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From the inside: the purpose of probation hostels

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From the Inside:

The purpose of probation approved premises (hostels)

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Hostels in Context

- Residential semi-secure accommodation for high risk offenders – part of MAPPA
- Bail and license cases – increasingly latter
- Part of the Offender Management Model

Prison ➔ Hostel ➔ Community
Official Purpose of Hostels

- Joint Inspection in 2008 evaluated the work and role of hostels in ‘Control, Help and Change?’ concluding that hostels carry out control well; help & change more patchily

- 2005 Probation National Standards:
  “enhanced supervision as a contribution to the management of offenders who pose a significant Risk of Harm to the public.” (NPD, 2005a:1)

- 2007 Probation National Standards placed hostels into context of OM
  • role = to implement risk management plans & monitor compliance
Work Inside Hostels

• Supporting Public Protection through:
  • Surveillance & monitoring
  • Assessment of risk
  • Delivery of accredited programmes & other interventions
  • Pro-social modelling
  • Provision of life-skills, health, education & employment services (NPD, 2005b)

• What’s most important?
Study

- Single case study of a probation hostel over 21 months
- Observation of interactions between residents & staff – including conversation
- Observation of MARAC (MAPPP) over 1 year (12 meetings)
- Interviews with 24 residents and 17 staff
What People on the Inside Said

- All respondents found it difficult to discuss the role & purpose of the hostel
- Tended to think only of their personal role

- 3 main areas:
  - Rehabilitation & reintegration
  - Supervision & control
  - Risk management and public protection
Rehabilitation & Reintegration

- RSOs esp. believed main role of hostel – PSO rated highly
- Supported offence-based work – SOGP ETS, one-to one etc.
- Inc. internal regime & pro-social modelling

BUT:
- Residents & Relief RSO: “what’s that?”
- Consistency in practice?
- Understanding of working roles or hostel work?
Supervision & Control

- Hostel staff & MARAC members – intrinsic to rehabilitation & reintegration
- Purpose of admission in MARAC: “detailed observation”
- Able to use hostel & home leaves as “testing periods”
- BUT:
- Residents: supervision = control & reduction of responsibility
  “They just want to control everything I do” R3b
  “It’s all about power and control “ R57
Risk Management & Public Protection

- Risk assessment & management referred to heavily in MARAC & SPO
  - context of public protection implicit
- Observation, testing etc fed into risk monitoring
- Overarching principle?
- BUT:
- Residents: warehouses for high risk offenders
  “R8: It’s just accommodation.
  R7: Yeah, we’re both homeless. They just want to put us somewhere so we can do these courses”
Incompatible?

- Reintegration
- Rehabilitation
- Supervision
- Support

Risk Management

Risk Assessment

Public Protection
Implications

- Despite the variety of perspectives expressed all staff are working coherently together in accordance with OM model, NOMS and Ministry of Justice guidance.

- BUT:
  - Respondents are not aware of this.
  - They do not know what each other are doing, they have different ideas about the purpose of their roles & the hostel in general (narrow and wide).
  - They misunderstand each other & residents do not perceive the significant of their residency.
References