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Criminal Sanctions Agency

Addresses and detailed contact information are
available at the Probation Service website at

www.kriminaalihuolto.fi



THE CRIMINAL SANCTIONS AGENCY

Probation service is responsible for the enforcement of community sanctions

Community sanctions consist of the supervision of conditionally sentenced young offenders, juvenile punishment, community service and supervision of parolees. Community sanction work also includes providing expert statements, i.e., personal history reports, suitability assessments and enforcement plans at the request of the prosecutor for the court of law.

Community sanctions are enforced within the sphere of normal everyday life. Different authorities, communities, workplaces and private persons assist the officials of the Probation Service in the enforcement.

Community sanctions are enforced so that the contents and enforcement methods of the sanctions

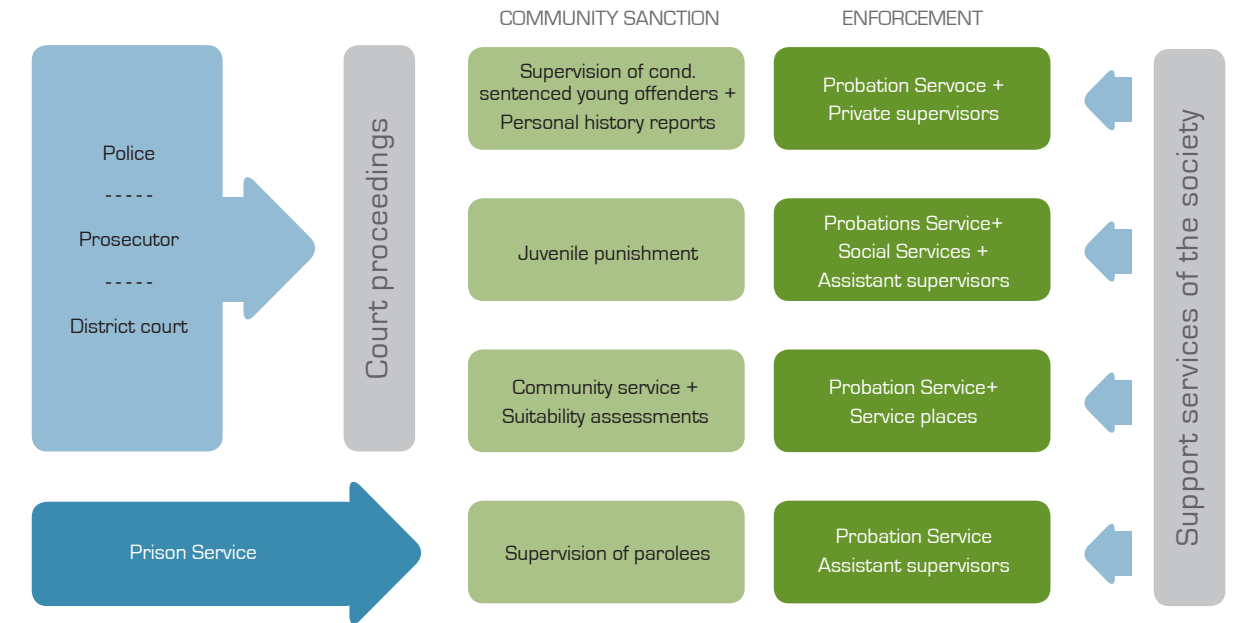
- increase the abilities of sentenced offenders to adopt a life without crime
- promote the life control of sentenced offenders and their reintegration into the society
- reduce the risk of recidivism of sentenced offenders

Values guiding the work include the respect for human dignity, justness and the notion of the potential of an individual to change and grow. Commitment to these values means:

- safeguarding the basic rights and human rights
- treating clients humanely, appropriately, and equally
- observing the lawfulness of all actions and complying with justice and fairness
- carrying out enforcement in a way that supports the personal growth and development of the sentenced offenders and their efforts to lead a life without crime

Operational environment of the Probation Service

The Probation Service works in close co-operation with the prosecution, courts, prisons and local social services. Other important co-operation partners are the contact people of the service places and private persons working as assistant supervisors.



Enforcement of community sanctions aims to decrease recidivism

Community sanction work means the enforcement of sanctions in freedom and its main goal is to reduce recidivism. Achieving the goal requires co-operation between several different authorities.

The regulations and duties concerning offenders sentenced to community sanction are recorded in the enforcement plan. The Probation Service supervises the compliance with the regulations as well as supports and motivates the sentenced offenders to adopt a life without crime.

Community sanction work is planned. A service plan for the term of the community sanction is made together with the sentenced offender. The plan includes the goals, the method and frequency of communication, and other working methods set for the term of the sentence.

Community sanction work influences the clients' values and attitudes supporting criminality. The Probation Service assesses the factors, which reduce and increase recidivism. Because problematic substance use is a significant factor in view of recidivism, special attention is paid on assessing the needs of the clients for substance services, motivating the clients to get treatment, and working together with local substance abuse service providers.

Community sanction work uses working methods, programmes and co-operation networks reducing recidivism. For instance, a course on anger management is a programme meant for community sanction clients who lose their temper easily and are constantly in trouble because of that. Discussions concerning the offence are also part of the enforcement of community sanctions. A programme of five structured discussions, which are based on motivating interviews, has been developed to promote the change of the old thinking and operating practices.

Community sanctions work requires professionalism

The qualification requirements of probation workers are education and experience corresponding to the duties. Suitable degrees are, for example, a vocational qualification in social care and an applicable higher polytechnic degree. Employees are trained to have a professional approach to the work. Research data regarding the operation of the Probation Service, international reports and different scientific fields, especially the trends of social work, are used in the development of community sanctions. Employees have good opportunities to attend in-service training and, if interested, also international events.

Supervision of conditionally sentenced young offenders

Juveniles who have committed an offence when under 21 years of age may be sentenced to supervision for a probationary period in order to intensify the effect of the conditional sentence presuming that it is considered justifiable in view of improving the social coping of the offenders and preventing recidivism. If it is evident that the sentence is going to be more severe than a fine, the prosecutor requests for a personal history report which is needed in the court proceedings. The report includes an assessment of the risk of the young offender to commit new offences and a statement of the need for supervision. Young offenders under 18 years of age can be sentenced to unconditional imprisonment only for weighty reasons.

The aim of supervision is to encourage young offenders to keep away from criminal activity and substances and to promote their abilities to function in the society in an approved manner. During the supervision appointments, young offenders are assisted in identifying and understanding the thinking and behaviour patterns connected with criminal behaviour.

The Probation Service is responsible for arranging supervision around the nation. Voluntary private supervisors working under the guidance of the district offices contribute substantially to the supervision work. Most private supervisors are professionals of the social service field. Some of the young offenders ordered to supervision have been former clients of the child welfare authorities. Local social services have an important role in acquiring private supervisors for offenders who are under 18 years of age and preparing the personal history reports for the courts before trial.

"In supervision, it's been possible to talk about things, they've talked some sense and made me think."

Juvenile punishment

Juvenile punishment is a specific sentence meant for those who have committed an offence when under 18 years of age. The court can sentence to juvenile punishment for 4 to 12 months. In the scale of sentences, juvenile punishment is comparable to conditional imprisonment. **Juvenile punishment aims to promote the skills of the offenders to cope in the society and prevent recidivism.**

The content of each juvenile punishment is determined in the enforcement plan approved by the court. Juvenile punishment is served according to a set schedule and the maximum length is eight hours per week.

Juvenile punishment consists of supervision, activities and programmes promoting social functioning capacity, and an orientation to employment and work. The activities are compiled in a manual on juvenile punishment. The working methods presented in the manual can also be used in other community sanction work.

The young offenders are obliged to be in close contact with their supervisors. At the beginning of the sentence, they meet generally twice a week after which the number of meetings can be either increased or decreased according to the need. The supervisors of young offenders are officials of the Probation Service. For special reasons, a private person can be hired as an assistant supervisor.

The Probation Service must notify the prosecutor in case young offenders do not begin serving their juvenile punishment, continue the service, or mend their ways despite prior warnings.

"The discussions on criminality were lousy, you had to recall old unpleasant things. It did, however, benefit me, I learned to understand how serious the situation was."

Community service

A court may convert an unconditional prison sentence not exceeding eight months into community service if the accused consents to it and is assumed to be capable of serving the sentence. At the request of the prosecutor, the Probation Service prepares a suitability assessment on the capacity of the accused to carry out the service.

"The best thing about this community service has been that I've been forced to not to drink. It has made me feel really good."

Previous community service or unconditional prison sentences may prevent the passing of a new community service sentence. Community service can also be imposed as a supplementary sanction to a conditional sentence exceeding one year.

The length of community service varies from 20 to 200 hours. It is scheduled to last the term of the original prison sentence. **Offenders sentenced to community service perform unpaid work for public good in a service place approved by the Probation Service in their leisure time.** During the sentence term, offenders can live at home and continue their studies or work.

A maximum of ten hours of the community service can be performed by participating in programmes decreasing substance abuse problems or recidivism. Special programmes aimed to promote traffic safety and substance use control have been included in community service.

The Probation Service supervises the community service sentence. Each service session is monitored either by calling by phone or visiting the service place. The Probation Service is obliged to report to the prosecutor if offenders sentenced to community service seriously breach the service conditions. Serious breaches of the conditions or new offences committed during the community service may lead to that the remaining community service is converted into imprisonment based on the consideration of the court.

Supervision of parolees

Almost without an exception only a fixed term of imprisonment is served in prison. Parole, also known as conditional release, means that prisoners sentenced to unconditional imprisonment are released to serve the rest of the sentence in freedom. Prisoners released on parole are placed under supervision if the probation period is longer than one year, the offence was committed when under 21 years of age, or the prisoners so requests. The supervisors are officials of the Probation Service. A private person suitable for the task may be ordered to assist the supervisor.

Prisoners ordered to supervision are involved in the preparation of three overlapping plans made in different phases of the imprisonment: a sentence plan, release plan and supervision plan. The prison is responsible for preparing the sentence plan and release plan. The supervision plan is prepared by the Probation Service. The plans can be seen as a continuous process in which valuable information is passed from one plan to the next. The supervision plan includes, among other things, the frequency of the appointments, the programmes and activities part of the supervision and the consequences of violating the obligations of the supervised person.

The purpose of the supervision is to increase public safety by promoting the social coping of the supervised offenders and by preventing them from committing new offences. Preventing new offences means above all influencing the attitudes of the offenders supporting criminality.

The supervision includes regular meetings between the supervisor and the supervised person to control the compliance with the supervision orders and to monitor the circumstances of the supervised person and changes therein. The supervision appointments handle factors influencing criminal behaviour. The supervision may also include activities or programmes enhancing social functional ability. The process aims at improving the ability of the supervised offenders to bear their responsibilities and to act in a manner acceptable in

society. An important part of the supervision work is the cooperation with different authorities and service organisations in order to secure the support measures the supervised offenders need.

Supervised offenders are obliged to arrive at the agreed supervision appointments and they cannot be under the influence of alcohol or other substances during the appointments. The offenders can be fetched to the supervision appointment if they fail to arrive without an acceptable reason. If they do not comply with their duty to keep in contact with the supervisor or otherwise seriously violate their obligations, the Probation Service has to notify the public prosecutor without delay.

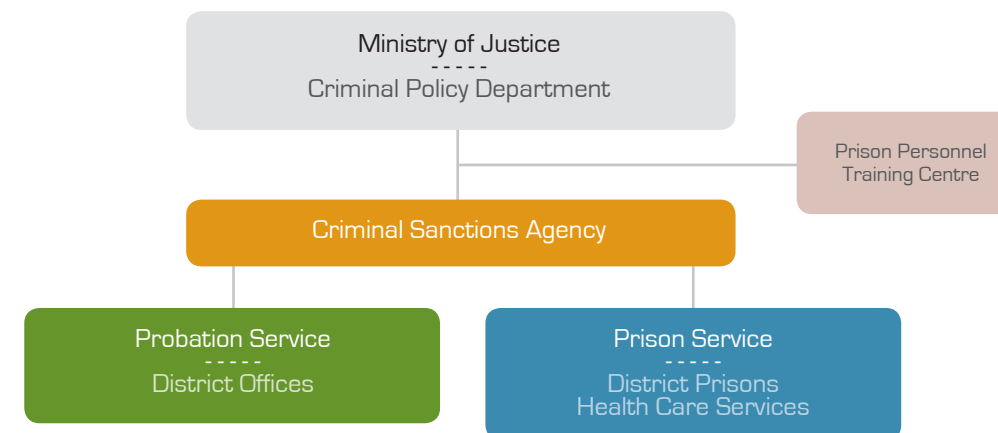
"The whole supervision is just a waste of time, it's no use, although on the other hand, it has reminded me that crime doesn't pay. I haven't done anything illegal during it."

Probation service is part of the criminal sanctions field

The Probation Service operates under the administrative branch of the Ministry of Justice and is part of the criminal sanctions field. The Criminal Policy Department of the Ministry of Justice is responsible for the strategic guidance of the administrative branch.

The Criminal Sanctions Agency is in charge of the direction and development of the whole criminal sanctions field. The directive unit of the Probation Service lead by the Chief Director of the Probation Service is part of the Criminal Sanctions Agency.

The Criminal Sanctions Field



The Probation Service consists of 15 district offices, which may have one or more separate operating units. The office network is nationwide because it has to be possible to serve community sanction in a nearby area, i.e. practically in the area of the home municipality.

The Probation Service prepares over 10 000 expert statements to the courts of law and enforces over 10 000 community sanctions annually. It employs 300 public servants and 500 private supervisors and has 2 500 service places.

The appropriation allocated to the enforcement of sentences has been around 186 million euro in the past few years. The enforcement of community sanctions has received about 14 million euro, which is 7% of the total. The operating expenses per community sanction are about 1 300 in a year.

Offices of the Probation Service

Espoo District Office

Helsinki District Office
Porvoo Local Office

Hämeenlinna District Office
Riihimäki Local Office

Joensuu District Office
Nurmes Operational Bureau

Jyväskylä District Office

Kuopio District Office
Iisalmi Local Office

District Office of
Southeastern Finland

Kotka Office
Kouvola Office
Lappeenranta Office

Lahti District Office

Mikkeli District Office
Savonlinna Local Office
Varkaus Local Office

District Office of Ostrobothnia

Seinäjoki Office
Vaasa Office
Kokkola Office

District Office of Northern Finland

Kajaani Office
Kuusamo Operational Bureau
Sopentupa Camp
Kemi Office
Oulu Office
Rovaniemi Office

Pori District Office

Tampere District Office

Turku District Office
Ahvenanmaa Operational Bureau

Vantaa District Office



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