



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE



European Union
European Social Fund



Investing
in your future



Reentry services for ex-offenders

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What are the risks/needs of ex-offenders

- No place to live
- No income (low level of working experience)
- Low level of education
- Health issues (mental health problems)
- Addiction
- Debts
- Broken relationships (need for supportive people)
- Overall attitude, mentality and behaviour (NOMS)
- Lack of familiarity with how to search and apply for support (Sapouna et al)
- Fears, stigmatisation (i.e. “me vs society”)
- Impatience – “I want all the things and fast“

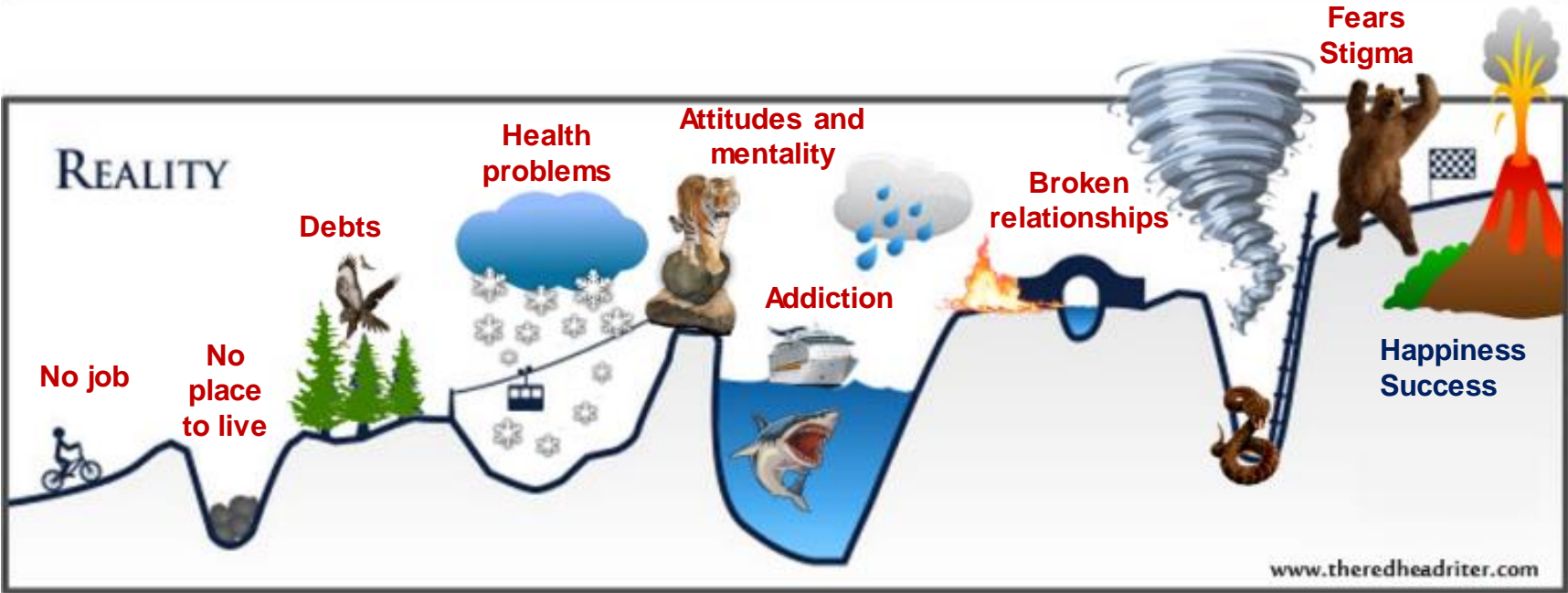


Research:
43% of
offenders
have *mental
health
disorder.*

*NOMS (2004) The National Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan

*Sapouna et al. (2011) What Works to Reduce Reoffending: A summary of the Evidence, Justice Analytical Services, Scottish Government

What happens if needs are not met?



Project: reentry services for ex-offenders

- European Social Fund 74%, governmental budget 26%.
- Services implemented in 2015-2023.

Mentoring and housing services. No fee.

Target group (men and women):

- for prison leavers;
- as an alternative to prison (since 2020).

Main goal: to support ex-offenders to reach labour market and to prevent recidivism.

Short term goal – to find a job, have a safe place to live.

Long term goal – to desist from criminal lifestyle.

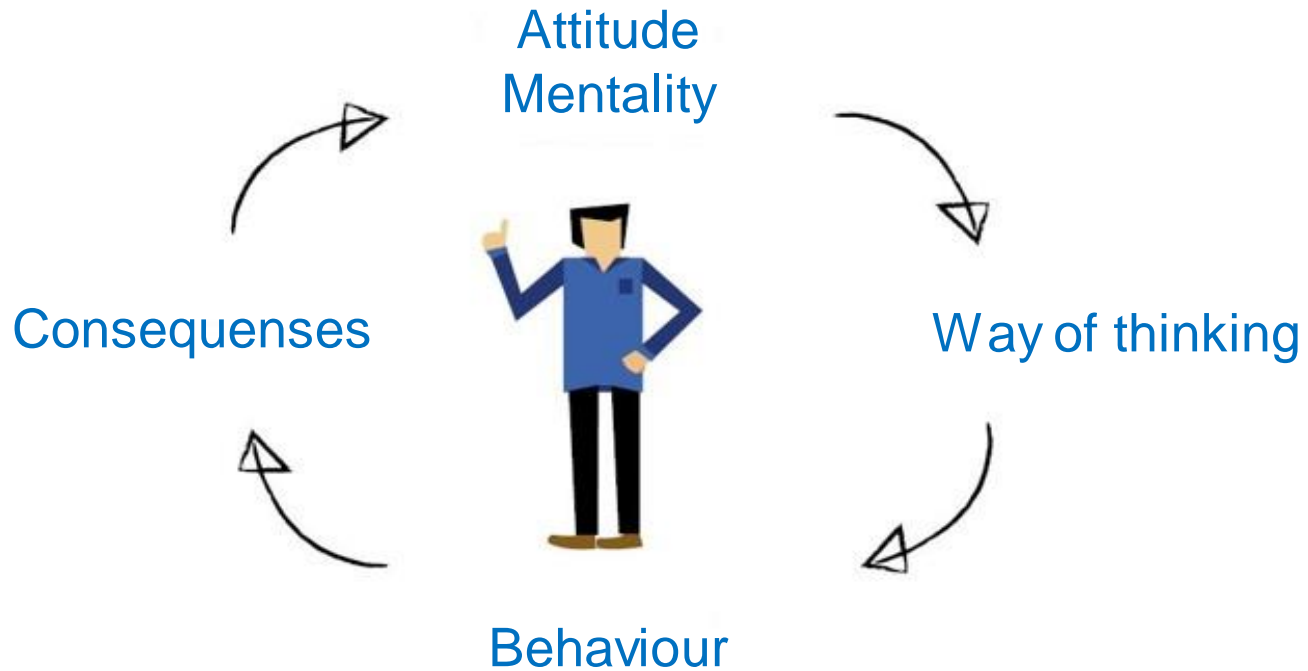


*Budget:
4,1 mln*



*From
fantasy
world to
real one.*

Short-term vs long-term outcome?



Mentoring

Building the bridge starts from 6 months before release and it goes on after release, for a total of up to **18 months**.

Working alliance – main factor to succeed after prison leave.

Agreement of goodwill between mentor and offender (main responsibilities and goals of both parties).

What does mentor do?

- Help to draw a **realistic post-release plan**.
- Help to find contacts for appointments (job provider, housing, debt counselor etc.)
- Mentor is a listener, adviser, motivator, supporter, as far as there is a mutual understanding of what is right for the client.

Two NGO-s as service providers all over Estonia (divided by regions)

All mentors are trained to work with offenders and get regular supervision/co-vision.



*Preparation
and inclusion
starts up to 6
months
before
release*

Housing

- For those who have no place to live and for those who want to change their life.
- Up to 12 months.
- As of March 2022, 63 housing places.



Motivation and mentality of offender make a huge impact.

Working on attitudes to change their way of thinking and ensure it is in line with reality.



Housing (II)

We also support people with their social and economical needs:

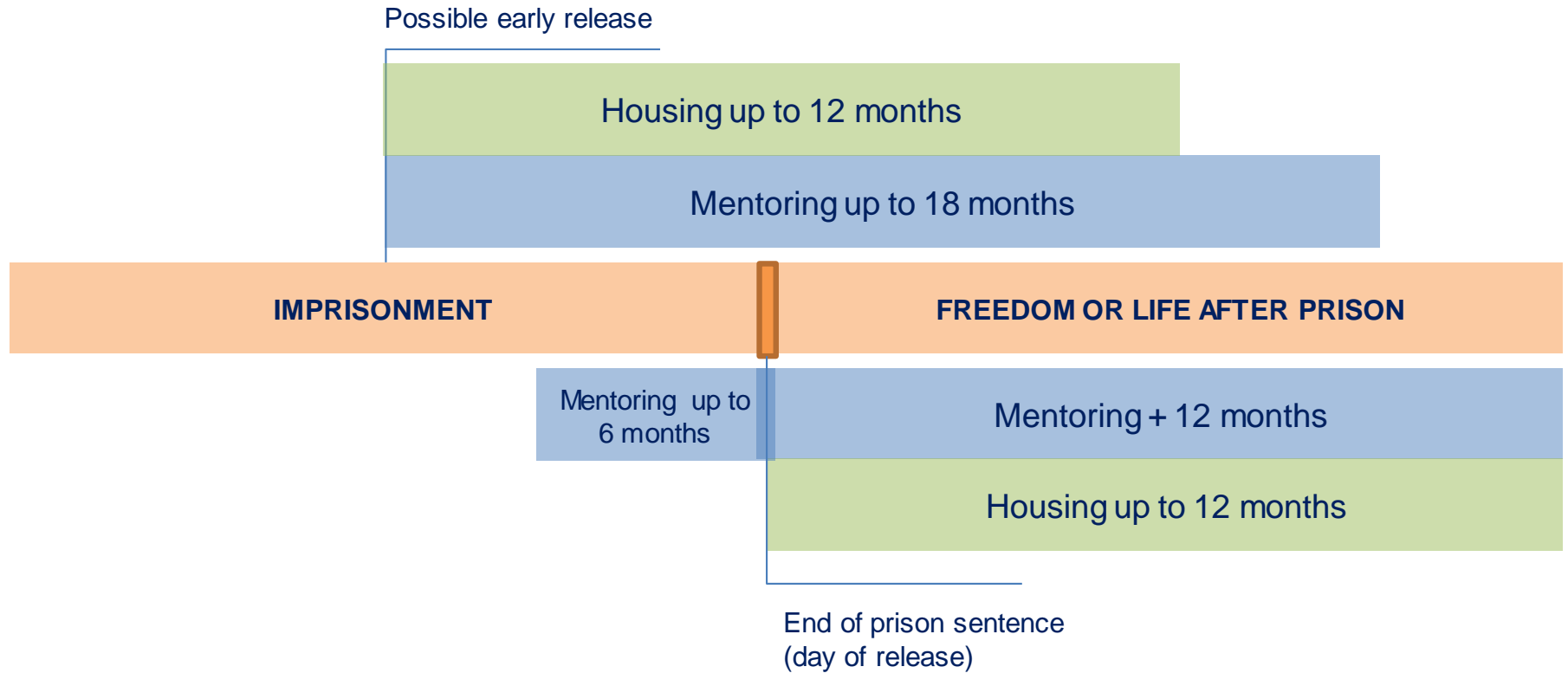
- addictions (12-step programme);
- relationships (e.g. letters of forgiveness, restorative justice);
- health issues;
- official documents (ID, pension etc);
- debts.

Step by step process: after some time, we support them to enter the labour market and to live on their own.

Staff members: head of the service, social counselor, debt counselor, psychologist, other specialist, 24/7 surveillance worker.

Four NGO-s are providing services in five different cities.

Building the bridge (6 +12 model)



Outcome indicators

- **75%** of the target group, 1 month after leaving service are **involved in the labour market***
 - incl. 30% of them are working**.
- **30%** of the target group, during **one year after leaving prison** are being **accused of new criminal act** (recidivism)***.
- Overall number of participants (2015-2023) – 1900
 - - incl. 532 in housing.

How we measure?

**registered as jobseeker in Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund.*

***registered as a worker in “workers register“.*

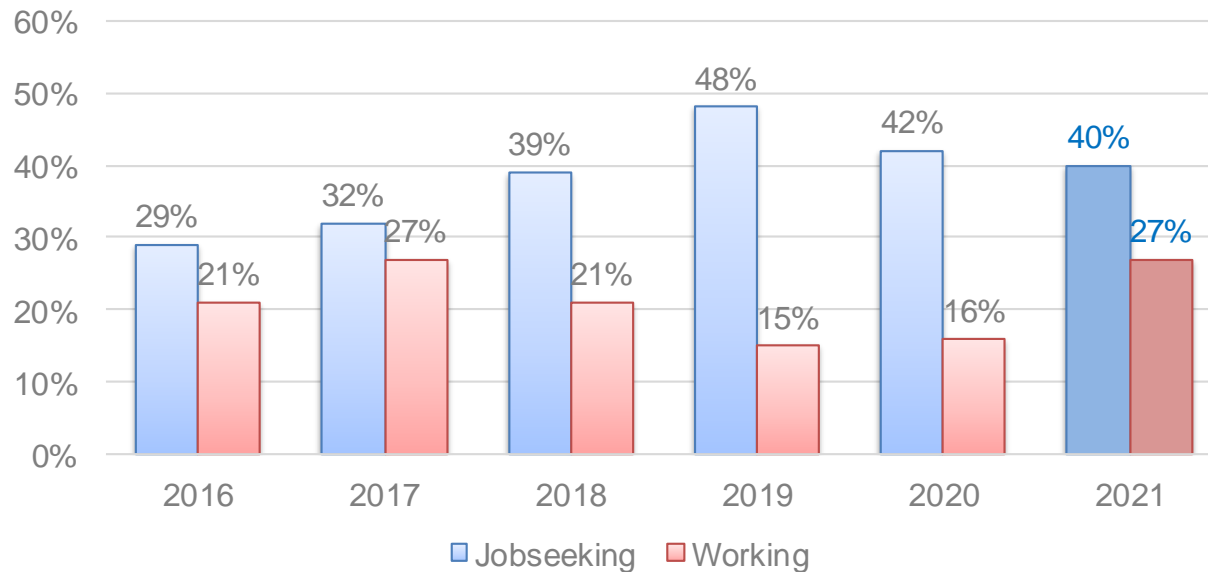
****hearing protocol in new criminal case.*

Outcomes

➤ 67% in the labour market (2021)

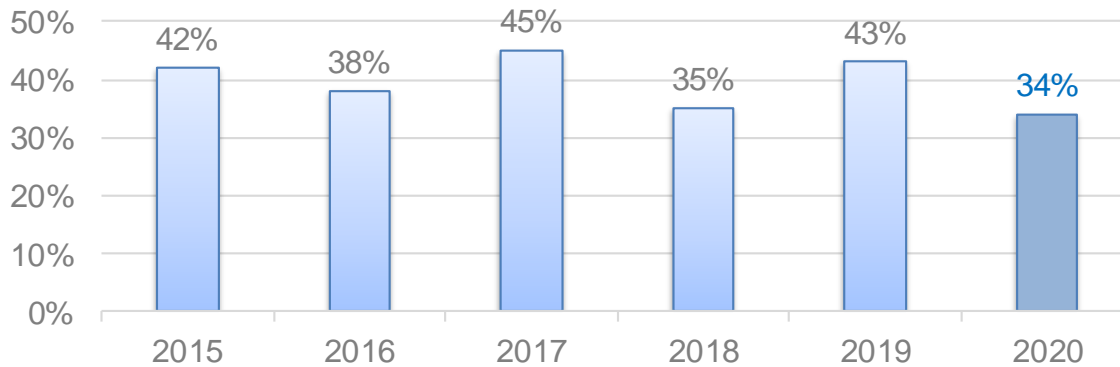
Mentoring service – 64% (incl. 24% working)

Housing service – 72% (incl. 32% working)



Outcomes

- 34% recidivism rate (2021)



*Research:
Positive impact
on recidivism
after 9 months
of getting
supporting
service.*

- Overall (2015-2021) – 1393 participants
- incl. 309 in housing.

*About 12%
of prison
leavers are
getting
supporting
services.*

Challenges and learning elements

- Implementation is a step-by-step process – 2015 vs 2022.
- It is **challenging to deal with all the needs** – target group is the “toughest”:
 - about 70% of mentor service clients served their full sentence;
 - 50% of housing clients are on conditional release.
- Good **preparation work in prison**, make reentry process easier after release.
- **NGO-s are highly motivated**, have less bureaucracy and are good at „working with people“ (ex-offenders).
- Impact is difficult to measure.
It is **important to look behind the numbers**.



Challenges and learning elements (II)

- Probably there should be no time limits (i.e. maximum length) of service providing.
- **Being in touch constantly** with every actor involved.
Project as network management.
- **Being in touch with prisoners** (e.g. information hours, leaflets, calls etc).
- There is no “perfect supporting service“, we provide opportunity.

Ongoing
goal:
*supporting
ex-convicts
is normal.*















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Thank You!

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