

# **Trustees Annual Report**

## **November 2002 to October 2003**

### **Introduction**

At the end of last year Prison Dialogue clarified its focus 'to provide an extensive dialogical intervention with the whole of an organisation'. Our broad and varied experience over the past ten years (and since 1995 as a charity) clearly pointed us towards this type of intervention and a year later this is still the case.

We have had a difficult and frustrating year achieving that aim yet, end the year embarking on our most ambitious project to date at HMP Dorchester.

### **HMP Blakenhurst**

Prison Dialogue continued at HMP Blakenhurst one day a week until August, working in partnership with the prison and adapting the structure of our intervention to fit their changing needs. We are presently working with the Healthcare Unit to renegotiate an intervention, which up to now they have found of value.

We ran weekly day-long sessions, spending one half of the day in the main house blocks and the other in Healthcare. Jane Ball, our co-ordinator, and Sarah Hill, project manager, have run the initiative with assistance from a number of skilled volunteers who gained invaluable experience of working within a prison setting.

The introduction of themed dialogues dealt with specific issues of concern to management, including bullying and being bullied, suicide and self harm, and safer custody. Methods were explored to disseminate findings and, through our reports, involve the rest of the prison.

Within Healthcare, issues relating to the dilemmas faced by nursing staff in managing the boundaries between care and discipline have frequently emerged.

The importance of having opportunities to talk with prisoners about the subtleties of relationships and what makes a difference, is illustrated below:

*'Hearing other people's opinions has been good. Learning something as staff too, things we don't normally think about, like the thing about keys; how the way that you open the cells can set the tone for the day on the unit. It really makes you think and feel. There will be times when individuals have differences in the group.'* (Nurse)

*'We are not being called down to Healthcare to deal with crises nearly as much as we used to be.'* (Prison Governor)

These healthcare challenges in Blakenhurst are also present in the context of policy (e.g. hospital/prison, NHS/prison service) role (e.g. nurse/officer) and internal structures (e.g. in relation to perceptions of people as patients/prisoners) and are areas PD is exploring with the Local Primary Care Trust. We are also keen to respond to other prisons interest about how to 'do' patient/public involvement (PPI) which is central to the Clinical Governance agenda.

### **HMP Dorchester**

We are embarking on an exciting new project at HMP Dorchester. The Governor (with whom we previously worked for a number of years at HMP Long Lartin) has a sound understanding of our approach and what we might contribute to the effective running of the prison. The recent history of the prison involves strained employee relations. Our partnership will focus on uniformed staff, their communication styles, and relationships with inmates and management. Having such a receptive environment gives us a significant opportunity to work with others in creating an impact on the prison's culture.

### **Fundraising**

The proportion of income earned from prison contracts (as against grants) has suffered this year as a result of our withdrawal from HMP Whitemoor. Given the financial constraints in the prison service, we now need to establish new funding possibilities.

In addition to approaching charities, foundations and the Prisons with which we work, options for generating income —such as profile building and conferences —are being explored, as well as developing relationships elsewhere, for example, by sourcing other public sector funding, including that specifically linked to healthcare

(such as Prison Health Policy Unit and the National Patient Safety Agency). Corporate support is also being sought through our links with Dialogue Associates who have agreed to assist in underwriting our work.

Focusing on Trusts and Foundations, The Tudor Trust funding of £30,000 has continued for the second of 3 years and the Mulberry Trust has recently agreed further funding of £10,000 for the coming year.

### **Profile Raising and Documentation**

This year, with the help of Sarah Hill, we have improved our process of documentation and evaluation. We have widely disseminated reports on the different sessions at Blakenhurst and submitted a paper describing our Healthcare intervention for publication to the Prison Service Journal; *"We've all come together as one – prisoners, staff and managers": Dialogue as a means of facilitating patient/public involvement and implementing new standards in prison healthcare.*

The documentation we see as important to raising our profile and we have also attended and presented posters at national conferences to build relationships further.

### **Staffing**

Sarah Hill joined us last year, bringing significant research experience which has helped us to focus on clearly documenting and evaluating our work. Her role this year as project manager has come from her important impact on facilitation and prison staff liaison.

Our challenge is to find more of the right people and to create appropriate training opportunities - HMP Dorchester being an example - and projects, and our links with Dialogue Associates may be helpful as a possible staffing pool.

Jane Ball, our co-ordinator, is expecting a baby in December and we wish her and baby all good health.

### **Membership**

We currently have 13 members, whom we hope will play an active part within the charity and contribute to the work of the organisation.

The introduction of quarterly meetings has allowed members to meet with the management team to review our work and discuss developments, providing a platform from which to learn and develop Prison Dialogue together. A number of members have attended each meeting and found them enjoyable and informative. The next dates are Friday 19 December and Tuesday 16 March between 10.00am and 1.00pm in Chipping Campden.

### **Trustees and Company Secretary**

Chris Lindley has stepped down as a trustee this year and will cease as company secretary after the 2003 AGM. Chris has been of enormous help to the charity since becoming company secretary in February 1998 and Trustee in November 1999. As a volunteer, he attended more than 250 dialogue groups at HMP Whitemoor between 1993 and 2002, showing a wonderful interest and commitment.

Deborah Brown will be replacing Chris as company secretary and the trustees look forward to working with her.

The three remaining Trustees will continue to foster and support the work, as well as address legal responsibilities and intend to increase in number over the next year. We have already begun that process and are very pleased that Madeline McGill will be joining us after she has been appointed at the AGM.

### **Conclusion**

Developing capacity and resourcing our work remains our main challenge and a sound group of volunteers and members is crucial in supporting the work. We believe that all who participate; grow and learn from their involvement in Prison Dialogue, and we continue to encourage that. Finally, many thanks to all those who have contributed to our significant endeavour over the past year.