

MALE SEXUAL ABUSE CHARITY IS 'OUT SPOKEN' IN PRISON

Monday 12 February, 2024

Leading Greater Manchester based male sexual abuse charity, We Are Survivors (formally Survivors Manchester) has today announced the award of an NHS England contract to deliver trauma-informed talking therapy to survivors in custody across the fifteen North West prisons.

At the same time as the charity celebrates its 15th Birthday year (beginning 05.02.2024), it also secures over £3.5m in funds to deliver the OUT Spoken Talking Therapy Service, developed by the organisation, to prisoners dealing with their own victimhood/survivorship whom have often never spoken about their early life abusive experiences.

In 2022-23, the OUT Spoken service received over 950 referrals, 61% coming directly from prisoners themselves, seeking change.

Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Duncan Craig OBE, states:

"I am so proud that we have been awarded this contract by NHS England securing our service for the next 5 to 7 years. We have worked so hard over the past decade to establish our presence in Prison and have supported the prison service and Governors since the tsunami of disclosures by adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse following the ITV documentary on Saville"

As a survivor himself, Duncan knows the feeling of holding onto a secret for many years and so it was no surprise to him that survivors who had remained silent for over 20 years suddenly began to make a noise at that point:

"there were so many men and women in our prison system that had been put into silence at the time of being abused and then pushed to the edges of society where no one looked, and then when a national conversation began about the long term impact of sexual abuse, they saw their opportunity to get rid of the secret they were carrying and spoke out. This was something that had not happened in the prison estate before in such a way"

Since the organisation's OUT Spoken service began in early 2020, at the very start of the COVID pandemic, the organisation has delivered 9494 hours of therapy; engaged 2334 amount of prisoners in support; and provided 30 training sessions to experienced and new prison staff on working with adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, rape and sexual exploitation.

We Are Survivors Criminal Justice Services Director, Alison Lloyd, has led the OUT Spoken project from the start and more recently developed a therapeutic education group that builds prisoners understanding of the impact of trauma on themselves, in the hope that more individuals understand what happened to them and how their actions can also have devastating impact on others. Alison states:

"It has been a privilege to be part of the HMP Deerbolt pilot and work alongside phenomenal and inspirational colleagues. The young men who attended the programme showed us all how important these spaces are if we are going to give people a second chance to change their lives. Their bravery and trust is something I personally will never forget"

A brand new report on the pilot group in HMP/YOI Deerbolt has just been released and can be downloaded from the organisation's online publication library:

www.issuu.com/survivorsmanchester/docs/was_deerboltreport

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