



HEARING THE USER VOICE

A group of 20 LPT service users (offenders) met with senior managers at an inspiring – and sometimes emotional – event in May, which marked the end of a consultation by the charity User Voice.

The Open Space event created a neutral and solution-focused environment to share experiences and ideas of how to improve the delivery of LPT services. Following the consultation in four Local Delivery Units (Haringey, Tower Hamlets, Greenwich and Kingston & Richmond), service users were nominated by their peers to present their personal stories and their probation journeys.

One service user from Haringey said: "I grew up in care and spent eight out of the ten years since I was 15 in prison.

"My aftercare was very informal – a quick 'how are you doing?' and 'see you next week'. When I left prison I had paid my debt to society. I needed help to reintegrate and I didn't get it due to the system, not the people. Good probation could change lives, if it concentrates on users' needs."

Stark observations about how it feels to be a service user entering LPT offices were combined with inspiring stories about the good work done by offender managers. A range of areas for improvement

were considered, including the induction process and importance of first contact with the probation service, levels of throughcare, more individualised care (sentence) plans, and environmental issues about our offices.

Adrian Smith, LPT Offender Engagement Project lead, attended the event and said: "Hearing the stories and experiences is a reminder that we are on the right track but still

have lots to do before we can be confident we are changing lives."

Many of the issues raised by service users are now being explored within LPT's Offender Engagement Project.



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CLEAR ROAD AHEAD

A new website has been launched to promote LPT's Steer Clear programme.

Steer Clear – run by the Trust – is a fee-paying, drink-drive rehabilitation course for people convicted of drink-drive offences. The programme has been running across the capital since 1998.

The course focuses on personal choice, the potential for reoffending, the consequences of poor decision-making and how

this influences risk-taking behaviour.

Programme Manager Sharon Kirk said: "All drink-drivers are eligible to attend this course if offered to them as part of the sentencing process. It can be as part of a community sentence with a requirement of supervision, as part of the Drink Impaired Drivers programme or as a standalone course.

"Offenders can gain up to a 25 per cent reduction in their

licence ban by attending and participating in 16 hours' training by an approved provider.

They will also gain improved knowledge of alcohol units and how they affect the body, as well as improved strategies to avoid reoffending. It is also unique in its ability to offer course materials in 14 different languages."

For more information, visit the new Steer Clear website, www.steer-clear.com