

English summary

Providing care for drug users in prison. An evaluation of the special anti-drugs effort within the prison service

Authors: Åsa Frodlund, Fredrik Marklund, Jonas Öberg

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A large proportion of all drug abusers will sooner or later come into contact with the prison service. This means that the prison system constitutes one possible arena upon which to focus society's efforts to combat drug abuse. Against this background, the National Prison and Probation Administration was commissioned by the Swedish Government on April 25th 2002 to initiate a special effort to combat drug abuse among prison service clients.²⁶ The Government earmarked 100 million SEK (approximately 11 million Euro) for this purpose over a three year period. In short, the work involves first identifying drug users, then investigating their needs and providing motivation and treatment for their drug abuse. Depending on the degree of motivation existing among the clients, they are to be placed in one of three different types of unit; motivational units, treatment units and units for those whom it is difficult to motivate. The prison service describes how the effort is to be implemented in the document "Action plan for a special effort to combat drugs within the prison service".

The National Council for Crime Prevention has been commissioned by the Government to evaluate this special effort. This report, the first of two, describes the extent to which the special anti-drugs effort has been implemented to date and how it has been received by affected groups of prison service staff. To this end, telephone interviews have been conducted with

²⁶ Kriminalvårdsstyrelsen, Dnr 2002-005943

representatives of these different groups. The views of the inmates themselves will be dealt with primarily in the final report. A small number of interviews have already been carried out, however, and are presented in the present report. In addition, the National Council has employed questionnaires to follow a sample of clients throughout their stay in prison in order to provide a description of the extent of the prison service's efforts for drug abusers. This report only contains information relating to clients serving relatively short prison terms, however, since those serving longer sentences are still in prison at the present time.

OUTREACH WORKERS IN PLACE IN ALL REGIONS

Within the framework of the special anti-drugs effort, outreach teams have been established in all five prison service regions. These have the task of identifying drug users among the clients in remand centres and to motivate them to undergo treatment measures during their stay in prison. One of the stated goals of the action plan is to identify all drug abusers, amongst other things by means of these outreach activities at remand centres.

At present it is not possible to specify the proportion of the clients passing through remand centres that the outreach workers succeed in establishing contact with since there is as yet no information available on this question.

PLACES AVAILABLE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SPECIAL EFFORT FOR HALF THE DRUG USERS IN PRISON

Two conditions necessary for the provision of care to drug abusers in the way described in the action plan are that there is knowledge as to which clients use drugs and that these are then placed in a drug unit.

The National Council's study shows that those responsible for placing prison service clients are aware of whether or not an individual uses drugs in 84 per cent of cases. Almost half of those placed have been identified as drug users by the time of this placement. Just under half of the drug users admitted on remand were placed in a drug unit. The chances of being assigned a place of this kind is greater among those serving longer prison terms. A little over 1300 drug unit places have been created by the prison service, a number which is not sufficient to include all drug using clients, and thus it has been essential to prioritise.

The regional assistant directors within the prison service are of the opinion that for the most part, those clients assigned to the various types of drug unit have had the correct level of motivation.

DRUG UNITS AND SERVICES HAVE BEEN CREATED

The anti-drug effort has meant 57 "drug units"²⁷ at 28 institutions being assigned the task of working with drug abusers. In addition, 140 half-time jobs have been created. Approximately one-third of these involve working to train staff in a counselling technique known as Motivational Interview-

²⁷ 28 motivational units, 21 treatment units and 8 units for clients lacking motivation.

ing; one-third investigate the problems and needs of the drug users by means of the ADI/MAPS instrument, and one-third manage programmes. The drug units and services that had been planned had for the most part been created by the August of 2003, although in certain cases after some delay.

The extent of the adjustments required by the prisons as a result of the anti-drug effort is affected both by the level of experience among those recruited to the institutions and by the traditions found at different institutions as regards the work conducted with drug users. The follow up shows that almost two-thirds of the new posts created have been filled with personnel already working at the prison in question whilst only one in four has been filled with someone from outside the prison service. All the prisons that today have a treatment unit for drug users already had a unit with a similar function prior to the initiation of the special effort.

The character of these units appears in part to be determined by the range of units provided at a given prison. At prisons with no treatment unit, the motivational unit to some extent assumes the role of a place for inmates with a higher level of motivation.

A LARGER NUMBER OF ASI-SCREENINGS ARE CONDUCTED

The prison service has chosen to work with the ASI/MAPS screening procedure in order to be able to document and catalogue the clients' needs. ASI is employed to specify a client's problems in a structured manner and MAPS in order to establish goals for the time to be spent in prison on the basis of the seriousness of the problems and the level of motivation.

The National Council has found that the proportion of clients serving prison terms of at least six months that have been screened using the ASI/MAPS procedure has increased substantially between 2002 and 2003, from five to 23 per cent. Of those serving shorter sentences, slightly under one-fifth are screened using ASI/MAPS.

THE ANTI-DRUG EFFORT HAS NOT LED TO A HIGHER LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMMES

The programmes on offer at the prisons included in the anti-drug effort comprise cognitive development, twelve step and motivational programmes. The most common of these, counted on the basis of the number of units at which it is offered is the cognitive drug abuse programme known as "Våga Välja" ("Dare to Choose"). The most common types of programme based on the number of clients participating are those based on the twelve step model. The reason that more clients participate in twelve step programmes is that this type of programme work is constantly available whereas the others are offered only a couple of times per year.

The length of stay in prison plays an important role in the question of whether or not inmates participate in programmes of this kind. Slightly under one-fifth of those clients whose prison term did not exceed five months had embarked upon some kind of programme. Of those serving at least six months in prison, the corresponding proportion was just under one-third. There does not appear to have been any increase in the proporti-

on of drug using clients participating in programmes in connection with the special anti-drug effort.

THE MAJORITY CONSIDER THAT THE ANTI-DRUG EFFORT HAS LED TO INCREASED LEVELS OF CO-OPERATION

As regards the requirement of improved co-operation between different agencies associated with the effort, the results have been variable. There is a sense at the majority of prisons that levels of co-operation have increased as a result of the anti-drug effort. Examples of agencies included in such collaborative work include the social services, the probation service and job centres. Many prisons feel, however, that the effort has not led to any changes in this area.

THE TREATMENT IDEOLOGY HAS BEEN GIVEN A MORE PROMINENT PLACE ON THE AGENDA

The outreach workers feel that the work they carry out is meaningful and is appreciated by their clientele. They also feel, however, that good treatment alternatives are quite often lacking for clients who are well motivated. The outreach workers consider there to be too few places in the treatment units and feel that many treatment units do not in reality function as such.

Among those responsible for placing the clients, there is a sense that the work of the outreach teams has provided them with more detailed information in relation to those clients whom the outreach workers have met with on repeated occasions. On the other hand, they do not feel that the anti-drug effort has led to any major improvement in the amount of information available on drug-abusing clients since they feel that they already had access to such information prior to the initiation of the special effort.

The regional assistant directors within the prison service are of the opinion that the special anti-drug effort has placed the treatment ideology on the prisons' agenda. Further, they consider that the differentiation involved means that it is now possible to employ a "carrot and stick" approach. This is regarded as an important tool since those clients showing a willingness to change must be given encouragement.

All of the representatives of the prison service that the National Council has been in contact with have pointed to the lack of prison places as constituting the most significant threat to the anti-drug effort.

THE INMATES' EVERYDAY LIVES MAY BE NEGATIVELY AFFECTED

The inmates feel that the introduction of the different types of units has had a negative impact on their everyday lives. There is a sense that this differentiation has had a substantial restrictive effect on the space they have at their disposal. Further, they contend that conflicts arise more easily in the units when a small group of individuals is forced to live together within a confined space with no opportunity to get out of one another's way.