

# PROCEDURAL JUSTICE PERCEPTIONS

When people believe the process of applying the law (how decisions are made) is fair, it influences their views and behaviour. When people feel treated fairly and justly, they have more confidence in authority, see this as more legitimate, and they are more likely to accept and abide (or commit to abide) by decisions and rules.

Procedural Justice (PJ) perceptions are not about how fair and just the outcome of a decision is perceived to be (although the two types of perceptions may be related). PJ perceptions are subjective and personal – they are not the same as a process looking fair to outsiders or intending to be fair when delivering a process / making a decision.

## WHAT MAKES PEOPLE FIND A PROCESS FAIR?

### VOICE



People need to have **the chance to tell their side of the story** and to feel that authority figures will listen and sincerely consider this before making a decision.

### NEUTRALITY



People need to see authority figures as **neutral and principled decision-makers**, who apply rules consistently, transparently and do not base their decisions on personal opinion or bias.

### RESPECT



People need to feel **respected and treated courteously** by authority figures, believe their rights are considered equal to those of others and that their issues will be taken seriously.

### TRUSTWORTHY MOTIVES



People need to see authority figures as people with **trustworthy motives**, who are sincere and authentic, who listen and care and who try to do what is right for everyone involved.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS – WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

There is good evidence that PJ perceptions matter for most people's cooperation and compliance with the Criminal Justice System. In prison and probation settings specifically:

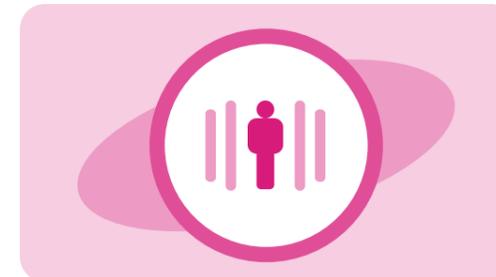
### ORGANISATIONS AND EMPLOYEES



Organisations characterised by PJ, and employees feeling treated in a PJ way at work, are associated with:

- **Less stress and burnout**
- **Less desire to leave the job**
- **More commitment to, and involvement and motivation within, the organisation**
- **Better life and job satisfaction**
- **More support and commitment for rehabilitating the people in their care, and less support for punishing them**
- **Less sickness absence**
- **Less fear of being victimised by prisoners**

### PEOPLE LIVING IN PRISONS



When people living in prison have more positive perceptions of PJ, this is associated with:

- **Less misconduct and disorder of many types (breaking day-to-day rules, violence and concerted indiscipline)**
- **Better emotional/ psychological health**
- **Less reoffending after release**
- **Less self-harm**
- **Less attempted suicide**
- **More positive beliefs about desistance from crime**

### PEOPLE SUPERVISED IN THE COMMUNITY



Although there has not yet been much research on PJ in probation settings, the evidence so far shows that when people in the community believe they are supervised in a PJ way, this is associated with:

- **Less self-reported crime**
- **Fewer officially-recorded arrests**
- **Greater compliance with licence conditions**

There is also a relationship between the procedural justice perceptions of staff and prisoners. When staff members' perceptions are more positive, so too are prisoners.