

New Leaf Workshop

HMP Askham Grange HMP New Hall were visited by Marie-Claire O'Brien from The New Leaf Initiative in August to deliver Inspirational Workshops.

The New Leaf Initiative CIC

Founded by Marie-Claire O'Brien, an ex-offender herself, the New Leaf Initiative provides support and training to prisoners, ex-offenders and their families as they resettle into the community. Working with the Probation and Prison Services, New Leaf aims to bridge the gap between those who are keen to work and the support they are receiving.

The Initiative employs those who have had experience of the criminal justice system and supports ex-offenders into education, employment or training. It provides peer mentoring support, employability skills training and motivational speakers and aims to raise the aspirations of prisoners and ex-offenders.

The Inspirational Workshop

Marie-Claire began by inviting everyone to join in an interactive judgement and choices workshop which was then followed by an account of her life as a teenager, her downward spiral, her time in prison and how she managed to overcome her barriers through education.

After the presentation Marie-Claire offered a question and answer session and also talked with individuals one to one.

The sessions were well attended at both HMP Askham Grange and HMP New Hall with positive feedback being given.



"I found out that there are people out there giving up their time to help others. Marie-Claire's talk was fascinating"

"I enjoyed listening to Marie-Claire's story and how she's fully turned her life around. She has made me feel it is actually possible for me to do the same upon release"

"It was nice to hear a true life story of an ex-prisoner and how much she has been able to achieve in her life and gave me hope that there is a life on the outside"

Focus Group at HMP Leeds

Our Partnership Co-ordinators in Custody, Nicola Wilson and Jo Parnham, led a focus group at HMP Leeds which was attended by 12 prisoners.

The aim of the focus group was to gain information on what type of employment, educational and training needs are most important to prisoners. This will ensure that the Inspiration Agenda work can more closely reflect the needs of prisoners. It is hoped that the focus group will also prompt prisoners into thinking about their future and any barriers they need to overcome as well as any support they may need while still in custody.

100% of prisoners that attended the focus group felt that they were able to give their opinions and had been listened to. 80% said that the focus group had prompted them to start thinking about what employability support is important to them before and on release.

Nicola and Jo received a lot of useful feedback and ideas from prisoners during this focus group, which have now helped them to draw up an Inspiration Activity Delivery Plan for the next year.

NCS also ran a focus group in HMP Hatfield in August. Prisoners fed back that they needed more information on the job market and training on techniques on how to access employment post release. NCS inspiration has a resettlement/employability conference event planned for November in Hatfield and the responses from the focus group reinforced how important events like this are. NCS inspiration are looking at getting training providers to speak at the conference and run workshops.