

European treatment and transition management of high risk offenders project 2012 -2014

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The JCN Newsletter

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European treatment and transition management of high risk offenders project 2012 -2014 Justice Co-operation Network (JCN) Helsinki workshop October-November 2013

Estonia, Finland, Ireland and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Germany), with the University of Greifswald as advisers, are partners in an EU funded project to examine and develop best practice in the transition management and supervision of high risk offenders leaving custody as well as developing a body of knowledge and creating an EU network of expertise. Ireland, through the Department of Justice and Equality, is represented in the project by the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service.

The Finnish partners, the Criminal Sanctions Agency and the Ministry of Justice, hosted the work stream 3 workshop in Helsinki between 30th October and 2nd November 2013.

The aim of the third JCN project workshop was to identify best practice strategies and interventions working with high risk offenders, for the desired continuity of services and for their effective transition management and resettlement.

The project began in November 2012 and will be concluded in

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October 2014. The work of the project will be completed in a series of workshops convened in the partner jurisdictions, published reports and a project conference in autumn 2014.

In the previous workshops in Tallinn and Dublin participants compared the existing systems in the partner countries. In Helsinki the goal was to focus on the ideal system, i.e. to look at the best practices in each country.

In spite of the different systems in partner countries, the workshop participants found that there are many similarities in values and in the way we look at things. For example, everybody agreed that all high risk offenders should be prepared for release gradually, through for instance prison leaves, open prisons, half way houses, supervised probationary freedom etc

Participants found that we share many of the same principles, which will help us in this project to develop a model for handling high risk offenders that all partner countries can agree on.

In putting together the workshop programme the Finnish team highlighted the role of view of research as well as NGOs and peer support.

The Road from Crime, a documentary film on desistance from offending , was an important centrepiece for the workshop and was a valuable prompt and focus for the discussion of principles behind good practices.

A comprehensive report on the work of the Helsinki workshop entitled “Best Practice Strategies and Programmes for dealing with high risk offenders and for the desired continuity of treatment as well as for transition management” has been completed and is available on the project website at <http://jcn.pixel-online.org> .



The Road from Crime

The Road from Crime is a product of the Discovering Desistance project, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The project, led by Professor Fergus McNeill, seeks to share knowledge and improve understanding about why people desist from offending. The other members of the project team are **Stephen Farrall** (University of Sheffield), **Claire Lightowler** (Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services) and **Shadd Maruna** (Institute of Criminology & Criminal Justice, Queen's University Belfast).

The film, **The Road from Crime**, has been produced as part of the project. For details about the wider project and for an opportunity to comment on the film visit the Discovering Desistance Blog. There is also an evidence summary to complement the film, called How and why people stop offending.

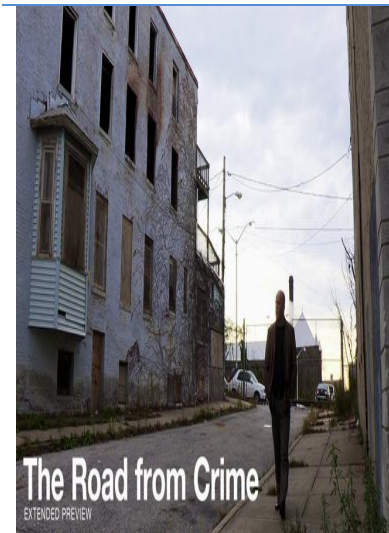
In this timely and compelling documentary, Allan Weaver, a Scottish ex-offender turned probation officer (author of the book *So You Think You Know Me?*) asks a simple question: What can we learn from those former prisoners who have successfully “desisted” from criminal behaviour or “gone straight?”

Starting where it all began for him on the streets of his hometown and in Barlinnie Prison in Glasgow, Allan sets off to understand how individuals like himself get caught up in cycles of crime and punishment, and how they break out of these patterns and move on to new lives. This journey takes him across the UK, meeting an array of ex-prisoners and ex-prisoner activist groups, probation leaders, and criminological experts from London to Washington, DC.

Allan learns that real change more typically involves processes of self-discovery and mutual support. Allan discovers that ‘desistance’ from criminality is an internal change process although it is almost never done without support from the outside.

The big question – especially pressing for Allan as a probation officer – is whether we can bottle and package these often intangible dynamics into our criminal justice interventions? Can criminal justice processes be improved by a better understanding of how the change processes in desistance from crime really work? How would the criminal justice system be different if it were run by people like Allan who had been through the process themselves?

To answer this, Allan finds a fascinating world of ex-prisoner-led

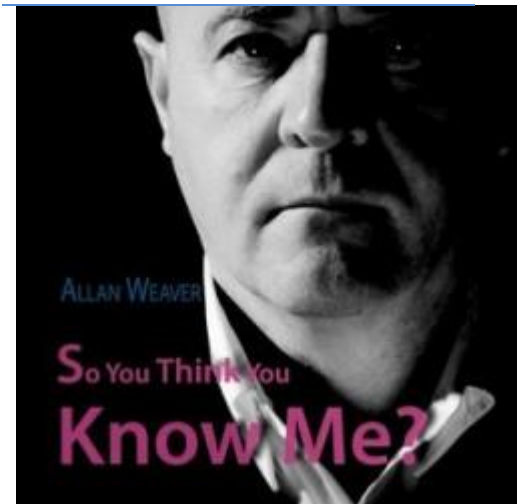


mutual aid and activist groups championing a new model of criminal justice practice. Like Allan, many of the ex-prisoners find meaning and purpose in their lives by helping others to avoid the mistakes they made. They might also have the answer for tackling the enduring problem of criminal recidivism.

The Road from Crime is available from the discovering Desistance website at

<http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/discoveringdesistance/documentary/> and is an invaluable resource from information, training and discussions.

An article by the project team on the work of the project titled *Desistance Research and Probation Practice: Knowledge Exchange and Co-producing Evidence-Based Practice Models* is in the Irish Probation Journal pp42-55 Volume 9 (2012) available on the Probation Service website www.probation.ie in the publication section for download for no charge.



Final conference

The final conference of the European treatment and transition management of high risk offenders project will be held in the **Yachting & Spar Resort Hohe Düne in Rostock-Warnemünde** (<http://www.hohe-duene.de>) from 3rd to 5th September 2014.

The Conference will feature presentations on the findings from the project, contributions from experts and workshop discussions. It will be a valuable opportunity for networking, to meet with experienced colleagues and experts in transition management, to exchange knowledge and develop partnerships.

Travel (flights), accommodation (from 03.09.2014 to 05.09.2014) and attendance costs (breakfast, lunch and dinner) for registered delegates from member states of the European Union and acknowledged candidate states will be funded through the project budget. Early registration will be important as places will be limited.

Please note that cancellation costs in the event of a cancellation of registration where travel and accommodation bookings have been confirmed will be the responsibility of the delegate as the project budget cannot fund such costs.

If you wish further information please contact the German JCN team by e-mail at: jcn.conference@jm.mv-regierung.de.





Associated partners:

In addition to the working partners the JCN project has a number of Associated Partners supporting the objectives and work of the project.

The Associated Partners are:

The Directorate General Houses of Justice (Belgium) <http://just.fgov.be>,

German Federal Ministry of Justice (Germany) <http://www.bmj.de>

Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic

<http://www.justice.gov.sk/Stranky/default.aspx>

Prison Administration of Republic of Slovenia,

Ministry of Justice and Public Administration,

<http://www.mpu.gov.si>

The European Organization for Probation (CEP)

<http://www.cep-probation.org>



Workstream 4

Workstream 4 will focus on the identification of best practice in transition management for high risk prisoners leaving custody.

Workstream 4 workshop will meet in Schwerin in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Germany between 1st and 5th April 2014. Following the workshop a report will be published on models of best practice in transition management for high risk prisoners leaving custody.



Keep up to date with the JCN Project

If you wish to keep in touch with developments about the actions, activities and progress of the JCN project please check the project website at <http://jcn.pixel-online.org/>.

You can also send an email to barbarah.hansen@jm.mv-regierung.de or Gerry McNally at gpmcnally@probation.ie to receive project newsletters and other relevant information.



The JCN project, Justice Cooperation Network European treatment and transition management of high risk offenders, is funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Criminal Justice Programme.



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If you wish to seek further information on the JCN project please check the project website at <http://jcn.pixel-online.org/> or contact Gerry McNally at gpmcnally@probation.ie or by post at the [Probation Service, Haymarket, Smithfield, Dublin 7.](#)

The next edition of this newsletter will be published in Summer 2014.