

Smart Steps

SAFER FUTURE COMMUNITIES
Empowering local voluntary & community partnerships

Deventio Housing Trust's SmartSteps project provides cost-effective housing and one-to-one support to former offenders in Derbyshire. The project aims to ensure that people leaving prison with an unmet housing need have access to appropriate services within a safe, supportive environment.

National statistics show that 40% of single homeless people have a history of offending and up-to a third of prisoners find themselves homeless on release. Research also shows that ex-prisoners who are homeless are twice as likely to reoffend as those in stable accommodation.

Deventio Housing Trust also found that many offenders are likely to be homeless, of the 541 homeless people who stayed at their emergency accommodation centre, Milestone House, during 2011/12, 68% were offenders or were at risk of reoffending.

Funded by Supporting People on a recurring contract until March 2013, SmartSteps receives referrals from the council, local prisons and the probation service. After an initial assessment, individuals move into one of Deventio's shared homes in Derby, where they are carefully matched with compatible housemates.

The residents then receive tailor-made support from the project, including reconnecting them with family and friends, finding employment or access to treatment for drug or alcohol misuse. They are also in continual contact with their support workers, both in person and by telephone, who

provide support in key areas, including economic wellbeing, health and safety.

The ultimate goal of SmartSteps is to create a stable foundation from which prison leavers can achieve personal growth, independence and a better, stable and safe future. Their success in achieving this can be seen in the experiences of their residents during 2011/12, which include:

- 73% with a statutory order complying with it;
- 94% with drug issues successfully completed a drug treatment programme;
- 92% with debt problems learnt how to effectively manage their debts;
- 100% who needed support to contact their friends and families made initial contact;
- 69% wanting to access training and education starting a course, and;
- 95% with no GP signing up to a local GP surgery.

SmartSteps is helping to reduce crime by reducing the number of prison leavers facing homelessness, leading to a reduction in criminal and destructive behaviour within this group. It has also empowered these individuals to permanently turn their backs on offending and move towards having safe and stable lives within the community.

For further information on Deventio Housing Trust visit

<http://deventiohousing.com>.