

Swanswell and West Midlands Probation celebrate success in tackling drink-driving

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The National Probation Service and Swanswell celebrated the completion of the 100th Drink Impaired Drivers Programme, which changes people's attitudes to drink-driving, on Tuesday (10th March 2009) with a special presentation ceremony.

A group of 13 people who have successfully completed the programme received their certificates from Warwickshire's Judge Hodson and West Midlands Probation Board chair Alan Harrison.

People convicted of drink-driving offences can be sent on the Drink Impaired Drivers (DIDs) programme. On the course, offenders examine the reasons that lead to drink-driving through demonstrations, discussions, quizzes and small group activities.

One group member said at the ceremony on Tuesday, "It's been a good course for me. I've learnt a hell of a lot. I even enjoyed parts of it."

The programme is run by Swanswell, a charitable trust. Swanswell's tutors are dedicated to teaching and motivating offenders by helping them find their own best ways to change. In this way, group members can put into practice the knowledge and skills learnt on the programme to avoid future re-offending.

Another group member added, "I'm glad I went on the course. I definitely won't drink-drive again."

Swanswell was the first non-Probation agency to be contracted to run the DIDs programme.

Since its national roll-out in April 2002, the Coventry and Warwickshire programme has achieved great results. 82% of those who start the programme complete it successfully.

Since 2002, Swanswell has supported more than 850 people to complete the programme.

The programme's success is also reflected in comments from the 100th group – many of them suggested they would like to see a similar module as part of the driving test. "It's a shame you have to be convicted of drink-driving before you learn all this stuff," they said.

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