Indicators for a successful interagency co-operation in the preparation of a gradual release from prison

Pia Andersson, Senior Specialist, Development and Guidance Department
Prison and Probation Service of Finland

Aki Saarinen, Head of Käyrä Unit
Prison and Probation Service of Finland
Pre-conditions for a successful interagency co-operation

Interagency co-operation included in:
- Criminal policy
- Legislation
- Sub-laws

In the organisation:
- Shared values and principles
- Strategical goals
- Action plans
- Normative and Operational guidelines
Probationary liberty under supervision (PLUS)

- Home curfew and zones
- Work, study and/or treatment and rehabilitation
- Weekly schedule
- Regular case manager meetings
- Alcohol and drug tests
- Home visits of the patrol group

PLUS means that a sentenced person can be released from prison under supervision up to six months before his or her regular conditional release. The aim of PLUS is to promote the sentenced persons controlled and planned release and adjustment to society.
How

• Everybody is assessed
  • Risks, needs, strengths and motivation
  • Living conditions
  • Work, studies, treatment, rehabilitation
  • Social network

• Structures for co-work and process

• Responsibilities and the roles

• In the offender management system

• All in the organisation works towards the same goal

• Meeting the children and others in the home

• Informed consent, CoE recommendation

• Co-work with service providers

• Content of rehabilitation and skill practicing

• Digitalisation

• Electronic Monitoring

Combination of control and support
Purpose

• Reduce the risk of reoffending
• Provide a context for change work
• Promote desistance
• Enhance social inclusion
• Increase responsibility taking
• Strengthen empowerment
• Build a new narrative
Experiences and feedback from the offenders/service users

• In Probationary Liberty Under Supervision (PLUS) - Prisoners’ Experiences of Probationary Liberty Under Supervision in Finland

• My research employs a qualitative social research design and it uses a follow-up style interview design, comprising of two phases of ten face-to-face thematic semi-structured interviews.

• Research data was coded using the thematic coding approach and interpreted with framework analysis.

• Research findings indicate that social integration (importance of social bonds and agency), resettlement (finding your place in the mist of change) and rehabilitation (specially including substance abuse treatment), all together are included in the process of PLUS.

• Research concludes that PLUS can be considered to be a positive factor in the desistance of criminal behaviour.
GETTING “FREE” REALLY MATTERS!

**PRISON**

- Good preparations eases the transformation
- PLUS minimises the damages of imprisonment
- The importance of social ties was highlighted
- In PLUS you are controlled, but also supported
- Controlled release back to the society makes sense

**SOCIETY**
Experiences and feedback from the offenders/service users (the meaning of PLUS)

“well, at least I’m happy that I’m given a chance like this, because I don’t have the intent of spending my youth in prison and things like that, I have dreams and goals that I’m going towards at high-speed, so there’s a positive mood towards it all”

“I now get a new start to my life from this whole sentence”

“it means to me a soft decline into the society, which is very good for me at this point, because as I said, I am institutionalised and I am really happy that I am going, that I am going to PLUS and not to total freedom, I still have a feeling that I get support, I get help and support during PLUS, and after release I am like, I can’t make calls here anymore, so what am I going to do…”

“yes I was supported and it also depends on one’s own behaviour, that if you’re volatile and use drugs and things like that, you can forget PLUS and open prisons, but in my case the prison itself noticed that I’m a calm guy and totally substance-free and all that, so of course they’ll try all the more vigorously to progress these kinds of prisoners’ matters”
Experiences and feedback from the offenders/service users (feelings and expectations)

“inside my own head I have processed this adventure in a way that I know that I’m going to follow the rules and instructions precisely, and I don’t see that as a hard thing, but there are such prisoners that don’t see it that way, or don’t understand the value of PLUS and then risk losing it all for some stupid thing”

“well I have a little...I don’t doubt that I wouldn’t survive, and I’ve intended that I’ll finish this with honours, but I’m so institutionalised, that now it really terrifies me to go back into society”

“you can be detached from the world you live inside the prison, it is a big influence that speaks against your process of change, so even if you had the desire to change, the surroundings can combat you in a way that succeeding is nearly impossible or at least extremely hard”

“now it has been possible for me to take part in my children’s everyday life and show support at home, in the same way it has been possible to connect myself to work again and get support on my rehabilitation and seceding from drugs, which I have been doing for a couple of years now, the most important is that it’s allowed me to be a parent to my children”
Question

What would you take with you to your jurisdiction from this workshop?

Name two things.
THANK YOU
pia.andersson@om.fi
aki.saarinen@om.fi