

8th July 2008

BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns
but nobody teaches

PRISON DIALOGUE: HMP GUYS MARSH

Tuesdays 9.30 – 11am Saxon

Be true to yourself

Participants: 9 Offenders & 7 Others (Prison Staff, Police, Housing Officer, Offender Supervisor & PD)

LEARNINGS

"There's property going begging in Bournemouth, like that big 26 suite hotel. It's been squatted, now it's empty. The council don't want to know. What's going on?"

(Housing Officer)

"From the moment you start in the system, everyone - housing, probation, everyone - treats you with mistrust. They treat you like you're always trying to pull a fast one. What happens when you're genuine?"

(Offender)

"There was this programme on last night, showing young offenders in a mock-up Cat B jail. I had my mum on the phone saying: 'Is that what it's really like? Were you in in a cell like that?' Even your family have no idea."

(Offender)

You've got to be true to yourself, take control of things and create your own path.

The system mistrusts offenders. The system is used to it's trust being abused. Offenders don't trust the system. Trust between offenders and the system can be built through these meetings.

Sentence plan courses are often used by prisoners & staff to tick boxes rather than really address individual needs.

"I've done courses that weren't on my sentence plan because I knew I had a problem and I wanted to change - for myself, not for Cat C or parole."

(Offender)

"You need to get control of your own sentence plan and OASys to get those things changed."

(Offender Supervisor)

"We used to run a 2 week resettlement course here. It covered job hunting, interview skills, the 1974 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, what you can say to help yourself, how to play the rules but not break them. It got cut back to one week then dropped. That's what we need here."

(Prison Staff)

"I used to be the same about the Police but some of them are all right. PC X came down to the cells to see me when I'd been arrested, because I'd met him in dialogue in Dorchester. I'd stop to have a chat in the street with him now, rather than think 'eeurrgh copper, won't talk to him.'"

(Offender)

"When you leave the room, take what you've got here with you. Try to hold on to it for as long as possible out there, even though everything else around you, the rest of the world grinds you down constantly."

(Offender Supervisor)



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.