**CASE STUDY**

**GINA**

**Miss K** had asked to see me when she had heard from other prisoners about our regular service at Drake Hall prison. Miss K was 30 years old when I first met her and was working in the kitchens within the prison.

Miss k was from a traditional Sikh background and had grown up in a tight knit community where the family business was important and everybody worked together in it. Although her upbringing was strict her father encouraged her to work hard and helped her to buy her first home. Miss K had an arranged marriage which she wasn’t happy about but went through under duress. Miss K suffered from domestic abuse from her husband and decided to divorce him. Her parents disowned her because of this, leaving Miss K without any support.

Miss K met someone else whom she became involved with but before long it became obvious that the partner was very controlling. Miss K’s property was burgled and the men involved threatened Miss K if she didn’t do what they wanted her to do i.e. growing cannabis. She became involved in drug offences which led to her arrest and a custodial sentence of 3 years.

Miss k had been and was suffering from depression because of her experiences when she was sentenced. Miss K participated in courses within the prison and worked in the Kitchens for 14 months as she had an ambition to eventually have her own business in the catering trade. She had made contact with her family but the relationship was strained.

I met with Miss K five months before she was due to be released on HDC (tag). She was concerned about her accommodation on release and said she didn’t want to go back to her parents as they would try to control her life and possibly try and force her to marry again. Miss K expressed wishes to get back into training and employment as soon as she possibly could.

I saw Miss K regularly until her release. She was interested in engaging with our service, joining courses relevant to her needs and having the extra outreach support to help her integrate back into the community. She also expressed a wish to do some voluntary work to get herself back into some sort of employment although she was restricted in her movements because of the restrictions of her licence condition.

The prison resettlement had applied to Stonham for supported housing with her Probation Officer. I had also applied to Midland Heart housing Association on behalf of Miss K for some eventual permanent housing.

Miss K’s support needs on release were:

* Help with accessing benefits
* Support with temporary and permanent housing
* Emotional support
* Signing on with Health professionals
* Support into the courses and training
* To access our centre
* To have support from our outreach team when needed

The prison arranged some accommodation which they described as a safe house. Miss K was very unhappy with this temporary accommodation, feeling that the level of support was too low for her needs, she was feeling very isolated. It was also too near to where relatives lived and she was worried that she might be seen by relatives or people who knew her family. We managed to get her quickly moved to other temporary accommodation with 24 hour support.

Miss K was regularly seen by our team and engaged at the centre. She went on a taster two week employment set up by Business in the Community and enjoyed working in a top restaurant doing silver service. Miss K applied to work with The Jericho Project on a voluntary basis and is currently working in their newly opened café in the Washwood Heath area of Birmingham. She has applied to do a three year professional cookery course at the College of food and is awaiting a place. Miss K also wants to study business management so that she can eventually open her own restaurant.

Miss K sees her family regularly now and has a better relationship with them, she is able to convey to them that she needs to be independent and not in their control. Miss K was released from her tag in February and has been able to start to have a social life with positive friends. She is determined not to re-offend and is looking forward to a positive future, her depression has improved. We wish Miss K the very best in her future endeavours, I am very impressed with her resilience and determination to make a fresh start, she is an inspiration to other women who have been in the criminal Justice System and proof that lives can be turned around.

 April 2012

Update

Presently K is doing a full time chef course at the Birmingham college of food and is doing really well.