

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE WHITE PAPER *MENTAL HEALTH IN PRISON AND PROBATION*

Reducing risk Factors

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# Mental health in prison and probation

## Summary



### 1. WHAT DO WE KNOW - MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS IN PRISON and PROBATION CONTEXT

- Special needs of individuals with mental illness in contact with the criminal justice system



### 2. WHAT DID WE FIND - Survey on Mental Health Disorders of Persons in Penal Detention under Probation Supervision

- Findings and conclusions



### 3. WHAT DO WE FACE – Council of Europe White Paper on the management of persons with mental health disorders

- Recommendations and future challenges

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# Mental health in prison

## Reducing Risk Factors

- In terms of prevalence of mental illness in prison context, about 4% of inmates (males and females) present mental disorders.
- 10% of male inmates struggle with depression, and 47% have an antisocial personality out of 65% with personality disorders.
- 12% of female prisoners show signs of having a major depression, while 21% have an antisocial personality disorder (out of 42% with PD)

### Male inmates vs Female inmates



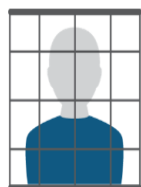
- Psychotic illnesses  
4%
- Major depression  
10%
- Personality disorder  
65%
- Antisocial personality disorder  
47%



- Psychotic illnesses  
4%
- Major depression  
12%
- Personality disorder  
42%
- Antisocial personality disorder  
21%

### Inmates vs General Population

Inmates present higher rates of mental illness...



...when compared to the general population

- Meta-analysis data confirms that inmates show higher rates of mental illness when compared to the general population.
- Emotional disorders rates can increase according to the stage of imprisonment.
- Research shows that during the first week of imprisonment, emotional disorders can be prevalent in almost 90% of the cases (after 6 months >50%)
- After trial, several inmates arrive in prison with previously detected mental health conditions, importing them to a whole new context.

# Mental health in prison

## Reducing Risk Factors

- Inmates with existing mental disorders are at further risk of acute mental harm, as they have fewer resources to cope in an environment lacking in privacy.
  - This risk is higher in tendentiously depressive inmates, who may become suicidal and psychotic due to an increased emotional deterioration.
- 
- Prisoners without any mental health problems prior to imprisonment may develop a range of mental disabilities in prisons, where they do not feel safe, dormitories overcrowded and staff not trained to deal with their specific psycho-social support requirements.

## PRISON ENVIRONMENT



### Negatively influences...



Physical  
health



Mental  
health

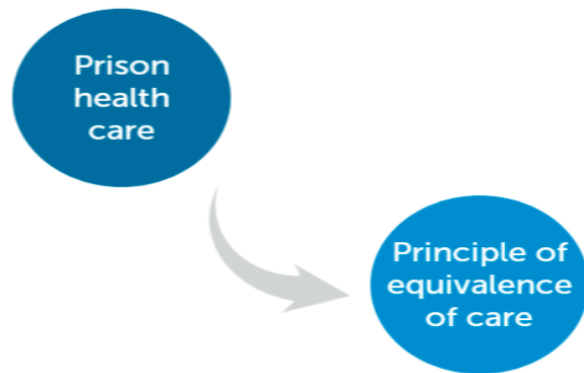


Social  
health

# Mental health in prison

## Reducing Risk Factors

### LEVELS OF CARE



### Level & quality of mental health services...



- Training on mental health to prison health staff
- Regular visits from a community mental health team
- Access to outside health care services / right to be transferred



- When analyzing prison health care issue, often the principle of equivalence of care is referred, highlighting the importance of prison services providing the same level of quality of the basic health services as in the community, including mental health.
- This principle might be achieved through different levels or means:
  - Prison health staff training on mental health;
  - Regular visits from a community mental health team;
  - Access to health care services outside prison.

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Council of Europe  
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## *Questionnaire on Mental Health Disorders and Disabilities of Persons in Penal Detention and under Probation Supervision*

*Charlie Brooker, Honory Professor, Centre for Sociology and Criminology  
Royal Holloway, University of London*

*Jorge Monteiro, Head of Service- Prison and Probation Services- Portugal*

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# Council of Europe White Paper regarding persons with mental health disorders – P&P

*Work in progress*

- Two questionnaires were designed (P&P)
- Aimed to elicit government policies and practical approaches to mental health disorders in probation services and in prisons;
- The survey closed in July, 2021

- Confederation of European Probation (CEP);
- European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris)
- International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA)

**Survey  
(Fev-July 2021)**

**Data collection**

**PC-CP WG**

**STAKEHOLDERS**

- Professor Charlie Brooker - Royal Holloway, University of London (United Kingdom) and
- Jorge Monteiro - Head of Service Directorate General of Reintegration and Prison Services (Portugal).

- Registry of the European Court of Human Rights;
- Committee for the Prevention of Torture Secretariat (CPT);
- Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO)



# Mental health in prison and probation

## Main findings and conclusions



- Good reaction from members states to the questionnaire (63%)
- In terms of national policy for probation and mental health, just over half of the countries/jurisdictions (53%) have policies in place. This contrasted sharply with prisons where policy exists in nearly all countries/jurisdictions (93%).
- Mental health awareness training is in place in 74% of the prison context responders, nevertheless, in probation it is a reality in only 37% (25 countries/jurisdictions probation staff are not provided with any training on mental health issues).
- Estimates of the prevalence of mental health disorders varied significantly in prisons ranging from 0-80% (median 18%) whilst in probation they ranged from 2%-90% (median 15%).
- Training and raising awareness on mental health disorders is provided for prison staff in many countries (74%). Nevertheless, in Probation the coverage is smaller (33%)
- In prison most inmates are screened at intake/admission and when leaving prison. Screening in probation takes place mostly at the court stage and before leaving prison (for probation services which deal with released prisoners).
- There is a large discrepancy in the existence of suicide prevention measure depending on whether a person is in prison or is serving a community order. Some sort of suicide prevention measure exists in most prisons (90%) whereas only very few probation services (13%) have specific measures in place.
- In the survey there is also highlighted the gender issues as it is known that women constitute by far the smallest element of prison and probation populations approximately 10%. Nearly half (47%) of the prison related responses stated that they have gender-sensitive approaches in place.

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## Main findings and results



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# Mental health in prison and probation

White paper



- Background and
- Introduction
- European State of the Art (survey main findings)
- International organizations inputs :
  - WHO, CoE, CPT, ECHR, CDBIO

- Literature review;
- Good practices review;
- Principles and Guidelines;
- Recommendations (P&P)

- Appendix I – Governmental policies
- Appendix II – Complete survey results
- Appendix III – Collection of Good practices

# Mental health in prison and probation

## Recommendations

### PRISONS

- Policy and standards for staff working with mental health disorders in prison context.
- Procedures to detect early signs of mental disorder or distress.
- Adequate access to treatment and care for all inmates.
- Provision of staff training on mental health issues.
- The development and implementation of integrated and tailor-made treatment and rehabilitation programs.
- Promote contact between prisoners and their family and friends.
- Design of the prison infrastructure.
- Referral of persons with mental health disorders to external mental healthcare services.



### PROBATION

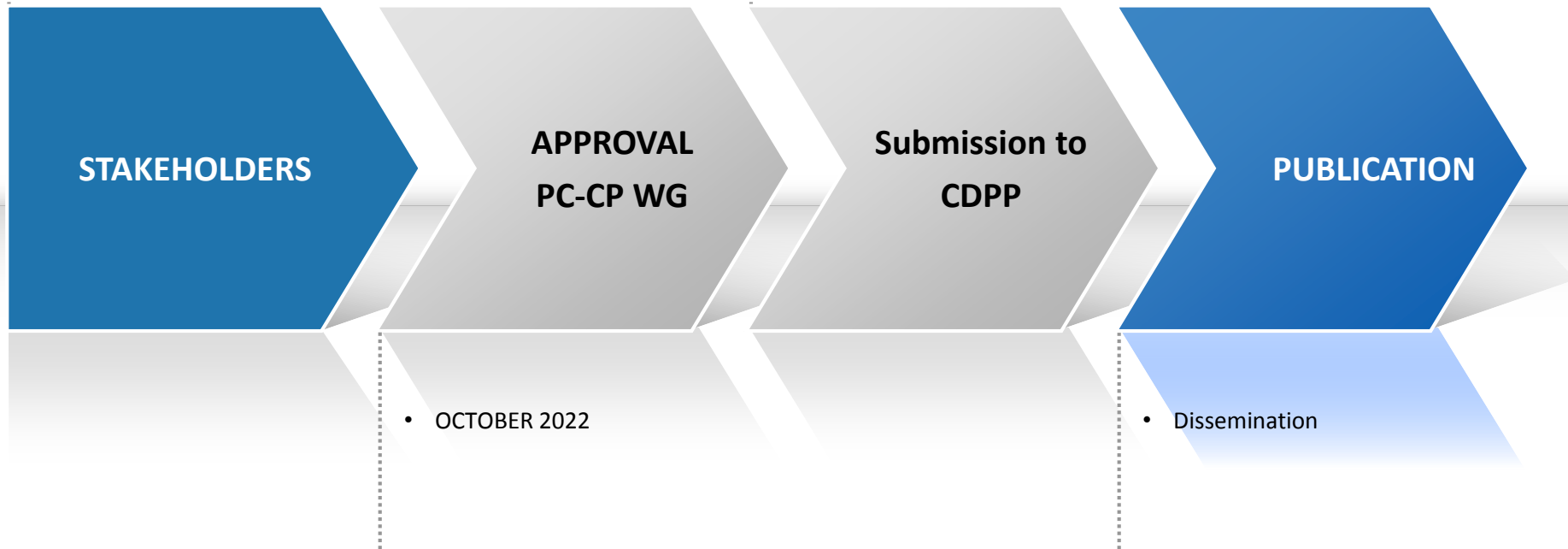
- Policy and standards for working with persons with mental health disorders in probation context.
- Continuous staff training and supporting their wellbeing.
- Use of structured risk assessment tools.
- Monitoring and collecting data on suicide.
- Continuity of care for mental health disorders.
- Development of inter-agency cooperation and partnerships.
- Investment in research and evaluation.

# Council of Europe White Paper regarding persons with mental health disorders – P&P

*Work in progress*

- Registry of the European Court of Human Rights;
- Committee for the Prevention of Torture Secretariat (CPT);
- Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO)

• DECEMBER2022



**Promoting change...**



**... building new opportunities.**

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