

SPATIALISED OFFENDER RESETTLEMENT JOURNEY:

The Line of Sight Workshop

by Jane Ball and Peter Garrett

Context

On 11th November 2010, Prison Dialogue facilitated the 'Line of Sight' workshop at HMP Guys Marsh. Serving prisoners and people in resettlement came as participants along with staff and managers from Prisons, Police, the Local Authority, Magistrates, and Third-sector Services such as drug treatment and housing providers. They had all been involved in Dorset Threshold Dialogue¹.

After a five year programme this marked the completion of a process to embed Dorset Threshold Dialogue in structures for local management, as Prison Dialogue stepped back. Threshold Dialogue was a pioneering initiative to support effective through the gate rehabilitation and resettlement for short sentenced prisoners and Priority and Prolific Offenders² from Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset in the South of England. Since 2008 a process had been underway to create a local multi-agency governance structure³, a facilitation team⁴, evaluation framework and effective network of Dialogues in prisons and the community. This multi-agency partnership was proving effective strategically and operationally. The next step was to give people an integrated view of the whole Threshold Dialogue network and how it supported the resettlement journey for prisoners and people in resettlement. In fact there was little or no systemic view of the criminal justice and resettlement services overall. Prison Dialogue had developed the philosophy of the Line of Sight while running Threshold Dialogue, to describe the importance of an integrated system. The concept was that for successful resettlement prisoners needed a clear and visible route, or line of sight, from prison to independent resettlement in the community. People were more likely to be successful in their resettlement journey if there were manageable steps along the route, without unrealistic hurdles, if they could see what was coming up, and if there was an opportunity to think through with other people what was going to happen. This would be an integrated through the gate resettlement system.

Dorset Reducing Reoffending Strategy Board, a sub-group of Dorset Criminal Justice Board⁵, was a multi-agency strategic group of Senior Executives in the criminal justice system, chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable from Dorset Police. Their purpose was to lead a joined-up strategic approach to reducing reoffending in Dorset, and they wanted to hold a consultation event to support their thinking about a new three year strategy.

The Line of Sight Workshop was planned to provide an opportunity for Dorset Threshold Dialogue Governance Board and the Dorset Reducing Reoffending Strategy Board to partner, and to serve this range of related interests.

Aims and Objectives

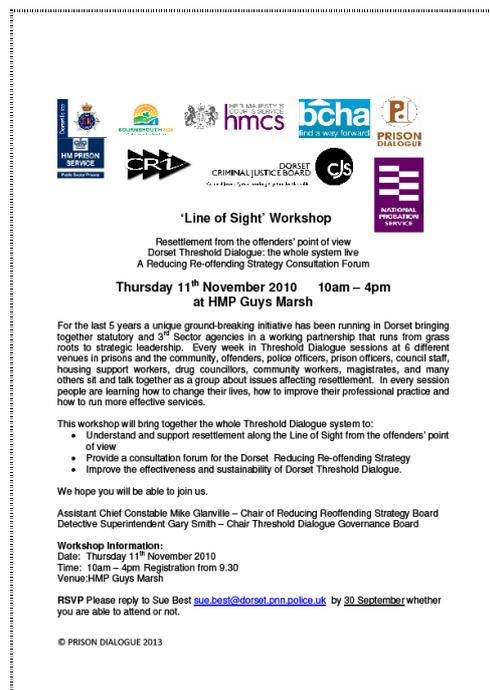
The agreed aims of the workshop were:

- Broad whole-system consultation to support the formulation of Dorset Reducing Re-offending Strategy , including the offenders' voice
- Identification of blocks and barriers in the current provision of a clear Line of Sight and integrated agency services for rehabilitation and resettlement, especially for Prolific and Priority Offenders and High Repeat Offenders⁶
- To make recommendations to improve the Line of Sight from prison to resettlement
- Evaluation of Dorset Threshold Dialogue by hearing first-hand from the whole system
- Identification of what makes Dorset Threshold Dialogue work, in order to extend into other communities or to other crime/offender groups
- To provide an opportunity for everyone participating in Dorset Threshold Dialogue – the Governance Board, Operations Group, Facilitators, Offenders, Ex-offenders, and others – to know whom else is involved, recognise what contribution each makes and to acknowledge one another
- To make Prison Dialogue (further) redundant in the local Dorset Threshold Dialogue programme

Method: Activity, Participants and Duration

The Chairs of the Reducing Reoffending Strategy Board and Dorset Threshold Dialogue Governance Board invited 64 participants to the six hour workshop.

The workshop took place in the training centre of HMP Guys Marsh⁷, one of the Threshold Dialogue Centres.



The flyer features logos for Dorset Prison Service, HMP Prison Service, Dorset Criminal Justice Board, CJS, bcha, hmcs, and Prison Dialogue. The text is centered and provides details about the workshop's purpose, objectives, and contact information.

'Line of Sight' Workshop
Resettlement from the offenders' point of view
Dorset Threshold Dialogue: the whole system live
A Reducing Re-offending Strategy Consultation Forum
Thursday 11th November 2010 10am – 4pm
at HMP Guys Marsh

For the last 5 years a unique ground-breaking initiative has been running in Dorset bringing together statutory and 3rd Sector agencies in a working partnership that runs from grass roots to strategic leadership. Every week in Threshold Dialogue sessions at 6 different venues in prisons and the community, offenders, police officers, prison officers, council staff, housing support workers, drug counsellors, community workers, magistrates, and many others sit and talk together as a group about issues affecting resettlement. In every session people are learning how to change their lives, how to improve their professional practice and how to run more effective services.

This workshop will bring together the whole Threshold Dialogue system to:

- Understand and support resettlement along the Line of Sight from the offenders' point of view
- Provide a consultation forum for the Dorset Reducing Re-offending Strategy
- Improve the effectiveness and sustainability of Dorset Threshold Dialogue.

We hope you will be able to join us.
Assistant Chief Constable Mike Glanville – Chair of Reducing Reoffending Strategy Board
Detective Superintendent Gary Smith – Chair Threshold Dialogue Governance Board

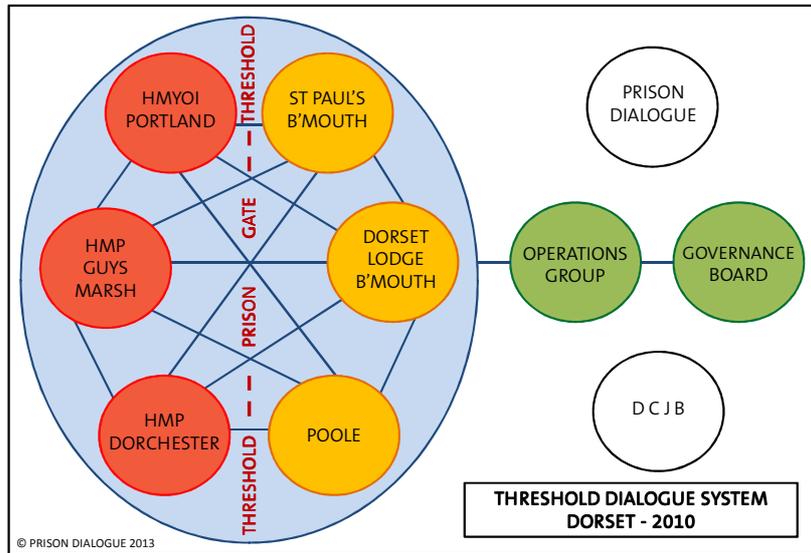
Workshop Information:
Date: Thursday 11th November 2010
Time: 10am – 4pm Registration from 9.30
Venue: HMP Guys Marsh

RSVP Please reply to Sue Best sue.best@dorset.pnn.police.uk by 30 September whether you are able to attend or not.

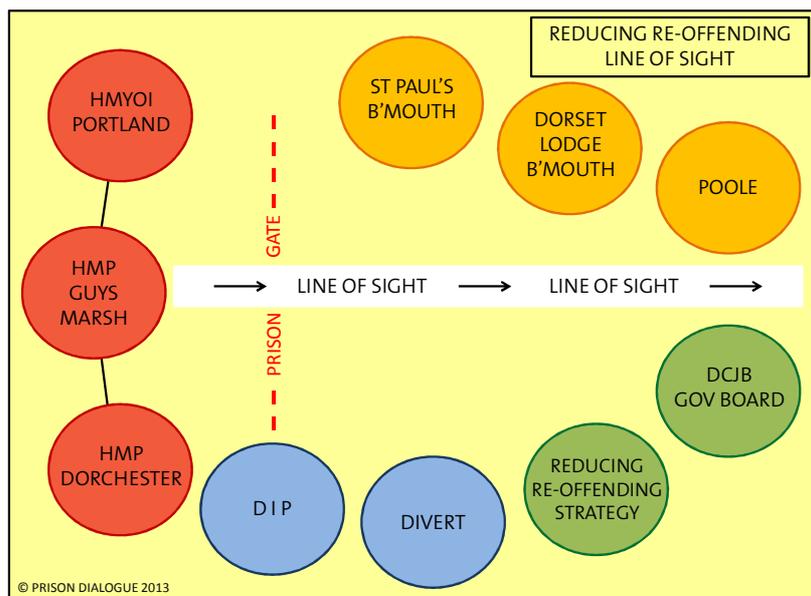
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The participants included staff from the Police, Probation, Bournemouth Borough Council, Drug Intervention Teams and Accommodation Providers. Prisoners from HMYOI Portland⁸ attended. They had been released from the prison on a temporary licence for the day specifically to attend the Workshop, along with prison officers from Portland. A Magistrate and a number of ex-offenders, who had attended Threshold Dialogue groups, were also there.

The room was spatialised in two different ways during the workshop. In the morning ten groupings sat together, representing the six Threshold Dialogue sites, the Governance Board, the Operations Group, Prison Dialogue and Dorset Criminal Justice Board. This provided an opportunity to hear from each of the groups about their experiences as part of the Threshold Dialogue.



In the afternoon groupings were positioned around the room to represent the Line of Sight and the offender resettlement journey – from the local prison, to the training prison, and in the community from the direct access hostel and day centre for those whose lives were unsettled, through supported accommodation to independence. The prison gate was marked across the floor. Two Prison Dialogue facilitators walked two ex-offenders in resettlement from the community where they were arrested, into prison, back out on their release and along the Line of Sight. Along the way they talked about their experiences and what helped and what hindered their progress, and the agencies were invited to talk about their role in the journey.



At intervals during the morning and afternoon the participants talked in their groups and gathered feedback that was submitted for the Reducing

Reoffending Strategy and was also made available to all of the participants. It was an insightful and emotional experience for those present following the human story and snakes-and-ladders experience of people who had been in prison and were now in resettlement, and who represented thousands of others in Dorset.

Outcomes

The very diverse group – staff, managers and executives from prisons and the community, prisoners and people in resettlement – recognised collectively the value of Threshold Dialogue, reinforced the future of the programme and their continued involvement.

Comments included: *“(Threshold Dialogue) creates a safe and effective conduit in which I as a Police Officer can connect with the part of my community who have only had more negative contact with the police”*

“(Threshold Dialogue is) ... a caring place/environment – people feel safe and a sense of belonging – people feel empowered and that they own something – builds confidence”.

The Criminal Justice Board received the results of a consultation process that included local offender needs, an analysis of the provision from prison to custody and the gaps and barriers, and recommendations for improvement and development of the system.

Some months later the Dorset Reducing Re-offending Strategy Board took on strategic responsibility for Threshold Dialogue from the Governance Board.

Learning

The offender resettlement journey is the most effective integrating force for the criminal justice system. This can be conveyed clearly in the concept of a Line of Sight and is powerful in practice in the Line of Sight Workshop. The Line of Sight Workshop reinforces the importance of collective ownership at a strategic and operational level to have a real and sustainable impact on re-offending rates.

A transparent, participative consultation process provides more genuine and enquiry and therefore more genuine data. It benefits the whole system,

including the people who are being consulted, and everyone can learn together.

The participants learned more about the whole Threshold Dialogue system and the state of the Line of Sight in Dorset.

“Now we have to push on and try to close the many gaps that were only too apparent on the day” Business and Programme Manager, Dorset Criminal Justice Board.

They learned more about the offender’s experience of their journey from custody to community, which was emotionally and intellectually stimulating.

“When you first aired the concept of the walk-through I wondered how it would work, but seeing it in action it worked really well fuelled by the emotions generated by helping the offenders to relive their experiences” Business and Programme Manager, Dorset Criminal Justice Board.

Prison Dialogue learned how to facilitate an offender walk, and have used this regularly in other work, particularly in Virginia Department of Corrections⁹.

Prison Dialogue had further insights into ways to structure Dialogic Research into systemic situations in the future, based on the Offender Journey and the Line of Sight systemic approach.

¹ See Case Study *Bournemouth and Dorset Threshold Dialogue: Through the Gate Multi-stakeholder Partnership to Reduce Reoffending*

² Prolific and Priority Offenders are individuals responsible for the highest proportion of crime and offences that have a significant impact on law and order, and/or on community life. PPO schemes began to be established across England and Wales in 2004.

³ See Case Study *Collective Ownership of Resettlement: Dorset Threshold Dialogue Governance Board*

⁴ See Case Study *Facilitation Training for Criminal Justice Staff: Creating a Local Facilitation Team for Dorset Threshold Dialogue*

⁵ There are 42 local Criminal Justice Boards across England and Wales. They bring together Chief Officers of the Criminal Justice System agencies to co-ordinate activity and share responsibility for delivering criminal justice in their areas.

⁶ High Repeat Offender was the term Prison Dialogue used to refer to prisoners who were repeatedly in and out of prison for short sentences of less than 12 months. In England and Wales at the time prisoners with a sentence of less than 12 months received no probation supervision on release and were low priority for interventions in prison. They were on a revolving door in and out of prison, with little likelihood of anything changing.

⁷ HMP Guys Marsh is a medium secure training prison for adult males, in Dorset in the South of England.

⁸ HMYOI Portland is a closed young offender institute for males aged 18-21, on the South Dorset Coast in England

⁹ A Case Study draft is available *Department of Corrections Virginia – Dialogue and a Healing Environment*