

Prison Threshold Dialogue (4) Cycle 3 on 30 October 07

8 Prisoners, 1 Governor, 1 Senior Probation Officer and 1 Prison Officer participated in the dialogue

Check-in Q: What's one small achievable thing that you can do for yourself this week to make the best use of your time in here?

'I've got to phone my sister.' (Offender) 'Start going to the Gym.' (Offender) 'Get myself into a 12 Step meeting.' (Offender)

'I feel like I'm wasting my time a bit in education. I'm going to try to get onto a course I'll really enjoy – like Cooking or Industrial Cleaning.' (Offender) 'I'm going to sort out my filing at home – I keep putting it off.' (Staff) 'I'm going to write to my mum.' (Offender)

'I've been coming here for a few weeks, I've heard what other people have said and it's got me thinking that treatment might be the right option for me. I never would have considered it before. I've started the ball rolling with my Carats Worker.' (Offender)

'I've been to lots of prisons. This jail is the best jail I've been to if you want to get help.'
(Offender)

'This is a deeply frustrating job. I find it really hard to defend prisoners to people on the outside. Only last week I was talking with a family member about a local paper report that a heroin addict had been found dead in a park and he said: 'Oh well, the world just became a lighter place'. It might be upsetting to you and me, but that's what an awful lot of taxpaying people out there feel about it.' (Staff)

Theme: Practical steps in custody



'There are stats out that show that, for all the billions of pounds spent on interventions and treatment in this country, only 70 people nationwide actually managed to get off drugs and stay clean last year. Something needs to be rethought because what's happening here isn't working. I think it all stems back to the 1971 Misuse Of Drugs Act. They've used prescribed heroin in pilots in Europe and it's dropped the domestic burglary rate by 85%.' (Staff)

'There's huge amounts of cash, outside organisations, lots of people's jobs riding on this drug treatment industry. Perhaps I'm being cynical, but it seems to me that a lot of people have a vested interest in things remaining the way they are.' (Staff)

'Methadone prescriptions are out there but they need to be quicker. I've seen my GP and then I'm waiting for like 6 weeks. By then my head's in the wrong place and I'm off committing crime.' (Offender)

'The SDP course here is top drawer. It's helped me a lot.'
(Offender)

Check-out Q: Has today been a waste of time?'

'I've been sat in my cell de-toxing all week and I'm just really glad that I've engaged in something today. It's been a good group, I feel uplifted.' (Offender)

'It's been alright – so many things talked about today. I feel like I HAVE got a choice in this.' (Offender)

'It's good having staff here. You get all the different opinions from different sides.' (Offender)

'Really enjoyed it today. There are good and bad Probation Officers as per any profession – when something comes to my attention I act on it. I'm in this job because I believe that people can change. There's hope for everyone.' (Staff)

The next Prison Threshold Dialogue will take place on Tuesday 6th November 2007 @ 2.00pm in the Chapel, HMP Dorchester