

WHAT MAKES A
St GILES TRUST
AWARD-WINNING

St GILES TRUST

Inspiring Choices, Creating Positive Futures since 1992

PEER ADVISOR?

An at-a-glance guide to our Peer Advisor model, the aim of which is to break the cycle of prison, unemployment and homelessness. We enable serving prisoners to learn new skills, offer support and advice to fellow prisoners & gain a qualification in the process.

Meet Michael. He's a serving prisoner who is about to be released. You might think this would be a good time for Michael but he's not looking forward to it...



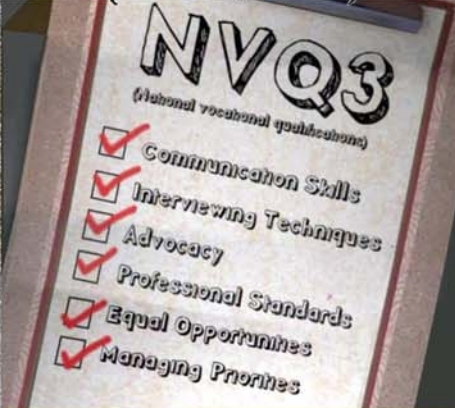
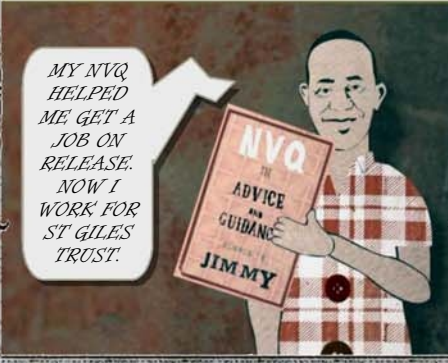
Like many prisoners, Michael faces the sharp-end of the link between homelessness and prison. 30% of people who go to prison are already homeless and another 30% will lose their accommodation whilst inside. And it's difficult to get a job, go straight and get on when no-one wants to employ an ex-con. With prisoners facing problems like these it's hardly surprising that...



The only people who will be particularly happy to see Michael are his old friends - now his ex-wife has moved on - and they were part of his problems in the first place...



Now meet Jimmy. Jimmy was also a serving prisoner but unlike Michael he used his sentence to study for an NVQ in Advice & Guidance through St Giles Trust. Now he advises other prisoners - or his peers, hence *Peer Advisor* - on a wide range of issues but typically on housing...

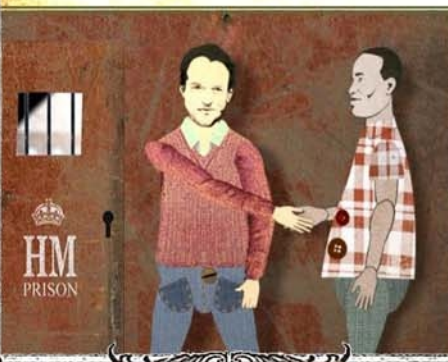


The NVQ3 is an externally verified, nationally recognised qualification that is the 'industry standard' for advice organisations. It is the equivalent of two 'A' Levels...

Peer-advice is cost-effective (our Advisors are volunteers), flexible (the model is easily adapted to suit various prison and community settings), and crucially has credibility among prisoners who get information and help from people who have gone through similar situations as them...



So when Michael is released, Jimmy meets him at the prison gates and helps with a range of issues from finding accommodation, making appointments (like Probation), to help with form-filling and accessing training. Our aim is to stabilise Michael's life and reduce his risk of re-offending...



With Jimmy on hand for guidance, Michael sorts out a hostel, claims benefits to which he is entitled and enrolls on a training course to learn some computer skills. A little later, Michael gets a flat and volunteers at a day centre...

One year and a lot of hard work later and Michael now has a paid job - something he never thought would be possible with a criminal record. In fact his situation has improved so much that his ex-wife agrees that Michael can see his children on a regular basis. Now that's a result!

