

Learning from a study of Correctional Services in Norway

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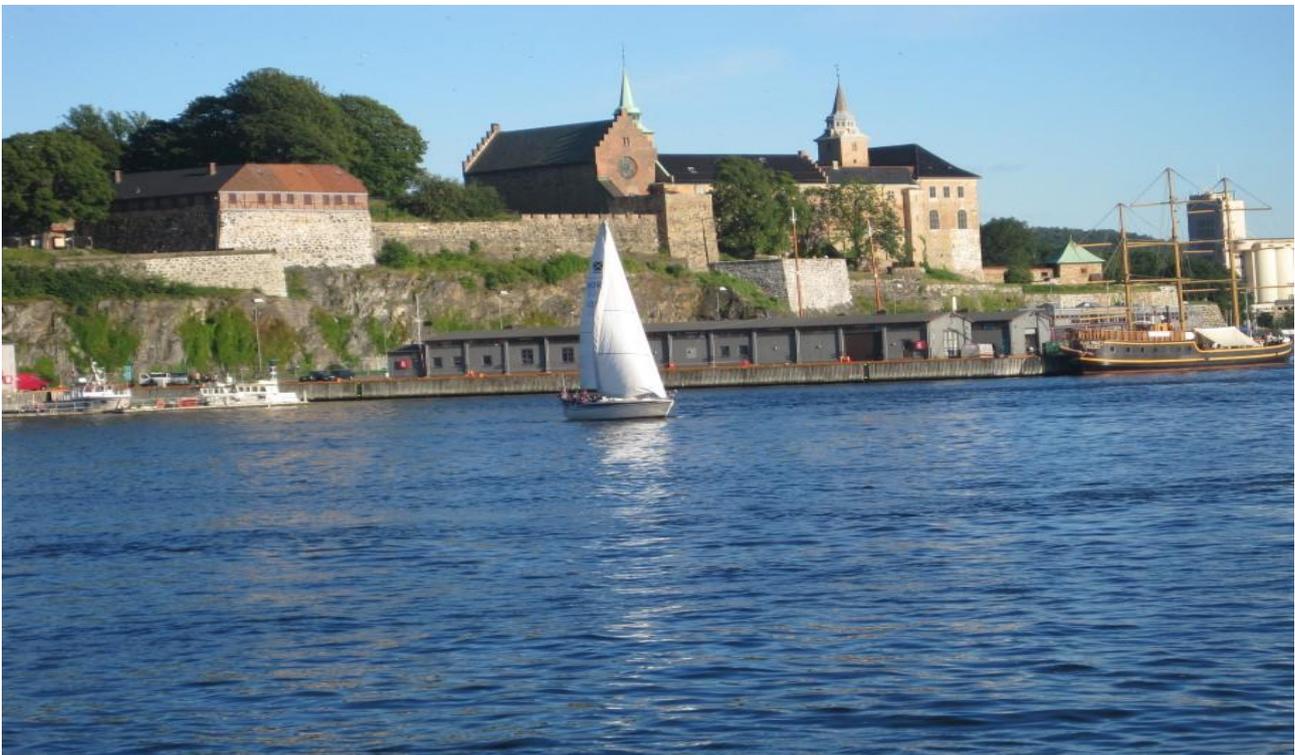
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The research was undertaken week commencing 26th June 2017 and I visited Oslo Fengsal (the largest and oldest Male Prison in Norway), Bredtviert Women's Prison (the largest Female prison in Norway), Sandaker Oversgangbolig (an open prison) and a Probation Office in Oslo.



Prior to the study visit I completed research and obtained background information on the Norwegian and U.K. correctional systems. In addition, I e-mailed specific questions to Prison Governor's, Government Ministers and Managers in Norway.

1. Introduction & Method of Study

The aim of this study is to compare the Norwegian system for the punishment and rehabilitation of offenders and their methods of rehabilitation in order to see how it works in practice and to see if there is an opportunity to learn from their system.

This study coincides with major changes within Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service Prisons in the United Kingdom are implementing the Offender Management Model which in practice puts more qualified Probation Officers and Prison staff keyworkers into establishments to work with high risk offenders with the aim of achieving more effective ways of working with offenders in prisons to reduce re-offending and increase compliance in the community ⁽¹⁾.

This significant change indicates recognition in England and Wales that there has to be a better system for prisons. It is hoped that some useful ideas may come from this study.

Norwegian prisons are notably smaller than prisons in England and Wales and follow a "village principle" with small establishments spread out across Norway facilitating frequent contact with the community and family to which they will be released to. Some commentators have described these prisons as "soft" and journalists from around the World have written articles about the apparent comfort of Haldane prison and Bastoey prison – both in the South of Norway and the latter being on an island where prisoners operate the ferry to and from the island. However, the low reoffending rates speak for themselves and these same journalists who describe the prisons in such a way come to the conclusion that Norway is doing something right when judged against the prisons in other countries.

The Female estate in Norway is particularly seen as one of the most humane in the World, implementing many of the provisions in the United Nations rules for the treatment of Women prisoners (The Bangkok rules) ⁽²⁾.

In the U.K. the Corston report 2006/2007 advocated a major radical overhaul of the prison system for women due to issues of poor provisions for their accommodation, mental health, self-harm and suicide. Baroness Corston was shocked by the number of deaths of women in custody. There is no evidence that any of her findings were implemented to any significant degree and the level of self-harm and deaths in custody is at a record high.

Open Prisons in Norway such as Sandaker are set in small communities with good public transport links, nearby community facilities such as shops, leisure centres and banks with a large staff of keyworkers and headed by a Prison Governor.

The probation offices in Norway are located in the town centres and the office space shared with satellite tracking staff who operate at night monitoring some of the higher risk offender's movements and enforcing swift breach proceedings.

⁽¹⁾ White paper on prison reform

⁽²⁾ Bangkok rules are the United Nations Rules for the treatment of Women Offenders which were adopted in 2010

I have read and noted various information regarding the Norwegian Correctional Services and the United Kingdom Justice system prior to my visit.

In Norway I visited:

- the largest Male Prison establishment (Oslo Fengsal) and met with a variety of staff members and prisoners.
- the largest Female Prison Establishment (Bredtviert Fengsal) and met with a variety of staff members and prisoners.
- a small unit for trusted female prisoners 1 mile from Bredtviert Fengsal.
- Sandaker Oversgangsbolig (open prison establishment, similar to Approved Premises in the U.K.) and attended a presentation of their role, met with a variety of staff members and inmates.
- a Probation Office in Oslo and attended a presentation of their work and met with a variety of staff and with three offenders.

2. Background Information: The United Kingdom

The National Probation Service was created in 2014 (now Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service) as part of the Transforming Rehabilitation Programme. The National Probation Service is made up of 35 former Probation Trusts to form a new organisation with over 900 staff supervising 90,000 offenders.

There are one hundred and twenty three prisons in the U.K. and one hundred and nine of these are in the public sector and the remaining are operated by private contractors. The official capacity of the prison system is 75,983 and the current occupancy level is 112.3%. These numbers are increasing year on year. The current U.K. population is over 65 million, of which 85,863 are prisoners, including remands. This equates to 146 prisoners per 100,000 of the population.

Female prisoners account for 4.9% and Foreign Nationals 11.9% in the United Kingdom. According to the charity Women in Prison, the current women's prison population exceeded 4,000 for the first time in five years. Of those women in prison 46% report having suffered domestic violence, 53% of women in prison report having experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse during childhood and 31% of women in prison have spent time in local authority care as a child. Women in the prison estate account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm, despite making up only 4.9% of the population. Women accounted for 21% of all incidents of self-harm in prison in the year to June 2016. There were twelve suicides in 2016.

There are only twelve Women's prisons in the U.K. therefore maintaining family ties is very difficult due to the distance that visitors, including children visiting their Mother will have to travel from their home area. The average distance that a child will be expected to travel to visit their Mother is 66 miles according to the charity Women in Prison. They also report that 48% of women are reconvicted within one year of leaving prison. This rises to 61% for sentences of less than twelve months and to 78% for women who have served more than 11 previous custodial sentences.

Resettlement services for both the Men's and Women's prison estate are provided on a fixed term contract basis by agencies such as Purple Futures, Working Links and Novo. Generally, they have to bid for the contract every four years and this then can result in a disruption in services to offenders.

England and Wales have the highest incarceration rate per head of the population in Western Europe. Recently two former Home Secretaries and a former Deputy Prime Minister – Kenneth Clark, Jacqui Smith and Nick Clegg – in a letter to the Times called for action to halve England's prison population currently standing at 85,000, almost double its 1980's level, stating that prison is failing to reform many criminals and that the more effective and less costly alternatives should be used. Their view included that prisons have become unacceptably dangerous and that almost half of inmates are re-convicted within a year of being released. This is not the first time that calls have been made to make substantial changes to the conditions inside U.K. Prisons as Lord Justice Woolf's 1991 report made major recommendations after the 1991 indiscipline at HMP Strangeways. None of Lord Woolf's recommendations to make Prisons less dangerous have been implemented.

The most recent Ministry of Justice figures state that 354 inmates have died in custody – part of this is an ageing prison population and a general increase in prisoners. 119 were self-inflicted deaths and eight were killed. Incidents of self-harm have also increased by 23% to 37,784. The same M.O.J. figures state

that staff assaults by prisoners are up by 30% to 4,568. The number of escapes from U.K. prisons in the last decade is over a hundred and there are 162 failures of Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL). The rates of re-offending within one year of release from custody according to the Ministry of Justice website is 32.6, although this stands much higher, at 59% for those serving 12 months and under.

A new Probation initiative E3⁽³⁾ was launched in the U.K. in 2014 with the objective of reducing cost, driving improvement and creating an organisation that can support the emerging shape of prison reform. Improvements are focusing on the areas of Courts, Community Supervision, Custody, Victims, Approved Premises, Youth Offending Services, Management structures and other supporting activities. This runs alongside the new Prison and Probation initiative – The Offender Management Model in custody.

The new Offender Management model gives an opportunity to make changes within the prison system with the aim of achieving a positive influence on reoffending rates, recall and Category D returns⁽⁴⁾. The aim of this model is to provide the offender with both a prison officer keyworker and an offender manager within the prison setting and with this in mind there will be an investment of 2,500 additional prison officers in Phase One of this model. At the very least this will bring the Prison Officer ratio to prisoner up from the average of 2 officers per 60.

The keyworker role will provide a keyworker for every prisoner and all officers will undertake keyworker duties of 45 minutes per week per prisoner. All keyworker meetings will be recorded on a progression plan. The focus of this role is to mitigate the negative effects of imprisonment with the desired outcome of a reduction in violence, self-harm and recidivism. Phase two will see more probation officers in establishments rather than in field offices. In addition, with more prison officers and the building of better relationships between officers and offenders it is envisaged that the high incidences of both violence and self-harm can be reduced from its current record level. The Guardian (29/06/2017) reports that self-harm incidents increased by 73% between 2012 and 2016. The same article recognised that the funding of Offender Management has been reduced by 13% and staff numbers cut by 30%.

To underpin these changes, it is planned that the strategic responsibility for sentence planning and support of prisoners serving sentences of ten months or more is transferred from the Probation Service to Prison Governors via a head of Offender management unit and a Senior Probation Officer. This model is currently being piloted as a pathfinder at eleven establishments across the U.K. and currently it is too early to comment on the success of this.

In the U.K. the current training model for Probation Officers is that they must have a relevant degree and then undertake the PQIP for 15 months. Prison Officers receive 8 weeks training prior to being assigned a working role in a prison where they have a mentor for the first year. There is additional training available for a prison officer working in the Offender Supervisor role in Prison in the form of a 2-day course and there will be further training offered to prison officer staff undertaking the keyworker role.

According to the BBC news website dated 17/08/2017 a scheme (unlocked graduates) to bring graduates to the front-line prison service is underway with fifty trainees. The scheme aims to professionalise the prison service. As this scheme is in its early stages it is not possible to judge its effectiveness yet.

⁽³⁾ Effective, Efficient, Excellent. E 3 blueprint is a Probation Service initiative introduced at the time of the Transforming Rehabilitation Programme.

⁽⁴⁾ England and Wales have the highest incarceration rate per head of the western population and almost half are re-convicted within a year of release. According to Ministry of Justice figures in 2015, 32.6% offend within the first year of release.

3. Overview of the Criminal Justice System Norway

Norway has a population of five million and the prison population stands at 3,874. There are fifty four prisons with an official capacity of 4,097. Of the Offenders in custody 60% have addiction issues, 40% poor education, 80% unemployed, 65% homeless and 40% below the poverty line.

The current occupancy level stands at 89.8% therefore it can be seen that they have capacity in their Prison establishments. On occasions when their capacity is reached they do not double up their cells but operate a waiting list for the lower risk prisoners. Norway has one of the lowest levels of imprisonment in the world (*Appendix 1*).

Female prisoners account for 5.8% of the prison population which is slightly higher than the U.K. 33.8% of the prison population in Norway are Foreign Nationals which is significantly higher than the U.K. This presents challenges in the form of language, visiting facilities, religion and culture and overall rehabilitation measures are more difficult for a section of the prison population that are going to be deported at the end of their sentence.

The most common used sentence in Norway is the fine which accounts for over 50% of sentences. Due to the higher standard of living in Norway this is generally affordable. The maximum prison sentence in Norway is 21 years. The average sentence for Women prisoners is 4 years 3 months and for both sexes there are a range of disposal options, home leave, tagging and frequent visits from family members which is made possible due to the provision of local prisons.

An independent study commissioned by the Norwegian Correctional Services Directorate and published on their website states that the recidivism rate is 20%. The Norwegian philosophy is to rehabilitate not punish offenders and it is a belief that public safety is not defined by the number of people in prison cells but by the rate of recidivism.

According to the publication Norway Today (08/10/2016) there have been 736 incidents of violence, spitting or threats to staff in 2016, this is double the previous year.

There are no private sector prisons in Norway which is different from the UK.

Training for prison staff in Norway is longer than that of the United Kingdom and it is college based for 2 years and the training involves the study of psychology, law, human rights, ethics and criminology, Prison Officers therefore gain theoretical knowledge and background to support them in working with people who have drugs, alcohol, mental health and lifestyle issues (*Appendix 2*).

There exists a principle of "normality" in Norwegian Corrections. The punishment is the restriction of liberty and no other rights are taken away by the sentencing court. Offenders are placed in the lowest security regime possible and that life inside a prison will resemble life outside as much as is possible. In accordance with this principle, progression through a sentence should be focused as much as possible at returning to the community (*Appendix 3*).

Below is a quote from the website:

The Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service are responsible for carrying out remands in custody and penal sanctions in a way that takes into account the security of all citizens and to prevent recidivism by enabling offenders, through their own initiatives, to change their criminal behaviour. All activities within the Correctional Services are to be in accordance with the values of Openness, Respect, Professionalism and Commitment.

There are discretionary powers available to the prisoner to serve the sentence wholly or partly in a treatment or special care institution in cases of serious addiction. In addition, there are options to serve half of an unconditional sentence at home and electronic monitoring is an available substitute for the last 4 months of a longer sentence. It is also possible to be released on licence after having served two thirds and a minimum of 74 days.

Preventative detention is used for high risk of harm prisoners who meet the dangerousness test. In practice, this means that after the minimum term has been served an assessment is made as to the prisoners continued dangerousness and the sentence extended by the court for a period of up to five years. This process can be repeated resulting in someone assessed as dangerous remaining in Prison Custody.

Prisoners with mental health issues can be sentenced to mandatory psychiatric treatment and become the responsibility of the Health services not the prison service. This system is very similar to the U.K. Norwegian Correctional Services uses what is termed an Import Model which is defined as services such as medical, educational, employment, charity and library all delivered by local and municipal service providers. The advantages of this are seen as a better continuity in the delivery of services – the offender will already have established contact during their time in prison. These services are provided and financed by the community in which the offender lives as they are part of his/her rights in the same way as other Norwegian citizens. This is enabled by having small prison establishments in communities, which also has the added advantages of keeping close family ties.

Norway has the capacity of 3,900 cells in 43 prisons over 61 locations. Two thirds of these are high security. The largest establishment has 392 cells, the smallest 13 cells and the average is 70 cells ⁽⁵⁾. One of the newer high security prisons – Halden which is set in a forest has won a design award for its interior decoration. It has flat screen televisions, pictures on the walls, a fridge in each cell, a toilet with a door in each cell and unbarred windows. The Governor Mr Heidal says” we felt that it shouldn’t look like a prison. We wanted to create normality. If you can’t see the wall, this could be anything, anywhere. The life behind the walls should be as much like life in the outside the walls as possible”.

The longest sentence is 21 years and the average sentence is 8 months. Prisoners are located in single cells and if the number of prisoners exceeds the amount of places then there is a waiting list for lower risk prisoners which could take up to a year to commence their sentence. As the Norwegian Prisons are currently running below capacity there are no waiting lists at present.

There are almost no escapes from Norwegian Prisons including the open Prisons and over 99% of ROTL’s return on time.

There are over 3,600 Full Time staff (40% female) employed in prisons and 325 in probation. The probation officers are responsible for community sanctions, unpaid work, release on licence, Home Detention Curfew (for those who can serve part or whole of their sentence at home) with or without electronic tagging and the writing of court reports.

The age of criminal responsibility in Norway is 15 years and there are very few under 18-year olds that are in prison and 2 specific establishments for young offenders.

It is possible to be sentenced to preventative detention by a court in rare circumstances and in principle this may result in a life sentence, however the onus is on prison staff to continue working on the reduction of risk and release at the earliest opportunity. It is also possible for the police to request that a remanded prisoner is kept in cellular confinement without access to visitors or a telephone in order to preserve evidence. In some instances, cases can be a long time in getting to court.

All of the aforementioned legislation came into being in 2008 when various academics, ministers and even school children were given an opportunity to decide what sort of Criminal Justice arrangements they wanted to see in their communities⁽⁶⁾.

As in the United Kingdom there are recognised systems of monitoring that the Criminal justice system is serving its purpose and there is an Ombudsman type service for prisoners to utilise if required.

⁽⁵⁾ As a comparison, Britain's newest and largest prison establishment is HMP Berwyn in Wrexham with a capacity of 2,100 inmates.

⁽⁶⁾ Soria Moria Declaration – Five Pillars is a Norwegian political statement which forms the basis of Jens Stoltenbergs government. The statement outlines the focus of the priority of the Red-Green Coalition Government of the Labour party, the Centre party and the Socialist left in 2005 towards the correctional services.

4. Oslo Fengsal

Oslo Fengsal is the largest Male Prison in Norway and serves both remand and sentenced inmates. It is situated next door to the main Police station and a tunnel connects the two. The prison is quite old having been built in 1840, however clean and bright inside. It is set within park land with houses and shops close by. The relationships between staff and inmates appear to be very positive and respectful.



The officers shared a belief in rehabilitation and were very interested in a holistic approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, crime and bullying. There were many books in the wing offices on the subject of theoretical knowledge, psychology and research. There is one officer per twenty inmates and the wing office doors were open with inmates being encouraged to speak to the officers who were in the office. This is very different to a U.K. prison establishment where Prison office doors will be locked.

This is in fact a small prison compared to those in England and Wales housing 392 inmates in single cell accommodation. At the time of my visit there were fewer numbers than this as some of the wings had been closed due to structural work being needed due to the age of the prison.

The Prison is divided into different blocks or sections but every inmate begins their journey in D Section which provides the reception facilities such as risk assessments, explanation and expectation of regime and monitoring. After this initial period, most remand prisoners are placed in a block where there are more employment, educational and recreational facilities. The prison security department is located here and there are separate facilities for those with serious mental health issues. In addition, there is a day centre for those who are serving lengthier sentences. On C Section, there is a pathfinder offering assistance to inmates with substance abuse issues. This is run jointly with Tyrili foundation and is accessed by prisoner application only. The inmate needs to commit to be drug free and have 6-8 months to serve and have a desire to remain in drug treatment on release.

There are offending behaviour programmes available to address thinking skills deficits and violence and "The Conflict Council" is a free, state service available to prisoners and civilians in all local authority areas in order to assist those who would like to make amends or enjoy better relationships with others (similar to Restorative Justice in the U.K).

There is employment available to inmates is in manufacturing, glass and ceramics, crafts, bee keeping, carpentry, smithy, laundry, and wing cleaning. In addition to this there is also Art and Drama available. There are two libraries provided by the community. The prisoner's wages are far higher than in the U.K. however the products that they may wish to buy on their canteen will cost more due to the higher standard of living costs in Norway. Inmates may have one visit per week and the visits arrangements are unlike the U.K where a large visits hall is the norm for everyone. Oslo Fengsal have very small lounge type areas with a settee and chair, coffee table and toys, very much like a normal sitting room. The security department make use of dynamic security intelligence to decide if this is not suitable for certain inmates who may be involved in any illegal activity or contraband within the prison.

The Incentives and Earned Privileges schemes are used to reward good behaviour and punish poor behaviour. One of the rewards for good behaviour is visitors being able to visit an inmate's cell for two hours once weekly which is unsupervised. This encourages the offender to engage in positive behaviour and not become involved in the drugs and mobile culture as they would have a lot to lose if this privilege is taken from them. The issue of illegal drugs and mobile phones is a huge problem in the U.K. prisons, and one prison alone can have three parcels a week thrown over the fence, with each parcel containing half a dozen mobile phones and drug packs.

There is an organisation FFP (For Fangers Parerende) who provide advice to the families and inmates about their rights and all assistance available to them - similar to Partners of Prisoners in the UK ⁽⁷⁾. There is a nursery onsite for the prison officers and the police officers children based in the prison grounds. I am not aware of a similar situation in the U.K. where provision is available for the young children of staff.

⁽⁷⁾ Partners of Prisoners is active in most prisons in the United Kingdom and offer help, support and advice to Prisoners families.

5. Bredtveit Fengsal

Bredtveit is the largest Women's prison in Norway and was originally built in 1919 as a detention centre for young men and was converted to a Women's prison in 1957. It has four floors each containing a common area, a kitchen and dining room. Male and female prison officers are employed, and each has a role as a contact officer/keyworker.

Women account for 5% of Norway's total prison population. The average sentence length is four years three months, the longest is twenty one years and the shortest is forty five days. Nearly half of the prisoners are Foreign Nationals. Generally, the type of offending is mainly drug related or child cruelty. There is no prisoner uniform and each woman has their own single cell or room as the Norwegian officers prefer to call it. They also do not use the term wing preferring to call them wards. For women who do not have very many clothes there is a donation of clothes from the community and these are displayed on rails as if in a shop to ensure that it is not a negative experience for women to access these clothes. In the low security wing women's doors are not locked and during the day they can move freely around the establishment which is compliant with rule 45 of the Bangkok Rules.

The women are allowed at least a one hour visit and 20 minutes of phone calls per week and in line with rule 26 of the Bangkok rules. Children are allowed to come in to see their Mothers 2-3 times per week. In addition, the usual one hour visit is extended for visitors who may have travelled a long distance. This demonstrates a responsiveness to the needs of the prisoner's families and the children within the prison system. After the necessary assessments, overnight stays are permitted for the prisoner, their partner and children in an apartment within the grounds. Women who are pregnant or who have young children may be able to serve sentences outside prison under paragraph 12 of Norway's Execution of Sentences Act ⁽⁸⁾.

Offending behaviour programmes, substance abuse treatments and employment are all provided in the Prison and they have the usual community services come in. They also have regular yoga sessions staffed by a community volunteer and a radio station run by the prisoners that the wider community is able to listen to if they choose. Employment available in the prison establishments comprise of ceramics, sewing, jewellery making, hairdressing and horticulture. In addition, there is Art and Drama.

I also visited a 25-room transition unit about a mile from the main establishment where those women who were preparing to go to an oversgangsbolig (open prison similar to Approved Premises in England and Wales) were housed.

A member of staff that I spoke to expressed the view that due to the change of Government in Norway there is a fear that these two establishment for women will close due to age and poor repair and that it will be replaced with a prison much further away which has already been built and that it will erode the local community services as it is feared that the providers of the local education and other services will not travel such distances. In addition, the women will not be as close to their families. This is seen by staff at Bredtveit as the erosion of the ethos of the rehabilitation model.

⁽⁸⁾ The provision states that people can serve all or a part of their sentences in institutions other than prisons where it is necessary to improve their ability to function socially and lawfully or where other special circumstances exist.

6. Probation Supervision in Norway

A Community sentence imposed by the Court can run from 30 – 420 hours and The Probation Office in charge of implementing the sentence will then carry out a meeting with the offender to establish the contents of the sentence. This may consist of Unpaid Work in the Community and other activities that are deemed important for preventing re-offending.

I visited a Probation Office in the centre of Oslo and met with some staff and some male offenders who were on licence who had committed serious offences of violence. Most of their lower risk offenders are wealthy males (due to the high cost of alcohol in Norway) who have committed drink drive offences who the probation staff work 1-1 with. The office was very bright, modern and well furnished with balconies and roof terraces for the staff. There is a Skype translation service for Foreign Nationals. The working hours for the Probation Officers are 8am -15.30pm, apart from the overnight electronic tagging monitors who are activating swift breaches of the tagging orders if needed.

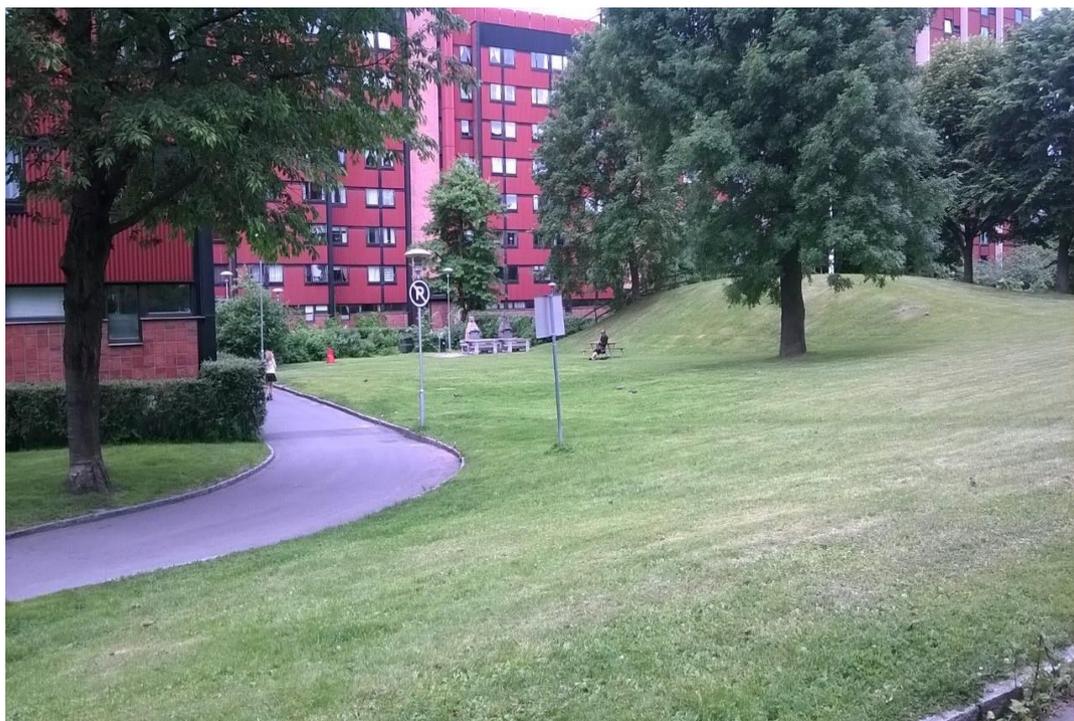
The probation Officers write regular progress reports to the court and in certain circumstances two reports are required. In the same office, there are night workers who monitor the tagging equipment 24 hours a day to check for breaches and those who do breach will be in court or returned to prison within 24 hours. The Caseloads are between 11 and 30 and there is little group work in the community as this is generally completed in the Prisons and due to the small numbers of offenders in the community, therefore 1-1 work is considered the norm. In addition, the Probation Officer is expected to go out to the Offender's workplace and family home on a regular basis.

The reason that there are small numbers of offenders in the Community under Probation Supervision is due to the system of using a fine in 50% of cases that appear in court. The Probation Officers in the field do not have any contact with the offenders in prison, however they do have regular contact with the voluntary agencies in the community. Two probation officers go into the prisons to assist the prison officers to deliver programmes in custody. There are lawyers (mainly for the electronic tagging breaches) and psychologists based at the Probation Office and the offender is signposted to the various voluntary agencies for assistance with housing, employment, education, substance misuse issues, although if they have been in custody these links will have already been made.

There are facilities on site for drug and alcohol urine testing via a toilet with a glass window on the other side for the Probation Officer to monitor that the offender has not substituted his own urine for another's. The Probation Officer in Norway has regular contact with the offender's family and employers. The voluntary agencies such as WayBack, the Salvation Army and the Red Cross provide accommodation and employment or education and the offender is expected to take up an offer even if it is not what they want to do immediately. In addition, the Red Cross links an offender with a non-offending mentor who assists with motivation, encouragement and use of leisure time. The Offenders that I met with stated that on the whole they were happy with the service that they had received. They stated that they enjoyed good staff relationships, the opportunity to learn a trade or education and frequent visits however one man who had pleaded not guilty of an offence of child cruelty resented having to report into the probation office during the day as his employer was not happy to release him from work. In conversation with a staff member it was stated that the promise of rehabilitation that has been so admired by many other countries has been weakened in recent years due to a change in Government and is no longer a "promise", however it is still adhered to by staff in the Norwegian Criminal Justice system in the Prison and the Community.

7. Sandaker Oversgangsbolic

In Norway Community Open Prisons operate within the correctional services and have 104 beds available for Men and Women. In comparison England and Wales have 100 Approved Premises providing over 2,000 bed spaces, each of which houses between 20-30 offenders with an average staff ratio of one-five. There are seven Approved Premises in Greater Manchester, one is a specialist Mental Health and one Personality Disorder. There are no Approved Premises bed spaces in Greater Manchester for Women, however there are two in the North West.



Sandaker is an open prison establishment, however the setup is more similar to the U.K. Approved Premises rather than the open Category D, lower security Establishments that we are familiar with in the UK.

Sandaker is run by a prison governor and employs a mixture of prison and probation/social work staff. There are at least two staff on duty in the daytime and one overnight. There are sixteen places in single rooms and it is situated on the ground floor of a modern apartment block. The maximum stay is twelve months and admission is by application from the offender which is different from Approved Premises in the UK. where there is a licence condition to reside in Approved Premises for a maximum of three months and the primary focus is on risk management. The Sandaker applicant needs to provide evidence that they have either work or education arranged and must have had no positive urine tests in recent months.

All the staff at Sandaker are trained in motivational interviewing and the governor can grant Home Detention Curfew to their own homes at his discretion if the prisoner has served a sentence of under ten years. If the sentence was over ten years then the Area Justice Department makes this decision.

The staff work with the offenders on life skills, budgeting, employment, maintaining family ties and reintegration. In addition, they regularly visit the place of work or education of the prisoner. The rules are no alcohol or drug use, abide by a curfew, pay rent if working and share the cooking and cleaning of the premises. The Prisoners must commit to sharing at least one meal a week with other Prisoners and the staff team

Whilst the Governor at Sandaker does provide a welcoming, pro social atmosphere and shares some leisure activities such as meals, climbing, camping etc., there are strict rules about curfew's, substance use, age of guests and following your plan and any breach is communicated straight to the Police and prison services.

The Governor of the establishment offered the following view on the success of the Correctional Services system in Norway:

Norway is a wealthy country, it has low unemployment and decent wages. Alcohol is very expensive and its purchase controlled. Taxes are high but are ploughed back in to the system and the community wants to help offenders to get back on track.

8. Learning & Comparisons

The Norwegian Criminal Justice System is successful in that it has low rates of re-offending (*Appendix 4*). My research indicates that there are factors involved in attempting to re-create their model in the United Kingdom although the Offender Management model may help to achieve some of their success. This Model aims to see more staff in establishments and better training for Prison Officers to make contacts with Offenders meaningful and productive. In addition, Lord Farmer's review, published on the 10th August 2017 fits the Norwegian model and he has called family relationships for prisoners "the golden thread" and states that research has shown that people in custody who receive visits from a family member are 39% less likely to offend – which costs society £15 billion every year. The Ministry of Justice are taking forward some of these recommendations in order to improve family ties for UK prisoners. It is notable that Lord Woolf's report in 1991 also highlighted some of the same issues and these are still outstanding.

There are vast differences between Norway and the U.K. population size therefore any contrast will always be difficult. Norway has a high standard of living and full employment, housing is plentiful and alcohol prices are high and controlled through specialist shops. The Norwegian media offers a more balanced view of offending and the social and community attitudes are different.

Training for prison staff in Norway is two years and encompasses knowledge on the law, human rights, ethics and psychology.

The incidents of violence towards prison staff and other inmates in Norwegian prisons is low, as is self-harm. There is good compliance with lower security establishments and therefore few absconds from custody. Norwegian prisons offer rewards in the form of better family contact for the prisoner's good behaviour. Prison officer's attitudes towards the offender is more positive in terms of having the prison office doors open and being encouraged to engage with the staff. Their recidivism rates are low.

The community, the Royal Family and the media actively support the rehabilitation of offenders and there are many charitable organisations to call upon for assistance with this. Their prisons offer only single cell accommodation so standards of decency and privacy are maintained and their locating of small prison establishments in communities helps to maintain the important community and family ties. In contrast, the United Kingdom favours much larger prison establishments and apart from the local prisons where offenders stay for a minimal period of time, these are generally located in areas where public transport is not satisfactory.

Offenders in Norway also have a different attitude to their sentences and many of them want the rehabilitation element of a sentence and have to work hard to be accepted into an open establishment. In comparison, to be accepted into a lower security establishment in the United Kingdom the criteria is built around security and risk of abscond and re-offending using past information from previous convictions and current comments from staff. There is no onus on the offender to prove via written application that they have solid plans in place for their future such as employment and accommodation.

There have been some challenges to the Norwegian Criminal Justice system in recent years. The change of Government and the distribution of budgets, plus the high number of Foreign National Prisoners which make it a challenge and expensive to provide rehabilitative services to a group of people likely to be deported.

9. Conclusions

- ✚ The punishment is the restriction of liberty, no other rights are lost
- ✚ A longer period of Prison Officer Training and better staff ratios promotes a better understanding of prisoner's needs and the issues that have brought them into contact with the Criminal Justice System
- ✚ A more meaningful system of reward for prisoners based on dynamic security
- ✚ Better access to Prison Officers and more positive interactions reduce violence and self-harm incidents. The relationship is central to achieving long term rehabilitation
- ✚ Media and Social attitudes are more positive towards offenders
- ✚ Desistance rates, Release on Temporary Licence failures and escapes are proven to be lower
- ✚ Swift return to custody for breaches of electronic tagging
- ✚ The emphasis on family and Community relationships is a valuable asset in managing offenders
- ✚ The offender engages more positively in what they see as a fairer system that treats them with respect
- ✚ Employment, education and housing are a priority for offenders and the Norwegian employers offer opportunities which is proven to be very important in terms of recidivism



Appendix 1

Prison Numbers

Average daily number of prisoners and
prison – population rate in some countries

N	Rate	
USA	2,292,000	743
Russia	793,000	559
England	85,000	152
Germany	69,400	85
Norway	3,600	73

Source: ICPS World Prison Brief, March 2011

Appendix 2

Prison officer training

Two-year education at academic level

- Psychology, sociology, criminology, law, social work
- Conflict management, ethics and human rights

Post-training courses in various working methods and programmes

Salary during education

Appendix 3

Principle of normality =
no stricter than necessary

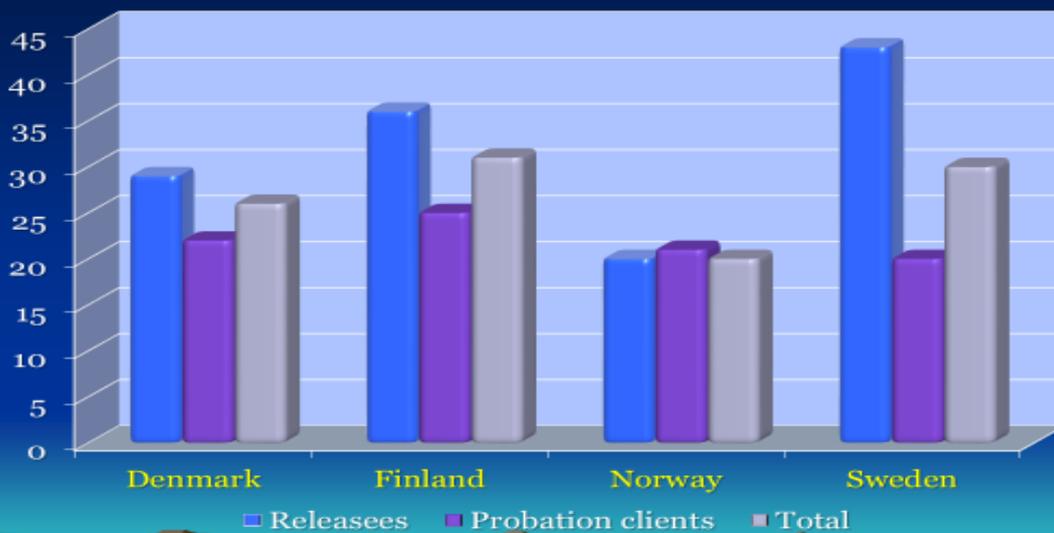
The punishment is the deprivation of liberty

Security: enough is enough

A life as normal as possible

Appendix 4

Recidivism



Source: "Retur", Nordic Research Group, 2010



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