

# European treatment and transition management of high-risk offenders

## Presentation of project results and introduction to **Forum 3:** **Transition Management and Release**

*Tiina Vogt-Airaksinen,  
senior specialist*

Criminal Sanctions Agency, Finland



The JCN project has been funded with the financial support of the Criminal Justice Programme of the European Commission. These contents are the sole responsibility of the JCN project partner institutions and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

# **Project results on Transition Management and Release**

**OBJECTIVE: TO SUPPORT THE PERSON TO RESETTLE SAFELY IN THE COMMUNITY AS A POSITIVE PARTICIPANT/CITIZEN ON THEIR TRANSITION FROM THE PRISON TO THE COMMUNITY**

*Findings from the JCN project define the following key principles:*

- Balance between security and rehabilitation
- Preparation of release should be structured and through out sentence
- Multi agency co-operation and joint working
- Use of community based services/in-reach services
- Graduated release
- Early release with supervision should be a standard
- Information exchange and data sharing should be a consistent practice

# KEY PRINCIPLES

## **Balance between security and rehabilitation**

- The importance of both factors should be understood, admitted and taken into practice
- Security and rehabilitation priorities have to be acknowledged, because they need each other
- Security that is well functioning and consistent is a condition for fruitful rehabilitation and vice versa:
- Rehabilitation, appropriately implemented, boosts and fortifies security
- Dialogue between security and rehabilitation staff essential
- Training for staff and personnel working with high risk offenders should include pro-social modelling, motivational skills, change management, risk identification etc.

# KEY PRINCIPLES

## **Preparation of release should be structured and through out sentence**

- Sentence management should support resettlement preparation at least several years before release for every high-risk offender
- “Step-down” stages in sentence management
- The inmate should be an active participant
- In-reach services should be used at earliest possible stage
- Regular and consistent contact with supervisor (PO)
- Normalisation: life in custody should seek to resemble living in the community, especially close to release
- Concrete plans well in advance of release
- Stable, secure accommodation should be a priority

# KEY PRINCIPLES

## **Multi agency co-operation and joint working**

- There should be joint working between criminal justice agencies as well as with external and municipal service providers both in custody and in the community.
- Clear boundaries and responsibilities, each member will bring their special expertise (not do each others' work)
- This approach should be applied throughout the sentence, as community is where the offender will be – sooner or later
- Cost of this may be high but it can be effective in reducing harm and damage

# KEY PRINCIPLES

## **Use of community based/in-reach services**

- Focus on resettlement of offender in the community:
- Use of in-reach engagement and participation to bind the offender to their community and promote his/her resettlement
- “Normalisation” and taking of responsibility by the offender in their rehabilitation and actions
- As far as possible and practicable, the prisoner should have an active role in sentence and supervision planning. Doing WITH rather than TO.
- Sentence planning should include in-reach services and clarify roles and responsibilities of all active parties

# KEY PRINCIPLES

## Graduated release

- Important to have an opportunity to try out self management skills and other pro-social knowledge learned in custody, both in prison and community
- Open prisons, half-way houses, supported independent living
- Prison and other temporary leaves are essential
- Testing and trying out coping in civil life is essential: release, for example, 6 months in advance with supervision conditions and/or electronic monitoring
- The criteria for granting such releases should be as minimally restrictive as feasible later in the sentence: reduced restrictions and increased rights and responsibilities

# KEY PRINCIPLES

## **Early release with supervision should be a standard**

- All high risk prisoners should be subject to mandatory post-custody supervision with appropriate conditions and support for a minimum period on discharge from custody
- All sentences and periods of post release supervision should be time-limited
- Conditions or restrictions attached to post-release supervision should be constructive, purposeful and subject to review and revision



# KEY PRINCIPLES

## **Information exchange should be a consistent practice**

- Between Criminal Justice Agencies
- Between Criminal Justice Agencies and NGOs as well as municipal and community based service providers
- Graduated or restricted access to information where necessary
- Protocols for information sharing and confidentiality are essential for effective "joined-up" working in custody and community
- The offender should, as far as possible, be consulted/informed on relevant issues
- Informed consent by the offender for programmes and interventions
- Tri-partite meetings for clarity and transparency in communication: prison, probation/service providers and prisoner

## Other rules and regulations

- There are a substantial number of relevant authorities, documents and recommendations:
  - CoE European Probation Rules 2010
  - CoE Prison Rules 2006
  - CoE Recommendation 2003 on management of life sentence and other long-term prisoners
  - CoE Recommendation 22 from 2003 on conditional release
  - CoE Recommendation 2013 concerning dangerous offenders
  - The European Convention of Human rights
  - Etc.

