

Presenting the BSC Outstanding Achievement Award to Joanna Shapland

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The BSC's Outstanding Achievement Award - awarded to my dear colleague Joanna Shapland relates directly to research which she directed for the Home Office and then Ministry of Justice. The research involved the first ever randomized control trial for restorative justice (RJ) and has been a key driver - some may say the key driver - in the current government's plans for the criminal justice system via the Crime and Courts Act 2013 as these relate to restorative justice. The research was ambitious from the outset - and cost an eye-watering £1.3m. Her research team's findings have pushed RJ to the fore of current thinking on how we deal with those affected by crime and do appear to offer a more progressive and socially just criminal justice system. The study explored the consequences of involvement in RJ schemes for adults who had committed serious offences, such as robbery, burglary and violent offences. The findings suggested that:

- “The majority of victims chose to participate in face-to-face meetings with the offender, when offered by a trained facilitator;
- 85% of victims who took part were satisfied with the process;
- RJ reduced the frequency of re-offending, leading to £9 savings for every £1 spent on restorative justice.”

This is one of a few truly ‘land mark’ studies in policy-related criminological research in the modern-era. But this is not all that Joanna has accomplished of late; since stepping down as the Editor of the British Journal of Criminology, Joanna has edited the International Review of Victimology, co-led (with Tony Bottoms) a very successful longitudinal study into why people stop offending funded by the ESRC, Directed the Centre for Criminological Research at the University of Sheffield, and undertaken two further projects with colleagues for the Ministry of Justice (one of which has morphed into a European-funded project). And been Head of the School of Law since 2009. Joanna's research contributions go far, far further than the Award which we, as the BSC, are recognising today, but nevertheless it is important that we today recognise the importance of this particular research project and the reflected glory it confers on all of us who in various ways can claim an association with it - as co-researchers, as colleagues or simply as fellow members of the British Society of Criminology.
