



CORRECTIONS CAREERS

EUROPEAN CAREER COUNSELLING GUIDELINES **FOR STAFF WORKING** IN CRIMINAL CORRECTIONAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

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Objectives

BrainLog being a partner of CCJ4C European project had the responsibility to carry out the stakeholders' checkpoint in the form of interview focus group in order to identify and analyze the needs and uncertainties of career development within correctional staff. The analysis focuses on providing insightful knowledge of policy weaknesses towards the target group, its learning and training system as well as incentive policies for attracting and retaining new talents.

This Work Package 3 of CCJ4C project aims at developing and complementing the catalogue of skills and policy reform recommendations of the project.

Date of the Activity

The third stakeholder checkpoint was organized with the special participation of representatives from the board of the Danish Prison Officers Union (Fængselsforbundet) was held on 22nd of October 2021 from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.

Location

Cordoba, Spain – Emotional Intelligence for Prison Staff Learning, Training, Teaching Workshop.

Subject of the Meeting

The subject of the meeting involved the relevant stakeholders and target group spokespersons for identifying career management competencies' structure, educational system, and application in real-life working environment. The interview aimed at recognizing the future needs, issues and current uncertainties in the field of prison officers' career.

Driver Mapping to identify the Political, Economic, Societal, Technological, Legislative, and Environmental drivers' method in the form of an interview was used to identify the career management future needs, current issues, and obstacles that the system is facing in terms of necessary work conditions and competences development of prison officers in Denmark.

Organizers and Participants

The focus group interview was organized by the CEO and Project Manager of BrainLog, Martin Savchev, for the CCJ4C project. At the interview more representatives were invited, however due to technical complications and obstacles such as lack of time, overworking etc. prevented more participants from attending and sharing their insights on the indicated topics and issues below.

Main participants:

President of Danish Prison Officers Union (Fængselsforbundet) – Bo Sørensen

Head of Communication of Danish Prison Officers Union (Fængselsforbundet) – Søren Gregersen

Prison Guards Representative Spokesperson – Area Hovedstaden – Gert Jensen

Pre-meeting Activities

The BrainLog team have entered within the justice and correctional with enthusiasm but without previous network. Entering this field has been a challenge, so the BrainLog team prepared a value creation plan for stakeholders in order to establish trustworthy collaboration within CCJ4C and future projects for career and skills development of prison officers in Denmark. The international aspect of CCJ4C project presented the opportunity for transnational exchange of knowledge and policy reform recommendation between the project partners' stakeholders.

The BrainLog team established a very fruitful partnership with the Danish Prison Officers Union (Fængselsforbundet) within the scope of CCJ4C and 3R – Emotional Intelligence Project for Prison Officers.

The official representatives from Fængselsforbundet took actively part in the “Learning, Training, Teaching” activity in Cordoba (Spain) for the [3R \(Respire, Remember, Respond\) Emotional Intelligence for Reducing Recidivism](#) project. At the event the BrainLog team had the opportunity to discuss in detail the questions for the “MAPPING OF INFLUENCE FACTORS AND UNCERTAINTIES REGARDING MANAGEMENT SKILLS OF CAREER IN THE FIELD OF CORRECTIONAL JUSTICE” for the insight data and report. The setup of the discussion was a challenge to organize since the career of prison officers in Denmark is at a critical point. Fængselsforbundet is negotiating new policies and reforms with the Ministry of Justice in Denmark in order to attract new prison staff and to retain prison officers within the justice system.

Agenda of the Activity

The agenda of the interview was presented in advance and discussed with the representatives from Fængselsforbundet in advance.

- Introduction to the meeting, brief presentation of BrainLog, the activities and objectives of the CCJ4C project;
- Presentation of the objectives of the meeting. What can the project offer? What are the possible useful tools for prison staff for improving their professional path?
- Discussion of the results and the salient points that emerged during the previous meetings
- Guided comparison and discussion of the issues and uncertainties within the career of prison officers
- Conclusion and evaluation of the meeting

Workshop Interview

QUESTION 1.

What do you think influences career management competencies? Please explain how.

Prison officers' education and training last 3 years. After that there are courses, as well as further practical education for managing conflicts, digital skills, and other types of additional education. However, with the current situation of understaffing, continuing professional education is not an option for prison officers. No one can substitute for the staff and there is not a budget for extra working hours. Unfortunately, this is the reason why no additional courses have been provided. Even some parts of the basic training are cancelled due to understaffing and allocating time to bringing new recruits to the correctional system. It is a huge problem because this situation means that the contract conditions are not met as there is no continuation of competencies or further education. To sum up, we could say that all problems that the system and government are experiencing are coming down to the issue of understaffing.

QUESTION 2.

Do you think the political aspects have an influence on career management competencies? Please explain how.

Yes, but not directly. The prisons are understaffed because of the politicians' lack of interest in solving the problem. We had to review the education provided for prison officers because there was political pressure to reduce the years of education from 3 to 2.5. This idea is not good because the consequence of this will be reduced salary for the prison officers. The Danish Prison Officers Union (Fængselsforbundet) is adamant that this strategy will have a huge negative impact on the career of prison officers, and we agreed instead that the formal education will remain 3 years. On the other hand, political decisions are crucial for solving the current understaffing crisis and the betterment of the future work conditions of prison officers. Right now, there is no feasible option for continuing professional learning. There is no staff that could be enrolled and managed properly to provide such an education. Although such continued education is part of the contract conditions for prison officers, the actual real-life work conditions are violating the official contract work conditions. It is a government mis-planning.

QUESTION 3.

Do you think the economic aspects have an influence on career management competencies? Please explain how.

The government has cut down on the working conditions in Danish prisons. The position of a prison officer is not attractive and is not perceived in a positive way, so this is the issue in attracting new talents and retaining them. The risks of the job are not compensated. Mental and physical harm are some of the main risks. Pension conditions are good but the working conditions at present are crucial issues as well as the negative perception of the job.

QUESTION 4.

Do you think that society has an influence on career management competencies? Please explain how.

One of the main problems in Denmark today is the poor working conditions. A prison officer will not be going to advocate for the job but rather the opposite. This again is related to the working conditions and risks that every person who is thinking of specializing and seeking professional realization as a prison officer needs to assess both before and even during his career. Every year around 100's of officers are laid off on early retirement because of PTSD. This is all due to the poor work conditions, lack of protection and all the risks involved in the job as a prison officer. All these issues should be addressed by the Ministry of Justice and Kriminalforsorgen.

QUESTION 5.

Do you think that digital development has an influence on career management competencies? Please explain how.

In Denmark we are quite advanced in this aspect. For some parts we are not funded but even the old prison officers are very digitally skilled in comparison to other countries. However, it has been self-learning during work processes and development done over the years. No digital skills development courses have been offered to the prison staff.

QUESTION 6.

Do you think that the career laws in force have an influence on career management competencies? Please explain how.

This subject is very sensitive. Career development is very often delicately pressured on a political angle and influence. Many political aspects directly conflict with career management. Some of the solutions for the new policies could serve as a political strategy but could not be in the best interest of the prison staff.

QUESTION 7.

Do you think the environmental factors (e.g. prison conditions, prison typology, location, number of employees...) have an influence on career management competencies? Please explain how.

New prison officers start in the toughest prisons and the older prison officers are in the small quiet prisons with better and less stressful conditions. This is an issue.

There is a large group of older prison officers reaching retirement age soon. Much smaller is the group of new officers and medium experienced officers. The group that is approaching retirement at the age of 63 is massive and we do not have a plan for how to replace them.

There must be a political will for the betterment of the educational system. We need responsible politicians to set a leading light for Kriminalforsorgen. EU is also an actor for this decision-making and change. Data from the EU prison staff shows that Denmark dropped from 2nd place to 11th place in Europe for regarding the ratio of inmates per custodians, now after Albania.

QUESTION 8.

Regarding the aspects above, for which do you think it will take longer to implement a solution? Please explain why.

We are at a point where responsible politicians have seen the problem. Hope that this autumn the politicians will come to a solution for the next 4 years in Kriminalforsorgen and turn the boat so it will sail in the right direction again. The positive change will not come in the next years, but we could set the direction now.

QUESTION 9.

Regarding the aspects above, which ones do you consider important and, at the same time, can represent some uncertainty? Please explain why.

The general issue of understaffing is the hardest problem to solve because we cannot make the job attractive enough immediately and hire thousands of prison officers as the work conditions influence the demand. For example, we have an agreement that Norwegian prison staff can work in Denmark, but no one from Norway actually came to work in Denmark. Probably because of the fact that the working conditions are way better there. Supply and demand theory also applies here.

Main strategies which should be focused on:

- Raising salaries
- Reducing working hours
- Make the job more interesting and attractive with a variety of bonuses, incentives, and privileges for family members of prison guards.

Focus group results

This focus group was done under Work Package 2, however the subjects and challenges discussed are of great relevance to Work Package 3 for CCJ4C. The main discussion for this focus group had also elements of career development and challenges concerning this subject. It describes how prison guard career development is more or less up to the drive of the individual and how there is a need for more specialized competencies within the work environment. We have therefore included the responses and results of this focus group for Work Package 3, as we find it very relevant and with valid points for this part of the project.

Date: 08.04.2021

Place: Odense, Denmark

Project Partner: BrainLog

Participants: 3 (BrainLog) & 3 (Danish Prison Officers Union)

Basic Information About the Participants

The focus group was conducted at BrainLogs offices in Odense, Denmark on the 8th of April 2021. Besides the three participants from BrainLog, three additional participants from the Danish Prison Officers Union for prison guards were present.

- The first participant was the head of communications for the Prison Officers Union.
- The Second participant has 20 plus years as a prison guard and officer but has spent the 4 years being part of the union full-time.
- The last participant was a current prison guard who has worked as such, for the last 19 years in multiple prisons in multiple roles.

The focus group was led in Danish by Kristian Frevert and assisted by Martin Savchev. The session was recorded.

Focus Group Description

The focus group participants were recruited through the Danish Prison Officers Union, which protects and fights for the interests of danish prison guards. The Union selected people they believe would be good participants and who could help us understand the current situation. The participants were familiar with the topic, through their many years of experience. Besides, they were willing to help us with their opinions on the current tools available and suggestions for future improvements.

Before initiating the discussion, Kristian Frevert, as the moderator and lead, made a presentation of the CCJ4C project, going through the objectives of the project, the target group, the methodology, and expected results.

Afterwards, the purpose of the focus group as well as the duration and the rules were explained. Before starting the open discussion on the pre-determined set of questions, two guest speakers had been invited to participate and give a presentation. The speakers were Gary Hill, Staff Training and Development Director of the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA), and Adrian Neagoe, Vice-president of The National Trade Union of Prison Policemen Romania (SNPP). After 30 min. of presentation and collegial discussion, the focus group began with the open discussion of the predetermined questions.

Main Discussion

- 1. How do you assess current staffing career opportunities? Feel free to share both positive and negative opinions.**

The current work conditions in Kriminalforsorgen in Denmark are quite strenuous. The system is heavily understaffed, resulting in many usual practices being suspended or down prioritized for the time being. These practices include the yearly performance reviews and other kinds of career promoting practices. The yearly performance review is the main tool a guard can use to help advance his career and enlist his superior in the endeavor. Having someone guide you and show

you the different opportunities, including how to navigate and achieve them, is very helpful. It saves the employee a lot of time and effort and instills a sense of belonging.

Hopefully, the system will normalize post-Covid-19, and some of the previous options to further one's career will return. Before the system stabilize the understaffed prisons, there will always be a certain down prioritization of anything besides daily operations.

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- *" They are actually okay. Currently, Kriminalforsorgen is very understaffed, but if someone wants a career, it is definitely possible, but you have to be very proactive."*
 - *" Creating a career path is very self-reliant. It is on the employee to seek out possibilities and make your superior aware of you wanting to further develop your career."*
-

2. What is your family's and friends' perspective on being a prison officer?

As shown by the survey that the participants are referring to during the interview, being a prison guard is rather highly respected. Especially by family. There is a lot of sympathy among the Danish population towards prison guards. This might have emerged from the fact that it is a very demanding and stressful job, and everyone is aware of that. Besides, it is also a rather low-paying profession. Especially when taking into account the risk involved.

According to the participants, the ones who most often have the lowest opinion of the profession, are the guards themselves. They can have a tendency to downplay the risk and how stressful the profession often can be.

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- *" We have just conducted a large survey among the guards in training and it concludes that there is rather widespread respect among their friends and family for what they will be doing when they finish their education."*
 - *" Creating a career path is very self-reliant. It is on the employee to seek out possibilities and make your superior aware of you wanting to further develop your career."*
-



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**3. What kind of innovation will have a positive effect on the topic?
(What do you and your colleagues think should be done with career guidance?)**

Currently, career guidance is very personal. This is meant in the way of it being up to the individual to seek out information and be proactive. The usual process is planning with your supervisor during the yearly reviews and having one-to-one on how you should proceed and their thoughts on it all.

One of the ideas on how to improve the process of career guidance could be to make the material on the process and the different options more readily available. Having an online directory could help guards better plan their careers and give them ideas on what they might aspire to become.

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- *" Currently, the available material to improve careers of guards, are online courses on basic training and courses in specific knowledge. One instance is a course on how to handle gangs and gang behavior in prisons."*
 - *" The issue with a lot of the basic online courses, are that the skills you learn and the knowledge is not useful or very applicable. The content needs to be changed and more online content needs to be available to guards on how to plan your career and what it takes to get there."*
-

4. Are there sufficient opportunities to fulfil your duty as a prison officer? Feel free to share your opinions and suggestions according to experiences you may have had in the past.

In Denmark, there are not issues surrounding sufficient options to fulfill the duty of being a prison officer. It is often, more the lack of staff that curtails many options of further developing oneself. Since the system is so focused on just maintaining and operating the current system with the minimal resources it has available, it is more often on the guards to drive their own development.

-
- *"It is very possible to fulfill your duty as a prison officer. What really makes this job more challenging than what it should be, is the lack of staff and the complications that brings."*
 - *" More regular training. Increased specialized training in areas that interests the individual guards so that they can tailor their expertise to what they feel they need to be the best version they can be."*
-

5. If given the opportunity, what changes would you introduce to support the career development of staff working in prison institutions?

It has become harder trained prison guards to move up in the ranks. Kriminalforsorgen has begun to recruit for leadership positions from outside the prison. The profile of these candidates spans from policemen to people with a background in law. This has made it much more difficult for normal prison guards to further their own careers as the competition for management is much tougher now.

It is important to remember that not everyone wants to be part of management. Many guards would much rather further educate themselves and specialize within certain areas. For example, with gangs and gang behavior. What needs to be done to help support the development of staff is increased resources set aside for this specifically. There needs to be a time that has been specified for developmental purposes.

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- *" With regards to having a career in Kriminalforsorgen and moving up in the system, it is becoming increasingly difficult. Kriminalforsorgen has begun recruiting outside the current system. The background of newer recruits for management divers. For example, they have begun recruiting people with a background in law or from the police."*
 - *" The central issue still comes back to the lack of staff. If that issue is not alleviated somewhat, very few actions can change anything significantly."*
-

Is there adequate training for prison officers?

What are your thoughts and suggestions?

The base education of prison guards is very good and thorough. It takes three years and includes 3 periods of 8-10 months of practical experience in prisons.

The training and further education available to current guards need changes though. Assuming that the time and resources are present, there are courses and training available to the guards,

-
- *" More or less. Increased specialized training in areas that interests the individual guards so that they can tailor their expertise to what they feel they need to be the best version they can be."*
 - *"The basic three-year training program all guards go through is very thorough. It gives them a solid foundation of both theory and practice."*
-

they often just need guidance and have the information be visible.

Conclusions

When it comes to career guidance in the danish correctional system, Kriminalforsorgen, is a very individual process between the guard and a supervisor. With the yearly reviews being rather optional in the previous years, with covid and understaffed prisons, there needs to be increased awareness of how the guard can improve and handle their own career. It is important to notice that career guidance is available. however, it is up to the guards to be proactive and seek out opportunities.

In the danish system, guards, more or less, have two different career tracks to choose from. They can either try to climb the ladder and compete for management positions, or they can educate themselves and specialize in different areas. Climbing the ranks has become increasingly competitive in recent years since the guards now have to compete with outsiders for the same jobs. Further training and education have been a bit impeded by understaffing and covid and therefore been more up to the guards to seek out and complete.



Regarding the perception of being a prison guard. It may come as a bit of a surprise to some, but there is rather high respect towards people who choose to undertake such a demanding job under very stressful and risky conditions while receiving a very low salary. Surprisingly, the ones who seem to have the lowest opinion of the profession are the guards themselves.

Lastly, innovative improvements that could be developed or implemented could either be online resources that help guide prison guards in what it takes to further their career and the skills they would need to do so.

Appendix 1 – Focus

Group Presentation

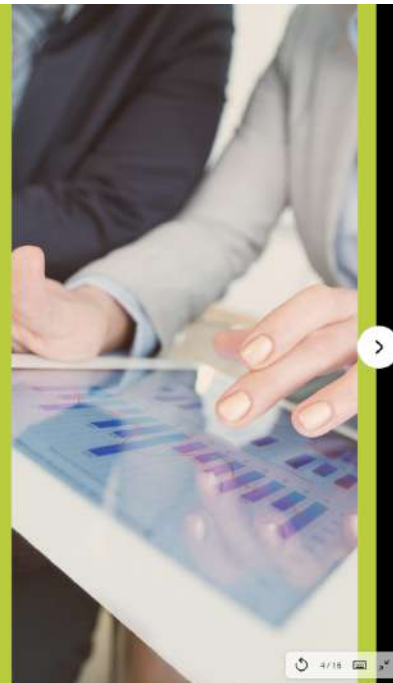


Formålet med projektet er at udvikle, teste og etablere en arbejdsmetode til at starte eller forbedre karrierevejledningsprocessen inden for kriminal Forsorgen (CCJ) med fokus på de nødvendige kompetencer der skal til for at styre sin egen karriere. Dette vil ske med direkte slutbrugerinddragelse (fængselspersonale), arbejdsgivere (fængselsadministrationer), arbejdspladser (fængseler), efteruddannelse (virksomheder og ngo'er). Derudover vil fængselsadministrationer, fagforeninger og internationale organer også blive inddraget i processen

FORVENTET PROJEKT RESULTATER

- En "current situation" rapport, der er relevant på europæisk niveau, og som fremhæver udfordringerne ved at levere karrierevejledning inden for kriminalforsorgen.
- Europæisk profil af specifikke kompetencer til karrierehåndtering, for ansatte i kriminalforsorgen.
- Uddannelse i hvordan man bruger struktureret offentlige høringer til at påvirke den politiske dagsorden.
- Offentlige høringer afholdt i hvert partnerland.

RESULTATER





PROJEKT PARTNERE

- Nationale fængsels administrationer: Det er dem, der sætter "spillereglerne" i forhold til at gøre karriere inden for kriminal forsorg.
- Internationalt organ, der repræsenterer slutbrugeren og flere europæiske netværk.
- Repræsentanter for arbejdspladserne.
- Direkte repræsentation af de ansatte, der har brug for karrierevejledning og support til udvikling af karriere kompetencer.
- Service sektoren - NGO'er, foreninger, fonde og firmer, som har indflydelse på aktiviteter der leveres til fængsler.






DIGITALE VÆRKTØJER FOR KARIERE VEJLEDNING AF NUVÆRENDE OG FREMTIDIGE FÆNGSELSBETJENTE




Appendix 2 – Leaflet





CORRECTIONS CAREERS

PROJEKTET:

Formålet med projektet er at udvikle, teste og etablere en arbejds metode til at starte eller forbedre karrierevejledningsprocessen inden for kriminal Forsorgen (CC) med fokus på de nødvendige kompetencer der skal til for at styre ens egen karriere. Dette vil ske med direkte slutbrugerinddragelse (fængselspersonale), arbejdsgivere (fængselsadministrationer), arbejdsplads (fængsler), efteruddannelse (virksomheder og ngo'er). Dette vil ske med direkte inddragelse af fængselsadministrationer, fagforeninger og internationale professionelle organer.

FORVENTET PROJEKT RESULTATER

- Betydningen af at tilpasse voksenuddannelse til den særlige sammenhæng med retfærdighed og specifik professionalisering af karrierehåndtering inden for retsvæsenet.
- En "current situation" struktureret fælles rapport, der er relevant på europæisk niveau, og som fremhæver udfordringerne ved at levere karrierevejledning i retsvæsenet
- Europæisk profil af specifikke kompetencer til karrierehåndtering, når man arbejder med kriminalforsorg
- Uddannelse i, hvordan man bruger struktureret offentlig høring til at påvirke den offentlige dagsorden.
- Strukturerede offentlige høringer arrangeret i hvert partnerland.

 [HTTPS://WWW.CAREERSINCORRECTIONS.COM](https://www.careersincorrections.com)
 [HTTPS://WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANY/CCJ4C/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ccj4c/)

WORKSHOP
INVITATION TIL
KARRIERE VEJLEDNING
&
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENS
TRÆNING
FOR MEDARBEJDERE
INDENFOR
KRIMINALFORSORGEN

AGENDA
08/APRIL/2021
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM CET

1. Projekt Præsentation
 - Projektets mål
 - Projektets målgruppe
 - Forventet resultater og ønsket effekt på det prioriterede område
2. Diskussion med international gæst:
 - Adrian Neagoe - Vice-præsident af The National Trade Union of Prison Policemen Romania (SNPP)
 - GARY HILL the Staff Training and Development Director of the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA)
3. Diskussion om træning, som på nuværende tidspunkt er tilgængelig indenfor karrierevejledning og følelses mæssig intelligens, og om hvilken træning som der er brug for.

Workshop - **COWORKING PLUS**
lokation - 2. sal/Reception
Kochsgade 31D
5000 Odense
Denmark

PROJEKT PARTNERE



OM GÆSTETALERE

Adrian Neagoe er næstformand for National Trade Union of Prison Policemen. Neagoe har ansvaret for at koordinere aktiviteterne i forbindelse med arbejdskonflikt, disciplinerkommission, juridisk bistand. Hans arbejde har til formål at etablere en organisatorisk position i forbindelse med socio-økonomisk sammenhænge. Desuden koordinerer Neagoe fagforeningens engagement i processen med at udarbejde forslag relateret til juridiske rammer. Neagoe er en erfaren sociolog og har tidligere været chef for samarbejde og programtjenester inden for den nationale administration af penitentiær - Rumænien.

Gary Hill er administrerende direktør for CEQA Services i Lincoln, Nebraska (USA) og præsident fra Contact Center, Inc. Hill har arbejdet inden for kriminalforsorg siden 1964 og er modtager af American Correctional Association's højeste pris. På en særlig opgave for FN-organisationer har han udarbejdet mere end fyre træningsmanualer til støtte for formelle træningsprogrammer for fængselsarbejdere. Hill er personaleuddannelses- og udviklingsdirektør for International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) og arbejder med flere institutter under FN's program for forebyggelse af kriminalitet og straffet. Han var medlem af FN's ekspertkomité, der forberedte opdateringen af FN's standarder for behandling af lovovertrædere (Mandela-reglerne) og udviklingen af standarderne for kvindelige lovovertrædere (Bangkok-reglerne). Han fungerer som ekspert på tre Europarådsprojekter, der beskæftiger sig med radikaliseret af fængsler. I januar 2017 blev Hill udnævnt til en af 18 kommissærer for The Commission on Accreditation for Corrections.

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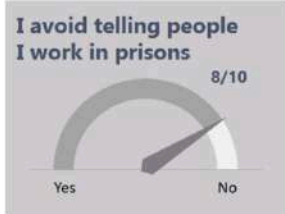
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Appendix 3 - Photos





CCJ4C Corrections Careers explores European career counselling guidelines



11 organisations across 7 European countries. The survey directly represents those in need of career development to develop key competencies in the professional landscape of corrections.

In 2020, we conducted an online survey of 11 organisations across 7 European countries. The survey directly represents those in need of career development to develop key competencies in the professional landscape of corrections.

- 4 Main reasons prison officers quit:**
- Aggression and stress
 - Low salary
 - Mundanity/ lack of change
 - 'Heavy' shifts