

# The Berlin Prison System

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# INTRODUCTION

For many people, prisons remain to be places that they regard with unease. Their architecture is intimidating. What occurs behind prison walls is open to speculation. And the image of the prison system that many have is often only formed by film and television. Many stories have been told about prisons and what happens in them. "The Count of Monte Cristo" and "Orange is the New Black" are just two of them. While such stories are exciting and poignant, the reality is quite different.

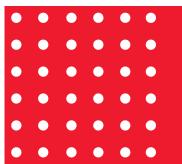
People are imprisoned in prison facilities for a specified period of their lives. The intent while there is to prepare them for a crime-free life. The goal is resocialisation. This is why prisoners have the right to furnish their cells comfortably. They are permitted to watch television, have limited access to information on the internet, and can make purchases with their money. They can receive visits from relatives and friends, as well as make phone calls to the "outside". However, they are also subject to just as many restrictions; they are placed "under lock and key", they are not able to leave a designated area without permission and must accept that their cells may be searched at any time.

The fourth edition of this brochure is intended to provide an insight into the realities of life in the prison system that require a supportive and crucial accompaniment by society more than any other public sector. Nowhere else in our society are people's basic rights subject to such severe restrictions as in prisons. The goals pursued by the Berlin Prison System have not fundamentally changed since the first edition. However, newly arising developments – as is common – are presented in this new edition. With the introduction of a cell media system, access to the internet and digital media is now available to a limited extent. We focus more intensively on the prisoners' children and their relationship with their imprisoned parent.

The Berlin Prison System identifies with its mandate of enabling prisoners to lead a crime-free life following their release. The prerequisite for this: Security in the prison facilities. Both can only be achieved with the help of the many employees from various professional groups. They perform a difficult and responsibility-laden service for society and deserve respect and recognition. This brochure will be considered a success if also encourages people to consider working in the prison system, e.g., as a correctional officer or nurse, as a social worker or psychologist, as an administrative officer or lawyer, or as a foreman or doctor.

Dostoyevsky once remarked that "The degree of civilisation in a society can be judged by entering its prisons". The Berlin Prison System stands for a high degree of civilisation. This brochure aims to provide information about this.

Senate Department for Justice and Consumer Protection



# 1 LEGAL FOUNDATIONS

# THE BERLIN PRISON ACT

Following the federalism reform, the legislative authority for the prison system has been the responsibility of the federal states since 2006. Berlin then made use of its legislative powers and enacted the following laws:

- Berlin Juvenile Detention Act (JStVollzG Bln)
- Berlin Mobile Telecommunications Prevention Act (MFunkVG)
- Berlin Remand Custody Act (UVollzG Bln)
- Berlin Prison System Data Protection Act (JVollzDSG Bln)
- Berlin Preventative Detention Act (SVVollzG Bln)
- Act on the Further Development of the Berlin Prison System
- Berlin Prison Act (StVollzG Bln)
- Berlin Juvenile Custody Act (JAVollzG Bln)

With the amendment to the Berlin Prison Act in 2020, the prison system laws were adapted to the case law of the Federal Constitutional Court: The requirements for the securing of prisoners were intensified and a judicial reservation was introduced. In addition, the principle that prisoners of different genders are to be separately housed has been adapted so that in individual cases, the official civil status entry of prisoners may be deviated from when deciding on housing. In 2021, the Berlin Prison System Data Protection Act (JVollzDSG Bln) was fundamentally revised in order to implement European data protection standards and facilitate the exchange of information between the prison system and the security authorities.





# **GOALS AND TASKS**

The Berlin Prison Act sets clear guidelines for those responsible for the prison system. Prisoners should be prepared for their social reintegration during their imprisonment. However, the execution of imprisonment is not a social welfare measure, but rather it represents

the state's harshest sanction against its citizens. Because the prison system must ensure that the community is protected from further offences during the imprisonment, placing prisoners in high-security prison facilities often cannot be avoided. And not only that: Prisoners' freedom of

movement often must be considerably restricted within the prison facility as well.

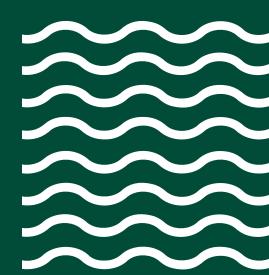
Preparation for freedom while under conditions of imprisonment: Can this task be solved? Many disagree that it can. But what is the alternative? No modern state under the rule of law can, for its own sake, waive the state's right to impose punishment and thereby forgo the appropriate response to a serious injustice committed. If the rendering of justice for the guilty requires a prison

sentence as the ultimate sanction, this does not mean by the same token that the enforcement of the prison sentence may only be carried out in the form of imprisonment or simple detention. On the contrary: It is well known that a "tough" penal system does not improve the offender, but rather can promote a subculture and brutalisation. Only a penal system that places human dignity at the centre of its efforts can have a positive impact on prisoners. This realisation is an achievement of civilisation.

# CORNERSTONES OF THE BERLIN PRISON SYSTEM

- Competent and engaged employees from different professional groups ensure a variety of skills, high quality, and problem-solving expertise.
- For resocialisation, both the skills and shortcomings of the prisoners must be taken into account. A broad range of individual and group measures, as well as employment and qualification measures, are available.
- Security for employees and prisoners is a prerequisite for a successful prison system.
- Changing requirements are met with the adaptation of concepts. This adaptation incorporates the findings of the Criminology Services and the city's scientific institutions.
- Intensive cooperation with the Prison System Social Services, as well as external organisations and institutions, is essential during the imprisonment and for prisoner integration after release.
- The conflicting priorities between the lack of freedom and preparation for freedom are taken very seriously. Berlin gives priority to the placement of suitable prisoners in open prison, the granting of imprisonment relaxations, and a professional risk management.

# 2 FACTS AND FIGURES



# THE BERLIN PRISON FACILITIES



### **Moabit Prison**

For whom: Male adults

Form of imprisonment: Closed prison Number of imprisonment spaces: 887

**Special features / Characteristics:** Star-shaped

building in the middle of the city centre



Information about this prison facility:







### Plötzensee Correctional Centre

For whom: Male adults

Form of imprisonment: Open and closed prisons

Number of imprisonment spaces: 499

Special features/Characteristics: The prison facility grounds also accommodate the prison system hospital and various competence centres (Prison System Training Academy, Prison System Central IT and the Prison System Social Services, Prison Facility Tenant

Management, and the Criminology Service)



Information about this prison facility:







# Tegel Prison

For whom: Male adults

Form of imprisonment: Closed prison, preventive detention

Number of imprisonment spaces: 904

**Special features / Characteristics:** Socio-therapeutic prison facility, preventive detention with 4 spaces in open prison



Information about this prison facility:







# Heidering Prison

For whom: Male adults

Form of imprisonment: Closed prison Number of imprisonment spaces: 572

**Special features / Characteristics:** Location outside Berlin in the Berlin municipal area, state agreement

between Berlin and Brandenburg



Information about this prison facility:







# Berlin Open Prison Centre

For whom: Male adults

Form of imprisonment: Open prison Number of imprisonment spaces: 873

**Special features / Characteristics:** Various prison facility branches in the Berlin metropolitan area, direct

admission upon presenting oneself



Information about this prison facility:







### Berlin Women's Correctional Centre

For whom: Female juveniles, young adults, and adults Form of imprisonment: Open and closed prisons

Number of imprisonment spaces: 236

**Special features/Characteristics:** Various prison facility branches in the Berlin metropolitan area, direct admission

upon presenting oneself



Information about this prison facility:







### Berlin Juvenile Detention Centre

For whom: Male juveniles, young adults, and adults up to

the age of 27

Form of imprisonment: Open and closed prisons

Number of imprisonment spaces: 422

**Special features / Characteristics:** Counselling Centre as a physical interface between stakeholders within and

external to the prison system



Information about this prison facility:







# Berlin-Brandenburg Juvenile Custody Centre

For whom: Male and female juveniles, young adults

Number of custody spaces: 30

Special features / Characteristics: Joint institution of the

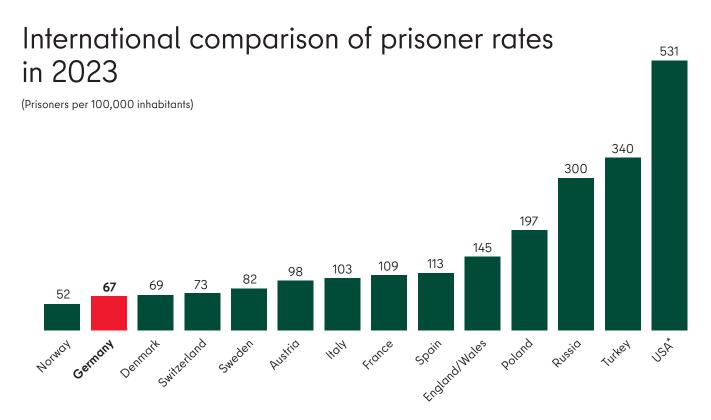
states of Berlin and Brandenburg



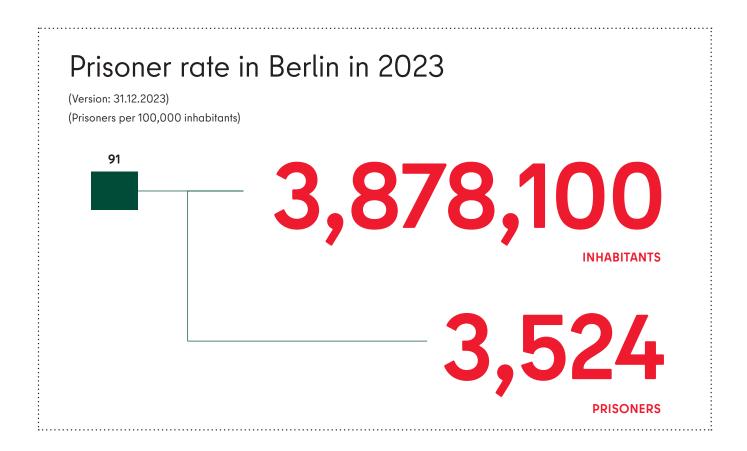
Information about this prison facility:







\* No data available for 2023, therefore 2021 Source: Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research, World Prison Brief



### Average occupancy

Average occupancy by year and number of prisoners and detainees who were imprisoned or housed in the Berlin Prison System (not including juvenile custody)

Year	Average occupancy	Year	Average occupancy	Year	Average occupancy
2001	5,051	2009	4,970	2017	3,930
2002	5,155	2010	4,729	2018	3,825
2003	5,286	2011	4,421	2019	3,684
2004	5,259	2012	4,163	2020	3,395
2005	5,172	2013	4,083	2021	3,366
2006	5,280	2014	3,983	2022	3,429
2007	5,299	2015	3,880	2023	3,525
2008	4,994	2016	3,888		

# REMAND CUSTODY

A distinction must be made between the execution of imprisonment and remand custody, which is carried out in Berlin at the Moabit Prison for adult men, the Berlin Juvenile Detention Centre, and the Berlin Women's Correctional Centre.

The purpose of remand custody is to ensure the secure custody of the remand custody detainee while criminal proceedings are in progress and to prevent the risk of further offences. According to §§ 112 and 112a of the German Code of Criminal Procedure, one of the following grounds for imprisonment must exist for remand custody to be ordered. These include:

- Risk of flight: The person concerned could evade criminal proceedings because e.g., no established residence exists, the housing situation is readily dissociable, or the expectation of punishment is high.
- Risk of tampering with evidence: Witnesses could be influenced, evidence could be removed or destroyed.
- Risk of repetition: e.g., with serial or sexual offenders

Criminal courts often impose restrictions on remand custody detainees that the responsible prison facility is tasked with observing and implementing. In particular, it is important to enforce contact bans that are issued due to a risk of tampering with evidence. This is to ensure that the offender's accused accomplices are not given the opportunity to collude. In order to prevent the risk of flight or risk of repetition, security issues are naturally a particular focus and therefore determine the course and structure of remand custody.

Because remand custody detainees are detained while their criminal proceedings are ongoing, i.e., they have not yet been finally convicted, the presumption of innocence applies to them – unlike for convicted offenders. Everyday prison life must be organised accordingly. It is essential to counteract the harmful consequences of remand custody. The indefinite, usually shorter length of stay and a high turnover of remand custody detainees are among the special features and challenges of remand custody. Remand custody detainees can take advantage of various services, such as socio-educational and psychological support.



# WORK IN THE ADMISSIONS DEPARTMENT

Marc Lindert and Steven Eckhardt on the special challenges of admitting prisoners.

#### How long have you been working in this Admissions Department?

We've been working in the Admissions Department at the Moabit Prison for three years. The Moabit Prison is the admissions centre for male remand custody detainees in Berlin. We admit people 365 days a year, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The men who are accepted here are at least 21 years old.

# How many prisoners does the Moabit Prison admit per year/day? Are there fixed times at which prisoners are admitted to the Moabit Prison?

It's around 3,000 to 3,500 prisoners a year. These include prisoners brought in from other federal states (so-called "new arrivals"), transfers from other Berlin prison facilities, and people brought to us by the court or the police. They all pass through the Admissions Department. During business hours from Monday to Friday, all admissions are carried out by the Prison System Office. The Admissions Department is responsible for this during all other times.

#### What exactly are your main tasks?

The Admission Department tasks include the admission, care, supervision, and provisioning of the prisoners to be admitted, as well as cooperation with the social, psychological, and medical services. We also ensure the immediate implementation of restrictions in order to conduct orderly criminal proceedings.

#### What do you particularly need to pay attention to?

While taking the existing, exceptional situation and the possibility of detention shock into account, we consciously pay attention to any behavioural abnormalities, the mental state, and possible withdrawal symptoms in order to be able to take countermeasures in cooperation with other services, if necessary.

#### Detainees in remand custody are presumed innocent until sentenced. Are they treated differently from prisoners who have already been convicted?

Both remand custody detainees and sentenced prisoners pass through the Admissions Department. In principle, we try



Marc Lindert and Steven Eckhardt | Officers from the General Correctional Services at the Moabit Prison

to treat all prisoners equally. In addition to the presumption of innocence, which must be taken into account, we are required to perform our service without judgment.

# A large proportion of prisoners who are admitted as remand custody detainees do not have German citizenship and only speak their native language. How does communication work?

Communicating with foreign prisoners is not always easy, but is made easier by routine and experience. This is done through non-verbal communication, as well as through texts translated into the respective national language. One example of this is the Moabit Prison House Rules, which we make available in various languages. In individual cases, we rely on the support of an interpreter during business hours or work with an electronic language translator.

# How does your private sphere react to the fact that you work in a prison facility?

Overall, our private sphere reacts positively to our service in the prison facility. There are always interested, as well as sceptical, questions and comments. The general public knowledge about our profession is quite low and seems to be primarily shaped by films and TV series.

# Have you ever regretted your decision to work in the prison system?

We enjoy working at the Moabit Prison, particularly in the Admissions Department, and have never regretted our decision to work in the prison system.

# **WOMEN'S IMPRISONMENT**

The proportion of women in prison is only around five percent. On average, they also spend less time in prison than men. More than half the women are serving prison sentences of one year or less.

Women in prison react with passivity, resignation, depression, psychosomatic complaints, and self-harming behaviour far more frequently than men. They only rarely externalise aggression. Physical altercations among female prisoners or attacks on staff members are rare.

§ 11 of the Berlin Prison Act stipulates that the genders must be housed separately. The Berlin Women's Correctional Centre with its four locations in Lichtenberg, Pankow, Reinickendorf, and Neukölln is one of six independent women's prison facilities in Germany. Female juveniles are also housed in a separate area of the Berlin Women's Correctional Centre. The Berlin Women's Correctional Centre offers, among other things, substitution treatment, drug counselling, and psychosocial support by internal and external specialists with a focus on the needs of the women in prison.

Around 55% of prisoners are often single mothers. Typically, their children must then be housed

5%



OF PRISONERS ARE WOMEN.

elsewhere. To mitigate the separation, children up to the age of 14 are permitted to spend three unsupervised hours a week with their mother in addition to the regular visiting times. For children up to the age of three, there is also the possibility of being housed together with their mothers in special areas of the Berlin Women's Correctional Centre.





OF WOMEN PRISONERS ARE MOTHERS.

# JUVENILE DETENTION AND JUVENILE CUSTODY

### Juvenile detention

Juvenile detention differs from the adult prison facilities in that it is committed to the concept of education. The principles of this detention system are regulated in the Berlin Detention Prison Act (JStVollzG Bln). Juvenile sentences for young men are executed in the Berlin Juvenile Detention Centre and for young women in Berlin Women's Correctional Centre.

The goal of detention is to provide the juveniles and young adults with the ability to live a socially responsible life. Individual support and educational needs are determined in a detailed diagnostic procedure. Each treatment concept is designed to encourage the juvenile detainees to confront the consequences of their offences for the victims and to assume responsibility

for those offences. The juvenile detainees are also obligated to take part in vocational or educational measures.

The Counselling Centre at the Berlin Juvenile Detention Centre is unique within Germany. It supports juvenile detainees in their individual preparation for release. It is both a coordination point and an action area between social services and external counselling and support organisations.

#### **ADDITIONAL SPECIAL FEATURES**

- The Berlin Juvenile Detention Centre also houses young adults convicted under general criminal law up to the age of 27, most of whom have little or no prison experience and due to their young age and existing personal development disorder or emotional immaturity, show parallels to the original prison clientele of the prison facility. They can benefit from the differentiated care and treatment options, as well as from the educational, vocational, and prevocational training opportunities.
- Young adult remand custody detainees between the ages of 21 and 24 are also remanded in custody

in the Juvenile Detention Facility to maximise their outstanding educational potential. The expansion of the clientele in the specified age range is in line with the statutory provisions according to § 89 c JGG and §§ 11 and 64 et seq. of the Berlin Remand Custody Act (UVollzG Bln) and takes up the recommendations of European law on the placement of young remand custody detainees.

# Juvenile custody

Juvenile custody involves a detention of up to four weeks as a means of correction for juveniles and young adults in accordance with the Youth Courts Act (JGG). In Berlin and Brandenburg, juvenile custody is enforced at a joint institution, the Berlin-Brandenburg Juvenile Custody Centre. The Berlin Juvenile Custody Act (JAVollzG Bln)

regulates how enforcement is to be organised in the facility. In its short-term housing form, this detention provides the opportunity to arouse an interest in change among those in custody by providing counselling, as well as to provide impulses for an independent life through fixed daily structures and everyday tasks.

# IMPRISONMENT RELAXATIONS AND OPEN PRISON

The longer a prisoner spends in prison, the more difficult their reorientation after their sentence becomes. This often leads to alienation from the social environment and to an increasing lack of independence due to the strong regimentation within the prison facility. The resulting excessive demands on people released from prison increase the risk of relapsing into criminal

behaviour. In order to be able to lead a socially responsible life without committing offences in the future, prisoners must have the opportunity to develop the necessary living structures (living space, work, social contacts), behavioural patterns, and conflict resolution strategies, and to (sufficiently) test their appropriate handling of stressful situations in daily life while in prison.

### Imprisonment relaxations

Imprisonment relaxations provide suitable prisoners with the opportunity to train and demonstrate their existing or newly acquired skills and resources outside the facility within a framework set by the prison facility. However, since the penal system also has the task of protecting the general public from further offences, only prisoners who demonstrate no danger of abusing the freedom they are given to escape or of committing new crimes are eligible for an imprisonment relaxation.

Imprisonment relaxations from open and closed prisons can be granted. As a rule, this involves a step-by-step trial, ranging from accompanied to independent exits from the prison facility. These

exits are often used to attend external treatment, such as addiction counselling.

This strengthens social ties during the further course. The most extensively granted form of an imprisonment relaxation is the so-called "day release". In this form of relaxation, prisoners can pursue employment requiring social insurance contributions outside the prison facility. In Berlin, however, this form of imprisonment relaxation is exclusively carried out in an open prison or in social therapy.

The prison facilities strictly monitor whether the agreements made with the prisoners for the

relaxation measure are adhered to. For example, prisoners must provide proof of attendance and expect surprise compliance visits at the location specified within the relaxation measure at any time.

### Open prison

Open prison is particularly suitable for supporting the legally standardised concept of resocialisation. It is much more adapted to the conditions of freedom and promotes and strengthens the prisoners' self-responsible actions and self-organisation. At the same time, however, it demands significantly more effort, reliability, and their ability to keep agreements.

Open prisons differ from closed prisons in that they involve less stringent precautions to prevent escape. Nevertheless, these are traditional prisons. The cells there are also searched, drug tests are conducted, and entry and exit controls are carried out. In no way does placement in an open prison mean that prisoners are free to leave the prison facility as they please. Residing outside the prison facility is only possible within the framework of individually approved incentive measures that are continually checked for their requirements, designed with the treatment objective in mind, and monitored to ensure that they are correctly implemented. If it becomes apparent during the course of the imprisonment that the prisoner is unable to meet the requirements, they will be (re)transferred to a closed prison.

### Berlin's self-surrender model

§ 16 of the Berlin Prison Act (StVollzG Bln) stipulates that prisoners deemed suitable must be housed in open prisons. Berlin's self-surrender model stipulates that anyone sentenced to prison who remained free between their conviction and admission to a prison facility is first summoned to report to the open prison centre. Whether the eligibility requirements for open prison are

satisfied are then reviewed there. Prisoners who prove to be suitable can quickly qualify for relaxations under the open prison framework conditions and the treatment options available there. For example, they can keep their job, look after their family, and pay off debts through their work. Unsuitable prisoners are sent to a closed prison for further treatment.

The rate of abuse, i.e., the number of cases in which prisoners do not return, or do not voluntarily return from relaxation measures, is extremely low. It has remained constant at around 0.03 percent in recent years.

0.03%

**ABUSE RATE** 

# PREVENTIVE DETENTION

Preventive detention is not a punishment, but a so-called measure for improvement and security. The court can order preventive detention in addition to the sentence under certain narrowly defined conditions if it finds that the defendant has an inclination to commit dangerous offences.

The convicted person then starts to serve their prison sentence. If they are still considered dangerous at the end of their prison sentence, they are then placed in preventive detention. Unlike a prison sentence, preventive detention is not quantified in terms of time.

Preventive detention only ends when it can be expected that the detainee will no longer commit any significant unlawful acts outside of detention.

Whether such a case exists is regularly reviewed by the regional court's criminal chamber responsible for execution of prison sentences, which seeks expert advice from forensically experienced psychiatrists when making this decision.

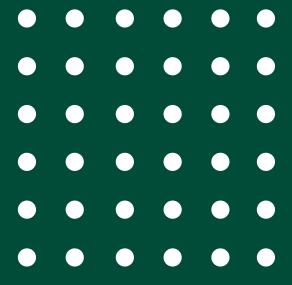
In the state of Berlin, preventive detention is carried out in the facility for the execution of preventive detention in the Tegel Prison. Its task is to reduce the danger posed to the general public by the detainees in such a way that the execution of the sentence can be suspended on probation or declared completed as soon as possible. So far, there have only been male detainees in Berlin.

In 2011, the Federal Constitutional Court developed strict guidelines for the execution of preventive detention. Because detainees have served their actual sentence, they are no longer sentenced prisoners and may not be treated as such. This so-called interval requirement gives rise to some special features for the execution

of preventive detention. The detainees live in residential groups, with each having a room and bathroom. This room significantly differs in size and furnishings from the sentenced prisoners' cells. Detainees may move freely around the facility during the day, including its outdoor facilities, and may only be restricted to the extent necessary to maintain security.

Above all, however, they should be offered comprehensive treatment aimed at releasing them back into free society as quickly as possible. On a daily basis, a team of social workers and psychologists works intensively toward this goal with all Correctional Services employees engaged at the facility.

# 3 TREATMENT OF PRISONERS



# IN-DEPTH DIAGNOSTICS AND BINDING PLANNING

The treatment provided to prisoners is based on two key cornerstones: In-depth diagnostics when the prison sentence commences and a binding planning that structures the imprisonment. Together with periodical updates on the sentence execution and integration plans and the preparation for release, these are the legally specified components that structure and document the imprisonment.

### The need for treatment

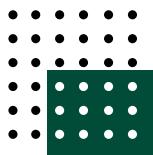
In order to effectively plan the prisoners' time in prison, the diagnostic procedure begins at the start of their imprisonment. It is carried out by specialists with a degree in psychology or social work. They evaluate both the court rulings and the prisoner assessments, as well as speak with the prisoners in great detail. This allows them to gain an impression of the personality, prior history,

and private circumstances of the person. On the basis of this information, they then assess the risk of recidivism and define the individual needs for support and treatment. In closed men's and women's prisons, as well as in juvenile detention, the diagnostic procedure and the initial imprisonment and integration planning are carried out in special departments by specialist staff members.

# Binding plans: The imprisonment

The insights gained from the diagnostic procedure flow into the imprisonment and integration plan. Among other things, it determines where the prisoners are housed, e.g., in open or closed prisons or in a special treatment area. The plan also includes whether prisoners will be assigned a job or whether they will receive further education or attend training courses. A procedure to identify the skills and abilities of the prisoners helps define these measures. The interests of the prisoners are taken into account (as much as is possible). Likewise, whether social therapy treatments or other support measures such as addiction counselling, debt counselling, or training to improve social skills are deemed useful is noted.

Prisoners can refer back to the determinations made in the imprisonment and integration plan and have them reviewed by a court. The imprisonment and integration plan is regularly updated and continued during the imprisonment.

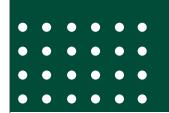


# THE TREATMENT PROGRAMMES

Treatment in the prison system is evidencebased, i.e., based on scientific findings to prevent recidivism and taking the individual strengths and weaknesses of prisoners into account. The following **five basic treatment programmes** are regularly provided in all Berlin prison facilities: The measures are carried out either by employees of the facility's own specialist services (social services/psychological services) or, if necessary, by independent organisations through the appropriate, needs-based allowances. Additional treatment programmes are available for specific prisoner groups.

#### **BASIC TREATMENT PROGRAMMES**

- Training in social skills
- Anti-violence training
- Structured offence reprocessing
- Addiction counselling
- Release preparation



### Short sentences

There is a comparatively large number of prisoners in closed men's prisons who only have a foreseeably short prison term (remaining sentence) to serve at the time of admission, the so-called short sentence offenders. Prisoners with short remaining sentences in particular generally have very complex problems that often cannot be sufficiently handled in a targeted manner within the short remaining time in prison. These prisoners take part in a modular group training programme for short sentence offenders that offers targeted assistance in coping with their specific life situation. The training is designed to

be practical and interactive and aims to quickly orientate prisoners toward the outside world with an external connection. The modular structure ensures that prisoners can join the training at any time and participate in the modules that are helpful to their individual situation. 47% (or just under half) of prisoners with a prison sentence are expected to serve less than one year.

The situation is different for juvenile sentences, where 65% of detainees are expected to serve between one and three years.

### Life prison sentences

A cross-institutional concept for the housing and treatment of prisoners serving life prison sentences is being developed in Berlin's Men's Prisons. The goal of this concept is to provide prisoners with orientation by structuring their indefinite sentence into manageable periods of time and content, to counteract damage caused by imprisonment as much as possible, to promote

motivation to participate in treatment measures, and to support the development of prospects for the time after release. The concept is based on the statutory minimum term of 15 years and, once the sentence has become final, provides for a regular course of execution in three successive, clearly defined phases, each of which is also associated with a change of location.

# Social therapy

In addition, special measures are provided in separate departments that are oriented toward the special (treatment) needs of prisoners.

Social therapy is a special form of modern correctional treatment for those prisoners who are dependent on special therapeutic services and social support measures for their reintegration into society. The socio-therapeutic institutions provide the appropriate organisational framework for implementing the necessary treatment approaches. Socio-therapeutic treatment is

based on psychological and psychotherapeutic approaches, as well as socio-pedagogical approaches. These are typically implemented in prison facilities in the form of integrative social therapy. This means that the clients are generally housed in residential groups and receive a wide range of support services. It consists of vocational and educational qualification measures, as well as psycho-therapeutic or socio-therapeutic treatment, and is intended to gradually enable the prisoners to lead a self-responsible and crime-free life.

# EMPLOYMENT AND QUALIFICATION

### Skills assessment

The skills assessment procedure records participants' vocational and educational background as soon as they are admitted to the prison facility. To this end, performance tests are conducted in the areas of reading, writing, and arithmetic and the participants assess their abilities and wishes using a self-

assessment procedure, as well as complete the comprehensive tests on manual-motor aptitude and job-related social skills. The procedure is concluded with a recommendation based on the specific needs of the participants for employment or qualification within and outside the prison system.

# **Employment**

The range of activities on offer in Berlin's prison facilities is very diverse in order to meet the differentiated needs of the imprisoned individuals. These include vocational therapy measures/work training, school, and vocational qualification measures, employment and training in the prison's own (works) operations, employment in companies, and the performance of activities to maintain the day-to-day running of the prison facility. Remote learning is also possible.

Among other things, the company provides printing and bookbinding services, laundry, upholstery, car and two-wheeler work, carries out

gardening and landscaping orders, and produces bakery and confectionery products. The prisoners' daily meals are prepared in large-scale kitchens.

In open prison, suitable prisoners are freely employed or self-employed outside the prison facility.

The prison facility's own programme is supplemented by measures offered by external educational organisations.

### School and studies

In order to overcome language difficulties in everyday prison life and prepare for classes leading to qualified school and training qualifications, each prison facility offers needsbased courses such as German as a foreign or second language and so-called basic education.

Teachers at the schools in the Juvenile Detention Facility and in the Tegel Prison, as well as qualified course instructors from external educational organisations, offer preparation for all possible educational qualifications in Berlin, from the vocational training entrance qualification to A levels. In cooperation with the Berlin school authorities, the Berlin Juvenile Detention Centre provides a range of classes for young people who are subject to compulsory education.

Thanks to the cooperation with the University of Hagen and the provision of a platform developed for imprisonment, entire courses of study can be completed.



### INTERVIEW



# SCHOOL FOR PRISONERS

#### What does the Juvenile Detention Facility's school offer?

We primarily teach young people who are subject to compulsory education. But all other prisoners also have the opportunity to catch up on their school-leaving qualifications. As part of the so-called non-student examination, the young men can obtain the vocational training entrance qualification (BBR), the intermediate school-leaving qualification (MSA/eBBR), and A levels, or even go on to complete university studies. The examinations are held in cooperation with schools outside the prison facility walls. Not all prisoners have a sufficient knowledge of written and spoken German. For this reason, language diagnostics developed by the Juvenile Detention Facility's school are conducted right at the start of detention to determine who is eligible for courses in literacy, German as a foreign or second language, or basic education. With the help of freelancers and volunteers, extensive tutoring sessions and individual learning coaching are offered to catch up on lacking school knowledge and overcome learning barriers.

#### How can young people be motivated to learn (again)?

The school team builds on the students' personal interests in order to awaken individual resources and strengths. We endeavour to not repeat the negative experiences of school, but rather to rediscover the joy of learning together with our students. As an example, we created a comic reader in history class and were supported by a comics author. We developed a staged reading for the 81st anniversary of the death of the school's namesake on October 27, 2023. The young men slipped into the role of historical figures and gained a direct insight into their world of thought, experiencing past events from their perspective.

The school also offers great latitude for practical experience as part of projects such as the ZweiDrittel FM podcast, training as peer mediators, and the "ZwischenWelten" project, in which biographical stories are told in the form of poetry slams or rap.

#### What happens during a typical day at school?

Classes take place in small groups of six students from 8:00 am to 2:30 pm. Of course there are breaks in between, two of which are outdoors. Because the level of knowledge within a course can vary greatly, we adapt the teaching material to the individual knowledge, interests, and learning pace of the students.



**Birgit Lang** | Director of the Helmuth-Hübener School at the Berlin Juvenile Detention Centre

Social interaction between the students and teachers takes up a large part of the lessons, which we use as practical learning situations. We cannot ignore the sometimes traumatic stresses of our students, but rather plan for this period so they can be receptive to the learning materials again. Finding a balance between handling problem areas and teaching is not always easy. Teachers therefore regularly share their experiences in the classroom in order to not to lose sight of the goal of the school course.

#### How do you assess your relationship with the prisoners?

The relationship is characterised by mutual respect and the common goal of obtaining a school-leaving qualification. We strive to recognise critical situations at an early stage and react accordingly in a de-escalating manner. Staff members from the General Correctional Services are always available as school counsellors to take care of students who need a short break.

### What motivates you to continue your work as a school director?

A large part of my motivation comes from the fact that, in addition to the administrative tasks, I have a high proportion of practical work that I can help to creatively shape. That is very important to me personally. In addition, I am part of a great interdisciplinary team of teachers and school counsellors who contribute a broad range of knowledge and qualifications. This team works with the same attitude and goal orientation.

# **Training**

Full vocational training is also offered within the facilities' own operations, e.g., as a locksmith, cook, carpenter, gardener, building cleaner, painter, motor vehicle mechatronics technician, or two-wheeler mechanic. In addition, modular partial qualifications are provided that enable prisoners with short sentences in particular to complete self-contained and certified modules of vocational training that can be built upon after their release.

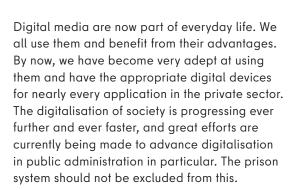
Technical instruction and training within the facilities' own operations is mainly provided by the works services employees, but also by specialists from external educational organisations.

# The "elis" platform

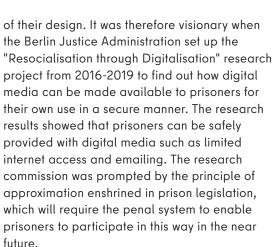
The interactive elis platform provides digital content for prisoners that is specifically oriented toward the penal system with its special security requirements.

Initially developed for educational work with prisoners, the platform's usage scenarios have expanded accordingly over the past few years to meet the diverse needs of the prison facilities (vocational training / basic education / remote learning / everyday and social skills / media and IT skills / media libraries and news / preparation for release).

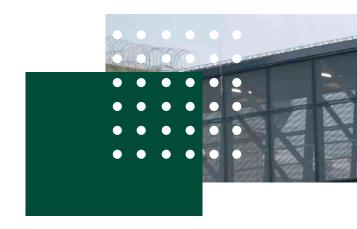
# CELL MEDIA SYSTEM



When we turn our attention to prisoners, it becomes clear that this group of people has not had a legally permitted option to participate in this social development. The computer labs in the prison facilities are not suitable for enabling prisoners to participate in such a way, neither in terms of their capacity nor in terms



How else can prisoners be integrated into society if they are excluded from it during their imprisonment and are not trained in the



use of digital media? In order to guarantee training opportunities and embed the use of digital media in everyday prison life, the only option was a digital device in the cell that was personally available to prisoners.

If prisoners were still denied regular and direct access to digital media, resocialisation would suffer as a result. Prisoners could not prepare for their release by establishing contact with various institutions themselves. They would be entirely dependent on the support of the prison facility's staff members. This would contradict the idea of resocialisation, which is directly oriented around prisoners assuming social self-responsibility and becoming independent. A number of learning, educational, and information offerings, which are now only available in digital formats, would also need to be converted into analogue formats by the prison facilities at great expense in order to make them accessible to prisoners.

The penal system organisation will particularly benefit from the introduction of the cell media system, since there is enormous potential for streamlining business processes. A digital application and administration procedure will allow processes to be designed faster and more efficiently than analogue methods. Language barriers can be bridged by translation tools and standardising applications will make it easier for prisoners to submit regular and identical applications. The targeted delivery of the application to the office to be processed

will take place systematically. Prisoners will be able to see the processing status of their applications, which will soon eliminate the possibility of misdirected applications and multiple applications on the same matter.

It is also worth mentioning here that in the future, prisoners will have digital access to the Berlin Central and State Library so they may borrow digital media themselves. This will give prisoners access to a public library for the first time, as is provided in the European Prison Rules. The digitalisation of prisoner purchasing is also envisaged once the requirements for this have been created on the prison facility and provider side. How the digital developments will take further shape in this regard remains to be seen. The digitalisation project will undoubtedly have a certain dynamic that cannot yet be foreseen.

Live testing operations have been underway in three (branch) facilities since December 2022 and will be continuously updated on the basis of the existing or additional operating requirements.



# MEDICAL CARE

The prison system is legally obligated to care for the physical and mental health of prisoners and detainees. In order to provide medical care in as close proximity to the patients as possible, medical offices have been set up in all prison facilities. Nursing staff work there together with doctors and provide prisoners and detainees with primary medical care and, in some cases, specialist treatment.

Doctors from a broad range of specialisations work for the Berlin Prison System. Together with the nurses, physiotherapists, medical-technical assistants, and members of other healthcare professions, they ensure that prisoners and detainees receive medical care.

116

#### **BEDS IN THE PRISON HOSPITAL**



# The prison hospital

If necessary, prisoners and detainees receive medical treatment on an outpatient or inpatient basis in the Plötzensee Correctional Centre Hospital. It is a hospital with all basic inpatient services and a total of 116 beds. These facilities include specialist psychiatric and psychotherapeutic departments (36 beds), as well as an internal medicine department (80 beds) that includes 20 treatment units for pre-operative and post-operative specialist care for symptoms requiring surgery. Treatment is only externally provided in hospitals or other medical facilities when necessary examinations or treatments cannot be carried out at the prison facility, e.g., in the case of intensive care, operations, dialysis, cardiac catheters, or procedures requiring largescale equipment.

# **Emergencies**

Prisoners and detainees with acute health problems are immediately presented to the nursing services and – if necessary – to the prison facility medical services, or to a medical specialist where appropriate. If this is not possible, then the medical on-call service at the

prison hospital will decide how to proceed. In acute emergencies, the prison facility personnel and nursing services, which is on duty around-the-clock, will immediately administer life-saving measures until the emergency medical service arrives.

# DRUGS AND ADDICTION

On March 31, 2023, 35 percent of all prisoners and detainees had an addiction problem. Addiction is determined using the diagnostic criteria listed in the International Classification of Mental and Behavioural

Disorders (ICD-10) issued by the World Health Organisation. The burden of addiction among prisoners and detainees involves all illegal substances, drugs, and alcohol.

#### **MEASURES**

- Medically supervised care/detoxification of affected prisoners
- Continuation of existing substitution treatments
- · Initiation of substitution treatments
- Counselling and support for affected prisoners through addiction support organisations
- Group counselling programmes for the preparation of external inpatient and outpatient addiction cessation treatments
- · Anonymous syringe distribution in the Berlin Women's Correctional Centre
- Departments with special concepts for abstinence motivation

# HIV and hepatitis C prevention

In 2023, the "TEST IT" free health service was initially introduced in three prison facilities in collaboration with the Berlin Aids Help

Association as part of a pilot project. Prisoners can obtain information and counselling on the infectious diseases

HIV and hepatitis C from the Berlin Aids Help association easily and independently of the prison system. They can test theirself for HIV or hepatitis C using a rapid test. The plan is to offer regular testing as part of HIV and hepatitis C prevention in all prison facilities.

35%

OF PRISONERS HAVE SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROBLEMS

### Suicide in prison

Suicides in a prison facility are dramatic events for relatives and friends, fellow prisoners, and staff members. As in life outside imprisonment, they cannot always be prevented. Suicides occur more frequently in prison than in the outside world. The suicide rate during remand custody is higher

than in the imprisonment period after sentencing. Preventative measures help to identify dangerous tendencies and avert suicides.

# Prevention through cooperation

All prison system employees work closely together on suicide prevention and crisis intervention and contribute their specialised knowledge and experience. Correctional officers acquire specific knowledge during their training and studies that they regularly expand upon in advanced training courses.

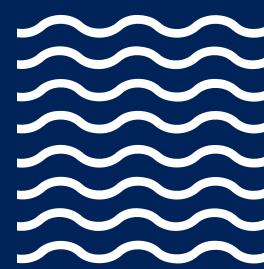


# Suicide prevention measures

When prisoners are admitted, prison facility officers conduct a so-called "suicide screening", which is used to assess prisoners with regard to a potential suicide risk. This occurs on an ongoing basis during imprisonment, especially in situations that are destabilising for the prisoner. Both the psychological and medical services are immediately informed if risk indicators are identified. In particular, psychologists are very quickly available for crisis intervention. Special

security measures also apply to particularly unstable and vulnerable prisoners. The approaches to suicide prevention are continuously discussed and further developed within the Berlin Prison System, as well as within, e.g., the "Suicide Prevention in Prison Facilities" federal working group.

# 4 SECURITY



# THE SECURE PRISON FACILITY

Security in a prison facility is an essential prerequisite for an effective treatment programme. However, the challenges are diverse and inevitably result from a large number of prisoners with different cultural backgrounds, addictions, mental disorders, or other stresses living together in a limited space.

The secure prison facility requires structural and technical measures, in particular to prevent escapes. The highly visible outer security lines of the closed prisons with their high walls, structure-borne noise detection fences, and video surveillance systems serve this purpose. In particular, the prison facilities must ensure administrative security through clear responsibilities and administrative structures so that guick and effective action can be taken in dangerous situations. Social security is another important factor. This is understood as a positive social climate that includes respectful interaction, as well as a balanced organisation of recreational activities, or enabling contact with people from the personal environment. This requires a high level of attention and communication from prison facility officers for and with the prisoners.

The prison facilities' security departments are responsible for the management of security matters. However, it is the task of all prison system employees active in the various professional groups to reconcile prison facility security measures with the goal of resocialisation.

Professional work with persons who have committed criminal offenses should prevent or manage conflicts and stop subcultural activities as early as possible. The support and treatment provided by the employees allows problems to be identified at an early stage. If an emergency nevertheless occurs, the personnel are equipped with personal emergency call devices so they can quickly raise the alarm and intervene in the event of assaults or threats against employees or fellow prisoners.

# Controls on visitors and vehicles

Non-authorised items, particularly weapons or weapon-like items, as well as mobile phones and narcotics, should not fall into the hands of prisoners. The question of how it is still possible to bring in such objects and substances is frequently asked.

The groups of people entering the prison facilities through the few gates is diverse. Alongside employees, this also particularly includes relatives, friends, and lawyers. Independent organisations also visit the prison facilities to conduct treatment programmes.

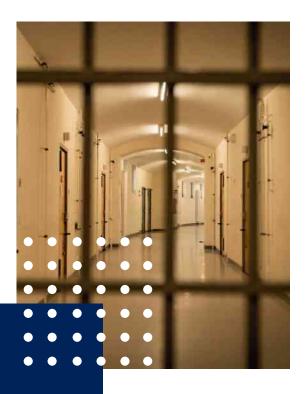


Employees of companies working on construction or repair work within the premises also enter the prison facilities. All visitors are controlled by means of electronic detectors and pat-downs and must leave any form of container they are carrying in a locker. Visitors who need to bring items with them inside the prison facility will have their belongings screened and may only bring these along afterward.

Vehicles must also be permitted onto the prison facility premises for various reasons, e.g., to transport refrigerated or heavy loads directly to their destination. The gates are equipped with heartbeat detectors to rule out the possibility of people hiding in vehicles that are entering or leaving. The controls on these vehicles for prohibited items are particularly extensive.

All legally permissible measures are used to prevent the introduction of prohibited items and narcotics. However, in the absence of a specific suspicion of danger, the legally permissible measures are limited. In particular, the prison facilities' principle of proportionality sets limits when searching people before they enter a prison facility.

However, there are always people who are prepared to abuse their visit to a prison facility despite the risk of detection, and the small size of mobile phones and narcotics also makes it easier to bring them in without permission.



# Cell and area inspections

In order to prevent the use and passing on of contraband, the employees of the General Correctional Services not only carry out controls in cases of suspicion, but also regularly carry out cell and area inspections without a specific reason. The searches can be supported with technical aids and sniffer dogs can also be called in. The number of mobile phones and narcotics found proves how closely meshed and effective the security measures of the Berlin prison facilities are.

Any substances found are first subjected to a rapid test. The narcotics found are also analysed with the aid of a drug detection device. In particular, new psychoactive substances can be identified on various carrier materials (e.g. paper or clothing).



# SECURITY DIRECTOR IN A PRISON FACILITY

Michael Giehl, Security Director at the Heidering Prison, on rules and sensitivity.

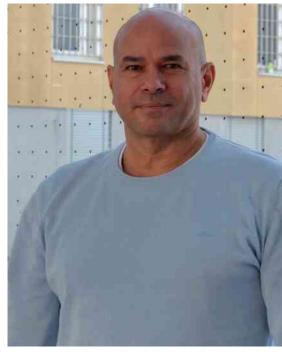
# What are the responsibilities of the director of a security department?

My job is to ensure the internal and external security of the Heidering Prison. Maintaining the security of the prison facility is a team responsibility, which I manage on a daily basis with the staff assigned to me at the gate, including the vehicle double gate system, the intercom centre, the alarm centre, and the security group. I'm also accountable for a variety of administrative tasks such as updating and implementing the security concept, updating building regulations or service instructions – insofar as they relate to security issues – as well as reporting duties to the Senate Department.

I'm responsible for personnel management in my area and I regularly coordinate with the managers of the above-mentioned areas on all official and security-related requirements. Together with the security group, I develop strategies to prevent drug trafficking within the prison facility. In addition, coordination takes place with the management of the prison facility departments regarding prisoners who are associated with organised crime or an extremist spectrum.

#### What are the greatest challenges in your work?

I'm often confronted with one or more unexpected issues and have to make a prompt contribution to finding a solution. The effects of these issues can have an impact on the entire prison facility, for example, due to prolonged alarm situations or area closures, and are coordinated with the facility's management. A delicate touch is often required when making these decisions in order to balance the impact on the prisoners.



**Michael Gieh**l | Security Director at the Heidering Prison

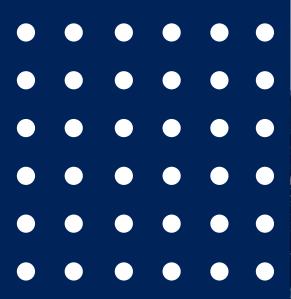
Another challenge is the fact that I can also be contacted outside my regular working hours in the event of significant incidents as part of an on-call service.

#### What is special about your day-to-day work?

I often experience new situations, so my job is interesting and varied. I must assess whether events give rise to a fundamental need for regulation at the Heidering Prison.

It never ceases to amaze me what prisoners come up with to shape their personal everyday life in prison, including bypassing existing regulations. Prisoners are very imaginative when it comes to bringing in or hiding illegal items such as drugs or mobile phones.

# 5 PERSONNEL



## DIVERSITY OF PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

#### General Correctional Services

Many people are only familiar with the job description of the General Correctional Services from the way it is portrayed in the media, although this does not come close to capturing the complexity of the profession. As the largest professional group in the prison system, the General Correctional Services officers are responsible for the supervision, care, and

provisioning of prisoners. Working in multi-profession teams together with social services and psychologists, they support prisoners with the goal of leading a socially responsible life without committing offences in the future. By providing secure housing for prisoners, they also protect the general public.

#### Psychological services

Psychologists working in the prison system generally have a degree in legal psychology or a license to practice as a psychotherapist. They plan and implement the treatment of prisoners and comment on prognostic issues such as the approval of imprisonment relaxations or transfer to an open prison. They support other staff members in handling special crisis situations

involving prisoners, e.g., suicide prevention, and advise management and staff members from other specialist disciplines on important decisions regarding prisoners. They cooperate with external treatment facilities, as well as with psychotherapists in private practice. Some psychologists have management tasks involving personnel responsibilities.



#### General administrative service Social services

The general administrative services also shapes the Berlin Prison System in a variety of ways. Administrative and operational imprisonmentspecific and/or administrative tasks, close cooperation with other professional groups in law enforcement, as well as management tasks with personnel responsibilities and a value-oriented understanding of leadership are key areas of activity for lawyers and administrative employees.

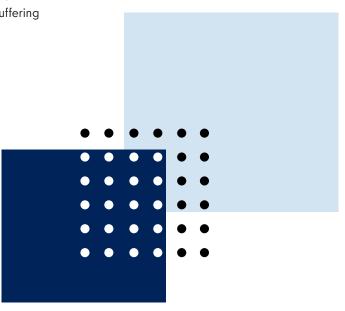
#### Medical services

The registered nurses receive additional prison facility training and work in the medical offices of the prison facilities and in the prison hospital. They organise medical consultations, implement medical prescriptions, dispense medication, and counsel prisoners. They are also involved in the implementation of visits to external hospitals and work together with external doctors.

Doctors employed in the prison hospital work in the specialist departments of psychiatry and psychotherapy, internal medicine, and the specialist outpatient services. In the prison facilities' medical offices, they provide basic medical care for prisoners and support the substitution therapy of women and men suffering from addiction.

Social workers provide support and counselling to prisoners to help them solve personal and social problems. This takes the form of both individual help and group counselling programmes in cooperation with other professional groups. They plan and lead imprisonment planning conferences, draw up imprisonment plans, and are responsible for their implementation. This work, which involves the conflicting priorities of resocialisation on the one side and protecting the general public from further offences on the other, places high professional and personal demands on the people involved.

Moreover, the majority of employees in social services also assume leadership and managerial tasks in the prison system.





## THE APPEAL OF WORKING IN A PRISON HOSPITAL

Find out why working in a prison hospital is not just a professional calling, but a personal one, and how the team meets these challenging patients with their complex needs.

#### Why did you decide to work at the prison hospital and what do you see as the appeal of your job?

It was only in the second step that I made a conscious professional decision for the prison system and its patients/ clients. For me personally, it was a decision that is still particularly important to me today. Initially, 18 years ago now, it was a decision in favour of a permanent employment contract and against a working world that only offered temporary prospects. Added to this was the fact that I had a friend who was already working in the Berlin Prison System, albeit in a different area. This brought me into contact with the "prison" workplace and care during imprisonment.

My move to the prison facility was a new professional start. Before that, I worked in the emergency department and in intensive care units, as well as in rescue services and training. Then I started at the prison hospital in the psychiatric department, which proved to be a bit of luck for me. The patients here are particularly challenging with their bundle of difficulties and needs. On the one side, they are delinquent and in prison, and on the other side, they are mentally ill and often accompanied by experiences of addiction and dependency or somatic illnesses. For a variety of reasons, these patients often bring unpleasant institutional experiences from "outside" with them and have rarely received adequate medical care. In addition, they have also been confronted with exclusion, a lack of responsibility, and little emotional support in their social experiences. Here in the prison facility, these people are met with an interdisciplinary team that can and wants to stand by them in their problematic relationship patterns with all the additional challenges.



Christian Stang | Acting Nursing Services
Director at the prison hospital in the
Plötzensee Correctional Centre

And this is precisely where the special appeal of this job arises: With the opportunity to help shape development, to directly experience the professional expertise, to be a part of it, and to become aware of your own professional ethical boundaries. And this special feature is also evident in the interface between nursing care and the prison system, regardless of whether we work here on an outpatient basis in the so-called medical offices or on an inpatient basis in the various medical specialties.

#### What does a typical day in a prison hospital ward look like?

The structures, processes, and requirements of everyday life on the ward are similar to any other medical area outside prison facility walls. This includes the entire spectrum of nursing care, as well as administrative tasks and responsible work in multi-professional teams. The work in nursing is diverse and goes far beyond the mere cooperation between the nursing staff and patients. For example, the development of care standards and continuous professionalisation are elements of professional emancipation.

Alongside this, of course, there are some special features relating to care in the prison system. For patients, for example, this means that they cannot simply receive visitors or move around freely in the hospital. The prison hospital is – unlike a hospital outside – naturally part of a closed facility. Patients often have very few contacts and this increases the expectations on the psychosocial care provided by the specialists. And this is often reflected in the dual role of the nursing personnel: A caring and supportive role in the context of care on the one side and a regulatory and restrictive

role in the context of executing the official tasks of imprisonment on the other.

#### If you had to describe your work in one sentence, what would it be?

Care in the prison system is of course challenging, but at the same time, professionally demanding in a good way, absolutely team-oriented, and socially in touch with the times.



#### Works services

Works services staff members are experienced craftspersons, some with a master craftsperson's certificate, with instructor qualifications or staff members with various technical training qualifications and proof of instructor qualifications. Furthermore, they have also completed special training to qualify them for work for the Correctional Services. They provide professional guidance to the prisoners employed in the facilities' own works, supervise them, and

coordinate the processes within the respective works. Prisoners, who often have social and vocational deficits, are given the opportunity to pursue further employment, qualifications, or vocational training depending on their individual capabilities. The works services staff members contribute their experiences and assessments of the prisoners to the imprisonment planning conferences and thereby participate in the treatment offered to the prisoners.



### Teachers and teaching staff

The prison system operates its own schools in the Berlin Juvenile Detention Centre and in the Tegel Prison. In addition to imparting knowledge and teaching, the primary goal of the teachers and teaching staff working there is to provide needsbased school services in close cooperation with the other specialist services.



#### IT specialists

IT availability is a particularly key issue in the prison system, both in the operation of the various IT processes and in user support.

The prison system, with all its responsibilities, depends on a functioning IT. Our IT specialists' tasks include the procurement of IT and other organisational tasks, the operation of IT systems, the provision of networks for communication, office and IT processes, user support, project planning, and the development of new solutions and enhancements, as well as ensuring IT security and data protection.

## TRAINING IN THE GENERAL CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Anyone who would like to support the Berlin Prison System with its eight prison facilities at 14 locations with over 2,900 staff members can complete a two-year training course in the General Correctional Services at the Prison System Training Academy and actively participate in the resocialisation of prisoners right from the start. The varied and demanding two-year preparatory service is divided into three training phases with alternating theoretical and practical units so that the knowledge acquired can be directly applied in practice. Candidates are trained at the Prison System Training Academy in the areas of prison system studies, social sciences, legal and administrative studies, healthcare, and prison system-related skills training. Modern teaching and learning methods such as the "blended learning" approach, i.e., the combination of IT-based learning with traditional teaching, are used. In addition to this knowledge, soft skills such as observation, empathy, assertiveness, communication, and diversity skills are particularly relevant in the internships at the prison facilities. These skills are also essential in the context of working with different professional groups in multi-professional teams. The job description of correctional officers has fundamentally changed in recent

decades. Diversity is also at the forefront here when selecting applicants. Applicants who have reached the age of 18, with or without a migration background, male, female or diverse, who feel up to the challenge of a committed support of prisoners in coping with their everyday life in prison, ensuring security and order internally and externally, and who are true team players can look forward to an exciting, high-quality, and multi-faceted training programme in which they will be prepared for their demanding future profession in the best possible way.

LOCATIONS



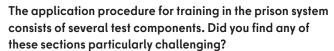


#### **INTERVIEW**



## INSIGHT FROM A TRAINEE

Join Thidawan Nguyen on her journey through training in the prison system and find out how she overcomes challenges and shapes her professional future.



The application process was challenging for me in all aspects. But it is achievable if you are well-prepared beforehand. In my opinion, the individual interview was the most challenging because I was very nervous. I have never had such an extensive interview before. I gave a lot of thought to what and how I answered and also to how I should conduct myself. In retrospect, I realised that I had put myself under pressure, because the selection committee actually only wants to hear simple, but logical answers.

### You are now in your second year of training, so you are already halfway through. Is there a moment that has left a lasting impression on you?

Each prison facility has its own special features. When I had an altercation with a prisoner, the whole team stood behind me. My colleagues and superiors came to me afterward and asked how I was feeling. I am very impressed by the cooperation of the Correctional Services with its strong team spirit.

#### The training alternates between theory and practice. Do you see any advantages for you in this model?

We can put what we learned in the theoretical part directly into practice. If there are any uncertainties at work, I can always ask my colleagues. Conversely, what we experienced in practice can also be better understood in theory. For me, self-protection also means being sure of the law. The training is there to ask questions and draw important information from senior staff members.



**Thidawan Nguyen** | Prison facility officer candidate who started her training on 01.02.2023.

#### How does it feel to wear a uniform? What effect does this have on your appearance and behaviour toward the prisoners?

I am very proud to wear the Correctional Services uniform. Because I have worked to be permitted to stand here. The uniform gives me a sense of security and I am aware of what it represents. I have a role model function and must treat every prisoner sensibly. And that is exactly how you gain the respect of the prisoners.

#### Would you say you have "arrived" in your work in the prison system?

I would say that I'm not quite there yet, because I don't have the relevant imprisonment execution experience. For me, every day at work is a learning process. No two days are the same. Correctional Services is very diverse. I learn something new every day and am constantly working on myself so I can handle specific situations better. Even daily routines can escalate. Then you have to keep your composure and know what you are doing. But I would like to emphasise that the decision to join the Correctional Services was the best decision I could have made.

#### What are you looking forward to most when you look toward your professional future?

I am looking forward to my work in general correctional services. Correctional services is a job with a future. I have been given the opportunity to work here and for this reason I take my duties seriously. I also want to contribute to the resocialisation of prisoners so that the people who are important to me are protected from further offences.

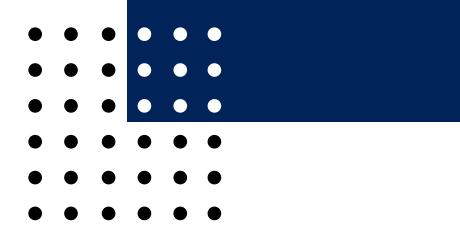
#### RECRUITMENT

The prison system cannot function without our employees. People of different ages, with and without a migration background, and with a wide range of skills work toward prisoners' resocialisation and ensure security and order. Teamwork skills and the ability to handle many different personalities, as well as a personal attitude and the ability to act as a role model, are of great importance.

To recruit personnel for the prison facilities, targeted advertising measures using posters and flyers, as well as on social networks, are used and job advertisements are published on digital platforms. The professional groups within the advertising materials (images and videos) created for this purpose are exclusively represented by

our own employees. This gives the public as true a picture of work in the prison system as possible.

All job advertisements are based on descriptions of the requirements associated with the area of responsibility, the so-called requirements profile. Applicants are selected for work in the prison system according to their suitability with regard to these requirements.



# PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

An efficient design and continuous further development of structures and processes is not only an indicator of organisational success, but also promotes an employee-centred and value-oriented culture in the Berlin Prison System. Appropriate recruitment, systematic preparation, adequate training, and a distribution of resources in line with requirements enhance the working atmosphere and individual motivation. This is an ongoing contribution to the health maintenance of employees.

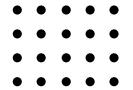
#### Personnel management: Value-oriented leadership

Shared values strengthen employees' sense of belonging and solidarity with the Berlin Prison System and their managers. Value-oriented management emphasises the ethical principles of the organisation and creates a balanced working environment, as well as an appreciative interaction. A good management culture is fundamental to a healthy and successful organisation. Because leadership is the key to employee health and motivation.



#### Personnel development

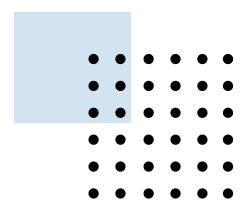
Promoting continuous professional development: Change is the norm in a dynamic and fastmoving world. In addition to professional development, personal development also plays a central role. Employees of the Berlin Prison System are systematically prepared for changes, appropriately qualified, assigned in line with the requirements, and supported. Their potential is recognised and supported by their directors while taking their skills, abilities, and existing individual performance strengths into account.



#### **HEALTH MANAGEMENT**

Good, motivated, and healthy employees are indispensable. The goal of health management at Berlin's prison facilities is therefore to recognise the abilities, skills, and needs of each individual, to reduce risks and problems at work, and to preventively counteract them. The preservation and promotion of the health of all employees is purposely at the forefront of the implementation of a holistically oriented health management system. In doing so, the focus particularly falls on those present. Appropriate measures are to be taken to create and continuously optimise working conditions that promote health and development.

The "prison" work environment is considered as a special living and work area in which empowering and supporting employees is worthwhile.

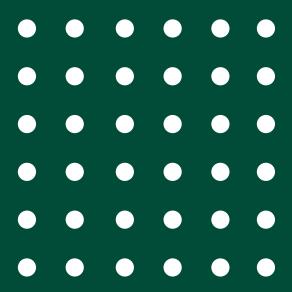


#### PERSONNEL COMMITMENT

Trust, respect, and common goals form the basis for a long-term commitment of the employees – that is the goal of the Berlin Prison System. We encourage each and every employee to take initiative and self-responsibility. Strengths and individual characteristics can be expressed in the diverse working teams. Targeted measures and programmes provide support and increase motivation, well-being, and health maintenance in order to meet the complex demands of everyday work life in the prison system.



## 6 PRISONERS



### Types of imprisonment, duration, and execution form as of March 31, 2024

983

2,537

156

31

54

3,761

Remand custody

Adult imprisonment

Juvenile detention

Other detentions

Preventative detention

**Total** 

28%

PRISONERS IN AN OPEN PRISON

Expected duration of imprisonment that sentenced prisoners in Berlin had to expect as of March 31, 2024	In execution of a prison sentence Percentage	In execution of juvenile detention  Percentage
under 6 months	26%	4%
6 months up to and incl. 1 year	21%	10%
More than 1 year up to 2 years	16%	35%
More than 2 years up to and incl. 3 years	11%	30%
More than 3 years up to and incl. 4 years	8%	12%
More than 4 years up to and incl. 5 years	5%	4%
More than 5 years up to and incl. 10 years	8%	5%
More than 10 years up to and incl. 15 years	1%	
Life long	4%	

Source: Monthly statistics in accordance with the Prison Rules, duration of sentence = time that prisoners must serve in accordance with the calculation of the time in prison in the execution of the currently executed prison sentence



Information about the facts and figures:



<sup>\*</sup> of which, the execution of alternative custodial sentences = 332

#### **EVERYDAY LIFE OF PRISONERS**

Prisoners are not only excluded from life in freedom, but are also no longer self-determined in their daily routine. From getting up in the morning to going to bed at night, a predetermined daily structure defines mealtimes, working hours, participation in training measures, and recreational activities, as well as the opportunity to maintain contact with relatives. How prisoners spend their individual days depends on a variety

of factors. The daily routine of remand custody detainees is considerably different from that of sentenced prisoners or those in preventive detention. The rules that apply in juvenile detention differ somewhat from those in adult prison facilities. Treatment and recreational programmes, which largely determine the daily routine, also differ according to gender.

#### Meals and purchases

Prisoners are provided with meals in accordance with the applicable quality standards and reference values. Three facility kitchens provide full meals; the Heidering Prison provides its prisoners meals in its own facility kitchen that is operated by an external company. On admission to imprisonment, the prisoners are informed of their choice of hot meals (normal diet/pork-free/vegetarian diet). Prisoners are permitted to follow the dietary rules of their religious community, as well as to follow a meat-free diet. Prisoners

in open prison or preventive detention have the opportunity to provide for themselves.

Prisoners without the possibility to shop outside the prison facility are given the opportunity to buy additional food, luxuries, and personal hygiene products. Toward this purpose, the prison facilities use external service organisations, i.e., a so-called prison facility merchant offers goods in the prison facility that the prisoners can order.



#### Clothing - laundry exchange

Prisoners are permitted to wear private clothing during their free time in all prison facilities – with the exception of the Juvenile Detention Facility to prevent the formation of a subculture. Prison facility/work clothing must be worn during work. A so-called laundry exchange for prison facility laundry (work clothes/bed linens/towels) takes place at regular intervals.

The Plötzensee Correctional Centre's own laundry facility is used to clean this laundry. Prisoners can also wash their private clothes (or have them washed) in the prison facility's own laundry facilities. Washing machines and dryers are available. The detergent is to be purchased via the purchasing department, insofar as no impoverishment exists.

## SPORTS, RECREATION, AND CULTURE

Prisoners and detainees have access to a wide range of activities in the area of sports and recreation. The sports are primarily group activities such as table tennis, volleyball, soccer, basketball, yoga, fitness, and running groups. However, free time can be actively organised by participating in art groups, working with clay, PC courses, chess, music or reading groups, and goal-oriented and/or topic-specific discussion groups.

Culture reaches prisoners and detainees in the form of readings, concerts. and regular performances by the "aufBruch" prison facility theatre, in which prisoners themselves can actively participate. The programmes are highly valued in the prison facilities. They contribute to social security and provide prisoners with opportunities to organise their free time in a structured and meaningful way, strengthen team spirit, and create a positive balance.



## PRISONERS' CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

The execution of a prison sentence imposes extreme restrictions on the person concerned. In some cases, contact with family and relationships with people outside the prison facility may be lost. Yet sustained social ties are particularly important not only during imprisonment, but also after release in order to lead a crime-free life. Within the framework of the statutory provisions and taking the mandatory security requirements into account, prisoners and detainees therefore have the right to be in contact with persons outside the prison facility. The prison facilities are, in fact,

obligated to encourage contact with persons who can be expected to have a positive influence. This is based on the knowledge that external contacts significantly contribute to resocialisation. They serve to create, maintain, and strengthen social skills and bonds. While it is also clear that the purpose of the prison sentence is to deprive the offender of their freedom of movement, the harmful consequences of which, namely social alienation and exclusion from social life, are to be counteracted.

#### Forms of external contact

Adult prisoners have a legally enshrined entitlement to at least two visiting hours a month, and juvenile detainees at least four hours a month. As an expression of the prison facilities' duty of care, visits by relatives are particularly encouraged. That is why the visiting time for visits with underage children is increased by an

additional hour per month. In addition, the prison facility may permit suitable prisoners to make unsupervised extended visits lasting several hours in order to maintain family and partnership contacts. Letters are permitted as an additional form of contact and telephone calls may be permitted.



#### Restrictions

Alongside the goal of resocialisation, the prison system also has the task of protecting the general public from further offences. This includes ensuring security and order both externally and within the prison facilities. For this reason, external contact without restrictions is not possible. Visits may be prohibited or monitored for security reasons. Visits are always supervised, with extended visits as the exception. The exchange of letters and telephone calls can also be prohibited or monitored under certain circumstances. Contact with persons and

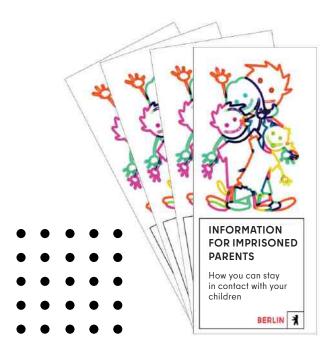
recognised state institutions whose work requires a special relationship of trust with the prisoners and uninfluenced communication is fundamentally free of controls by the prison facilities. These include defence lawyers, federal and state parliaments and their members, and, e.g., the European Court of Human Rights and the United Nations Human Rights Committee.



#### Family orientation

The Berlin Prison System has already established many measures that are aimed toward a family-oriented prison facility structure and promote further contact with prisoners' relatives and children in particular, since this is an essential part of the prisoners' resocialisation.

It is estimated that 100,000 underage children in Germany are affected by the imprisonment of a parent every year. This is a vulnerable group that needs to be addressed with appropriate preventive measures to protect them from future consequences.





Independent prisoner support organisations offer nationwide projects in prison facilities to strengthen the role of parents and ensure that the relationship is maintained. The visiting rooms are designed with children in mind. Every prison facility in Berlin has contact persons specifically

for the children of prisoners and websites with information that is directly oriented around children. The contact persons at the prison facilities can be reached via the respective email address set up specifically for children. Additional materials inform the families and children of prisoners about the conditions in the prison system, answer questions related to imprisonment, and help them prepare for their visit to a prison facility.

#### Video calls (Skype)

A pilot project carried out in the Tegel Prison in 2019 on the use of video calls, in addition to regular visiting hours between prisoners and their relatives, initially failed to arouse the interest of these groups of people. The rapid development of the coronavirus pandemic and the associated restrictions on visits gave the subject an unexpected boost. In addition

over 30

**VIDEO CALL SYSTEMS** 

to the existing pilot video call system, 30 additional video call systems were procured and installed in spring 2020. This meant that a great deal of user experience was gained during the pandemic.

As a result, it was found that video call systems are a good supplement whenever prisoners cannot be personally visited by relatives. Video call systems could be used for police and court hearings and were a popular means of communication for the employees of independent organisations responsible for preparing prisoners for release. Lawyers were also interested in this type of contact with their clients, provided that the conversation could be conducted confidentially. After these experiences, it was decided to continue operating video call systems. This is not counted toward the visitation allotment because visiting relatives in person has priority and should not be reduced by video calls.

## DIVERSITY IN THE PRISONER POPULATION

The prisoners in Berlin's prison facilities come from around 100 nations, have a variety of cultural backgrounds, belong to different faiths and communities, have diverse sexual identities, and are also at different stages of life in terms of age.

### Language and language proficiency diagnostics

An essential key to successful resocialisation is learning German. A wide range of legally prescribed treatment measures are provided in Berlin's prison facilities, but these are offered and carried out exclusively in German. In the past, it has become apparent that prisoners' language skills are increasingly insufficient to achieve satisfactory treatment results.

A prerequisite for an adequate range of language support courses is a precise assessment of existing language skills. For this purpose, a language assessment is conducted at the beginning of the imprisonment period to ensure that the need for language support measures is precisely determined.

The Senate Department for Justice and Consumer Protection supports the "Round Table for Foreign Prisoners and Prisoners with a Migration Background", a forum for all associations, organisations, authorities, consulates, and volunteer caregivers involved in working with foreign prisoners.

#### Religion

The prison system permits members of all faiths to practice their religion. Catholic and Protestant chaplains customarily maintain a presence in the prison facilities.

Church services are regularly offered and celebrations are organised, as well as discussion groups and individual pastoral care or assistance with everyday problems. Alevi services and Friday prayers are regularly held for prisoners of the Muslim faith. In addition, religious celebrations

are organised and individual consultation hours and/or discussion groups are offered.

Furthermore, the prison facilities are obligated to assist all prisoners in establishing contact with a representative of their religious community.

#### Aging

An increase in older prisoners has also become apparent in the prison system as a result of the higher life expectancy in society. The prison system must be oriented toward the target group based on its corresponding needs. Appropriate measures will be successively implemented as part of building maintenance in the course of upcoming renovation and repair work in order to create accessibility in the housing areas. Likewise, the needs of individual prisoners are also addressed in a personalised manner and appropriate aids are made available.

The "Drehscheibe Alter" (hub for older prisoners) project funded with grants by the Humanistic Association of Germany, Berlin-Brandenburg State Association provides advice to the prison system. The counselling services offered by Drehscheibe Alter are oriented toward prisoners and people released from the penal system who are 50 years or older.

Age group "60 years and older"

1%

2%

3%

**5**%

1990

2000

2010

2020

### Gender identities and sexual orientation of prisoners

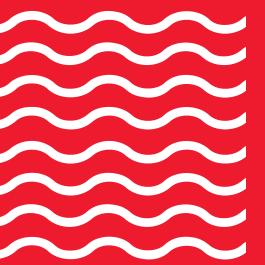
Prisoners of different genders are to be separately housed. Since the amendment to the Prison Act in 2021, it has been possible to deviate from this principle of separation if prisoners or detainees do not feel that they belong to the gender specified in their civil status entry, but rather to a different gender or permanently to neither the male nor the female gender (§11 Para. 2 StVollzG Bln).

The admission of a trans\*, inter\* or non-binary person to the Berlin Prison System requires an intensive case-by-case assessment. The decision

on the appropriate housing of the person is made as part of a review process using a standardised guideline and a checklist.

The prisoner's own information and needs, as well as the security of the person, the other prisoners or detainees, and the prison facility are taken into account. Employees of the prison facilities' specialist services, the person concerned, and external counselling centres are involved in this review process.

## 7 COOPERATION AND NETWORKING



#### Networking in the prison system: Network for prison release and cross-state resocialisation models

People released from prison should successfully integrate into society. The Berlin Prison System supports this through numerous assistance programmes. Most start during the imprisonment, while others only start after release. For these assistance programmes and measures to be effective, they must be optimally coordinated with each other. This requires transparent structures and the networking of all those involved in the reintegration process of released prisoners. Close cooperation and networking with institutions such as the probation services and offender support services is an important aspect of successful integration. An example of the promotion of networking and cooperation is the prison facility release network developed by the Berlin Prison System: www.netzwerk-haftentlassung.de.

In addition, regular exchanges on successful models for the resocialisation of prisoners occur at the cross-state and European levels. The goal of the cross-state cooperation is to optimise, newly plan, design, and support coordinated measures in a resource and skills-oriented manner. The promotion of measures in the areas of preparation for release, transition management, and transition support is an ongoing subject in the prison system.

Transparent structures and close networking are essential for the successful reintegration of released prisoners into society.

# TRANSITION MANAGEMENT - IMPRISONMENT AND LIFE AFTERWARD

#### Return to freedom

The reintegration of offenders is a common task and thorough preparation for release serves to protect the general public. The path back to freedom is often very difficult for released prisoners and there are very few obstacles that can be overcome alone. The prison system needs the support of external institutions to build bridges, offer assistance, and minimise negative effects.

Each and every prisoner faces very individual challenges that require their own support plan in which specialists both within and external to the justice system must work together. The Berlin Prison System therefore continuously promotes a binding, regulated cooperation with reliable networks and has had very good experiences with this for years.

### Transition management: No gaps in treatment

Reintegration requires a systematic caserelated and cross-case approach to treatment, counselling, qualification, and assistance in order to prepare ex-prisoners for their time after imprisonment in the best possible way and to integrate them socially and vocationally and thus prevent them from reoffending. Transition management begins on the day of imprisonment. This is a task of the social services working in the prison system. However, this task cannot be handled by the prison system alone, since the responsibility of the prison system usually ends when the prisoner is released. Support that begins in prison and continues afterward significantly improves (re)integration into a crimefree life and demonstrably prevents recidivism. For this reason, support structures within and external to the justice system must be properly networked and coordinated. This is where the Prison System Social Services are active. The

transitions between "inside" and "outside" at the end of the imprisonment term should be as trouble-free as possible and structured in reliable cooperation between all parties involved. To ensure this, the social workers plan and coordinate all important preparations for release with the prisoners at an early stage in order to initiate all the necessary steps for each respective case. The specific transition management measures are then taken over by independent offender support organisations twelve months before the expected end of imprisonment. There is now a standardised transition management service in the Berlin Prison System that is linked with transition support for all areas of the prison system. These measures can be continued for up to six months after release from prison. Prisoners receive support in finding housing and employment, as well as in applying for social benefits and health insurance.

# VOLUNTEERS AND INDEPENDENT ORGANISATIONS

Volunteers have been working with great commitment and success for many years in the prison facilities within the State of Berlin by providing individual and group support for prisoners. As prison facility assistants, they must be willing and able to adapt to individual prisoners and help them to lead a future life

without offences in a socially responsible manner. It is crucial that the assistants maintain regular contact with the person they are supporting. This is why only suitable and reliable people can volunteer. The minimum age is 18 years old. The respective prison facility decides on the approval.

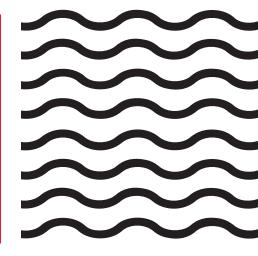
### Advisory boards as a connecting link to the public

The members of the Advisory Board are involved in the organisation of the imprisonment and the integration of prisoners in an advisory capacity. They support the prison facility management with suggestions and proposals for improvement. As a connecting link to the public, the members of the Advisory Board promote an understanding of the concerns of a prison system that is oriented toward resocialisation.

In addition to the prison facilities' advisory boards, there is also the Berlin Prison System

Advisory Board, an independent prison system policy committee. This consists of the prison facilities' advisory board chairpersons, as well as representatives of social institutions such as universities, the media, employers' associations, the medical association, welfare organisations, and others. The committee supports and advises the Senate Department for Justice in the planning and development of the prison system and, above all, in fundamental matters.

- VOLUNTEERING IN THE PRISON SYSTEM
- SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
- REGULAR CONTACT



#### Coordination office for children

Since December 2022, the Berlin Prison System has had a coordination office for children of prisoners in Berlin (KvI Berlin), which is managed by the Freie Hilfe Berlin Association. This is a cooperative project between the Senate Departments for Justice and Consumer Protection and for Education, Youth, and Family. The project is being funded for three years by the Auridis Foundation, which aims to sustainably improve the conditions under which children grow up in

Germany with its services. The implementation of the Council of Europe's recommendations (CM/Rec(2018)5) regarding children of imprisoned parents and achieving the goals established therein with the help of the project is a particular concern of both Senate departments. Linking the two departments is meant to intensify the cooperation in order to provide special prevention measures for the target group from the outset.

### A variety of programmes through independent offender support organisations

The work of independent organisations in the prison system and after release is important and necessary – and therefore highly valued by society, since it establishes an important connection to life outside the prison facility. Their services complement the Berlin Prison System's treatment spectrum. These include, e.g., counselling and support for prisoners and their relatives, work with prisoners suffering from addiction, violence prevention measures,

support with debt settlement, job market integration, preparation for release, and transition management. Through their work during and after imprisonment, these independent organisations can also provide prisoners with continuous support. In particular, they ensure that prisoners who have started treatment or support measures during their time in prison are also supported after their release.





The wide range of services offered by the independent offender support organisations build important bridges between the prison system and society by providing prisoners with continuous care and support.

### THE PRISON SYSTEM SOCIAL SERVICES

As an independent service authority with regional responsibility, the Prison System Social Services is responsible for all court and probation services (adults) at three locations in the city area.

#### Special court assistance services

In preliminary or criminal proceedings, court assistance reports on specific issues and can propose restitution measures, such as victim-offender mediation. Moreover, a report detailing the consequences of an offence, in particular for those affected, can be commissioned (victim report).

As part of judicial assistance in execution proceedings, Social Services may be commissioned to mediate community work to avert the execution of an alternative custodial sentence, among other things.

### Framework conditions in probation services and supervision of conduct

The legal requirement and included goal is to reduce the danger and prevent new offences. The stabilisation of the life situation required for this is to be achieved through the awareness of defined control functions and targeted professional support for those concerned. Both the ability to act with self-responsibility and social integration play a particular role here.

The framework conditions for probation or supervision of conduct are determined by a court in each individual case. They cover the period of subordination, as well as possible restrictions and instructions. The support concept of the probation officers is based on contemporary methods and standards of social work. The goal is to take a planned approach and work with clients in a respectful and trusting manner so that the individual can successfully escape from criminality.

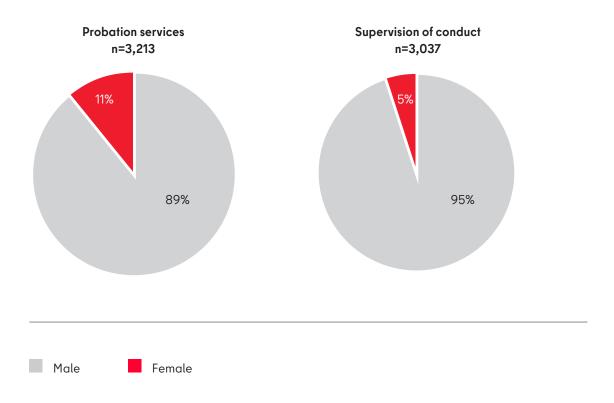
Ultimately, every successful probation services process that leads to an abatement of the sentence or detention order without reoffending avoids (possibly renewed) imprisonment. This is currently the case for over 70% of completed measures.

#### Participation in transition management

Cooperation between the social services and the prison system takes place on the legal basis of § 9 Para. 7 of the Berlin Prison Act (StVollzG Bln), which provides for the timely and consistent participation of the probation services as part of integration planning twelve months before the expected end of imprisonment. Intensifying cooperation between the two specialist services, establishing relationships as early as possible, and thus providing "seamless" further support should create a professional framework for action that allows for the expansion and stabilisation of participation opportunities for

those being released from prison. In addition, joint recommendations for an appropriate, practicable setting of instructions are to be developed through this cooperation. This is also intended to transfer the successes achieved to date in inpatient treatment processes to the outpatient context and sustainably secure or continue them.

As at the 31.03.2023 reference date, a total of 4,548 people with 5,250 cases were under probation services and supervision of conduct. The distribution of cases is as follows:



- The proportion of probation services after suspension of the remaining sentence is 40%.
- The proportion of those subjected to supervision of conduct after serving a full sentence due to an unfavourable prognosis assessment is 71%.

#### **Imprint**

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