

23rd June 2009

BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns
but nobody teaches

PRISON DIALOGUE: HMP DORCHESTER

Magistrates don't bite

Tuesdays 2 – 3:30pm Chapel

Resettlement Pathway: Attitudes, Thinking & Behaviour

Participants: 18 Offenders, 3 Prison Staff, 1 DIP, 1 Police, 1 Magistrate, 1 BCHA & 1 PD

LEARNINGS

"Past offences will be relevant to the courts for a considerable period of time. It is by that yardstick that the court makes some of its decisions. The only way to reduce the effect of past offences is to stop offending." (Magistrate)

"In the past I have always let my barrister or solicitor talk for me in bail hearings. More recently I have spoken for myself and found the magistrate more favourable towards me." (Offender)

"It's good to meet the man behind the charge sheet. It's hard to make a fair decision based on facts and figures written on a piece of paper." (Magistrate)

To start to learn you must first learn to listen

When someone offers you something good for free. Take it with thanks. Don't ignore good advice.

"When you are released on licence you must remember that you are still serving your sentence but in the community. The restrictions imposed must be strictly adhered to or you will be breached." (Prison Staff)



Many magistrates are ordinary individuals who will listen. They can only administer justice based on the information they receive. Let them know you are a trustworthy individual.

"All my past offending behaviour has been drug and alcohol related. I have now made real inroads into addressing these problems. The court does not take this into consideration when making decisions concerning bail." (Offender)

"When probation are considering a breach of licence they have no discretion whatsoever even though common sense may dictate otherwise leading to inappropriate recall." (Offender)

"A 28 day lie down after a licence breach causes a lot of problems for the offender who has to start from scratch with benefits and housing on release often finding themselves in a worse situation than before. It's no wonder licences are so hard to keep." (Offender)

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.