

# Leavers of residential judicial treatment for juveniles, a one-year follow-up

## Summary

Each year several hundreds of boys and girls in the Netherlands, aged 12 to 18, enter judicial residential treatment either under a penal or a civil measure. Most of them have a history of previous placements and all juveniles show a wide range of (severe) problem behaviour at the time of admission. Most of them have an early problem onset and about half of them acquire police records before entering judicial treatment. In this follow-up study juveniles admitted to judicial treatment in 1993 were approached a year after their departure. The follow-up period averages 15 months. A total of 161 juveniles (51%) participated in an interview. Although this percentage is not very high, it is comparable to the response rates in other research.

A year after leaving the centres, we found 34% of the former residents living at home with their parents, and 35% again detained in a residential facility. One quarter had a place of their own and 6% lived with either other family members or friends. The re-admission percentage is in line with other research, as are the characteristics of these re-admitted juveniles. This group consists mainly of boys, who left treatment irregularly and are rapid re-offenders.

The situation of the juveniles who remain at home with their parents, on their own, or with other family members or friends is far more positive. Almost all are content with their situation, and most go to school (30%) or work (42%). The majority of this group does not have financial problems, they can usually name about ten people they trust and to whom they can go for help if necessary. On certain points, the situation of this group seems less positive. Only a third moved directly from the treatment centre to their current address; the others had had several living situations since leaving the centre (ranging from 1 to 8). One fourth of these juveniles are unemployed and about a third have serious financial problems, especially those juveniles who live on their own and are unemployed.

When we take the problems reported at follow-up into account we get the following picture. About 30% of the juveniles report daily drug and/or alcohol use, 80% confess to one or more offences, 34% has had contact with the police in the year after leaving treatment and 14% report behavioural problems on the Youth Self Report (YSR) or Young Adult Self Report (YASR) which are similar to those of juveniles referred to mental health agencies. Compared to the situation at admission however, the scores on the Y(A)SR are significantly lower, and less juveniles appear in the police records.

In summary two groups of juveniles can be distinguished in the follow-up study: a group which remains problematic, reports a great deal of problems, is still delinquent and is therefore re-admitted to a judicial setting, and a second group with a more positive situation - they live at home or on their own, go to school or have a job, and stay out of trouble most of the time. These juveniles, however, still report more offences and alcohol and drug use than juveniles in general. This, in combination with risk factors such as shifts in whereabouts, unemployment and financial problems, shows that, although the situation has improved, the group of juveniles we are dealing with remains a vulnerable and problematic one.

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**Eind goed, al goed? De leefsituatie van jongeren een jaar na vertrek uit een justitiële behandelingsrichting**

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