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# DESIGNING

# A CASELOAD AND WORKLOAD MODEL

**Workshop on Caseload and Workload: Supporting Sustainable Probation Through the Human Dimension**

**27-28 May Bucharest, Romania**

# Why This Topic Matters

- Probation systems across Europe face increasing workload pressure
- Caseload numbers alone do not explain workload
- "Invisible overcrowding in probation"
- Excessive workload affects:
  - quality of supervision
  - rehabilitation
  - staff well-being
  - public safety



# The “Holy Grail” Problem

There is no universal number.

What matters is:

- context
- complexity
- supervision intensity
- organisational structure

“BALANCED MODEL” 



# Caseload vs Workload



## CASELOAD

- No. of cases



## WORKLOAD

Total amount of work required



## Include:

- supervision
- assessments
- court work
- administration
- travel
- interagency meetings

# Why Numbers Still Matter

Numbers help services:

- understand pressure
- allocate resources
- support accountability and governance
- identify overload
- plan staffing

**BUT:**  
**Numbers without context are misleading.**



# European Diversity

## Examples:

Austria → legal caseload limits

Latvia → workload coefficients

Belgium → time-based models

England & Wales → risk-tier  
allocation

Some systems → no formal  
benchmarks

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**Different systems =  
different workload  
realities**

# What Shapes Workload?

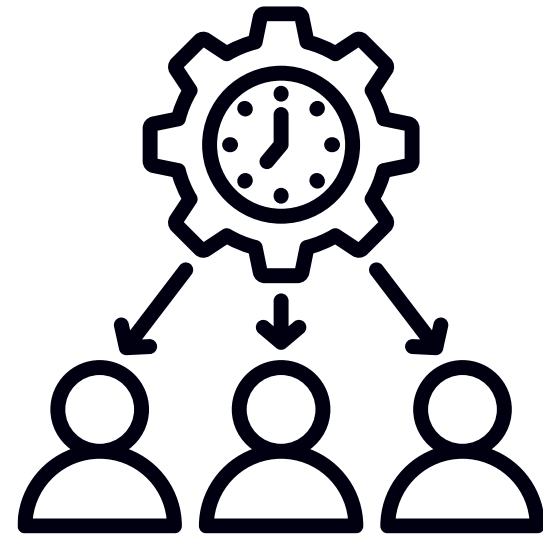
## Drivers:

- Client risk and/or needs
- Type of sanction
- Administrative demands
- Geography/travel
- Interagency cooperation
- Technology
- Organisational model
- Staff experience

**Aa**

**Equal caseloads  
do not mean  
equal workload.**

# The Key Question



## How much is too much?



The issue is not only individual overload. It is also about:

- quality,
- ethics,
- sustainability,
- and the limits of supervision

Include:

- burnout
- procedural supervision
- reduced meaningful engagement
- risk of net-widening



# Preconditions for Building a Model

## Before designing a model, ask:

Who are our clients?

What is the purpose of probation?

What sanctions do we supervise?

What tasks actually consume time?

What level of quality do we expect?

What data do we already have?



# Roadmap for Designing a Model

## STEP 1

Define caseload and workload

## STEP 2

Map sanctions and tasks



## STEP 3

Analyse current workload realities

## STEP 4

Differentiate workload by complexity

## STEP 5

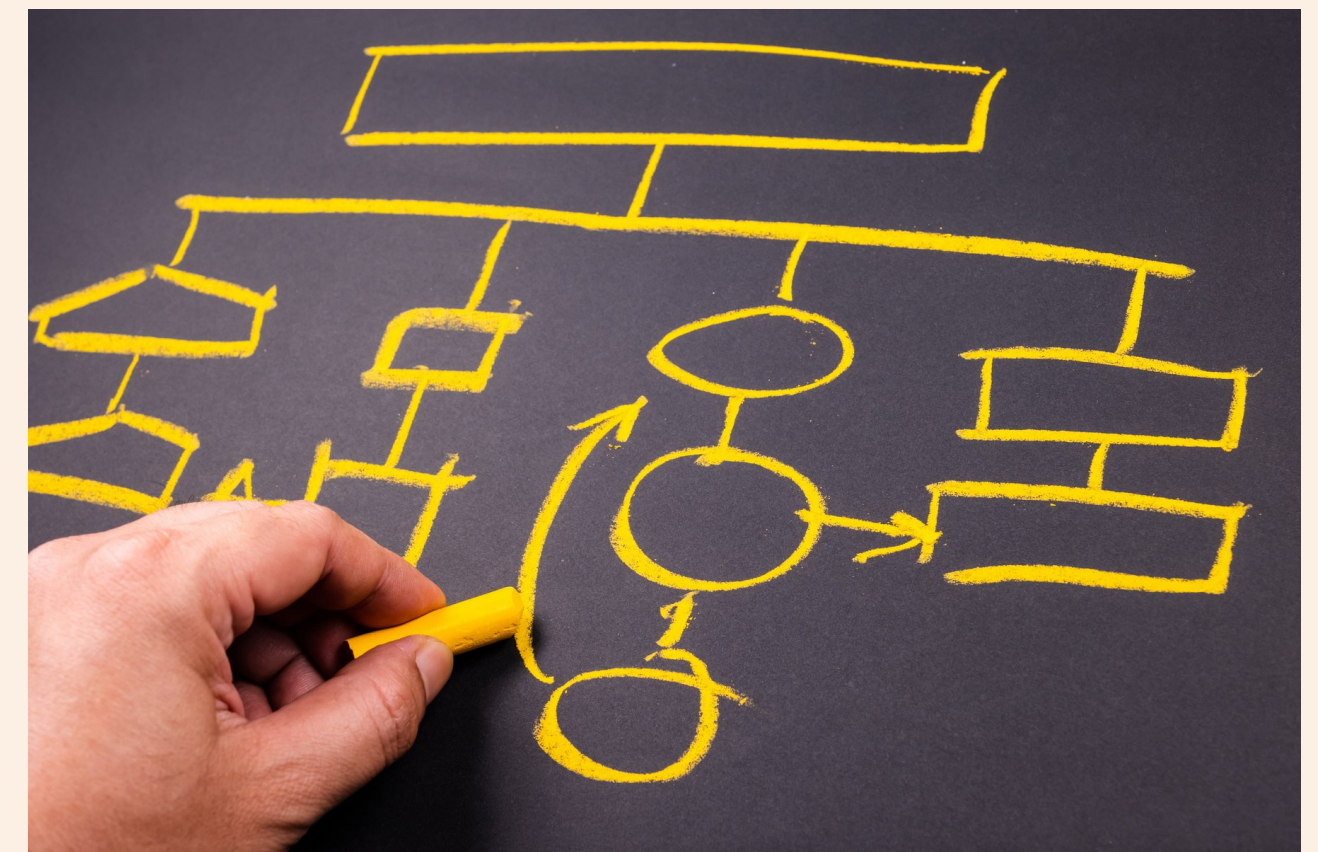
Calculate capacity

## STEP 6

Define thresholds

## STEP 7

Monitor and adjust



# Measuring Workload

## Possible elements:

- time estimates
- risk levels and/or needs levels
- supervision intensity
- administrative burden
- travel time
- programmes
- crisis work

**Aa**

**Workload models  
should move  
beyond  
headcount.**

# Overload vs Underutilisation

Sustainable Balance Model

If:

**Workload  $\approx$  Capacity  $\rightarrow$  Sustainable Practice**

If:

**Workload  $>$  Capacity  $\rightarrow$  Overload  $\rightarrow$  Adjustment Required**

If:

**Workload  $<$  Capacity  $\rightarrow$  Underutilisation  $\rightarrow$  Strategic Review Required**



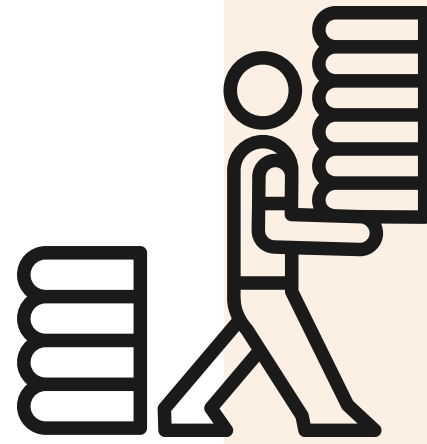
# Possible Adjustments

When imbalance appears:

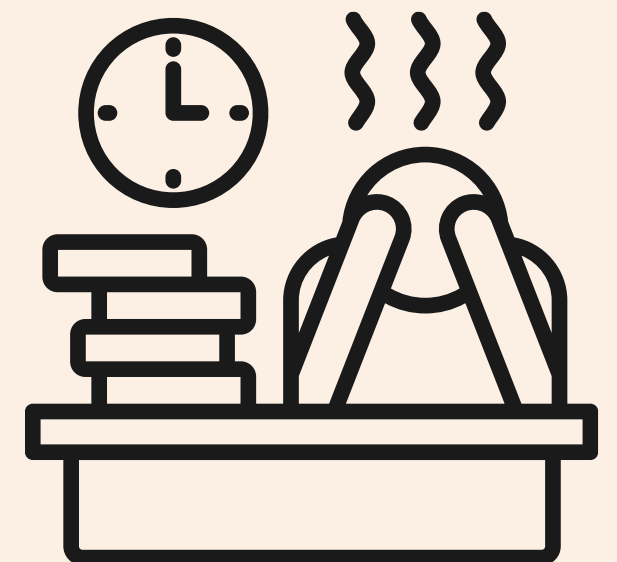
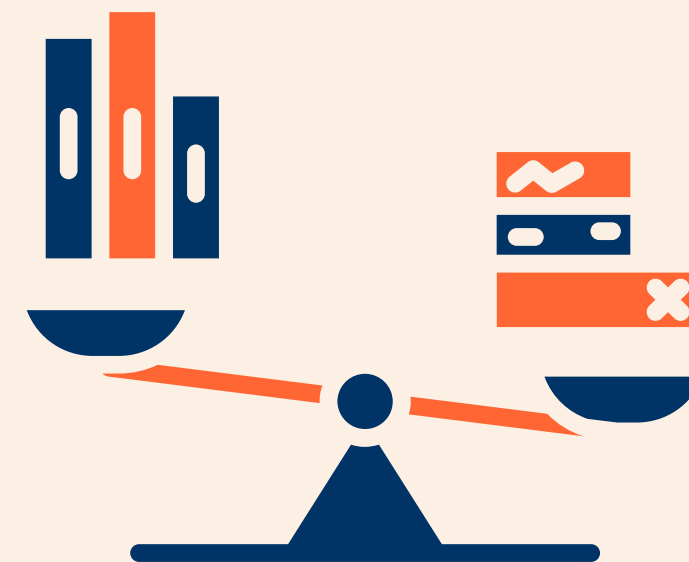
- prioritise work
- redistribute cases
- simplify administration
- use digital tools carefully
- review supervision intensity
- strengthen staff support
- involve practitioners in adjustments
- review organisational priorities



# Risks of Poorly Designed Models



- reducing probation to numbers
- ignoring relational work
- hidden workload
- burnout
- unfair allocation
- excessive control / net-widening
- loss of professional autonomy



**THE GOAL IS NOT SIMPLY TO  
COUNT CASES, BUT TO CREATE  
THE CONDITIONS FOR  
MEANINGFUL AND  
SUSTAINABLE PROBATION  
PRACTICE**