Further to my appearance before the Justice Select Committee hearing on Tuesday and our subsequent brief discussion, I wanted to take this opportunity to clarify the responses to your recent Parliamentary Questions which related specifically to out of court use of restorative justice by the police.

The Government does not hold any information centrally which shows how restorative justice is being used as part of out of court disposals such as community resolutions and conditional cautions. As stated in one of my responses, restorative justice is not a disposal in its own right and there are no plans to record participation in restorative justice on the Police National Computer (unless this is already recorded as part of a conditional caution or other formal disposal).

Similarly, we have not made an assessment on how the use of restorative justice as part of an out of court disposal affects re-offending rates. The research I quoted at the evidence session (Restorative Justice in Practice – Shapland et al, 2011) examined the impact of restorative justice. This showed that restorative justice, by the conferencing method, has the potential to reduce the frequency of re-offending by 14%.

Furthermore, a systematic review of restorative justice conferencing (Restorative Justice Conferencing Using Face-to-Face Meetings of Offenders and Victims: Effects on Offender Recidivism and Victim Satisfaction – Strang et al, 2013) found a ratio of 8 times more benefit in costs of crimes prevented than the cost of delivering conferences. This is the basis of my evidence that every £1 spent on restorative justice can save up to £8 by reducing the cost of re-offending.

I hope this letter is helpful in clarifying the position.

27 May 2016