

1st July 2008

BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns
but nobody teaches

PRISON DIALOGUE: HMP GUYS MARSH

Tuesdays 9 - 10.30am Saxon

What can we talk about here?

14 Offenders, 6 Others (Prison Staff, Police, Local Authority, Prison Dialogue)

LEARNINGS

"For someone like that, housing isn't the answer. You could give him everything – even a room in Buckingham Palace – he'd still offend, he'd still come back to prison. Heroin is the problem, it's the root of everything."
(Offender)

"I had my housing sorted out just before I got sentenced to six months. Now I've lost it because my missus won't take me back."
(Offender)

"It took so long for benefits to come through. For almost 8 weeks I had to take the support of friends and family to get by. It's having that pressure all the time, relying on everyone else – it doesn't do great things for your self-esteem and pride."
(Offender)

Everyone is labelled by others. Underneath we're people with different perspectives.

"How are we supposed to go straight and get a job? If we lie on our job application it gets us fired, if we tell the truth we don't get the job in the first place. It's not difficult to work out. If you've got two people, equally qualified, sat before you as the potential employer, one of those people has done prison time and the other one hasn't, who are you going to take on?"
(Offender)



"Heroin is bad at this prison. I'd reckon at least 70% of us are using, but the Mandatory Drug Test figures are coming up at like 13%. I've seen people coming in here fit and healthy and go downhill within a couple of weeks. They've lost weight, they go round like ghosts from window to window."
(Offender)

"When I finished my degree course a few years back, I hadn't worked in this country for 17 years. When I started applying for jobs I wasn't getting any luck. I got into this line of work by initially volunteering and going from there. My point is that jobs are difficult to get for everyone."
(Local Authority)

"It's been helpful to do this today. It's my first session and I'm hoping to train and take my involvement further. I am a person behind this shirt. I'm a label and a uniform, but I'm also a human being too. All of us are."
(Prison Staff)

It's not just the top layer of housing or employment needs. Beneath that are drug and health issues and underlying those, problems with self-esteem.

Attending the group regularly gives the most benefit. You can raise points, listen, include others.

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.