

Citation for Val Jeal, MBE, Hon. Doc. of Laws (LLD) (Bristol University 2018)

Val was born in Northumberland in 1941, before later coming to Bristol and training in secretarial skills. She worked as a secretary in W.D. & H.O. Wills in Bedminster, Bristol Siddeley Engines, and Sir Percy Thomas Architects Partnership.

In 1968, Val joined the Department of Pathology in Bristol University as a Secretary and later moved to the University Library as the Executive Assistant to the University Librarian.

In August 1991, Val began a new career in the voluntary sector. She founded the Salvation Army Candle Project for street homeless people in St. Paul's and worked there until 1995.

Val then volunteered in Genesis House, Chicago, which had a six-bed residential unit and two drop-in centres for female sex workers. Returning to Bristol in 1995, Val resigned from the Candle Project and founded One25 Limited working with street based female sex workers in Bristol. She was then an adviser in a new project for female sex workers in Thessaloniki, Greece and as an observer and information gatherer in Amsterdam with projects for female sex workers.

Following retirement from One25 in 2003, Val worked with the Home Office and Christian Care Centres in Bristol to set up a chain of four houses for male ex-offenders to equip them for rehabilitation. In addition to the four men's houses, with the help of Alabare Christian Care Centres, Val set up The Well, a six-bed house for female sex workers committed to change.

In 2008, Val, as part of One25, helped to set up Naomi House, a five-bed mother and baby unit for female sex workers. This unit was much welcomed by Social Services, who advised on all aspects of the work, together with the Courts and legal system.

In 2003, Val was appointed as a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) and, in 2018, awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Laws by Bristol University.