

Preventing crime among young adults

Competence Centre for Crime Prevention

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Kompetansesenter for
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Criminal young adults - not a quick fix

- There is a general reduction in crime among juveniles in Norway
 - the gap between the law-abiding and criminal young adults widens
 - the criminal ones becomes even more stigmatized
- We know quite a lot about the risk and success factors today – but are the sanctions in the justice system taking the youth well enough into consideration?

Prevalence of Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Children's Commissioner (United Kingdom) Nobody Made the Connection: The Prevalence of Neurodisability in Young People Who Offend (United Kingdom, 2012)

Neurodevelopmental Disorders	General population	Young people in custody
Learning disabilities	2 - 4%	23 - 32%
Dyslexia	10%	43 - 57%
Communication disorders	5 - 7%	60 - 90%
Attention deficit hyperactive disorder	1.7 - 9%	12%
Autistic spectrum disorder	0.6 - 1.2%	15%
Traumatic brain injury	24 - 31.6%	65.1 - 72.1%
Epilepsy	0.45 - 1%	0.7 - 0.8%
Foetal alcohol syndrome	0.1 - 5%	10.9 - 11.7%

Desisters

- Desisters usually start offending after 13 years of age
- They commit at least one offence during formative years
- Settle into law-abiding lifestyles by their mid-twenties, having committed only a few crimes

Persisters

- Persisters start offending early, before age 14 and often as early as 10 years of age
- They offend at high rates and continue offending into adulthood
- They tend to come from multi-problem backgrounds, having few social ties, mixing with antisocial peers
- They tend to show poor impulsive behavior, poor thinking skills, showing aggressiveness, abusing drugs and alcohol
- They are usually seekers of immediate gratification and give no thought to the consequences of their actions



Cooperation necessary

- Not a matter for the correctional services alone
 - everyone around the young adults needs to cooperate
 - And the support must be coordinated
- This requires knowledge and understanding of each others responsibilities and expertise
- Regular meetings between for example the police, child welfare, youth workers, school, the correctional services etc.
 - in general and around the specific youth
 - written collaboration agreements are recommended
- The dialogue between the welfare services has to start before the criminality escalates
- The family and natural network must not be forgotten



Tailor-made sanctions

- The new juvenile sanctions in Norway – a tailor-made sanction to the specific youth
- All the participants around the youth needs to commit to their tasks
- Realistic demands to the young adult
- When a crime is committed – the sanctions must come as soon as possible
- The rules of confidentiality



The child welfare in Norway

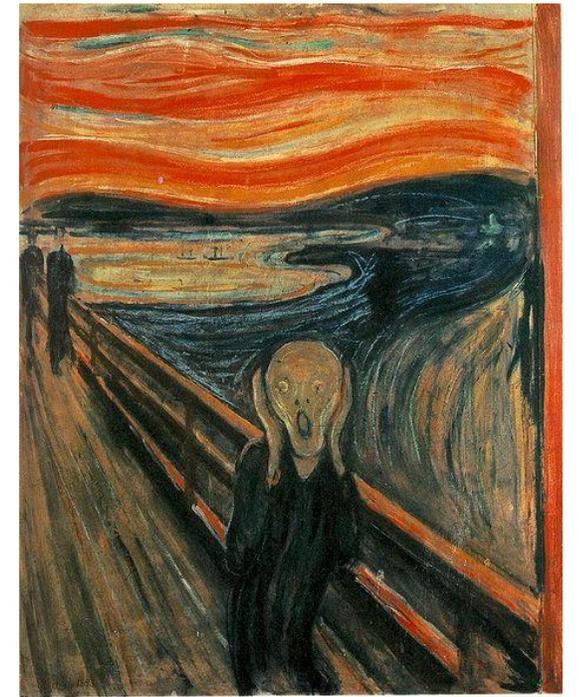
- Since January 2012 the child welfare is required to attend at the detention hearing for children under 18 years
- At the hearing the child welfare service shall state its opinion regarding the need for measures under Chapter 4 of the Child Welfare Act and provide information regarding the work that is being done to implement measures.
- Voluntary to get help form the child welfare when turning 18 unless the county welfare board has decided that the juvenile should stay in an youth care home, also after he or she has turned 18 years.
- A right to aftercare until 23 years of age – also a right to regret



How do we intervene? Expected re-offending rates for Persisters was achieved through:

M W Lipsey, *The Effect of Treatment on Juvenile Delinquents: Results from Meta-Analysis*, in F Losel, D Bender and T Bliesener (eds) *Psychology and Law: International Perspectives* (Walter de Gruyter and Co, Berlin, 1992).

- Preparation for employment (35% decrease)
- Behaviour contract (25% decrease)
- Institutional training (15% decrease)
- Court/Probation (10% decrease)
- Offender Counselling (8% decrease)
- Family Counselling (No change)
- Deterrent Sentencing (25% increase)



A matter of last resort !

- Child welfare institutions and prison must always be the last option
- When it's necessary to take the young adult into custody – the work towards the release has to start from day one.



Communication with the youth

- A clear communication is important – a clear adult voice creates confidence
- A dialogue with the young adult is essential – the young adult is the expert on his or her life
 - Do we dare to ask the difficult questions?
- It's essential that the youth experiences to be seen, heard and taken seriously
- Give them hope – help them to navigate – include them



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