

DEAF EX-OFFENDERS MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP

PARTNERS: CMS AND MANCHESTER DEAF CENTRE

FUNDED BY THE MOVEMBER FOUNDATION

Manchester Deaf Centre is setting up a mutual support group for d/Deaf male ex-offenders. This support group is being set up together with CMS and funding from the Movember Foundation. It follows a pilot mutual support group for d/Deaf ex-offenders in Lancashire.

We want to set up a group where men will support each other. And where men can talk freely because everyone in the group is an ex-offender. The group will link into Manchester Deaf Centre's other services. The group will also look at activities members can do together to build confidence and a sense of achievement.

The d/Deaf ex-offenders group will provide assistance in accessing support, employment and training opportunities for one of the most marginalised and vulnerable groups in our society. Unemployment rates among deaf people are up to 33% and unemployment rates among ex-offenders can be as high as 60%. Hence finding employment and training for a deaf ex-offender is very difficult. Deaf ex-offenders:-

- a) Are isolated and marginalised. Whilst some of this was predictable, their isolation within the Deaf community surprises some.
- b) Are unemployed and have limited prospects for work
- c) Have very similar experiences of prison
- d) Welcome the chance to tell their stories
- e) Are surprised how much their experiences have in common
- f) Are usually keen to support others like themselves

The aim is to provide a mechanism for mutual support for the deaf ex-offenders to support each other. Moving people away from cycles of offending behaviour is much easier if people develop new friendships and social networks which reinforce their efforts.

The meetings (both one to one and the group) will be held entirely in British Sign Language (BSL) without the need for an interpreter. This is important in building rapport but also in letting the meetings flow without having to wait for an interpreter to finish before someone else can contribute.

If you have any clients who might find this group helpful to support them to move on from offending behaviour, please contact:

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