

3<sup>rd</sup> Dec 2009

# BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns  
but nobody teaches

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE: BOURNEMOUTH

## Staying out for Christmas

Thursdays 4pm – 6pm BCHA, Dorset Lodge

Resettlement Pathway: Finance, Benefits / Children & Families / Attitudes, Thinking & Behaviour

Participants: 5 Ex-offenders, 2 B'mouth Council, 1 Magistrate, 1 BCHA & 1 Volunteer

### LEARNINGS

"Magistrates are normal people, and we're now getting out, to talk and listen to people, at schools, prisons and in the community. We don't get paid for this, if we're working all day we get £7 expenses for lunch."

(Magistrate)

"That's more money than I get a day to live on. It's tough especially coming up to Christmas. I've got three grandchildren, it's really tempting just to go out and rob some presents for them, 'cause I haven't got the money to buy what they want." (Ex-offender)

"But surely your grandchildren would rather spend time with you at Christmas rather than you being back inside. Christmas shouldn't be all about presents, but also about spending time with your family."

(Agency)

Magistrates are normal people representing the local community.

Sometimes you can be too honest. There are situations in life where you might have to keep quiet to get ahead.

Being on licence is tough, you need to focus on the long term goal of staying out of prison.

"I've got a final warning from Probation today for anti-social behaviour because I told my Probation Officer to shut her mouth and that I wasn't interested in her input. I'm sure she wants to breach me and get me back to prison."

(Ex-offender)



"It might not seem fair, but if you're on licence, then it's really important that you keep a good relationship with your Probation Officer. Maybe you should think about saying sorry to your Officer."

(Agency)

"But I've got to be honest to myself, I can't say sorry if I don't mean it."

(Ex-offender)

"In the past I can't understand why Magistrate courts would impose fines which there was no way I could afford to pay. All that happened was that I got sent to prison for non-payment."

(Ex-offender)

"Magistrates are there to be judge and jury – we decide on guilt and also pass sentences, but these are based on national guidelines. The Government wants us to keep people out of prison if possible – now there are more community sentences and fines can be taken straight from people's benefits."

(Magistrate)

Bournemouth Threshold Dialogue brings Bournemouth offenders together in open conversation with the agencies responsible for their supervision and support. Dialogues are themed on the issues affecting re-offending. The process starts in custody and continues post-release in the community, emphasising support, challenge, responsibility and early intervention. Threshold Dialogue is supported by Bournemouth Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership.