

3<sup>rd</sup> Mar 2009

## BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns  
but nobody teaches

PRISON DIALOGUE: HMP DORCHESTER

Tuesdays 2 – 3:30pm Chapel

### In Housing; one size doesn't fit all

Participants: 9 Offenders, 3 Prison Staff, 4 Bournemouth Council

#### LEARNINGS

"There is a big demand for housing in Bournemouth and ex-offenders are near the bottom of a big pile of people looking to the Council for support. It's like musical chairs sometimes; there's never enough chairs for everyone." (Agency)

"I was living in a caravan before I came to prison and when I get out I've only got a tent. If nothing else is sorted I'll just get myself locked up again." (Offender)

"I don't want to be put into a hostel with sex offenders. After what I've been through, I know I'd just walk out and commit more crimes to survive." (Offender)

Demand for housing in Bournemouth is high, and there's not enough to meet everyone's needs.

"I'm an addict and there are drugs available everywhere. It doesn't matter if you're housed in Boscombe or wherever, if you're going to use you will. You need to take responsibility for yourself and not blame others." (Offender)

You might think you need support to find housing, but the definition of "vulnerable" is tight and you'll be competing with other vulnerable groups.

The system needs to change, but sometimes you need to fit into the system to stay out of prison.

"The system needs to take individual circumstances into account, the one size fits all approach doesn't work. If you're an addict, being dumped into some hostel with people who are using won't work." (Offender)

"Yes we need to try to make the agencies take individual circumstances into account, but also you need to try to fit into the system and the rules you're given. We can't change things overnight." (Agency)

"The Council will support people who are 'vulnerable' to find housing, this means they can't fend for themselves in finding accommodation. You need to prove that you are vulnerable to get support, just because you have an addiction or mental health problems you're not necessarily vulnerable. Look at Stephen Fry from TV, he's got severe mental health problems but isn't 'vulnerable'." (Agency)



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.