakeholder group and values this change in financial terms. This element of the process is key to SROI, which aims to put a value in financial terms on outcomes that are not always easy to price, like a feeling of security for oneself or one's family, a sense of belonging or self-esteem. What is of note is that while personal outcomes are more difficult to put a price on, they are often more important to people than things which are easily priced, like shoes, computers and cars.

The process of developing an SROI is underpinned by seven principles, these are:

Principle 1: Involve Stakeholders: the views of those affected by the Project are core to the methodology; the first step in the process is asking people what changed.

Principle 2: Understand What Changes: all stakeholders are asked about both the positive and negative outcomes of the Project.

Principle 3: Value the Things that Matter: Stakeholders are involved in discussing how much the changes that happened as a result of the Project are worth to them. When a market value for an outcome is not readily available, such as in the case of self-esteem for instance, a proxy value will be selected such as the cost of counselling (for the number of interventions which could feasibly result in this kind of outcome) and a rationale provided for why this valuation is considered appropriate. Research into valuations of non-market goods will also be used, where available, to assist in understanding the values of outcomes.

Principle 4: Only Include what is Material: Materiality refers to the idea that a piece of information will affect the final SROI calculation or could affect any decisions made on the basis of the information being excluded. If it could affect a decision, then the information is considered material. Not everything that emerges through the process will be material, i.e. some outcomes will have such low values that they will not affect decision-making and so will be excluded from the final SROI calculation. However, in all cases to support transparency, this information and a rationale for the decisions made will be clearly highlighted within the report (see the Materiality Table in the appendix for a summary of these decisions).

Principle 5: Do not Over Claim: It is important that throughout the report all value assessments are undertaken conservatively veering on the side of under-valuing rather than over-valuing outcomes. All values are also reduced with discounts for: 1) deadweight: what would have occurred anyway, 2) attribution: how much the service contributed to change and 3) drop off: a reduction in causality over time between the original intervention and the outcome. These discounts have been described in more detail in section 8.3.

Principle 6: Be Transparent: Calculations undertaken to arrive at an assessment of social value must be clear and traceable for the interested reader. To assist with this an impact map is available, which outlines all the calculations within assessment.

Principle 7: Verify the Result: This report has been undertaken by a team, which includes a qualified SROI practitioner, and has also been submitted for independent verification by the Social Return in Investment Network.

This evaluation reviewed all inputs and outcomes that occurred through the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project for the period between November 2010 and July to 2014.

### 6.3 The Discounts: Deadweight, Attribution and Drop-off

Once it has been established how much change occurred and the value of this to the stakeholder group then it is necessary to develop estimates of the following:

Length of time the impact was felt: an impact may have an effect for a lifetime (such as health improvement after an operation) or only for a day or so (such as relaxation after a massage). For each outcome the length of time the impact will have an effect on the individual has been estimated.

Deadweight: as change often occurs without the intervention of services, the analysis seeks to estimate what would have occurred anyway. This is presented as a percentage; a deadweight of 20% means that one fifth of the service users would be likely to have achieved the outcome without the intervention.

Drop-off: this refers to the reduction in causality between the initial event and the outcome over time, i.e. the initial intervention will be less responsible for the maintained outcome each year. This is also presented as a percentage.

Attribution: this seeks to identify all of the agencies responsible for the change and to assign a portion of the change to each agency. In interagency processes, if each agency were to claim full responsibility for the valuation of the change that occurred, this would result in an obvious over-valuation. Attribution is presented as a percentage, which describes the proportion of the outcomes that was due to other agencies or individuals. Note that where sufficient information was not accessible from either the research or the literature in relation to deadweight or drop-off, then these have been given a conservative estimate of 30%.

### 6.4 Displacement

Within each section the values and rationale for length of time of impact, deadweight, drop off and attribution have been provided. No values for displacement have been provided, as the research did not uncover any scenarios where value that was created through Le Cheile activities had the affect of reducing value for another service, group or stakeholder. Another way of saying is there was no movement of negative outcomes from one group to another due to the interventions. Displacement was reviewed through the lens of data analysis, as well as discussed in all interviews and focus groups where it was asked whether there were any negative outcomes for them selves or others as a result of engagement with Le Chéile. None were identified.



## 7 SROI Analysis of the Outcomes for Young People

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter of the report reviews the outcomes that occurred for young people, through the lens of SROI. Data from the Project and the evaluation process, as well from comparable international research, is used to estimate for each outcome category, how much change occurred, what would have occurred without Le Chéile, how much of change was as a result of the Le Chéile's work and how much as a result of other agencies, as well as how long this change will have an impact. The outcomes reviewed are:

- An increase in empathy;
- Improvement in family relationships;
- Reduced involvement in criminal justice system;
- Improved engagement in education;
- Reduction in substance misuse;
- Positive change in peer groups.

It is important to note that there were other outcomes, which emerged through the process, such as young people feeling respected and heard and having a positive experience of the process. However these outcomes were viewed as antecedent to the longer-term outcomes. Another way of describing this relationship is that these outcomes were necessary in order for the longer-term outcomes listed above to be achieved. In line with principles of SROI these antecedent outcomes have not been valued in and of themselves.

### 7.2 Theory of Change

The theory of change for Le Cheile participants was developed in a focus group, the interview schedule was developed based on this theory of change and aimed at: exploring how much change occurred, the value of this change, the length of time the change was expected to have an affect and the attribution of Le Cheile to the this change. The theory of change was also validated in subsequent interviews.

1. By attending Le Cheile, young people reduced their fear of service engagement / authorities and were able to see themselves as having increased choice and autonomy within the their engagement with social and justice services. They also developed an introductory knowledge to the restorative justice approach. This resulted in:

2. An increase knowledge and awareness of alternative ways of viewing their actions and the results of those actions. This resulted in changes in the way youth viewed their behaviour, and new identification of goals in relation to important components of their life including: school, criminal activity, family and peer groups/use of time.

3. From this the following behavioural changes or life outcomes were experienced by young people. Each outcome was viewed as having intrinsic value in its own

right, and being independent of other outcomes, i.e. while some youth may have changed peer group and stayed in school, these were not dependant on each other as outcomes. The outcomes experienced by young people were: 1) increase in victim empathy, 2) improved family relationships, 3) reduced involvement in criminal justice system, 4) remaining in education, 5) reduction in substance misuse, and 6) positive change in peer groups.

## 7.3 Outcome 1: Increase in Victim Empathy

### 7.3.1 Introduction

Supporting individuals to develop increased ability to empathise with victims of crime is core to Restorative Justice (Zehr, 1990). The focus of the development of participant empathy in Le Cheile focused on developing empathy for victims of crime. Research shows that increasing an ability to empathise can result in positive outcomes for individuals, such as an improvement in overall well-being and an increase in positive social interactions (Grühn, 2008), and holds a positive value for youth in and of itself. An increase in empathy in adolescents also results in a decrease in anti-social behaviours such as bullying (Stavriniades, et.al, 2010).

While these positive outcomes can reduce offending, and contribute to desistance, the link between levels of empathy and offending/re-offending has been difficult to prove, with studies suggesting anything between no impact at all (Bock and Hosser, 2014) to those which suggest some impact (i.e. that violent offenders display lower levels of empathy)(Joliffe and Farrington, 2004). A New Economics Foundation report (2010) on youth justice interventions, refers to the broader but related issue of the 'wrongness' of the crime, and summarises that perceiving the crime to be wrong is an a deterrent for young people in relation to their further involvement in crime:

*The Home Office has carried out Youth and Lifestyle surveys based on interviews with young people aged 12–30 in the UK. In answering questions on what stopped them from being violent towards others, 65.6 per cent answered that it was the feeling of it being wrong or the shame that it would bring to their families. Only 17.1 per cent cited the fear of legal repercussions (New Economics Foundation, 2010: 17).*

### 7.3.2 Young People's Views on Empathy of Victims of Crime

Eight out of nine of the young people interviewed reported an increase in their own ability to empathise with others, notably victims of crime, following their engagement with Le Chéile. The youth placed a value on this change, seeing it as having a positive effect on their ability to understand and experience their reality and behaviours, both past and present.

Participants in the interviews spoke about how restorative justice had helped them to understand what their previous behaviour had meant to their victims. As one participant of the Victim Empathy Programme explained:

*"You know more how the victim felt. If I was thinking about how the victims were feeling before then I probably wouldn't have done it [the crime]." (Young person 1)*

He went on to say that prior to undertaking the programme, he gave victims "no thought". The young person reported that he didn't think he would have gained the same understanding

had it not been for Le Chéile and that participation in VEP gave him “the push [he] needed” to change. Another participant reflected:

*“[...] you think you are doing nothing wrong and it [the Victim Empathy Programme] gives you an insight into the lives of the person you’ve done it to, how much it hurts them and how much you have scarred them.” (Young person 4)*

All but one of the evaluation participants stated that taking part in the Restorative Justice Project had led to significant changes in relation to their ability to empathise. For two participants, it was also important for them to be able to share their learning with their friends:

*“Yeah, that was a big thing I learned. It was about the effects of what I had done. It helped me to change the way I acted and what I would do when I was out with my friends. I started telling my friends about what I learned and talking about why we shouldn’t do certain things. Some of my friends listened to me and others didn’t.” (Young person 5)*

While the word ‘empathy’ may not have been used by all young people who were interviewed, all participants stated that they had a far greater understanding and insight into how their actions affected others. In the first instance this included a greater appreciation of how their past crimes may have impacted upon victims, however this empathy also stretched to an increased awareness of the impact of their behaviour on other individuals, such as family members and members of the community.

The testimonies of young people interviewed for the evaluation mirror the analysis of Project outcome data, as described below.

### 7.3.3 The Change in Empathy: the Victim Empathy Scale (VES)

Le Chéile uses the VES measurement tool to provide a measure of change in empathy for VEP participants. This pre-and post-programme assessment tool was completed for 22 of the Project participants, which is 50% of all those who attended. This information is not available for all young people as the assessment tool was introduced mid-way through the Project’s life cycle.

The pre-intervention information available indicates that 41% (n=9) of young people rated as having “low empathy” and 41% (n=9) as having “some empathy” at the start of the programme, the remaining four clients (18%) had “a lot of empathy” although it was noted that three of these four were referred for Restorative Conferences, rather than Victim Empathy Programme as their main intervention.

Analysis of this data indicates that the Project resulted in a statistically significant<sup>5</sup> increase in the levels of empathy of young people involved in the VEP for those who had been assessed at the start of the intervention.

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<sup>5</sup> Following an analysis of this data through SPSS using a paired sample t-test. The finding that there was a difference of between pre (M= 31.6 SD= 8.41) and post (M= 17.35 SD= 8.05) data;  $t(19) = 8.28$ ,  $p = 0.00$  means that this change may not be explained by chance and is statistically significant.

Table 4: Average VES Scores

Average VES Pre-restorative Justice Project	Average VES Score Post-restorative justice Project	Average decrease in VES Score	Average increase in Empathy
31	17	14	21.5%

Table 5: Average score by intervention type

Intervention type	Number of young people	Increase in empathy according to VES score
Victim Empathy Programme	10	17.5%
Victim Impact Panel	4	27%
Restorative Conference	6	23.4%
Restorative conference where YP had low empathy at start	3	31%

A second analysis of this data<sup>6</sup> compared those who had only participated in the Victim Empathy Programme with those who had taken part in additional interventions such as a Conference, Reparation, Victim Offender Mediation or Victim Impact Panel. While a small mean increase in levels of empathy was observed by those who did more than the Victim Empathy Programme (VEP M= 13.6 vs VIP & O= 14.5), this was not found to be statistically significant (i.e. it could be down to chance). This finding is important as it supports many of the assumptions underpinning the working processes of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project. Many referrals, especially for the Victim Empathy Programme are assessed as being “not suitable” for certain restorative interventions, given that they do not exhibit remorse or empathy before their engagement with the Project. Attendance at the Victim Empathy Programme was shown to have a positive, statistically significant effect on levels of empathy. Another valid way of interpreting this information is to conclude that a stepped-up approach, where more than one intervention was provided, led to a higher impact in terms of increase in empathy (19.5% vs 23% increases).

#### 7.3.4 SROI Assessment of Value

It is conservatively estimated that 33 out of 41 young people experienced a moderate to significant increase in the ability to feel empathy for past or future potential victims of crime. This outcome was considered valuable by the young people and as an outcome in its own right. This view is endorsed by the aforementioned literature (Grühn, 2008), which highlights a connection between victim empathy and wellbeing. Information from the VES was available for the last 20 young people who have been through the Project. All those 20 young people

<sup>6</sup> This was an independent-samples t-test, using an admittedly small sample size of (VEP n=5 vs VEP & Other n=15).

experienced an increase in their levels of empathy. Of this, 16 (80%) experienced an increase of 10% or more. This change was considered significant and has been used to estimate the overall number of young people who would have experienced this outcome. Using this figure, 80% of the 41 young people who went through the Project, results in an estimated 33 young people overall experiencing such a significant increase in victim empathy. The qualitative research supports this assessment as all but one of the young people spoken to during this research (n=8) reported an increase in their levels of victim empathy after engaging with the programme.

To provide a value for an increase in victim empathy a proxy valuation has been used. The value selected was the average cost of six unsubsidised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) sessions. This proxy was identified, as it is a common criminal justice intervention in other jurisdictions, often focusing upon the consequences of behavioural and thought patterns. The average costs of these programme at the time of writing this report were €70<sup>7</sup> per session (€420 for a series of six).

When young people were asked what other agencies had contributed to this change, the most commonly identified contributor, other than Le Chéile, was their Probation Officer, with the average rate of attribution for the influence of other agencies being 45%. This means that Le Chéile was considered by the young people to be responsible for the other 55% of change which occurred in their behaviour.

All young people anticipated that this increase in empathy would be a constant throughout their lives and would not disappear or be forgotten, as shown in the following quotes:

*"I'd say once you start thinking that way that you never really change."* (Young person 4)

*"I think it will stay with me forever"* (Young person 5)

The literature supports the views of young people, with research showing that the development of an empathetic appreciation for the perspective of others, including victims may wane during teenage years but does not decline later in adulthood (Hoffman, 2001). Taking this into consideration a conservative estimate of four years has been used for this outcome.

Deadweight has been estimated at 20% based on the feedback from the interviews with young people where the predominant view was that they would not have developed an enhanced ability to empathise without the input of professional services.

## 7.4 Outcome 2: Improved Family Relationships

### 7.4.1 Introduction

Research shows that positive family relationships, or even the presence of one consistent significant adult in the lives of children in conflict with the law is an important factor in relation to building youth resilience and preventing offending or further offending (Ungar, 2010, Martynowicz et. al, 2012). Young people identify the importance of adults in providing

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<sup>7</sup> This figure was the average price from a current list of providers, which was accessed here: <http://www.whatclinic.com/psychotherapists/ireland/cbt-cognitive-behavioural-therapy>

mentoring, guidance and support at difficult times (Martynowicz, et. al, 2012: 5) and often identify mentors from their family circle as those most significant (Martynowicz, et. al, 2012: 28). As part of their work with children and young people, Le Chéile seeks to support the building, improving or maintaining of those relationships (where in the best interest of the child) and in this section we take a look at the outcomes for the young people in relation to their family relationships.

#### 7.4.2 Young People's Views of Family Relationships

In interviews, young people reported a very varied impact of their engagement with the project on their family relationships. This is not surprising as different young people would have had different relationships with their parents or guardians before they came into contact with Le Chéile; some reported a very good understanding between them and their families while others spoke about more fragmented family lives. Often, however, even with the relatively good relationships, young people observed that their contact with the law and, 'getting into trouble', tested these relationships:

*"We always had a good relationship but it would have been strained as I was getting close to the edge." (Young person 2)*

There was a close relationship between reported changes in young people's behaviour following engagement with Le Chéile and their perception of improved family relationships. Young people spoke about their parents "not liking" their getting into trouble (Young person 8) and being "given out to" by family members (Young person 4). While the family situations for five young people remained unchanged (especially where the young person reported a positive pre-existing relationship), for three others the change was quite dramatic (one other reported a small improvement), as this interviewee observed:

*"My mother and my family seen me as a different person. My mother used to give out to me and tell me not to get into trouble, now she knows that this thing changed my life and I don't want to do the things I used to [do]." (Young person 4)*

This outcome was considered by participants, to various degrees, to be a direct result of their engagement with Le Cheile. This outcome was valued by young people who experienced this change and was considered independent of other outcomes. Improvements in family dynamics related to a sense of wellbeing and happiness that has not been recorded as an outcome in its own right, so the benefits of this change do not overlap with other outcomes.

#### 7.4.3 SROI Assessment of Value

Three out of nine young people interviewed stated that they had experienced positive change in family relationships as a result of their changed behaviour. If this were a representative sample, that would translate to an outcome for 30% of the clients of the Project. In order to ensure the estimates used remain conservative, this will be reduced by a third to 20% to take account for potential sampling bias. As such this will be an outcome valued for 20% (n=8) of young people who participated in the Project.

While all young people who reported that this improved relationship would last forever, two family members spoken to stated that in the period since their sons had finished with the project their relationship had begun to deteriorate slightly. Taking this information into account a timeframe of two years was applied as a figure indicating the length of time for which the impact of this outcome would last.

In all three cases where there was a large reported impact upon family relationships, the young person stated they had also been working with other agencies. When averaged, these figures show a 55% attribution of this outcome to other services, namely Probation and other social services. The young people did however state that without such supports, it was unlikely their relationships would have improved.

The proxy valuation for improved family relationship has been calculated at equivalent of six family therapy sessions, which is valued at €600.<sup>8</sup> Given a lack of data on what would have occurred without Le Chéile, 20% deadweight has been estimated, with a drop off of 30%.

## 7.5 Outcome 3: Reduced Stress as a result of Reduced Involvement with the Criminal Justice System

### 7.5.1 Introduction

A reduction in young people being involved with criminal justice system has an obvious value to the State in terms of the reduction of the cost of criminal justice interventions. This section, however, looks at the value of this change to the individual young person, from the perspective of quality of life and increased wellbeing or a reduction in stress based on less involvement with criminal justice services. Other savings to the State and agencies funded by the State will be valued and analysed separately in subsequent sections relating to savings to Gardaí and judicial services.

### 7.5.2 Young People's Views on their Engagement with the Criminal Justice System

In interviews, all but one young person reported significant reduction in their involvement with the criminal justice system. In the course of the evaluation, they spoke about settling down and realising that they didn't want to be in conflict with the law anymore, as this resulted in increased stress and unhappiness in their lives.

*"I was in trouble two years ago, now you keep yourself to yourself. It kept me out of prison."* (Young person 8)

Four interviewees stated that, had it not been for their involvement with Le Chéile, they would now have been in custody. They reported that the Restorative Justice Project gave them an opportunity to stay out of prison and was fundamental in assisting some of them in finding a way to do so longer-term:

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<sup>8</sup> The cost of six sessions of family therapy from the national counseling provider My Mind ([www.mymind.ie](http://www.mymind.ie)) is €600.

*"I'd say I would definitely have ended up in jail, I didn't see any way out of it. But I didn't, they helped me."* (Young person 2)

All but one reported that they no longer are in any contact with the police (the remaining interviewee did not answer the question about their involvement with criminal justice agencies). Three individuals reported decreased stress levels associated with decreased fear of contact with the police. The interventions prevented them from "the kind of messing I was doing before" (Young person 8) and kept their time occupied. For those that did not experience this change their experience was of remaining in stressful situations of regular contact with criminal justice or enforcement services, stressful situations of avoiding being apprehended for their activity, and a continued fear of incarceration.

### 7.5.3 SROI Assessment of Value

It is estimated that this outcome was achieved by 17 individuals, this is based on the assumption that the expected 68.5% recidivism rate<sup>9</sup> would be reduced by 14% based for restorative interventions (Nugent et. al, 2003).

Young people interviewed as part of this evaluation largely attributed the change to their involvement with criminal justice agencies to the activities of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project. An attribution of 35% was given to Probation and other services. Based on the feedback by three young people that their prior involvement with criminal justice services led to an increased sense of anxiety or stress, a proxy valuation for this outcome is a decrease in anxiety.

To assess the value of a reduction in anxiety valuation methods from health care services have been used utilising a technique called 'quality of life adjusted years' or QALY. One way of describing a QALY is that it is a measure of the welfare losses associated with different health conditions (Dezetter, 2013). A QALY has a generally accepted value of between £25,000 and £30,000 (Shirowa, 2010). A reduction in anxiety is assigned a QALY of 0.098, which results in a valuation of €3,385 (.098 x €34,543) (The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, 2003).

The deadweight for this outcome has been tied to recidivism, as the assumption is that as anxiety/stress is tied primarily to engagement with criminal activity and the criminal justice system. If this stops, then this anxiety will also reduce. The deadweight is therefore 76%, which relates to the estimated percentage of young offenders who would naturally desist or leave crime (The Probation Service, 2013)<sup>10</sup>. The length of time for this outcome is conservatively estimated at four years, based on stakeholder feedback and research into the affect on reductions in recidivism (Nugent et. al, 2003) with a drop off of 20%.

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<sup>9</sup> The recidivism rate for under 18yr olds in Ireland is 68.5% after three years (The Probation Service, 2013). A conservative estimate of reductions in recidivism as a result of restorative justice interventions is 14%. Using these calculations in relation to the 41 young people engaged in the Project result in an expected 17 young people desisting from crime, four of whom would be doing so as a result of Le Chéile Restorative Justice, with the other 13 expected to "age out of crime".

<sup>10</sup> See footnote 9.



## 7.6 Outcome 4: Improved Engagement in Education

### 7.6.1 Introduction

Reviewing five significant studies on the impacts of restorative justice projects in relation to youth engagement in education the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against children found that “Children who complete community-based restorative justice programmes are more likely to return to school and so increase their chances of becoming productive members of society” (United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary, 2013: 28).

It is also of note that the value of remaining in education has a significant multiplier effect in reducing later substance use (Townsend, 2007) as well as earnings over a lifetime, once employed: “In Ireland, individuals with less than upper-secondary completion and in employment earned on average 15% less than those at the benchmark” (Department of Education and Skills, 2013:6).

### 7.6.2 Young People’s Views on Engagement in Education

Three out of the nine young people interviewed related the work that they did with Le Chéile to the fact they had decided to remain in education or return to education.

*“Before I was all over the place and rarely going in. Now I have nearly perfect attendance. Before I would never go in.” (Young person 3)*

*“I was never really into education, I was always planning on moving off. They told me to stay and get me level three’s and fours. I would have ended up in jail” (Young person 6)*

Of the other five interviewees, all had left school prior to the Restorative Justice intervention, and therefore experienced no change in relation to school retention, however, one interviewee stated he was considering going back to college (Young person 3).

### 7.6.3 SROI Assessment of Value

Three of the nine young people experienced a positive change in relation to staying in education, with one going on to third level education. It is therefore estimated that this outcome was experienced by one third of young people who were in school at the time of the intervention. Given the potential for sampling bias, this has been reduced by a third to 20%, equating to an estimated eight young people benefiting from this positive outcome.

The value of remaining in school has been calculated based on the average additional income received once employed; if the individual had completed secondary education. The Irish Department of Education and Skills states that: “The private net present value for an individual obtaining upper-secondary or post-secondary, non-tertiary education as part of initial education in Ireland was US\$142,366 for males and US\$118,058 for females)” (2013:8). To attain a proxy value for this outcome in one year, the value of education for males was divided by an approximate number of years of work for most school leavers (18 years to 68 years = 50

years of employment) to arrive at a yearly value of having a completed a secondary education, which is \$2,847 or €2,277.<sup>11</sup>

Two interviewees who experienced this outcome stated that approximately half of this was due either their school or to Probation. Le Chéile was seen as playing a positive role and was responsible for 50% of the change. The third individual assigned the majority of influence (70%) on this outcome to an employer, who had a big impact on the individual's life and who encouraged him to return to education. He was now attending another educational service provider as a result of the employer's and Le Chéile's interventions. Therefore, the average figure for attribution is 57%. Deadweight has been estimated conservatively at 20% based on feedback from the young people as to the decisions they had made prior to attending Le Chéile, i.e. to leave school and having little plans to go back, prior to the intervention.

As research shows that staying in school has an impact across the lifecycle on income and the ability to seek employment (Department of Education and Skills, 2013) the impact period has been estimated at five years.

## 7.7 Outcome 5: Reduction in Substance Misuse

### 7.7.1 Introduction

While it is difficult to discern a definitive link between substance misuse and involvement in offending, there is evidence to suggest that young people in conflict with the law often report problematic use of alcohol and some use of drugs. The Youth Justice Review in Northern Ireland in 2011 noted that alcohol was an issue in 38% of all youth conferences led by the Youth Justice Agency (YJR, 2011: 138). A review undertaken in England and Wales by the Youth Justice Board into alcohol and drug use among children and young people accommodated in the secure estate (age 12-18) found that two thirds (66%) would binge drink once a week, while 25% stated that their drinking before entering custody was 'out of control' (Mentor UK, 2013: 1). Change in the use of alcohol and drugs may, therefore, support desistance and prevent further involvement in the criminal justice system. As with other outcomes the benefits of this change may also have a specific effect on general health and wellbeing. Clinical research (Picci, 2014) shows a strong connection between an increase in wellbeing and a reduction in problematic alcohol use.

### 7.7.2 Young People's Views on Substance Misuse

It was found that two of the nine young people interviewed identified a reduction in substance use during or since their engagement with the Restorative Justice Project. This was an unexpected outcome and was not a question asked directly of all young people, rather these two young people mentioned this reduced use of substances (drugs and/or alcohol), as being one of the improvements in their lives since they had come in contact with the Project<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter> used on the 9th November 2014.

<sup>12</sup> All interviewees were asked if anything else, in addition to what had been discussed either positive or negative, had occurred in their lives.

### 7.7.3 SROI Assessment of Value

Based on the research data and the multiplier used within the research, it is estimated that 10 young people experienced this outcome. The proxy indicator used to establish the value of a reduction in substance misuse to the youth who experience this is likely to be equivalent to the value of a state funded, NGO-managed substance misuse 12-week day programme. The values of two separate day programmes in this service were averaged; one a drug specific programme (€1,800) and the other a general substance misuse day programme, including alcohol (€1,500).<sup>13</sup> The average valuation was €1,650. The attribution of other services to this change was estimated by the young people as 40%, with this being accredited to family and other services, including Probation.

Research, which was undertaken with 40,000 people in the US (Dawson, 2005), indicated that 75% of people who are engaged in problematic drinking are likely to reduce this, at some stage in their life, without further intervention. Therefore the deadweight, i.e. what would have happened anyway, has been estimated at 50%, to account for the fact that many of the young people may have reduced this behaviour over the coming years without intervention. Given the small timeframe it is unlikely that the full 75% would have reduced this problematic use without intervention. The length of time for this value is estimated at four years based on research into the affect of treatment on problematic drinkers. Research by Dawson (2005), which engaged problematic drinkers at 20 and 60 year points post intervention, found that the majority sustain change for a number of decades. This research also points to smaller drop off than other areas, with there being a strong causation between an initial interventions and sustained behavior change. Therefore, the drop off has been estimated at 20%.

## 7.8 Outcome 6: Improvement in Peer Group / Social Experience

### 7.8.1 Introduction

Positive engagement or an increase in position in hierarchy within adolescent peer groups has been shown to be positively associated with pro-social behaviour (Ellis, 2007). This research shows that if young people have authority within their peer groups or are able to engage with more positively focused peer groups, this also contributes to a reduction in anti-social behaviour. Conversely, research shows that associations with other young offenders is a strong criminogenic factor (Sutherland et. al, 1995). Likewise, the breaking of these relationships and the development of pro-social peer groups has been proven as a strong aid to desistance (Maruna, 2001).

This section of the report looks not at the societal value of the improved behaviour as the possible result of an adolescent offender having more positive social groups but rather at the value of an increase in belonging to a positive peer group from the perspective of the young people themselves. Within interviews young people, who made this change stated that having

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<sup>13</sup> These figures come from an unpublished cost per unit analysis that was undertaken by Quality Matters. The cost per unit analysis considered all income and divided this against each element of service delivery based on a weighting of staff time.

better social groups, or being able manage negative peer pressure within social groups had a beneficial impact on their lives, improving their experience of social and peer connections.

### 7.8.2 Young People's Views on a Positive Change in Peer Groups

Young people stated that working with Le Chéile often made them reflect on the way in which they behaved and also on their involvement in certain social networks, which led six of the nine individuals to change their peer group:

*"Yeah, I hang around with different people now. The other lads I hung around with were bad news, they weren't bad guys but just the stuff they were into..."* (Young person 6)

A change in peer group was viewed as having intrinsic value to the young people who stated that this led to them being less pressured to do things they didn't want to do, as well as leading to them feeling more comfortable, or happier, with new peer groups who better reflected their current and newly clarified values.

Another young person displayed what appeared to be a greater resilience to being influenced by their broader social circle in their decisions and greater independence in making choices about their own behaviour. While not changing the groups with which they socialised completely, they experienced changes in how they responded to their friends and as a result the pressure to get involved in offending lessened, as this interviewee observed:

*"My mates used to give out to me [for not being involved in criminal behaviour], but not any more like."* (Young person 5)

As with the other six individuals who reported experiencing this outcome, this individual was happier and more comfortable with their peer engagement as a result of these changes.

### 7.8.3 SROI Assessment of Value

This positive change in peer group was described as an outcome for seven of the nine young people interviewed. With six of the nine young people reporting a medium or large change in their peer groups (one young person reported a small change and two reported no change), this represents a positive change for two thirds of those interviewed (66%). In accounting for potential sampling bias, this figure has been conservatively reduced by one third and will be estimated as being an outcome for 44% of those who worked with the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project. This can therefore be estimated to result in an impact for 18 young people overall.

The value of this change has been estimated using Fujiwara's Wellbeing Valuation Work (value calculator accessed at October 9<sup>th</sup> 2014). Wellbeing valuation uses large national data sets to calculate the monetary value of different goods and services, such as mental health or social belonging. This technique derives values by estimating the amount of money that is needed to keep individuals as satisfied with life as if that good were not there. Using this valuation

technique (Trotter, 2014) the value of being a member of a social group has been estimated at £1,850, which is the equivalent of €2,353.<sup>14</sup>

Generally, young people believed this to be a long-term change, with new peer groups being viewed, as stable and much preferred to previously more anti-social peer groups, therefore the period of impact has therefore been estimated at five years:

*“I wouldn’t go back to behaving the way I did. Messing, getting in trouble with the police, now they know I keep myself to myself.” (Young person 3)*

The attribution of other services to this outcome was estimated by the young people to be 53% and was attributed to Probation and other community services. Deadweight, i.e. what would have occurred anyway, has been estimated at 20%, as information was not available on the likeliness of this outcome without the influence of Le Chéile. The drop off for this change is likewise estimated to be 20%.

## 7.9 Summary

Of note is that interviewees identified an important unintended positive outcome from the Project, which was a reduction in substance use. There is a sound evidence base to highlight the connection between restorative justice and family outcomes, educational outcomes and positive peer social groups. This chapter highlighted the value that the outcomes held for young people, and that, on average, the majority of these changes were seen as being attributable to the work of Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter> used on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2014.

## 8 The Value of Le Chéile for Family Members

### 8.1 Introduction

Family members involved in this evaluation reported several positive outcomes from their and their child's engagement in the Restorative Justice Project. The most often cited benefit of the Project was their child's reduced criminal behaviour:

*"He was able to say no - able to say no to getting in to cars. He was thinking before he acted. He said "I have to change my phone number because they are all phoning me trying to get me to rob cars." (Family Member 3)*

However, this outcome has been discussed and valued in relation to the value of a reduction in crime to the State and the community, and will not be valued again to avoid double counting. The outcome of improved family relationships, while also identified by parents, has also been valued within the outcomes section for the young people and so has not been replicated here.

### 8.2 Theory of Change

The theory of change for parents was developed in a focus group. The interview schedule was then developed based on the theory of change and aimed at: exploring how much change occurred, the value of this change, the length of time the change was expected to have an affect and the attribution of Le Cheile to the this change. The theory of change was validated in subsequent interviews.

1. Parents received information and support from Le Cheile staff, this resulted in an increase in awareness of options available, a feeling of increased support, which resulted in desire to engage with the project.

2. Engagement resulted in awareness of restorative justice practices, and the receipt of new information in relation to communication and parenting. Parents also received supports in relation to their experience and in implementing new learning. This in turn resulted in the development of new skills and awareness.

3. From the application of learning parents experienced improvements in their parenting skills and experience. From the change in their child's behaviour, particularly in relation to a reduction in criminal activity and/or improvement in peer groups, parents experienced a reduction in stress. These two outcomes were seen as distinct by parents. Each outcome was considered valuable, and having significant impact in the lives of parents.

## 8.3 Outcome 1: Improved Parenting Relationships

### 8.3.1 Introduction

All three of the parents spoken to as part of this research reported an improvement in their ability to communicate and interact with their children. It should be noted that two of those who participated had also received parental supports through Le Chéile mentoring in addition to the supports provided to their children.

### 8.3.2 Family Members Views on Parenting Skills

All family members reported positive experiences of engaging with the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project. It was stated that with young people's increased levels of empathy and understanding, parents could communicate better with their children and observe improved outcomes in their relationship. One parent spoke about having a better understanding of addiction, and being better able to respond to the behaviours associated with it. Another parent stated that having seen their child open up and being honest about their behaviour, they were freer to speak openly and honestly at home:

*"He changed with the course of time as well, partially because of the course of time and partially because of my manner of dealing with him." (Family Member 3)*

*"I learned how to handle him and it showed me how to stop fighting with him... the more I shouted at him the more he went out and done it." (Family member 1)*

The improvements in their parenting skills were viewed as having a direct relationship to improvements in family dynamics.

### 8.3.3 SROI Assessment of Value

There was parental engagement in the majority of cases, with just over half of young people involved in restorative interventions (n=24) having at least one parent present. Given the small sample size of parents interviewed as part of this evaluation, 100% of whom stated that their parenting has improved as a result of the interactions with Le Chéile, it is necessary to reduce this to account for potential positive bias. Therefore it has been conservatively estimated that this outcome would be experienced by 50% of parents involved, equating to an outcome for 12 parents overall (based conservatively on one parent's involvement).

The improvement in parenting skills has been valued using a proxy figure of €2,629.04 which represents the cost of a parenting programme for parents of children with a conduct disorder (Bonin et al, 2011). Two of the three parents spoken to had also received some external parental supports in addition to the support provided by Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project. Taking their feedback into consideration, attribution is estimated at one third (33%).

Two of the three parents stated that since their child had worked with Le Chéile Restorative Justice, which was approximately a 18 months to two years previously, the relationship with them had become somewhat strained again, affecting their ability to parent as positively as they had done previously. Therefore, the time for the impact of this outcome has been estimated at two years, with a drop off at 25%. Deadweight has been estimated at 20%, based

on feedback from the parents in relation to their experience prior to starting their work with Le Chéile.

## 8.4 Outcome 2: Reduction in Stress and Anxiety

### 8.4.1 Introduction

The other significant outcome reported by parents was a reduction in levels of stress and anxiety. Research shows that having a family member involved in crime can be a stressful and traumatic period in a person's life (Write & Kahn, 2010). The parents interviewed as part of this evaluation commented on how the behavioural changes of their children resulted in a less stressful atmosphere in the family home and that subsequent improvements in relationships and less engagement in offending behaviour, significantly reduced their personal levels of stress and anxiety.

### 8.4.2 Family Members Views on Reducing Stress

Parents interviewed for this evaluation often reported a reduction of stress connected to their child's behaviour as a result of their engagement with Le Chéile. This reduction in stress, is best described in the words of one of the parents:

*"There wasn't so much anger in the house. There wasn't so much tension. Less stress in the house."* (Family member 3)

Stress sometimes contributed to parents' experiencing health problems and a reduction in stress therefore improved their general well-being. This reduction in stress was also reported in Le Chéile case studies, where one parent detailed the impact of this reduced stress on their sleeping patterns:

*"I slept for the first time in a long time. I feel in a better and happier place now in my thoughts", "The apology was brilliant to hear"* (from an existing case study prepared by Le Chéile Staff).

### 8.4.3 SROI Assessment of Value

All three parents interviewed noted a reduced level of stress within their household and of their own anxiety levels. Given this small sample size, and in line with the previous estimation logic, the overall impact of this outcome will be conservatively estimated at half of the families who would have been engaged in the project, which is an estimated total of 24 parents.

In assessing the value of the impact associated with this reduction in stress, a number of proxy valuations were reviewed. These ranged from a value of €54,989.77 (Fujiwara, 2012, adjusted from Pounds to Euro) for a reduction in depression and anxiety (albeit in a clinical setting) to €3,385 for a reduction in anxiety (Edwards et. al, 2013). Given the need to ensure a conservative approach to valuation, the lower of these two figures will be used. Applying the



same logic as for other family outcomes, it is estimated that half of the family members worked with would have experienced this outcome.

As much of the reduction in stress was down to decreased engagement in criminal behaviour by the young people deadweight is pinned to the figures for natural desistance at 76% (Probation Service, 2013), with an expected two years of impact for the outcome, given that two of the parents had stated this reduction in stress had become less pronounced since the interventions ceased. Attribution was pinned at the same rates as the improved parenting skills, due to the interlinked nature of the events.

## 8.5 Summary

The parents viewed Le Chéile as having a significant positive affect on their lives, by contributing to a reduction in their stress and supporting them to improve their parenting.

## 9 The Value of Le Chéile for the Future Victims of Crime

### 9.1 Introduction

This section reviews the outcomes of the project on future victims of crime that are made by reducing the number of youth involved in committing crimes. Obviously given that these individuals cannot be spoken with (as these crimes have not yet been committed) the amount and value of the reduction in crime needs to be sourced from existing data and research on crime.

One of the key aims of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project is the reduction of youth crime. While obviously an important outcome, it needs to be noted that this outcome is inherently difficult to measure. Recidivism rates are measured differently from study to study and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. There is a difference between recidivism, reoffending and re-committal, all of which must be carefully defined in order for statistics not to be misinterpreted.

Where crimes are not reported or detected it is impossible to accurately predict or review reoffending rates. Rather, reoffending is often a term used where a young person has been charged and found guilty of a further offence (i.e. reconviction). Re-committal rates relate solely to offences where there has been a sentence of imprisonment. These again do not give a full picture of recidivism, but do provide for comparable, benchmarked data.

Young people (predominantly boys) are more likely to commit crime, but this propensity towards criminal behaviour reduces as they get older (Farrington 1992; Nagin and Tremblay 2005). This is referred to as the age crime curve. Peaking at around 16 to 17 the age crime curve is a bell shaped progression, showing the increasing likelihood of criminal behaviour through early teens, dropping steeply as young people enter into early adulthood and continuing to reduce slowly throughout the remainder of the life course.

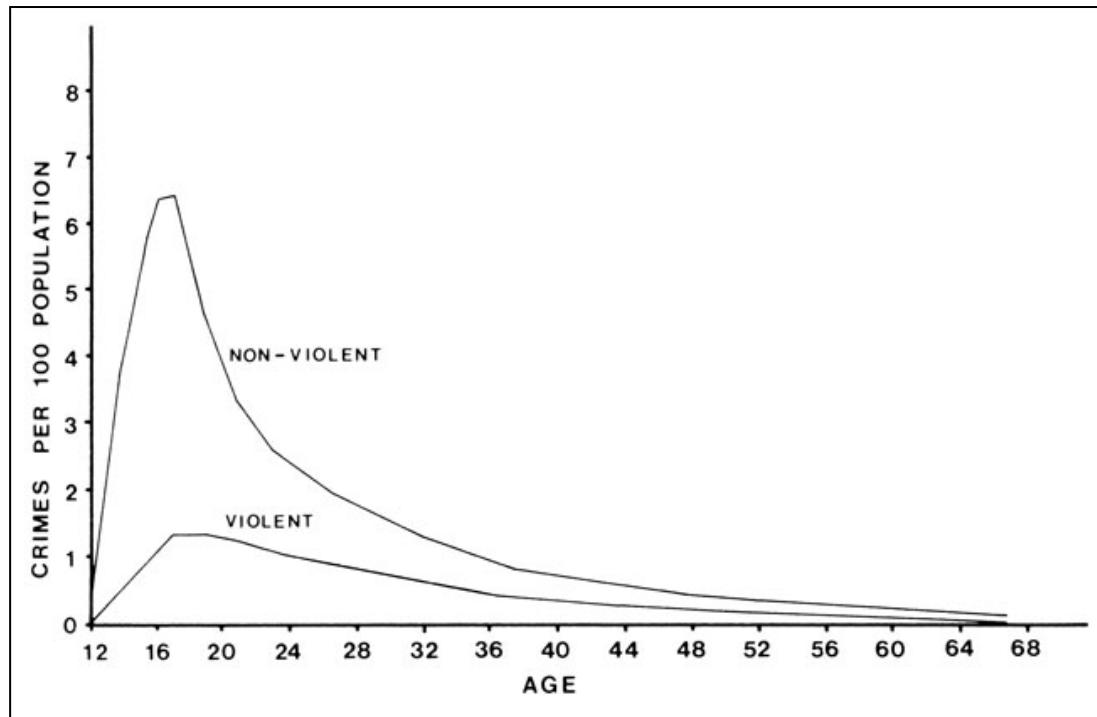


Figure 5: Age Crime Curve (Farrington, 1986)

This well documented phenomenon is of importance for this evaluation and must be factored in to any analysis of the outcomes of the Project. The following two conclusions may be drawn from this curve, which are of importance to the research:

- The majority of young people involved with the Project, or who have participated, remain at high statistical likelihood of reoffending, given their age, i.e. the graph show that for 100 16 year olds approximately 6.5 crimes are committed, this reduced to fewer than 2.5 crimes by the age of 24.
- Any reduction in recidivism must be gauged against what would be expected as young people “age out” of crime, within the SROI this is referred to as deadweight. Simply put, a restorative intervention may directly reduce the immediate criminal behaviour in a 17 year old, but by the time that same person turns 25, many would have stopped committing crime anyway.

A reduction in crime has numerous positive outcomes for the community, for every crime that has been prevented there is a gain for the potential victim. This chapter of the report seeks to establish, using research data, estimates for the quantity and value of the reduction in crime that is estimated to have occurred as a result of Le Chéile’s work.

## 9.2 Outcome 1: Decreased Incidence of Crime

### 9.2.1 Introduction

It was not possible in the course of this evaluation to undertake a full recidivism analysis using data either from the Gardaí, Probation or the Prison Service. While this information was sought, issues regarding data protection and access could not be overcome within the timeframe of

the evaluation. Therefore, the following assessment is based on the testimonies of the young people interviewed as part of the research.

Eight of the nine young people interviewed stated they had moved away from crime (one young person did not wish to discuss this; a position which was fully respected). This is a high figure (as compared to standard restorative justice outcomes referred to within this chapter) and when considering this research findings, issues of potential positive bias with regard to the sampling methodology must be taken into account, as must the small sample size. It is important to note that a potential positive sampling bias may have led to interviewing young people for whom the interventions had more of a positive impact. The fact that the information provided by young people in relation to their own offending behaviour provides such a small sample size, statistical assumptions could not be made (eight out of nine young people did not commit crime after Le Chéile), therefore the data has not been used as an outcome estimate within the SROI.

Considering the previously discussed points, it was decided to use a proxy from academic literature on restorative intervention and recidivism. As discussed in the literature review section, the impact on recidivism rates post-restorative justice interventions vary from project to project. These range from a 32% reduction in recidivism (Nugent et al, 2001) to no change at all (Wilcox & Hoyle, 2004). As such, a conservative intermediary figure of 14% (Nugent et al, 2003) has been used.

### 9.2.2 SROI Valuation of a Reduction in Crime

Using the above figure for the reduction in recidivism as a result of the intervention (14%) we can assume that of the 41 young people who engaged in the Project, 17 would not have gone on to commit further offences. This figure and the deadweight are calculated through the following equations:

- 68.5% (expected recidivism figure) x 41 young people = 28 would have gone on to commit a crime without intervention from Le Chéile
- 31.5% (expected natural desistence) x 41 young people = 13 would have naturally desisted from crime
- 14% x 28 young people (from line one – actual estimated recidivism) = four (rounded up from 3.92) would have desisted from crime as a result of Le Chéile.
- The deadweight is calculated by as the percentage of expected natural desistence (13) over the expected outcomes (17); this equals 76%.

The length of time for this outcome is estimated at five years. Drop off is the reduction in causality to the reduction in crime over time, i.e. as the young person moves on in their life, Le Chéile will be less responsible for their not committing crime. Factors like education and positive peer social groups are likely to play an increasing role, while the interventions of Le Chéile, will play a much lesser role. Drop off has thus been estimated at 30% and attribution at 55%, taking into consideration the findings relating to change in offending behaviour, reported in the section on outcomes for young people.

To calculate the reduction in crime as a result of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project's intervention, a multiplier needs to be used to estimate how many crimes each individual is likely, on average, to have committed, if still engaging in this behaviour. According to Ministry of Justice statistics in the United Kingdom, the average frequency of crime for those released that keep reoffending is 4.7 convictions within a year (New Economics Foundation, 2010: 38). After factoring in the re-conviction rate, it is estimated that this represents 17 criminal offences per person in the first year after their release. This means that for the 17 people who have desisted from crime, it can be estimated that each of these individuals would otherwise have committed 17 crimes in year one - a total of 289 crimes in that same year, and for each year this or a smaller number of crimes, reflecting the natural aging out of crime.<sup>15</sup>

To calculate the value of this reduction in crime, the average value for the cost of a crime needs to be estimated. To establish the average costs of crime to the victim, the average cost of theft of a vehicle<sup>16</sup> at €7,780 (Brand & Price, 2000) and the cost to the victim of a burglary at €2,630<sup>17</sup> (Cohen, 1998) have been used; these being the two of the most common crimes committed by young people prior to their engagement with Le Chéile. The average estimate of the costs of each crime is therefore €5,205.

The duration of this impact is calculated at five years, which relates to the reduction in future reduction in crime over five years i.e. each year a number of crimes would have been committed that now have not been committed. Five years is calculated in line with the age crime curve, i.e. the number of prevented crimes will reduce over time, i.e. year one will result in 289 crimes being reduced and year two a lesser amount of crimes will have been prevented (Farrington, 1986).

### 9.3 Summary

This chapter outlined how a reduction in crime for even a relatively humble number of young people, can have significant value to the future victims of crime, the overall number of which can will be reduced based on this intervention. The cost of crime to victims is high, and research shows that reducing even one individual's engagement with crime may save up to four other community members from experiencing a loss associated with a criminal act (New Economics Foundation, 2010).

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<sup>15</sup> Another way of describing this outcome is to say that Le Chéile's involvement resulted in four people desisting from crime completely, and that using the average, this resulted in 18.8 fewer crimes (with zero deadweight). However, to incorporate the important notion of deadweight (estimated at 76%), the figures for all 17 young people have been used within the impact map.

<sup>16</sup> This figure has been adjusted for inflation by using the adjustment calculator (<http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare>), which estimates a 2000 figure of €5,969 at €7,780 in 2013 figures.

<sup>17</sup> This figure has been adjusted for inflation by using the adjustment calculator (<http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare>), which places a 1998 figure of €1,945 at €2,630 in 2013 figures (lowest figure in the range has been used).

# 10 The Value of Le Chéile for Past Victims of Crime who have Engaged with Le Chéile

## 10.1 Introduction

Of central importance to the restorative justice process is positive engagement with victims of crime, with the purpose of providing specific outcomes to the victims. Research shows that restorative justice results in victims feeling more respected than in the traditional criminal justice system, and victims can experience positive outcomes such as improvement in well-being (Trimboli, 2000; Poulson, 2003; Doak, 2011; Campbell, et.al, 2005).

Two significant outcomes that may be experienced by victims are identified in the UNSGDP report (2013: 32). This report highlights “greater involvement of the victim, who is given the opportunity to put questions to the offender” as well as “symbolic restitution” as a result of the restorative justice intervention which they may not experience as a result of engagement with the traditional criminal justice process. However, it should also be noted that research highlights that if managed unprofessionally the process can have a negative impact on victims (Campbell, et al., 2005).

Victim representatives were spoken to as part of this research. As this is a relatively small sample size, within the SROI analysis the views of the stakeholders have been supplemented with research on the impact of restorative justice on victims of crime. As with all estimates made as part of this evaluation it is recommended that the impact map be updated with data on these important outcomes for victims in the future.

## 10.2 Theory of Change

The following theory of change was developed through a focus group including of victim proxies. The interview schedule was based on this theory of change and aimed at exploring how much change occurred, the value of this change, the length of time the was expected to have an affect and the attribution of Le Cheile to the this change. The theory of change was validated in subsequent interviews.

1. Victims and victim proxies had the option of engaging with Le Cheile following provision of information in the process. A primary reason for victims choosing to engage with Le Cheile was a desire to learn more about those who committed the crime and attain additional closure on their own experience. For victim proxies their engagement was usually as a mentor, with the role of victim proxy an addition to this role. They learnt about the process and gained an understanding of restorative models, practices and alternatives to the traditional criminal justice system.

2. Through training and / or preparation for their role in restorative justice practices, they gained a working knowledge of restorative justice. The support they received enabled them to develop the confidence required to meet with young people who had committed crimes (either directly meeting victims or as part of a Victim Impact

Panel), while this confidence was considered valuable, it was considered a precursor to the following outcomes:

3. From engagement with restorative justice those involved experienced two final outcomes, which were each considered independent, i.e. one was not dependent on the other and valuable in their own right: 1) an increase in their perception of safety or a decrease in fear of crime, and 2) an ability to attain closure on the event or symbolic restitution.

## 10.3 Outcome 1: Decreased Fear of Crime

### 10.3.1 Introduction

A reduction in victim's fear of crime, following a restorative intervention, has been observed as an outcome from youth restorative justice interventions (United Nations Special Representative, 2013). The experience of talking to a perpetrator and developing an understanding of them as an individual, as well as understanding the rationale for why they committed the crime, was a goal for most victims, as is illustrated in the following quote:

*"Absolutely, you humanise the young person... you have questions and I asked him 'do you hand pick your victims?' because I wanted to know if I was being watched for a while and he said 'ah no it's kind of random usually, spur of the moment.'" (Victim 1)*

This kind of understanding, as it did in this instance, can lead to a reduction in fear of future crime. Any steps that reduce feelings in relation to past or potential crimes (i.e. fear of future victimisation) have an obvious value to the victims of crime.

### 10.3.2 SROI Valuation of a Reduction in Fear

Dixon (2006) maintains that crime can have costly effects on victims, encouraging people to take expensive security measures (like using cars and taxis instead of public transport or walking, or purchasing home security equipment and more expensive home insurance). In the course of the evaluation, all victim interviewees agreed that their involvement with Le Chéile led to a reduction in their fear of crime or changed the way they thought about how they had been targeted. Associated desktop research supports the estimation that all 16 victims who have at some stage engaged with Le Chéile would have achieved some degree of this outcome.

Taking this into consideration the value of a reduction in crime has been developed by averaging two potential proxies. The first is the proxy value of a low cost security system<sup>18</sup> at €400. The second is the estimated value of a person being 'not worried about crime' (Trotter, et al., 2014:14); the value of this is established through well-being valuation methods and equals £11,873 (€15,107).<sup>19</sup> However, half of this figure has been used as the proxy (€7,553) as within

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<sup>18</sup> The two prices used were sourced from <http://www.fealesecurity.ie>, and <http://www.gard.ie>

<sup>19</sup> As of the 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 using <http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>

this study the participants stated that their fear was reduced rather eliminated. Combining these two estimate proxies, the final proxy valuation is €3,976.

For the purposes of this analysis, the HACT recommended deadweight for crime prevention of 19% has been used (Trotter, et al., 2014). The length of time for this outcome has been conservatively estimated at two years based on feedback from the interviewees who stated that this knowledge should have impact on them in the foreseeable future. Drop off has been estimated at 20%. Without this activity there would have been no avenue to achieve the equivalent outcome so attribution has been estimated at 0%.

## 10.4 Outcome 2: Ability to Attain Closure on the Event / Symbolic Restitution

### 10.4.1 Introduction

Dixon (2006: 8) states that “the impact crime has on its victims tends to far exceed the loss of material resources”. This is due to how the victim feels about the crime that has occurred and how they may be impacted by fear of any future crime (ibid). Research shows that almost nine out of ten victims are emotionally affected by the crime in some way (Flatley, et al., 2010). The most common feelings are (in order of frequency): anger, annoyance, shock, loss of confidence / feeling vulnerable. This research found that a smaller number of people experience much more negative consequences such as panic attacks, depression and trouble sleeping.

Bazemore and Umbriet (2001: 3) in a review of four restorative conferencing models found that “although restitution was an important motivator for victim participation in mediation sessions, victims consistently viewed actual receipt of restitution as secondary to the opportunity to talk about the impact of the crime, meet the offender, and learn the offender’s circumstances”. These events gave the victim the opportunity to process or come to terms with their own experience. In this context, restorative justice has been shown to have positive healing effects on those affected by crimes (Doak, 2011).

### 10.4.2 SROI Valuation of a Reduction in Fear

Using research findings, it is estimated that 16 victims experienced a sense of closure or ‘symbolic restitution’ (United Nations Special Representative, 2013), as a result of engaging with the restorative process. Research estimates the cost of pain and suffering for each robbery victim at €18,329.26<sup>20</sup> (Zhang, 2008). However this estimation of the cost of suffering has not been used to establish a value for its reduction, as in the Le Chéile process, institutional structures mean that victims are generally engaged a long time after the initial crime. In this instance it would be fair to estimate that certain amount of healing has been achieved since the original crime.

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<sup>20</sup> Original amount in US dollars has been adjusted



As in the above outcome, this outcome is estimated to have affected all 16 victims. This sense of closure has been given a proxy valuation equivalent to attendance at a series of group events or a training course, held in Ireland, and aimed at healing emotional trauma or enhancing well-being.<sup>21</sup> Two examples of these kind of programmes, from well-established models or organisations, are priced at between €60 and €320 (average price €180). Deadweight and drop off have been estimated at 20%. Without this activity there would have been no avenue to achieve the equivalent outcome so attribution has been estimated at 0%.

## 10.5 Outcome 3: Improved Empathy Towards Young People

### 10.5.1 Introduction

Both research (Bazemore and Umbriet, 2001) and findings from the victim interviews identify an increase in the empathy towards young people as an outcome of restorative justice interventions.

### 10.5.2 SROI Valuation of Outcome

In exploring potential proxy valuations for this outcome, such as spending time with young people (cinema, time and travel costs for instance) or reading selected books or seeing quality documentaries about their experience (nominal costs and time commitment), the low values of these proxies led to the assessment that this outcome is immaterial. This assessment is made as the total value of the outcomes would not meet the materiality threshold used within this report of €2,000.

## 10.6 Summary

The outcomes described within this section are important and valuable to victims. However one outcome was excluded from the SROI calculation, as this did not meet the materiality threshold, i.e. the final figure was significant enough to affect the final SROI figures and therefore the final valuation. This analysis indicates potential for increasing value in relation to the outcomes for victims, either by engaging a higher number of victims who wish to participate (instead of the victim proxies), or if changes to the system meant that victims could be engaged in restorative practices closer to the event of the original crime.

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<sup>21</sup> For example, see <http://www.theworkireland.ie/events> or [www.sanctury.ie](http://www.sanctury.ie)

# 11 The Value of Le Chéile for Training Recipients

## 11.1 Introduction

An evaluation of restorative practice awareness raising training in Ireland provided in Tallaght to over 800 people has shown that training, as well contributing to better interagency working, has led to the majority of trainees being able to manage conflict with a restorative approach (Fives, 2013). The study also found “an overall reduction by 43% of disputes in the workplace, home and community”, and the improvement of “relationships with users of their services (up 61%), their work colleagues (up 47%) and their family members (up 47%)” (Fives, 2013). Similar outcomes were also noted as a result of training undertaken by Le Chéile.

Le Chéile is a registered provider of restorative practices training accredited by the International Institute of Restorative Practices Europe (IIRP Europe). Throughout the period under review Le Chéile has provided 16 different restorative justice-related sets of training. The total attendance at these training programmes was estimated at 342 professionals, based on project records. Programmes were between one to three days, with staff receiving additional supports by way of opportunities to attend annual conferences and to refresh and review their learning. Reviewing training provision from the perspective of days provided in total, Le Chéile has provided 785 individual training or conference days during the lifetime of the project.

The vast majority of the feedback from training was that it was of excellent quality and provided a good learning experience. The interviews with attendees at these programmes identified a significant increase in knowledge and skills as a result of engaging in training. The average number of days of attendance at training or refreshers/conferences was estimated at three days for the 342 professionals included as part of this stakeholder group.

## 11.2 Theory of Change

The following theory of change was developed through interviews with professionals who have attended training. Interviews explored how much change occurred, the value of this change, the length of time this was expected to have an affect and the attribution of Le Cheile of this change.

The training provided participants with new knowledge and skills in relation to restorative methodologies, approaches and the practical skills to apply this in a work context. Following training participants had the opportunity to attend large conferences to further imbed and contextualize their restorative practice within a community context. The use of new skills in a work environment lead to changes in the way they communicated with service users resulting in the outcome of a reduction in conflict and an improvement in professional / service user relationships, including a increase in trust and engagement as a result of improved communications. This change is highlighted through the following quotes:

*‘Yes, it definitely has an impact on your work practice; it’s about a shift in mindset from punitive to repair. It makes a huge change to work practice; it’s a win-win model, as it*

can turn a negative situation into a positive one. As a practitioner you look to strengthen a relationship rather than weaken it. Sanctions don't often work, but getting people to walk in others shoes can have a huge effect'. (training participant 4)

'Our old form of Mediation was not as successful [as Restorative Justice]. People who caused harm previously left the project and ended being pushed to the outside of the group or service, now they remain engaged' (training participant 6)

Those that had not experienced significant change saw a need for more training or a fuller organisational approach to support in order to create real and significant outcomes in the relation to work practice.

Respondents who experienced change also commented on the value of ongoing conferences/seminars and short trainings offered by Le Cheile and that are this had had a significant affect on their ability to apply learning.

## 11.3 Outcome 1: Reduction in Conflict and Improvement in Relationships Due to a Change in Communication Method

### 11.3.1 SROI Assessment of Value

The changes in work practice experienced by professionals who attended the training was based on feedback from interviews, combined with a review of literature of similar training within an Irish context (Fives 2013). The following data has been combined to estimate that 69% of the 342 professionals trained<sup>22</sup> (no.= 236) went onto positively improve their work practice and their relationship with their clients / services users through changes in the way they communicated, which were improved due to the use of restorative justice philosophies, methods and processes.

- Training participant interviews: Four Gardaí were interviewed or participated in focus groups, three stated that the training had a positive influence on their work practice, identifying that it had improved the way they interacted with young people by reducing conflict and increasing young peoples trust and improving communication (75%).
- Training participant Interviews: Ten interviews were conducted with attendees from other social or community services, 70% of whom maintained that they had significantly improved work practice in relation to their engagement with clients (hard to reach clients particularly) through reducing conflict, improving trust and engagement by improved communications.

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<sup>22</sup> 601 attended training and the conference, however a change in work practice has been estimated for only those attending training (342), which has a more intensive skills based focus.

- Research: 61% of participants in the Tallaght Restorative Training programme identified that they got on better with their services users as a result of the restorative practices training (Fives, 2013: 38).

The value of this change has been estimated based on the price of three days of restorative justice training with a U.K organisation, priced at £354,<sup>23</sup> which equates to €450<sup>24</sup>.

As stakeholders in the interviews commented that it is extremely unlikely that they would have developed knowledge and skills in restorative justice without attending training, and therefore experienced the consequent outcomes, the deadweight has been estimated at a low 10%. The timeframe for impact has been estimated at three years, based on participant feedback, which can be summarised as interviewees stating that this would have a significant impact into the foreseeable future, a drop off of 20% has been used.

## 11.4 Summary

Feedback from attendees on the quality of training has been very positive, with the majority of attendees stating that the training was excellent. By reviewing other research and the feedback from the stakeholders interviewed it can be proposed that the training has also had a positive influence on work practice. To strengthen the understanding of this outcome, it is recommended that Le Chéile further develop their outcome framework to better record the impact that their training has on knowledge and skills development and consequent improvements in the workplace or community.

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<sup>23</sup> A figure taken from the IIRP website: [http://djci4vzeaw44g.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2014/09/2014-15\\_IIRP\\_EU\\_FST.pdf](http://djci4vzeaw44g.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2014/09/2014-15_IIRP_EU_FST.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/> as at 28<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

# 12 The Value of Le Chéile for the Criminal Justice System: Gardaí and the Courts

## 12.1 Introduction

When crime is reduced, this has the effect of bringing down certain costs in terms of State spending. This section seeks to estimate this value of Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project in relation to a potential reduction in state spending on crime-related interventions. Calculating and understanding the value of savings to the criminal justice system is not as straightforward as dividing the costs of the criminal justice by number of people who are estimated to have been removed from the system, and stating this amount as a saving.<sup>25</sup> This is due to the fact that if a young person is diverted away from crime and consequently is not incarcerated in a juvenile detention centre, for example, this does not mean that the full cost of incarceration will be saved, as the centre will still pay certain fixed costs, such as those related to its premises and staff.

This dynamic changes when very large number of people can be diverted from certain services, such as detention centres. Therefore, a small saving through a successful programme could turn into large-scale savings, if the programme was extended nationally and achieved the expected outcomes, i.e. large numbers of young people were diverted from crime and the consequent State provision.

When devising the value of outcomes for a smaller number of people, such as within this SROI, calculations for State savings need to be made based on marginal costs. The logic behind this is that while staff will not be made redundant, or a wing of a detention centre closed, it is possible that some resources can be re-diverted to other valuable activities or potentially saved all together.

Court is a good example of this. The removal of eleven individuals from this system will not save the costs of court operation, made up of the costs of wages of judges and other staff as well as courthouse running costs. However, the marginal costs of legal aid, which is paid per individual per case brought to court, can be saved.

It can be assumed that if there are 289 fewer crimes within an area, this will also impact on Gardaí resources. The logic of SROI when applied to this situation means that there is a saving for the proportion of crimes that are reported, as Gardaí will spend less time on the phone receiving reports of crime, and less time in subsequent paper work and investigation and can then divert these resources into other valued tasks. As Gardaí services are overstretched (as noted by several officers who participated in this study), it can be assumed that if staff time is not used on investigating youth crime, these resources could be used elsewhere, such as in an investigation of a serious crime, or in preventative work. This value of spending Gardaí time on other activities can be understood using the proxy of the average cost of Gardaí time. This notion is explained in the quote from an officer interviewed for this evaluation:

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<sup>25</sup> For more information on the difference between fixed and marginal costs, and how these can be used for valuing the work of criminal justice interventions, see Henrichson and Galgano, 2013.

“It [restorative justice] allows the services that are dealing with that young person... more opportunity to deal with more issues within the community that are at this time only at the tip of the iceberg” (Member of An Garda Síochána).

Table 6 below presents the various stages across the criminal justice system at which specific savings may be identified, as well as proxy figures for estimating the impact of the Project. It should also be noted when reviewing the Table below, that the accuracy of the assumptions within it are restricted by limitations in relation to Irish data on the numbers of individuals progressing through each stage of the criminal justice process.

Table 6: Criminal Justice System: points of potential saving

Starting point	Cost to police	Cost to courts / legal fees	Cost of imprisonment / to probation
Assumption that for 17 young people they would not have committed further offences (average 17 crimes per non-desister)	Reporting rate for burglary 50% and for car theft close to 100% - A reporting rate of 75% will be used	Detection rate of 34.6% (CSO, 2012)	20% of court outcomes are referred to probation.  7.5% are for incarceration
Assumptions on saving based on 289 crimes (17 young people)	Reduction in 207 of cases requiring police time involved in taking and responding to reports of crime (75% of 289).	Reduction of 72 legal cases resulting in court and legal costs (representing 11 young people)	Reduction in state service provision post- conviction of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 probation referrals</li> <li>• six prison sentences</li> </ul> Based on sentencing breakdown from Irish Youth Justice Service (2010)
Source of data for assumptions on use of services	British Crime Survey 2005/6	Central Statistics Office 2010	Irish Youth Justice Service 2010
Cost	€1,568.37 (Anton and Temple 2005)	€1,755.14 (Anton and Temple 2005)	Probation: €6,000 per probation order (Probation Service, 2010: 25)  Prison: €62,800 per young person (based on marginal cost of 20% of €314,000 (Irish Penal Reform Trust, 2014)

The data within this section has been developed based on extensive research, interviews with key professionals in Gardai and Probation and the final analysis been agreed by senior regional staff within the Probation service.

## 12.2 Outcome 1: Reduction in Gardaí Costs

A significant social return on investment analysis of youth mentoring programmes in Minnesota (Anton and Temple, 2005) estimated that the administrative (marginal) costs associated with property crime in 2005 were \$1,651 (€1,568.37 when converted and adjusted to 2014 equivalent) per arrest. It would be expected that of the 289 crimes averted, 207 of these would

have been reported to the police. The analysis of the offending history of young people who had engaged in the Project showed that 46% of young people had in the past committed car crimes, with the remaining crimes primarily being theft or burglary. As such, calculations on the dark figure of crime (that which does not get reported) will be based on the assumption that of the expected crimes that would be committed, 50% would be car-related crimes and 50% burglary or theft. Using information from the British Crime Survey (Home Office, 2006) to estimate the equivalent number of crimes that would be reported to the Gardai, it is estimated that almost all car theft crimes are reported to the police and just under half of burglary and theft related crimes are reported. As such, a reporting rate of 75% will be assumed for the profile of offending activity relevant to this sample.

*“I mean some of the lads that the project has dealt with now, were re-offenders, and they stopped.”  
(Member of An Garda Síochána)*

The same figures for deadweight (76%), attribution and duration will be applied as were used for the calculation of cost saving to the community resulting from decreased incidences of criminal activity.

## 12.3 Outcome 2: Reduction in Judicial System Costs

Applying the detection rate of 34.6<sup>26</sup> to the expected 207 crimes reported to police, it is estimated that 72<sup>27</sup> crimes would progress to court. As noted, the work of Anton and Temple (2005) identified a cost of €1,755.14<sup>28</sup> per court case as an expense to the State.<sup>29</sup> This figure includes the costs of legal aid and other per unit marginal costs. The 72 estimated crimes are multiplied by €1,755.14 to get a total saving of €126,370.

As with all estimates in this section of the SROI, the high deadweight figure of 76% is applied to factor in the number of young people who would naturally have desisted from crime within this period and the attribution figure of 55% is used to account for the joint work of Le Chéile, the Probation Service and other community service providers.

## 12.4 Outcome 3: Reduction in Probation Service Costs

The general views of Probation staff have been described within Part One of this evaluation. Probation is an integral partner in the provision of the Restorative Justice Project, acting as sole referrer and on-going case manager of the young people involved. This section of the report reviews the outcomes experienced by the Probation Service, although any outcomes specifically related to training have been accounted for in the training chapter. A senior

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<sup>26</sup> Detection rate for theft and related offences in 2012 was 34.6% according to the Central Statistics Office (CSO, 2012).

<sup>27</sup> An alternative method for calculating this figure would be to use the figures from the New Economics Foundation (2010) and take the number of expected convictions (4.7) for the 17 young people. This would result in a similar estimate of 79. The lower estimate of 72 was used in order to remain conservative.

<sup>28</sup> When adjusted from 2005 value in USD, converted to euro and adjusted to for inflation.

<sup>29</sup> Another such study, conducted by Zhang (2008) found a similar figure of €1,800 per offence tried in court. To remain conservative the lower estimate was used, however the closeness between these two estimates should provide some validity to the use of this figure as a proxy.

member of the Probation Service within the region has reviewed these assumptions and findings.

Using figures from the Irish Youth Justice Service Annual Report 2010, it is estimated that of the 17 young people who would have re-offended, 11 would have been re-referred to Probation and six would have been sentenced to prison or a juvenile detention facility.<sup>30</sup>

In terms of cost, it is estimated that the 11 probation referrals would have a cost of €6,000 per referral, based upon the average unit cost of a probation order (Probation Service, 2010). This whole figure is included, as it is assumed that Probation time could be diverted to other valuable activities, such as more intensive individual or group work with offenders. The estimations for deadweight and attribution have been estimated as same as those for a reduction in crime, given the inter-relatedness of these outcomes. The duration of the Probation relationship with the client is estimated at two years.

While a reduction in staff time required to be spent on individual cases will not decrease the overall cost of Probation time to the State, it can be logically concluded that savings in Probation supervision means that staff are therefore freed-up to undertake other preventative or risk related work.

This analysis reviews the outcome of fewer repeat, persistent offenders from taking time and resources in the form of staff hours from the Probation Service. When combined with the additional benefits of restorative justice as explained through the SROI analysis, this makes a convincing case for the extension of restorative justice multi-agency arrangements between Community Based Organisations and the Probation Service across Ireland.

## 12.5 Outcome 4: Reduction in Detention Costs

As discussed earlier, the figure representing a saving on prison costs is not straightforward. While some SROI evaluations calculate the entire annual prison cost per person, this review looks just at the marginal costs, as prisons will not close down due to a small number of young people being diverted away from imprisonment through their involvement with Le Chéile. SROI is focused on reporting the real saving to people and the State and on not over-valuing outcomes; as such the marginal costs of incarceration only can be considered.

A review of prison based marginal costs found that the marginal cost to be approx. 20% of the total cost of a prison space. The average cost of a child in a youth detention school in Ireland was €314,000 in 2013 (Irish Penal Reform Trust, 2014) and the average annual cost for adults in prison is €65,542. As the Project works with young people approaching the age of 18, an average of these two figures has been used to ensure there is no overestimation of this cost,

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<sup>30</sup> For the purpose of this calculation, it is assumed that all re-offenders would be convicted and sentenced, as those not sentenced would not be classed in this group as re-offenders. This breakdown of probation and incarceration is based upon statistics contained within the Irish Youth Justice Service Annual Report 2010.



the average of these two numbers being €189,771. Applying the same ratio as found in Massachusetts, it is estimated that the marginal cost per young person diverted away from prison or detention schools is €37,954. Using the figures from above, this figure applies to the six persons who would otherwise be expected to return to prison or a detention school.

## 12.6 Summary

This section has conservatively estimated the savings to the State as a result of reduced recidivism among young people who have accessed Le Chéile. The four points at which saving have been estimated are the:

- Saving to Gardaí of fewer crimes being investigated;
- Saving to the courts of fewer offences being tried;
- Saving to the Probation Service of fewer probation orders being made;
- (Marginal cost) saving to youth detention facilities as result of fewer young people being sent to prison or detention schools.

Each of these savings have been arrived at using conservative estimates based on existing research and other Social Return on Investment studies. A high deadweight of 76% has been applied to all these savings, to take into account the high rate of natural desistance from crime, which would be expected from this age demographic. Likewise, the high attribution figure has also been used, reflecting the fact that young people are worked with by multiple agencies.

# 13 The Value of Le Chéile for the Health Services

## 13.1 Introduction

If problematic or addictive substance use is reduced for young people this will have savings for the health service, most particularly in relation to the cost of treatment. According to our research, it can be estimated that the Le Chéile Project resulted in 10 young people reducing their problematic drug or alcohol use to a non-problematic level without further service intervention, i.e. use of health services. Using research from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's research (NSDUH, 2012) approximately 11 percent of people over 12 who need treatment for problematic substance use receive this. Using this data it can therefore be estimated that only one of these 10 young people would have sought treatment from statutory funded health services at some time in the future had they not reduced their drug and alcohol at this point in their life.

As this information is not based on current service use, but rather the reduction of future service use costs, research was considered a more valuable source of information than local service representation, as local health service staff have not been involved in the project to date, and information on per service user costs not publically available at the regional level.

## 13.2 The SROI value

The approximate costs of treatment for substance use in Ireland, per person seeking treatment, can be calculated at €7,054 per year. This figure is arrived at by dividing the substance use health care cost data in a given year by the number of people receiving treatment in that same time frame. In 2012, the total spent on addiction services can be calculated by adding the amount of State funding spent directly by the HSE and Drugs Task Force funded services, the figures are, respectively: €90,752,000 (Dáil Eireann Debate Ref 599, 2014) and €20,003,720 (Dáil Eireann Debate Ref 112, 2014). The total number of people recorded as accessing addiction services was 15,699 for alcohol and all other drugs (HRB data, 2014). Therefore, the cost per individual in treatment was €7,054. There was no equal and opposite increase in immediate health services as youth reduced problematic use without health service intervention such as methadone and rehabilitation.

The time frame for this saving is estimated, very conservatively, at two years, with the same deadweight and drop off as used within the initial calculations for substance misuse.

## 13.3 Summary

A reduction in substance misuse will have an impact for individuals as well as more broadly for the health service, which will save on health expenditure per individual who do not require treatment. While not established as a primary outcome of the Restorative Justice Project, a reduction in substance misuse was identified as an ancillary outcome for some of the young people.

# 14 Summary of Inputs into the Programme: Funding and Volunteer Time

## 14.1 Funding

Le Chéile is funded primarily through State funding, with a smaller amount of philanthropic funding also received. Funding from January 2010 to June 2014 is shown in the table below, and covered all Project costs including premises, staffing and associated administration and event costs.

Table 7: Funding Jan 2010 - June 2014

	2010 (€)	2011 (€)	2012 (€)	2103 (€)	Q1 & Q2 of 2014 (€)	Total (€)
Irish Youth Justice Services		40,000	40,000	36,500	18,250	134,750
Limerick Regeneration/City Council	70,000	49,000	43,962	40,200	20,100	223,262
National Lottery (Department of children)			8,000			8,000
The Ireland Fund		8,000				8,000
Commission for support of victims of Crime			5,000	5,000	2,500	12,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>97,000</b>	<b>96,962</b>	<b>81,700</b>	<b>40,850</b>	<b>386,512</b>

This financial input represents the monetary investment but does not represent the total amount of resources invested into the programme over the three and half years, such as the hours of the Project Advisory Group or volunteers. An SROI costs out all the inputs and all the outcomes, regardless of whether these have an obvious monetary allocation within the organisation's accounting sheets. This chapter highlights additional resource inputs into the Project from various sources, as noted below:

## 14.2 Probation Resources

Probation have contributed resources to the Le Chéile restorative justice process, through the following means:

- Attendance of one Senior Probation Officer on the Project Advisory Group (including all preparation, travel and associated work), estimated at two hours per quarter, which have an approximate value of €36 per hour,<sup>31</sup> meaning a total contribution of €72 per month, representing a cost of €1,008.
- Contribution of staff time to assessments at 2 hours<sup>32</sup> x 62 assessments, valued at €27.40 per hour (average of €49,317 per annum, based on a pay scale from €33,294 - €65,340). This equals a total contribution of €3,397.

<sup>31</sup> Based on a Senior Probation Officer Average salary of €65,000

<sup>32</sup> These includes one hour of assessment plus time for, preparation, follow-up, travel and other admin.

- Four review sessions or one hour each for the 42 young people engaged in the programme, valued at €27.40 per hour. This equals of total contribution of €4,603.

The total of these contributions equals €9,008 of input into the programme from Probation.

### 14.3 Victim Proxies

Victim Impact Panels are reliant upon the voluntary investment of time of victim proxies. Each victim proxy provides, on average, three working days of time to the Project. Time volunteered to the Project involved attendance at a two-day training programme as well as preparation, attendance and debriefing following a Victim Impact Panel. This translates to 21 hours, which when calculated at the average industrial wage<sup>33</sup> (valued at €21 per hour) equals €441 per volunteer. The total contribution for 5 volunteers is therefore €2,205.

### 14.4 Victim Liaison Officers

In addition to the above, the cost of Garda time spent being trained for and performing the role of VLO must also be included. Each of the nine VLOs received three days training, equating to a cost of €186.43 per day<sup>34</sup> or a total of €5,034 for the training in terms of Garda hours.

The on-going resource investment in the project in terms of time spent being a VLO is more difficult to calculate. Based on conversations with VLOs it was found that the role generally took between 0 and 4 hours per month for each of the VLOs, with some of the VLOs stating that they spent little or no time on the role. Therefore, it has been assumed that half of the eight active VLOs spend two hours per month on the role, resulting in an average of eight hours per month (€186.43) for the past one and a half years totalling an on-going investment of €3,355 in staff hours<sup>35</sup>. This represents a Garda working hour investment of approximately €8,390 over the SROI period.

### 14.5 Steering Group Participation

The Steering Group involved a total of eight individuals.<sup>36</sup> The group meet quarterly for meetings that average one and a half to two hours. Over the 3.5 years to which the SROI refers this translates to a total of 14 meetings of two hours per each of the seven professionals: a total of 196 hours. This has also been valued based on the average industrial wage, equalling a total contribution of €4,116 in professional support.

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.cso.ie>

<sup>34</sup> Based on an average annual wage of €44,744, which is the indicative average wage as identified by the Garda Representative Association in 2013.

<sup>35</sup> (18 months x €186.43)

<sup>36</sup> The value of their contribution here excludes the contribution of the Senior Probation Officer whose hours have been calculated as part of the Probation contribution in the preceding section.

# 15 Sensitivity Test and Discussion of the SROI Valuation

## 15.1 Overview

This section outlines the final SROI valuation. This section also looks at how robust this ratio is in relation to other logical assumptions that could have been made in place of the SROI calculations. To establish the sensitivity of the final valuation ratio a variety of other scenarios have been tested with the SROI spread sheet.

SROI is a precise methodology, although the final valuations are based on a series of assumptions leading to the overall figure. This general accuracy is the strength of the methodology if explored and critiqued in a transparent manner. Supporting transparency and critique are the aims of this chapter of the report. It is this discussion which also encourages stakeholders to question for themselves how much certain outcomes are worth.

## 15.2 The Discount Rate

In this study all the financial values in year two and three have been calculated using a discount rate of 3.5%. This figure appears in the top left of the impact map. This is the standard rate recommended for the public sector by HM Treasury in the UK (2008).

## 15.3 Sensitivity Testing

Sensitivity testing is a process that considers different valuations or discounts than those used within the impact map and described within this report. The reason for undertaking a sensitivity test is to understand how vulnerable the SROI ratio is to changes in logic and different ways of assessing value. Sensitivity testing has focused on areas of high value and on areas where data and evidence for the assumption are least robust. Only downwards testing was undertaken, meaning only scenarios resulting in a decrease in overall value was tested. The following situations were adapted with the SROI sheet as part of the sensitivity test.

- Deadweight in relation to client outcomes - all values were doubled for the following outcomes: increase in empathy, improved family relationships, remaining in education, reduction in substance misuse and positive change in peer groups. The highest change this resulted in was a reduction of valuation of three cents for positive change in peer groups (final valuation €2.87), the rest of the changes resulted in a change of no more than two cents. Note that 'Reduced involvement in the criminal justice system' was not put through this test as it has a very high deadweight at 76%, which is based on adequate research data.
- Deadweight in relation to other outcome categories - all the outcomes (with the exception of values pegged at 76%, rationale as noted above) were sensitivity tested by doubling the deadweight. Testing on 'perception of safety / reduction in fear' resulted in a downwards change to €2.82 and 'Reduction in conflict and improvement in service user relationships due to a change in communication', resulted in a reduction to €2.84. All other tests resulted in a change of only one or two cents.

- Attribution was raised from 0 to 20% for the following categories (change in value is in brackets); 'Perception of safety / reduction in fear' (€2.83), 'Reduction in conflict and improvement in service user relationships due to a change in communication' (€2.80). In all other categories changes resulted in less than three cents change or were not tested as the figure for attribution was based on concrete feedback and were of a significant value, i.e. the lowest attribution figure was a significant 33%.
- Drop off – for all drop off discounts of 20% and 25% these were increased to 40%, the most change this resulted in was a reduction in value to €2.81, however the majority resulted in a change of three cents or less. Drop offs with higher existing rates (reduction in crime, perception of safety) were increased to 50%, resulting in the most change to €2.79.
- Valuations – Not many valuation revisions were undertaken as in all cases these were calculated conservatively, i.e. in general the lower of two potential valuation methods was selected. However one area that was tested was the valuation for perception of safety which was valued at €3,976 (half of well-being valuation averaged against a low cost house alarm system). Given that victim proxies were not directly involved with the crime committed by the particular young person, and that the intervention was undertaken after a significant time, it could be argued that this represents an over-valuation. If this amount was reduced by 50%, the final valuation would be €2.73.

The sensitivity tests show that the vast majority of alternate calculations reduce the final amount to between €2.80 and €2.90. This is also true for the majority of combinations of two or more of the tests. A small number of the combined changes reduced the overall valuation to around €2.62. These tests indicated that the SROI assumptions and calculations present a reasonably stable valuation.

## 15.4 SROI Calculation and Discussion

To calculate the Social Return on Investment of the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project, the total cost of outcomes over time (less deadweight, attribution, displacement and drop off) is divided by the total cost of inputs. Calculated in this way, the final assessment of social value is €1,190,583.85. If the initial investment is subtracted from this figure, this results in a total social return of €780,353.85

For every €1 of investment in Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project this returns over €2.80 in social value.

This SROI shows the following proportional division of value across the various stakeholder groups, presented in order of the percentage of value accrued:<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Total percentages sum to 101 due to rounding.

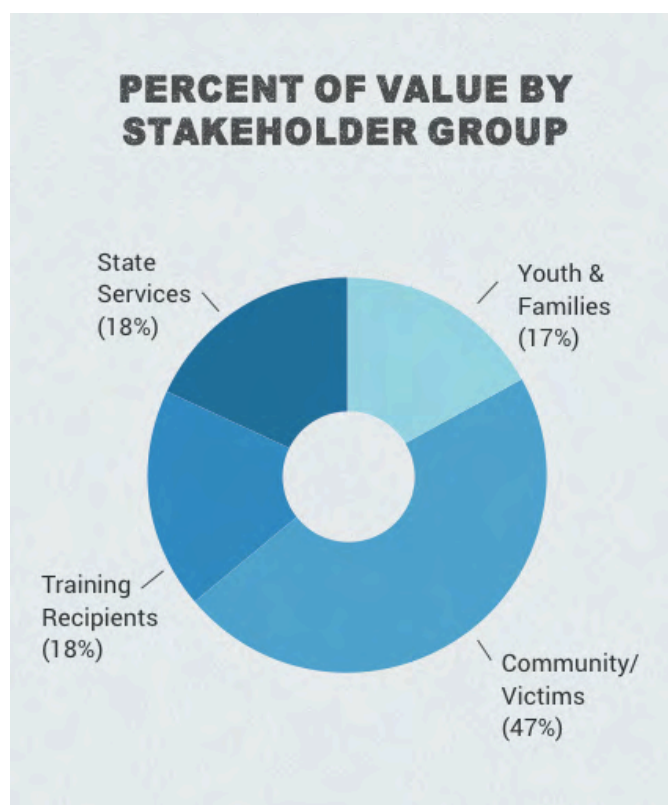


Figure 6: Percentage of SROI Value by stakeholder group

Understanding the proportionate value of the service across the various stakeholder groups assists in indicating the areas where value can be further increased as well as potential areas of risk in relation to potential future reduction in value. These two issues of enhancing value and the risk of value reduction will be discussed in sequence.

The SROI indicates the best way for Le Chéile to increase the social value of the programme is to work with an increased number of young people. At the time of finishing the SROI, the project was working with a caseload approximately 20% greater than the average number over the whole period of the SROI. This is due to the fact that in the initial years substantial time was spent on project set-up and consolidation of the model. If the SROI map is completed using the current figures for youth engagement, it would show an increased return of approximately €3.50. This highlights the potential for the service to further expand its work and the positive impact this will have on the social value it generates.

Likewise, if the number of victims engaged in the process is increased, this will also increase value. An increase in victim engagement of 25% (16 to 20) will increase the social value from €2.80 to €2.99. These increases in the value of service are both sizable and it may be possible to achieve them through changes in the way work is done, i.e. referrals routes adapted, rather than significant workload additions to the project. This analysis should be seen as adding additional weight to the recommendations, which are aimed at increasing referrals to the service or the engagement of victims. The SROI indicates that increasing referral numbers will

have a significant impact for all stakeholder groups, most notably for the community, State services and recipients themselves.

Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project has trained a significant number of people over the last three and half years, with the value of training representing a very significant proportion of the overall value of the project at 18%. If the next period sees a reduction in training numbers, this value will need to be replaced by further client or family work in order to maintain the overall social value. This analysis should also be considered in light of recommendations regarding exploration of potential training provision to Gardaí or other statutory providers.

In order to refine the SROI assessments over the coming years, a framework that has clear methods for capturing data on outcomes as listed in the impact map, should be developed. This information should be used to further refine the logic and information within this SROI analysis. This may include systems to gather information on recidivism, which within this SROI was based on research proxies rather than real data. It is arguable that Le Chéile could have had better results than the average impact on recidivism statistics, which were used within this analysis. The SROI also highlighted some unintended outcomes such as reduction in substance use. This information, as well as high value outcomes such as remaining in education, should ideally be recorded as part of the regular ongoing work of the Project. The need for an outcome framework is further discussed within the recommendations.

## 15.5 Summary

The SROI analysis shows that for every €1 invested Le Chéile creates over €2.80 of social value. The sensitivity test has shown this figure to be of an acceptable reliability within the context of the core assumptions made within the SROI. This value is spread between all stakeholders, with the majority of value being received by the community and victims of crime, showing that the project clearly contributes to restorative practice within the local environment in which it operates.



# Part three: Findings and Recommendations

## 16 Findings

### 16.1 Introduction

This section summarises the main findings of the report, as well as reviewing the organisation's progress against its original project objectives. The final recommendations are also presented below.

### 16.2 Findings: Young People

Young people reported very positive experiences of engagement with the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project. Those who participated in this study reported being appropriately prepared for what was going to happen during the restorative intervention, although some young people would have wanted a bit more information about the possible outcomes of the meetings. Young people reported that they were able to ask questions and that they were listened to by the project workers, with their views considered throughout the process. They felt respected and well supported by staff and project workers who put those who felt nervous about the process at ease. Young people found the experience of the Project emotional – especially when having to meet victims face-to-face – but felt it not to be intimidating. Only one of the young people interviewed stated that they thought the Project was not really for them, but even this person said they would recommend it to friends or siblings in a similar situation.

In terms of individual outcomes, young people reported that the Project has had a positive, and in some cases profound, impact on their lives. Young people reported increased levels of empathy (which was supported and shown to be statistically significant by quantitative data recorded by the Project), improved family relationships, decreased substance use, increased pro-social peer relationships and an overall reduction in their involvement in criminal behaviour and engagement with criminal justice agencies.

### 16.3 Findings: Victims

Achieving high levels of victim participation has been noted as a challenge among many restorative justice projects across different jurisdictions. The findings of this evaluation are no different, however it is noted that the Project has taken steps to promoting victim participation as well as putting in place processes, such as Victim impact Panels, which support providing restorative interventions even where there is no direct victim participation.

The victims interviewed for this research (all of whom acted as 'proxy victims' for the Project) found restorative justice to be a more inclusive, respectful and meaningful approach than the

traditional criminal justice system and generally reported a very positive experience of their engagement with the Project. Half of those interviewed took part in Victim Impact Panels as proxy victim to explain to young people the impact of offending on the lives of those affected by their behaviour. They praised their preparation for these panels and commented on the professional approach by Le Chéile staff in the sessions. Some victim interviewees noted the importance of victim participation and wanted to see more engagement with the Project from a greater number of those affected by crimes. Victims reported decreased fear of crime and associated anxiety after participating in restorative interventions as well as noting a sense of 'closure' with regard to their experience of victimisation.

## 16.4 Findings: Parents

Parents of the young people involved with Le Chéile all described very positive experiences of the Project, which they felt was respectful and inclusive of them as family members. Parents reported positive changes for themselves, such as greater understanding of what was going on for their children, often linked with improvements in their parenting skills and approaches. An outcome of this was a lower level of stress or anxiety. Parents also reported learning more about issues such as the reasons for offending and the nature of addiction. It was reported that this information helped them to deal with and respond to challenging behaviours rather than reacting out of frustration. The second main benefit cited by parents was the change in behaviour of their children, this was seen as reducing stress and conflict within the home, often having a further impact upon other family members such as siblings.

## 16.5 Findings: Interagency Working

The multi-agency approach employed by the Project has proven very successful. The Project is embedded within the youth justice network of service providers in Limerick and works in conjunction with the Limerick Young Persons Probation (YPP). From the Probation Service point of view, the Project has been core to their ability to provide a range of restorative interventions rather than just using family conferencing available under the *Children Act 2001*. Thanks to this range of interventions, the work with young people was able to take a more developmental approach and the models applied in the Project are more flexible and fit for purpose for work with, in particular, children and young people involved in persistent offending. The broader impact of the Project was also evident, including through the provision of highly praised training to An Garda Síochána's Victim Liaison Officers which they were then able to utilise not only in their direct involvement with the Project but also in the course of their day-to-day duties.

## 16.6 Findings: Social Return on Investment Analysis

The SROI analysis, which was undertaken as part of this evaluation found the project to be very worthwhile from a value for money perspective. It was found that after three and a half years the project's total investment of €410,230<sup>38</sup> generated a social return of €1,190,583.85. This equates to a return of over €2.80 for every €1 invested.

Through the use of an SROI technique known as sensitivity testing, it has also been found that with the initial developmental work of the project now largely completed, and when operating at full capacity, the project has the potential to see a social return of approximately €3.50 for every €1 invested.

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<sup>38</sup> It should be noted that this figure is inclusive not only of funding, but also of other inputs, which have been valued such as time from Probation Officers and members of the Gardai. For a total breakdown of this figure, please see the SROI map in section.

## 17 Recommendations

### 17.1 Project Effectiveness

As stated earlier in this report, the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project arose from the need to provide a pathway for developmental work with children and young people in conflict with the law. In its design, it was to assist the Young Persons Probation work with persistent and serious offenders, who often present with multiple challenges and needs which would not necessarily be addressed through the use of statutory instruments such as the Family Conferencing under the *Children Act 2001*.

This work, however, while representing the core function of the Project, is not its only work. From inception, Le Chéile have been very ambitious not only in providing needs-based, child-centred interventions for young people and their families, but also in creating a positive impact for victims and the wider community. The organisation has also been and continues to be a key part of the interagency response to maintaining a wider culture of restorative practices within and beyond the criminal justice sector. In the four years since its inception, Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project developed effective relationships with statutory and voluntary organisations in the region, which mean, for example, that they can call on partner organisations to support reparation work with young people and refer to other services if needed.

Having reviewed the qualitative and quantitative evidence collected in the evaluation process, it is clear that the Project is fulfilling its original objectives. While some of the processes may need some fine-tuning, the Project proved itself to be reflective and committed to its own development through learning from its own practice and through taking advice and direction from Project partners.

Recommendation 1: The Project should continue to provide restorative justice interventions to young people in Limerick through continued alignment with the Probation Service Restorative Justice Strategy. Specifically, the Restorative Justice Strategy (Probation Service, 2013), in goal 2, identifies a need to “Continue to build capacity and capability in the development and delivery of Restorative Justice projects/ programmes”, with a specifically named action being to “Explore the opportunities for further development of Restorative Justice projects / programmes nationally as well as for specific categories of offenders including young people, adult offenders who have hurt people and members of the Travelling community.”

### 17.2 Data Collection

Over time, the Project has developed a number of forms, templates and documents that support its work and appear largely fit for purpose. The analysis for this evaluation identified that where the information flow could be improved is in the systematic analysis, review and use of this information to form a service wide feedback loop. An example of the need for such feedback, identified earlier in this report, was the more systematic analysis of reasons for victims choosing to engage or not to engage with the project.

In order for information to become knowledge, a review should be undertaken regarding how information is managed and analysed. This would likely involve the introduction of a Client Relationship Management (CRM) system, which can both collect information as well as produce reports for both internal use as well as meeting the needs of Project funders.

Consideration should also be given to what information is shared with and presented to the steering group, which itself has a roll in relation to the development and direction of the Project.

Recommendation 2: Each outcome of the Project, especially those for young people and victims, should have a corresponding indicator or set of indicators, which would allow the Project to review its effectiveness against each of these outcomes. This should be integrated as part of the existing processes such as the initial agreement meeting and the case closure meeting. In relation to reoffending, the Project may wish to explore agreeing a process with funders and its statutory partners (Gardai and Probation Service) to review levels of recidivism, giving due consideration to data protection implications. Any such review of recidivism should take account not just of levels of re-offending but also severity and intensity of offending over specific timeframes. Outcome information should also be gathered for the provision of training as well as victim and family engagement in restorative processes. It is important to note that information on ancillary benefits to service users, while important to record, should not become targets or Key Performance Indicators.

Recommendation 3: One central data management system, such as a CRM (Client Relationship Management) system should be introduced to allow for systematic collection and utilisation of the information gathered by the project. The continued use of validated tools such as the Victim Empathy Scale, which provides rich client outcome data is also recommended. This will allow the already considerable and consistent amount of information recorded to be better utilised by Le Chéile for review and strategic purposes. Outcome indicator tools should be considered for each key outcome for young people, such as desistance from crime, educational outcomes as well as peer and family relationships. Where outcomes are identified for other stakeholders, such as victims/victim proxies or family members, the project should consider how outcomes could be recorded in an on-going basis.

### 17.3 Information for Children and Young People

The evidence collected in this evaluation, and in particular the invaluable feedback provided by the young people, clearly demonstrates that the best interest of the child lie at the heart of the Project's practice. Young people have, however, on occasion reported that some information perhaps needs some more explanation, particularly in relation to ensuring voluntary participation and the progress of their cases when victim participation is envisaged, and on the outcomes of reparations (such as letters of apology).

Recommendation 4: Le Chéile should use this feedback to fine-tune its processes and consider if there are any points of the process where more information could be made available to young people, particularly if there is any delay in their case. In line with international standards, the principle of voluntary participation should be reiterated to young people at agreed points

throughout the process, recognising the difference between mandatory probation engagement and voluntary participation in the Restorative Justice Project. The Project should continue the process of case closure meetings, which promote all parties finishing the restorative process with agreement and clarity.

## 17.4 Victim Engagement

As most interventions at this particular time involve referrals to the Victim Empathy Programme, the engagement with direct victims has perhaps been lower than initially expected. Having reviewed the process for victim engagement that is in place, this evaluation has found that many necessary procedures have been developed to ensure that if victims wish to engage, they have an opportunity to do.

Recommendation 5: Le Chéile should embed a system to regularly analyse information regarding victim engagement, continuing to promote victim engagement and understand what works for victims. This can be done as part of the introduction of the new data management system. This should also include the use of an agreed victim participation strategy, containing all good practice for engaging volunteers as outlined in this report. Victim engagement should continue to be reviewed on a systematic basis, in conjunction with both statutory partners as well as victim support organisations.

Recommendation 6: Le Chéile should consider the continued need to raise the profile of restorative justice to the general public in Limerick, with a view to increasing victim participation in the longer term. This work should be undertaken in conjunction with other providers, particularly victim support services. Also, this work may include the use of additional information formats, such as social media, video and online content, which can help explain the restorative justice processes to victims and followed by directions for initial contact with the VLOs. Victim Liaison Officers working with the Project. As a method of profile and awareness raising the project should continue to organise the annual Restorative Justice conference.

## 17.5 Interagency Working

The Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project has developed an effective interagency support structure, which is a pre-requisite for the provision of services to vulnerable client groups. Le Chéile has undertaken significant consultation and engagement with stakeholders, to position the Project as a well-known and regarded service within the eco-system of service delivery in the region. To support replicability of this model, it is suggested that the next phase of this engagement be the sign off of agreed interagency protocols. To have impact, this agreement will need to be signed off on and agreed by all agencies at high level within the region. This will ensure the continuation of systemic working processes in addition to the existing positive relationships. The ultimate aim of these negotiations will be to increase referrals into the programme.

Recommendation 7: Le Chéile should use the findings of this evaluation to support and continue the agreement and formal adopting of written interagency protocols, which are

agreed and signed by all involved agencies, including but not limited to: Le Chéile, the Probation Service, An Garda Síochána, host agencies, victim support services and any other identified organisations. This protocol should detail existing and emerging procedures such as referral routes and criteria, working arrangements between staff and management, complaints mechanisms, gaps and blocks procedures and roles and responsibilities of all parties involved. Clarity and agreement should be sought with victim support services to ensure clear processes and agreement on roles and responsibilities. This document should be developed with consideration of the other recommendations listed within this section of the report.

## 17.6 Referral Pathways

The outcomes of the Project have demonstrated an effective model for working with vulnerable young people involved in the criminal justice system. As such it is recommended that the Project ensure it has the processes and structures in place which allow it to provide these interventions to all those who need it. The capacity of the service is supported by the fact that after four years since the establishment of the Project, resources and protocols have been developed such as; volunteers, close and effective relationships with Project partners (including An Garda Síochána and the Probation Service), and clear effective working processes. These resources and relationships place the Restorative Justice Project in an ideal position to increase the number of referrals received. This evaluation has found two viable options available to the Project in terms of increasing referral numbers:

Recommendation 8: The Project could explore, in partnership with the Probation Service, the potential to work with vulnerable young adults (over the age of 18) involved in criminal behaviour and advocate such an extension of service. The successes of the Restorative Justice Project show promising outcomes for young people, which would likely be of similar benefit for young adults. The expansion of the age group is in line with internal Probation Service strategy documents. Subject to appropriate and further resourcing, there is no reason why this Project could not also provide interventions to young adults over the age of 18.

Recommendation 9: Undertake a review, in conjunction with An Garda Síochána and Young Persons Probation, as to the potential for the Le Chéile Restorative Justice project accept pre-court referrals. This may involve supporting and working with the existing Youth Diversion Programme and other community projects to provide restorative interventions such as victim empathy programmes to pre-court young offenders.

## 17.7 Resources

With funding for one project worker, the Project is limited, at the moment, in its capacity for expansion or growth in relation to working with other target groups, such as pre-court referrals, post-sentence referrals or work with young adults.

Recommendation 10: Any expansion of this effective model must be supported with appropriate resources such as core funding. The model has demonstrated value for money of over €2.80 for every €1 invested. As of 2014 the project is working at an increased capacity which is estimated to provide a return of approximately €3.50 for every €1 invested. The lack of

core funding, and inability to offer permanent or long term contracts may hamper the Project's ability to retain suitably qualified staff.

## 17.8 Wider Replicability

The Restorative Justice Project has not only created a template of good practice in terms of the resources developed but has also shown the inter-agency working arrangements and structures developed to be effective and fit for purpose.

Recommendation 11: A review should be undertaken by Le Chéile in partnership with the Gardaí in relation to the potential cost benefit of making IIRP training available to Gardaí across the Limerick division. This training provided by Le Chéile has been credited with promoting awareness of restorative practices among members of the Gardaí who would otherwise not have access to this training, as well as promoting restorative practices. Any review should consider the benefits of external training to Gardaí in relation to highlighting alternative models of work, from qualified IIRP trainers with a restorative perspective and approach. This could include training to more Victim Liaison Officers, as well as Community Gardaí.

Recommendation 12: The structural and procedural model developed, including the innovative use of Victim Impact Panels, by the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project has demonstrated its effectiveness and is primed for replication in regions with similar existing interagency structures specifically where existing relationships and working arrangements exist between Le Chéile and the Young Persons Probation Service. The existing network and infrastructure of Le Chéile Mentoring services across the country provide an ideal launch pad for such roll out. Additionally, the relatively recent establishment of a network of Children's Services Committees across the country provides may provide an opportunity for replication of the interagency working processed developed by the Le Chéile Restorative Justice Project.



## 18 Glossary

**Attribution:** attribution is an assessment of how much the outcome is as a result of the activity or intervention of the organisation under review, and how much is due to other organisations or interventions.

**Deadweight:** This is an estimation of the amount of change that would have occurred without the intervention.

**Displacement:** Some value that is created may merely displace the same value for other stakeholders. Displacement is an assessment of how much of the outcome has displaced other outcomes.

**Drop-off:** As time passes after an initial intervention, the causality between the initial intervention and the continued outcome will lessen; drop-off describes this relationship.

**Duration:** How long an outcome will last after the initial intervention.

**Financial proxy:** This is an estimation of a financial value for the outcome when a market value does not exist.

**Impact map:** This is a spreadsheet which accompanies an SROI report and which contains all the information and calculations that result in the final SROI assessment.

**Inputs:** The resources that are used to create the intervention by each stakeholder group.

**Materiality:** In an SROI, if information is material, this means that this inclusion will affect the final valuation within an SROI, and therefore affect decision-making. If a piece of information or a stakeholder group will have an effect on the SROI then this needs to be included in the process.

**Outcomes:** The changes that occur as a result of the intervention. In an SROI, outcomes include planned and unplanned, as well as positive and negative changes.

**Outputs:** The amount of activity communicated in numerical units, i.e. three people.

**Stakeholders:** People and organisations that are affected by the activity.

**Theory of Change:** the story about the sequence of events and changes that led to final outcomes for participants.

**Restorative Justice:** A process “whereby parties with a stake in a specific offence collectively resolve how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future” (Marshall 1999).

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## 19.1 Appendix 1– Information on Materiality Assessments

Stakeholder	Outcomes	Relevance. The outcomes are related to the objectives and scope of the intervention or what happened to stakeholders as a result of the intervention.	Significance. The outcomes are of a scale that will have some influence on the final outcome of the SROI. The threshold for materiality in the SROI was €2,000, values under this changed the SROI by only 1 cent or less, which was considered immaterial when considering the overall valuation band.	Point at which this information was excluded from the SROI
Young people attending victim empathy programme	Increase in empathy	yes	yes	
	Improved family relationships	yes	yes	
	Reduced involvement in the criminal justice system	yes	yes	
	Remaining in education	yes	yes	
	Reduction in substance misuse	yes	yes	
	Positive change in peer groups	yes	yes	
	Increase in confidence	no		Excluded at the interview analysis phase as this was not a clear theme
Family Members	Improved parenting skills	yes	yes	
	Reduction in stress and anxiety	yes	yes	
Community (including community members and local organisations that represent them)	Reduction in criminal behaviour	yes	yes	
Victim proxies	Perception of safety / reduction in fear	yes	yes	
	Increased empathy for young people	yes	No, this value did not reach the materiality threshold of 2,000 and so was considered to be insignificant in relation to the overall impact of the intervention.	Excluded at the SROI valuation stage



	Increased sense of justice	No		Excluded at the interview stage as victim proxies did not receive this outcome.
	Ability to attain closure on the event / symbolic restitution	yes	yes	
Training participants	Knowledge as a result of provision of training / seminars	yes	yes	
	Improvement in work practice (application of knowledge)	yes	yes	
Probation	Reduction in probation cases	yes	yes	
Garda	Reduction in police time per reported crime	yes	yes	
Courts	Reduced number of cases before the courts	yes	yes	
Neighbours of young people		no	no	Excluded at the stakeholder mapping stage as neighbours were considered too distant from the actions and impacts of the project to be affected directly.
Irish youth Justice Service (Juvenile detention)	Reduced number of young people sentenced to youth detention school	yes	yes	
Funding bodies (Limerick Regeneration /City Council, National Lottery (Department of children), The Ireland Fund, Commission for Support of Victims of Crime).	No direct outcomes	no	No, funders did not receive direct outcomes as a result of the intervention. Outcomes were considered to be received by victims or community rather than the funders themselves.	Outcomes excluded at the interview stage based on stakeholder feedback.

## Appendix 2: Focus Group and Interview Schedules

### Focus Group Schedule

Focus groups were aimed at exploring the theory of change, i.e. the causal chain of events and outcomes. The process involved open discussion with attendees, which was mapped onto the flip chart. The themes /questions for discussion for each group are described below; these were adapted for each stakeholder group. The first three discussion points were used to develop a theory of change:

- General experience of engaging with the service
- Walk through the engagement with the service (for young people) this involved hearing about the service, and then receiving a series of services, whereas for professionals this involved their initial engagement at a policy or programme level for instance?
- What happened or changed through out this process, what happened first and then secondly etc?
- How valuable were the outcomes and change?
- How much did other services contribute to changes?
- Were there any negative outcomes for you, or any others that you can think of?
- What could improve?
- Are there any next steps for you/the project (as relevant)?

Attendees were offered the chance to see the research at its completion or receive emailed versions of responses.

### Young People Interviews

1. Can you tell us how were you referred to the Le Chéile restorative justice project?
2. What kind of process were you involved in (Conference, reparation, mediation, victim impact panel)?
3. Did someone talk to you about how your involvement in the project is going to look like/what is restorative justice project?
4. Did you know who will be present at the meetings?
5. Who was present at the meetings?
6. Did anyone talk to you about what to expect from the meeting/restorative justice project?
7. Did anyone talk to you about what would happen if you did not attend?
8. Were you told about the possible outcomes of the restorative justice process/the meetings?
9. Did you have an opportunity to ask questions about the process? If yes, were they answered?
10. What were your expectations of the restorative justice project?
11. What was going on for you before you accessed the Restorative Justice project?
12. Did you want to take part in the project? If yes, why? If not, why not?
13. Can you tell us how did you feel about taking part in the project?
14. Can you tell us how did you feel about the outcome of the meetings/conference/action plan? Was there anything that you had to do after the conference? (for example, apologise to the victim; do some work for the victim for free; do some work in the community for free; undertake any courses?)
15. Did you think your views were listened to/respected during the meetings? Did you feel that you were involved in the decisions made at the meetings?
16. What did taking part in the conference/meetings mean to you?
17. Were there any other interventions or services offered?
18. Did you see any changes in your behaviour after your involvement in the conference/meetings? What were these?
19. Did you think your view of the victim changed? Did you understand how the victim felt?
20. Were you able to complete your action plan? If yes, how did you feel about the things you needed to do as part of it? If not, why not?
21. What changed in your life as a result of Le Chéile RJ?

22. (for each outcome named) Is there anything else that would have been worth as much to you or helped you get the same outcome, how valueable was this change to you?
23. (for each outcome named) How much of that would or might have happened anyway?
24. (for each outcome named) Is this all due to Le Chéile?
25. Were there any negative outcomes?

### Victim Interviews

1. Can you tell us how were you referred to the Le Chéile restorative justice project?
2. What kind of process were you involved in (Conference, mediation, victim impact panel)?
3. Did someone talk to you about how your involvement in the project is going to look like/what is restorative justice project?
4. Did you know who will be present at the meetings?
5. Who was present at the meetings?
6. Did anyone talk to you about what to expect from the meeting/restorative justice project?
7. Did you want to meet the young person? If yes, why? If not, why?
8. Were you told about the possible outcomes of the restorative justice process/the meetings/what the young person will be required to do?
9. Did you have an opportunity to ask questions about the process? If yes, were they answered?
10. What were your expectations of the restorative justice project?
11. Can you tell us how did you feel about taking part in the project?
12. Can you tell us how did you feel about the outcome of the meetings/conference/action plan agreed for the young person?
13. Did you think your views were listened to/respected during the meetings? Did you feel that you were involved in the decisions made at the meetings?
14. Did you feel that your questions were answered by the young person?
15. What did taking part in the conference/meetings mean to you? Did you feel that the harm done by the crime against you was addressed?
16. Did you feel that the process lessen the impact of the crime on you? If yes, in what way? If not, can you tell us why not?
17. Did you get a sense of closure?
18. Before you were involved with the RJ programme, how had you been affected by the crime you were a victim of? Did any of this change?
19. Were you told if the young person completed their action plan? If yes, did you feel that this was a fair 'punishment' for the crime?
20. Did anything else change for you after being involved with the Restorative Justice Programme
21. (for each outcome named) Is there anything else that would have been worth as much to you or helped you get the same outcome, how valueable was this change to you?
22. (for each outcome named) How much of that would or might have happened anyway?
23. (for each outcome named) Is this all due to Le Chéile?
24. Were there any negative outcomes?

### Professional Interviews

1. Please give us an overview of your / your organisation's involvement and role in the process.
2. How does the process work? Please talk us through the stages from referral, engagement with your people / victims, preparation, meetings, follow up.
3. In general, what percentage of your work is spent on the RJ project?
4. What are the arrangements put in place at the end / follow up?
5. Do you engage with the young people after their engagement with the service?

6. What happens as a result of the project? Are there any unexpected outcomes? How do you know these changes are being made?
7. What is the impact of the RJ project on your work and for your organisation?
8. Is there anything that you think worked particularly well in the process?
9. Is there anything that you think could be improved for others?
10. If you could influence the future of the project, is there anything you would change about it?
11. Any other comments?
12. How many hours, in an average month have you / your organisation put into the Le Chéile RJ project?
13. For those who were trained by Le Chéile in Restorative practices / host agencies: Has there been an increase in your ability to reduce conflict for clients?
14. For Gardai – What have the benefits been for the Gardai? Has it reduced the time you spend with certain young people and freed you up to do other work?
15. For Probation – What have been the benefits for Probation? Have you seen the benefits of increased empathy? How does this benefit the work of Probation?
16. For host agencies – Have you hosted reparation? If so, how much would this work have cost to carry out if it were not being done as part of reparation?
17. For those who received restorative justice training – What did you learn? Did this impact on your work practices?