

Round Table on New Users of Electronic Monitoring

Experiences with electronic monitoring in Norway by Jan-Erik Sandlie

It is a pleasure for me to speak at this conference and inform you about the pilot for electronic monitoring that we finally have established in Norway. Our friends in Sweden started with electronic monitoring in 1994 and in 1999 – 2000 we were making plans about a pilot in Norway. Then we got a new minister and the planning stopped – he did not believe in turning the home into a prison.

During the years 2000 – 2006 Norway had a growing capacity problem in the prisons. This capacity problem did not result in overcrowding of the prisons, but it created a waiting list – the prison queue. In the beginning of 2006 almost 3000 convicted persons were waiting to come in to prison and serve their sentence. In 2006 the Government made a plan for dealing with the problem. The plan had two goals. Get rid of the queue and at the same time – increase the quality of the execution of sentences in the Correctional Services. The introduction of electronic monitoring was an important part of the plan. Electronic monitoring would give us flexible capacity compared to prison cells and at the same time – give the Correctional Services a new tool to increase the quality of the execution of sentences.

The proposal to implement electronic monitoring in Norway was heavily discussed by the politicians. Finally, a narrow majority in the Parliament decided to approve and the legislation was passed in the Parliament in the summer of 2007.)

In September this year we have a new election. The second largest political party in Norway stated as late as last week, that if they win the election, closing down the electronic monitoring pilot is something they plan to do on day two. This is a big challenge for us – it is very important that we have a successful pilot that shows the politicians that electronic monitoring is something for the future. It is also a part of the story that the Norwegian media at the moment is very positive to our pilot.

The legislation came into force in August 2008 and on the first of September 2008 we had the first person serving an unconditional sentence at home with electronic monitoring.

In Norway electronic monitoring is a way of serving an ordinary prison sentence. It is the Correctional Services at a regional level that decides whether an unconditional sentence can be executed with electronic monitoring or not. The Execution of Sentences Act allows the Correctional Services to decide that prison sentences up to four months in whole can be served at home. They can also decide that inmates serving longer sentences can serve with electronic monitoring during the last four months before their parole time.

In the first place this is a 2-year pilot project limited to 6 out of 19 counties, and the anticipated number of offenders being tagged in this period is 130 at any given time.

It is important to us that the Correctional Services have the responsibility for all parts of the project. The Correctional Services Department in the Ministry of Justice is administrating and

coordinating the implementation of electronic monitoring in Norway. The regional level is considering the applications and is the decision-making authority, while the local level is responsible for the execution of the sanction. The Correctional Services IT Centre has the responsibility of implementing the software system for electronic monitoring, and is also in charge of the control centre that is monitoring the whole country and that reports to the field personnel.

Special units for electronic monitoring have been established within the existing local probation offices. These units have well-qualified multidisciplinary staff of both prison officers and social workers. There is a great emphasis on dynamic security and close follow-up from the staff. The offender has to accept a very tight supervision and control-schema, and having a suitable occupation is part of the conditions. The offender also has to participate in motivational and crime preventive programs, and other activities to individually match the offender's need for rehabilitation. The goal is to maintain and advance the social and economic capabilities of the offender and in this way to prevent recidivism.

Verwijerd:

As a technical solution we have chosen the conventional electronic monitoring of an offenders presence at his domestic residence, based on radio frequency-technology. As the supplier of the technical equipment we have chosen a British company, Guidance Monitoring Limited.

Some figures:

Front door (1 Sept 2008 - 24 April 2009)

Applications received	830
Applications denied without assessment	254
Applications denied after assessment	81
Applications accepted	374
Electronic monitoring started	322
Imprisoned (revoked)	13
Electronic monitoring completed	245

Back door (1 Sept 2008 - 24 April 2009)

Applications received	81
Applications denied without assessment	24
Applications denied after assessment	10
Applications accepted	24
Electronic monitoring started	20
Imprisoned (revoked)	1
Electronic monitoring completed	13

Breaches 2008 - executing sentences in the community

	Drunk driver program	Community sentence orders	Electronic monitoring	2009 Electronic monitoring
Completed	85	87	92	95,5
Revoked	15	13	8	4,5