

Innovating as part of Our New Way

Created a two day training package: Jo Cheverton, Commissioning Manager

Our New Way is about finding different ways to operate, including innovative local initiatives which improve outcomes and increase value for money.

As with everything we do, our new way is fundamental to our objective of protecting the public and reducing reoffending by helping offenders to change their lives.

One of our greatest sources of ideas is from the people in prisons doing the work, and to reflect this NOMS has established a programme of work, focusing on how good ideas are being developed by individual prisons and how they might be adapted, shared and used elsewhere.

F&S and benchmarking provide the principles and framework within which all prisons have to operate, but to achieve success each prison needs to innovate locally.

A good example of this is the innovation HMP/YOI Portland developed to translate 'every contact matters' into a meaningful everyday activity, and address the need for prisons to focus on developing a safe and decent rehabilitative culture as set in the [NOMS Commissioning Intentions](#).

Known locally as 'Five Minute Intervention' (FMI) (see Related Documents below), Portland's initiative gives prison officers the chance to make the most of the daily interactions they have with prisoners. [The idea behind it is based on the research](#) which shows that staff can make a real difference when using skills which help prisoners become more self-reliant, more thoughtful and less impulsive, and more positive about their futures.

The original idea, which was developed by Jan Knake, former Head of Reducing Reoffending, was to enable staff to identify, in their daily interactions with prisoners, the opportunities for more meaningful conversations. Steve Hodson, Deputy Governor, tells us about how this is working at Portland.

"FMI is a model which does not require extra time but does require commitment from staff to use the time they already used for conversations in a constructive and purposeful manner."

Jo Cheverton, Commissioning Manager at Portland, created a two day training package to enhance staff skills and she explains: "Staff who attended the initial training to become interventionists, had varied degrees of experience, but all had a belief in the role of a prison officer in bringing about a rehabilitative culture.

"At the conclusion of the training, it was clear that staff had felt some elements were very useful, particularly enabling prisoners to take responsibility for their own future, along with asking prisoners for their thoughts, as opposed to giving advice and telling them the best thing to do.

"Even situations of potential conflict have been transformed into learning opportunities. Staff have supported prisoners to help them develop their abilities to take responsibility and to think for themselves."

On the progress that is now being made within Portland, Steve adds: "Frequently, I now hear from staff and prisoners alike, where day-to-day conversations are transformed into an opportunity for an intervention.

"In depth evaluation has been undertaken, as it was always clear that we wanted to know, not only whether FMI worked, but also how it worked, and this is an essential element of ensuring the success of any project.

"The final evaluation is being concluded but I feel that staff prisoner relationships have been enhanced and developed through the implementation of FMI. We have a great deal of pride in this innovative and high impact intervention, particularly as it was developed in our own establishment."

The results of the evaluation will be shared later in the year. Based on the emerging positive findings, the Public Sector Prisons Directorate has asked Business Development Group, along with the support of Commissioning Strategies Group, to test and develop this initiative further, and plans are being draw up to train staff at Norwich and Wandsworth in the early Autumn, and at two other local prisons later this year.

If you are developing your own local examples of innovation which others could learn from to improve local practice, please share these with commissioningstrategies.group@noms.gsi.gov.uk. Consideration can be given as to how whether the project should receive additional support or help with evaluation, and allow any learning opportunities to be promoted and shared across NOMS.