



State Probation Service  
Republic of Latvia

FOR A SAFER SOCIETY



State Probation Service  
Republic of Latvia

# **Cooperation, Communication, Correction – Remotely Forever**

Imants Jurevičius  
Director of the State Probation Service of Latvia

# Functions of the SPS

- to provide a **pre-sentence/ parole report**
- to ensure the development of **probation programmes** and the implementation of licensed programmes
- to organise the execution of **community works service** (criminal punishment and compulsory measure of correctional nature)
- to organise and facilitate **victim-offender mediation** in the criminal proceedings and cases concerning application of a compulsory measure of correctional nature to children

# Functions of the SPS

- to ensure **community supervision:**
  - conditional release from criminal liability
  - conditional sentence with deprivation of liberty (suspended sentence)
  - conditional release before term from deprivation of liberty (parole)
  - probation supervision as basic punishment
  - probation supervision as additional punishment



State Probation Service  
Republic of Latvia

# STATISTICS | 2021

Probation clients 26 YO and older

74%

Probation clients 11 - 25 years

26%

Number of  
probation clients  
in 2021

16 391

Community  
service

8644

Community  
supervision

5790

Mediation

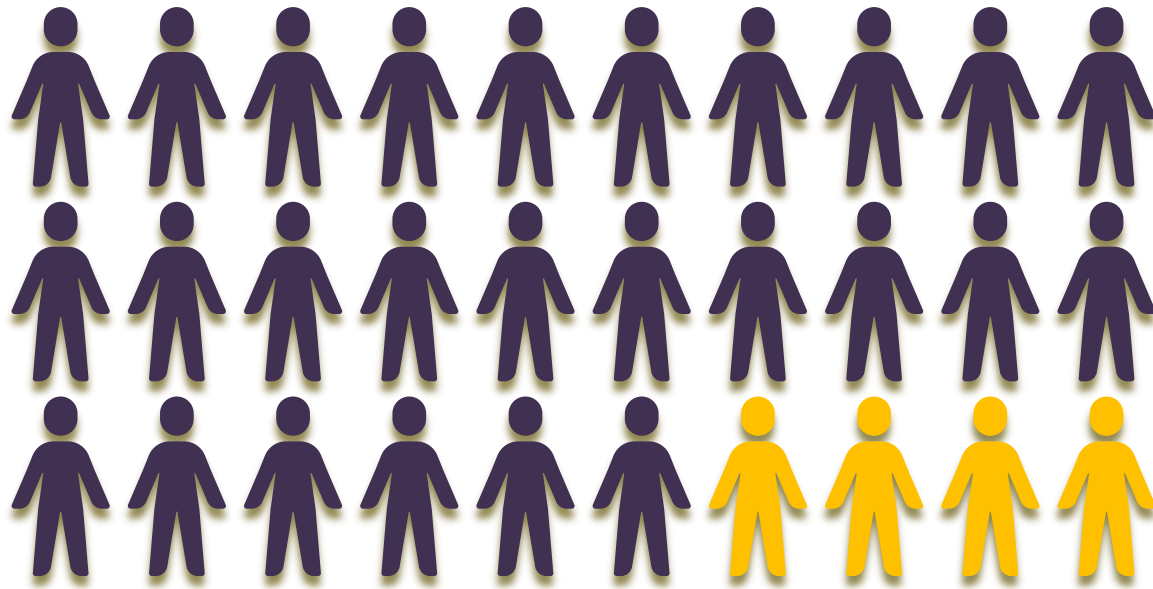
988

Pre-sentence/  
parole reports

969

# NUMBERS OF STAFF

Working "de facto" on April, 2022



**86%**

Of employees are working in regional probation offices

Caseload: on average 25 cases per probation officer at the same time\*

**14%**

Of employees are working in headquarters

"De facto" working on April, 2022 - 367 employees (total number of staff - 419)  
52 working in headquarters; 315 – in regional probation offices

# Dynamics of remote work

Past



*Only in separate cases when probation client's residence was abroad, the communication were remote*

Present



Future - ?



# Remote community supervision

**When making a decision about remote communication, the following is taken into account:**

- Risk and needs assessment
- Client's ability to provide secure and unimpeded video communication
- Client's ability to provide submitting and signing documents remotely
- Imposed obligations on client
- Activities included in supervision plan
- Client's cooperation with SPS in dealing with criminogenic problems and socio-psychological needs

**I (very low risk)** – face-to-face meetings can be replaced fully with remote communication

**II (low risk)** – face-to-face meetings 1 x 6 months, rest of meetings are replaced by remote communication

**III (medium risk)** – face-to-face meetings once a month, rest of meetings are replaced by remote communication

**IV (high risk) and V (very high risk)** – remote communication is determined only if there are objective grounds, it has to be aligned with Resocialization department (SPS headquarters)



# Remote community supervision

## Benefits

- Saving time and financial resources (infrastructure, travel expenses, travel time)
- Clients are motivated to acquire different on-line options
- Common environment for young people – more open for conversation
- A bonus for clients, striving and cooperating more, for maintaining it
- It's possible to manage cases in other regions of state (balancing workload, attract particular specialists)
- Wider opportunity to gain access to psychologists, addiction specialists and others (also from other regions)
- Wider opportunity to attract family members, support persons
- An instrument for supervising clients abroad and clients with special-needs

## Challenges

- Insufficient technical facilities for clients (mobile phones, Internet access, hardware issues)
- Insufficient digital/ virtual skills for clients
- Different conversation structure, missing non-verbal language (gestures, posture, facial expressions)
- Concerns that conversation is not safe and there are third parties
- Issues with clients ability to sign documents prepared during conversation
- Risk of overlooking certain behavioural aspects (alcohol use, health issues, etc.)
- To ensure meaningful supervision not formal one
- Clients use disclaimer on technical problems to justify not contacting the SPS at the agreed time

# Remote probation programmes

## Benefits

- Opportunity to involve clients in one group from different places of Latvia
- Opportunity to involve programme managers from different regions
- It's often easier for clients to open up, safer environment
- Common communication environment for young people
- Programme managers embrace new skills
- Saving time and financial resources (infrastructure, travel expenses, travel time)

## Challenges

- Difficult to manage the group's development processes and influence the dynamics of the group because there is no presence effect
- At this moment clients are participating in programmes remotely only from SPS computers in SPS working space (allows to ensure confidentiality for all members of the group)
- Clients experience fatigue more quickly and lose focus
- Difficult to track compliance with group rules
- Programme materials are not fully adjusted to on-line

# Remote pre-sentence/ parole reports

## Benefits

- Easier to provide a pre-sentence/ parole report about persons in prisons (no formalities required for visiting the prison)
- It's possible to attract staff from other regions (balancing workload, attract particular specialists)
- Opportunity to ensure Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements during preparation of pre-sentence/ parole reports
- Saving time and financial resources (infrastructure, travel expenses, travel time)

## Challenges

- Weak technical facilities in prisons
- Remote signing of documents using e-signature is not possible in prisons
- Prison staff do not leave inmate alone during conversation

# Remote victim-offender mediation

## Benefits

- Opportunity to take place in mediation for persons not willing to see each other face-to-face
- Opportunity to participate in mediation for persons who are abroad
- Saving time and financial resources for mediator and parties involved in mediation
- Helps to overcome anxiety

## Challenges

- Confidentiality risk
- No face-to-face (personal) contact
- Hard to respond to emotions
- The approach does not apply to all cases
- Mediator needs to focus more intensely
- Uneven technical facilities for parties
- Network issues can have a significant impact on the mediation process and well-being of parties

# Remote volunteering programmes

## Benefits

- Creative environment for informal activities for volunteers from different regions
- Opportunity for members of COSA to communicate rapidly
- Good way to start cooperating with secretive clients

## Challenges

- Mostly not a successful solution for volunteers in communication with clients
- Uneven technical facilities for volunteers and clients

# Other areas remotely – MAPPA, therapeutic interviewing, staff training, conferences etc.

## Benefits

- Efficiency
- Extended participant circle
- Opportunity to attract highly qualified and rare-available specialists
- Time and financial resources
- Quick access to information during conversation
- Opportunity to cover a wider amount of clients in a shorter period of time

## Challenges

- Uneven technical facilities
- Always has to be "Plan B"
- Personal contacts are more formed and strengthened in face-to-face meetings
- Difficulties in forming an alliance (therapeutic interaction between the client and specialist performing therapeutic interview), but does not exclude it

# Benefits to probation clients from remote probation

- Opportunity to more successfully align everyday life processes with probation activities
- Saving time and financial resources (infrastructure, travel expenses, travel time)
- More common communication type for young probation clients
- For some probation clients it is easier to overcome internal barriers to an open conversation with the probation specialist
- Probation clients who have social anxiety or difficulty being in a group and who are involved in probation programmes have greater sense of security and are easier to open when the rest of the group is virtual rather than in person

# Remote communication – for which probation client groups?

- Mothers and fathers
- People with specific employment schedule
- People who have long-term health problems or rehabilitation period
- People with movement disabilities
- Young people
- People who need to leave the state for a certain period of time (for example employment issues etc.)
- People who are abroad for a certain period of time because of education or hobbies (camps, competitions etc.)
- Very low (I risk level) and low (II risk level) risk probation clients
- For all groups of probation clients, if an emergency situation or state of exception in certain territory or whole state is declared



# What we plan for the near future

- Develop digital solutions for the provision of probation services
- Develop and test interactive resocialization and rehabilitation methods (interactive games, video and audio materials, digitalization of probation programmes)
- Implement audio-video recording tool
- Continue developing staff on-line learning platform
- Establish closer cooperation with local authorities and NGOs so that the client can ensure a secure and undisturbed communication with the SPS as close as possible to his or her place of residence (e.g. libraries, youth centers, etc.)
- Develop networking with cooperation partners (e.g. companies that can provide probation clients with work, organisations that can become employers in community service, etc.)

Remotely  
forever,  
because...

- It's an opportunity to attract qualified specialists to a wider circle of probation clients
- It's an opportunity to successfully align daily life activities of probation client with the probation measures
- It allows to balance workload of probation specialists at state level
- It allows to create compact clusters of specialized probation specialists to work with probation clients throughout state
- It's essential benefit of time and financial resources
- It encourages continuous development of approaches and methods in work with probation clients and cooperation partners (virtual reality technologies, artificial intelligence etc.)

# FOR FURTHER QUESTIONS CONTACT US



[Imants.Jurevicius@vpd.gov.lv](mailto:Imants.Jurevicius@vpd.gov.lv)



Lomonosova Street 9-1, Riga, Latvia



[www.vpd.gov.lv](http://www.vpd.gov.lv)