

15th July 2008

BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns
but nobody teaches

PRISON DIALOGUE: HMP GUYS MARSH

Tuesdays 9:30 – 11am Saxon

Putting the rest of your life back together

Participants: 9 Offenders and 7 Others (Prison, Police, external agency and PD)

LEARNINGS

"I'd like to see a situation where you could see the rooms online, know where you were going to be housed 4 weeks before your release. A month's rent and a month's deposit sounds like a lot, but it's not compared to the cost of keeping someone in here."

(Agency)

"It's nothing to do with money. I could have a yacht and loads of money and it wouldn't change a thing. I'd still be using – that's the thing about rituals and habits. You get so accustomed to doing the same things."

(Offender)

"I went to a conference where they told us they weren't going to renew funding for Gateway. People were shocked. It seems that government people become policy drones that just trot out the party line."

(Staff)

Every individual makes their own decisions as to who and what to trust.

Most people being released from prison will find the early stages overwhelming and difficult to cope with. Housing provision is key to managing this.

Private accommodation is available to ex-offenders, but you need to find a month's rent and deposit up front.

"Let's be honest, when you first get out of prison you spend the first day just spinning. More than anything, you need a safe place to get your head down that night, then you wake up the next morning and start putting the rest of your life back together. You might just stay a few days in this place, you might want to move on or go somewhere out of town."

(Agency)

"People are being told they're not going to amount to anything. Our education system teaches linguistics via English, logic via Maths. You might be crap at both, but amazing at reading people or have incredible creative skills but you don't fit in the box. I feel like we've developed a system that turns sculptors into chippies."

(Prison Staff)

"Since I've been dealing with X (Police) my attitude's changed. She's come in today with some good news for me today, now I'm waiting for Probation to get me released. I trust the Police more now because of what's happened. If it wasn't for X and Y I'd still be stuck in here."

(Offender)

"I trust everyone and no one at the same time." (Agency)

"You can't trust anyone in here." (Offender)

"There are different levels of trust, different types." (PD)

"I trust my family and friends but that's pretty much it." (Offender)

"It's unfashionable these days, but I trust in God." (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.