

6th Oct 2009

BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns
but nobody teaches

PRISON DIALOGUE: HMP DORCHESTER

Benefits and Housing are still the biggest obstacles to resettlement

Tuesdays 2 – 3:30pm Chapel

Resettlement Pathway: Accom / Finance, Benefit, Debt

Participants: 12 Offenders, 1 Prison Staff, 2 Police & 1 B'mouth Council

LEARNINGS

"Three years ago we sat here and discussed homelessness on leaving prison and applying for benefits whilst in prison. Nothing seems to have changed. When are you going to try and resolve these issues?"

(Offender)

"I'm just as frustrated as you but these issues will never be resolved unless we start by talking about them. We invite the senior managers from appropriate agencies. In time I'm confident things will change."

(Agency)

"I have an average of 10 days to arrange accommodation for someone in prison. Prisons have a policy that no-one should leave homeless. We do find a lot of accommodation for a lot of people, we manage housing benefit claims and prevent a lot of people from becoming homeless."

(Agency)

Changing the system can be an uphill struggle, but in time things happen.

The only way to implement change is by starting to talk it through.

Changing behaviour and attitude is a personal responsibility.

"You've got to find the burning issue on which you want to focus. Then with commitment and dedication it is possible to achieve something. I've seen it done. With the right commitment it is possible to receive funding to make a difference."

(Offender)



"Last time I left prison it took 14 weeks for me to receive my benefits. That is absurd. I'm going to be released just before Christmas. I've got no chance of getting any money."

(Offender)

"Ultimately the responsibility lies with you to change yourself or your circumstances. I've received a lot of help on my release from prison in the past. Even though I was chaotic with drugs, I've never been turned away by CRI or BCHA."

(Offender)

Quote 7

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.