

## Summary

### **Sixth edition of the aftercare monitor for former prisoners; basic conditions for reintegration and their relation with recidivism**

To reduce the relatively high recidivism rates among former prisoners, reintegration policy tries to address problems for successful reintegration already during imprisonment. Since 2004, an important part of the reintegration policy in the Netherlands involves working on the 5 basic conditions for reintegration. These basic conditions are: 1) valid ID, 2) income and work, education or other (daytime) activities, 3) accommodation, 4) insight in debts and a strategy how to deal with them and 5) continuation of adequate care. These five conditions are supposed to be necessary (but not sufficient) for successful reintegration of former prisoners into society. Therefore, addressing them can promote successful reintegration and thereby contribute to a safer society and lower recidivism rates. The Custodial Institutions Agency (DJI) of the Ministry of Justice and Security works together with the Dutch Probation Service and municipalities to which former prisoners intend to return after release. Together these organisations support (former) prisoners, during and after detention, in organising these basic conditions.

Every two years the aftercare monitor describes the situation of (former) prisoners on these five basic conditions both before and after their time in detention. Since the fifth edition we also study the relation between the situation on these five conditions and recidivism. This provides insight in whether addressing problems on the basic conditions can reduce recidivism among former prisoners. New in this sixth edition, is that we also study the relations between the various basic conditions. Earlier research, among others the fifth aftercare monitor, shows that especially work is related to lower recidivism rates. However, if other basic conditions determine whether former prisoners are able to find work, it might be easier or more relevant to address these other basic conditions.

### **Research questions**

Firstly, in every aftercare monitor we study the situation of (former) prisoners on the basic conditions:

- 1.1 What is the situation of (former) prisoners on the basic conditions valid ID, income and daytime activities (work or education) and accommodation, six months and one month prior to detention and one, six, twelve and 24 months after release?
- 1.2 To what extent does the situation on the basic conditions change between these time points?

Secondly, we study relations between the various basic conditions:

- 2.1 To what extent do problems on the basic conditions coincide?
- 2.2 What is the relation between the situation on the basic conditions and working after release?

Thirdly, we study the relation between the situation on the basic conditions and recidivism:

- 3.1 What is the relation between the situation on the basic conditions and recidivism?
- 3.2 What is the effect of changes in the situation on the basic conditions on recidivism; are people more likely to re-offend *when* they have problems on the basic conditions?

## Method

This reports answers these research questions for all (former) prisoners who are released from prison in the years 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 after a detention of at least two weeks and who belong to the target group of the reintegration policy. This target group consists of adult (former) detainees with a valid resident permit who after release return to a Dutch municipality. Furthermore, also for people within this target group with shorter detentions we describe whether problems on the basic conditions emerge or are solved during detention. In this report we use the 'reintegration candidates' for former prisoners within the target population of the reintegration policy with a detention period of at least two weeks and 'short termers' for former prisoners within the target population with shorter detentions.

To describe the situation of reintegration candidates and short termers on the basic conditions, we used a number of data sources. We used data on whether people had a valid ID from DPAN, a system developed to share information on detainees between penitentiary institutions and municipalities, and registration data from Netherlands Statistics on work, education, income, accommodation and debts. Furthermore we used data from the OBJD on judicial history (prior convictions) and recidivism (new convictions after release). The OBJD is the Research and Policy Database Judicial Information and contains the complete judicial history of all persons (older than twelve) who have been suspect in a criminal case in the Netherlands. Recidivism is calculated in accordance with the standard procedures of the Dutch Recidivism Monitor; recidivism includes all crimes committed within two years after release from prison that did not end in acquittal, dismissal by reason of unlikelihood of conviction, clearance of charges or a technical decision (Wartna et al., 2011). Since there is no data available on health care *needs* of reintegration candidates, we cannot describe to what extent people receive adequate care.

Firstly, we describe the situation on the basic conditions. How many reintegration candidates experiences problems on the basic conditions before and after imprisonment and how does the situation on the basic conditions change between these time points. Secondly, we describe the prevalence of recidivism separately for reintegration candidates with and without problems on the various basic conditions; which share of reintegration candidates are convicted of a new crime within two years after their release. Thirdly we estimate in a linear probability model the relation between the situation on the basic conditions and the probability to find work after release. We estimate in cox regression models which basic conditions, for whom, are related to recidivism. Finally, we follow people over 24 months after release and estimate whether they are more likely to re-offend in months *when* they have problems on the basic conditions than in other months.

## Results

### **Reintegration candidates experience many problems on the basic conditions**

- 15% of the reintegration candidates have no valid ID, both before and after imprisonment.
- 85% is neither working nor following education one month after release.
- 36% has no registered income (from work or benefits) one month after release.
- Only one third of the reintegration candidates have (at least) the educational basic qualifications necessary to enter the labour market.
- 22% of the reintegration candidates have no registered address in the month after release. This group consists of people who receive income support for people without a permanent residence (5%) and others without a registered address (17%). This last group might consist of homeless people without income support, couch surfers who move from one temporary living arrangement to another or people who have left the country (probably to their country of birth). 36% live together with a partner, parents or others, this seems to be the most stable housing situation. 30% of the reintegration candidates live in a single person household, for this group we cannot be sure whether they have accommodation or only a postal address. 11% live in an institution, for example in a clinic for addiction or psychological care.
- 26% of the reintegration candidates are registered as defaulter of their health insurance, which is an indicator of (problematic) debts.

### **Problems concerning the basic conditions are partly solved during imprisonment, but also new problems appear**

- 27% of the reintegration candidates released from detention in 2016 without valid ID prior to detention, obtained a valid identity card during imprisonment. Over the years 2013 up to 2016 the share of reintegration candidates that obtained an ID during their imprisonment seems to have increased. However, as there is only information on ID for a small and decreasing share of reintegration candidates this trend might be biased.
- 60% of the reintegration candidates who worked in the month before imprisonment, also work a month after release. 77% of short termers who worked before imprisonment, continue working after release. 5% of the reintegration candidates and 6% of the short termers who did not work before their imprisonment, obtained work in the month after release.
- Of the reintegration candidates who lived together with (their partner, parents, or) others before imprisonment, 85% returns to the same housing situation after release, for short termers this is 91%. Of the people who lived alone and had an independent (postal) address before detention, 75% of the reintegration candidates and 91% of the short termers return to the same housing situation. 32% of the reintegration candidates and 12% of the short termers with a detention period of less than two weeks that did not have an address registered before imprisonment, do acquire an address (independently or with others) after release.
- 49% of the reintegration candidates and 40% of the short termers that were registered as a defaulter of their health insurance before imprisonment, are no longer registered as a defaulter after imprisonment. 16% of the reintegration candidates (and a similar share of the short termers) that were not registered as a defaulter prior to detention, were registered as one after release.

**Concurrence of problems on the basic condition; many reintegration candidates face problems on more than one basic condition**

- Reintegration candidates without a valid ID, are less likely to have work, more likely to have no (legal) income and more often have no registered address. This is problematic, as one especially needs an ID to apply for work, welfare benefits or accommodation.
- One out of five reintegration candidates without a legal source of income are registered as a defaulter for their health insurance. Not having an income makes it extra complicated to pay off debts.

**Reintegration candidates with problems on the basic conditions have a lower probability to work**

- 34% of reintegration candidates work (in at least one month) in the two years after release. Also when background characteristics such as labour market history, judicial history and educational level are taken into account, we find that problems on the basic conditions are related to a lower probability to work.
- Reintegration candidates with a valid ID are more likely to work than candidates without a valid ID. Reintegration candidates who live together with (their partner, parents or) others are most likely to work, more likely than candidates in single households. Candidates with no registered address or candidates who live in institutions are least likely to work. Whether people have (health insurance) debts has no effect on the probability to work.
- Since work is related to lower reconviction rates; policies that address problems on the basic conditions ID and accommodation can, through increasing the probability to work, also reduce recidivism.

**Reintegration candidates with problems on the basic conditions are more likely to be reconvicted (at least once) in the two years after release. Also when background characteristics are taken into account, work, stable accommodation and a valid ID are related to lower recidivism.**

- Almost half of the reintegration candidates are reconvicted at least once in the two years after release from detention. Recidivists are on average reconvicted 2,7 times within these two years.
- The situation on the basic conditions is related to the prevalence of recidivism. Reintegration candidates without a valid ID, without income, work or daytime activities, with health insurance debts and without accommodation are all (individually) more likely to be reconvicted within two years after release compared to candidates without problems on these basic conditions.
- Also when background characteristics such as duration of detention, labour market history and judicial history are taken into account, a valid ID, work, welfare benefits and following education decrease the probability of recidivism. Also (stable) accommodation decreases the probability of recidivism; people who live together with (their partner, parents or) others are least likely and people with no registered address most likely to be reconvicted.
- Especially work decreases the probability of reconviction. Thereby job stability is important; people who keep a job for six months or longer are much less likely to be reconvicted compared to people with (multiple) short time jobs.
- There are individual differences in the importance of basic conditions for successful reintegration. Receiving income support for people without a permanent residence (homelessness) especially increases reconviction rates for women, while homelessness seems to be less related to recidivism for men. Welfare benefits especially decrease reconviction rates for people with debts and

- people with many prior convictions. Addressing problems on these basic conditions is thus extra important for these groups.
- Finally we tested whether people are less likely to be reconvicted *when* they have less problems on the basic conditions (income, daytime activities and accommodation). We find that people are more likely to be reconvicted in months when they are homeless than in other months. This is a strong indicator that solving accommodation problems will reduce recidivism. The results whether people are more or less likely to be reconvicted *when* they have income, work or follow education are less clear.

## Conclusions and recommendations

This research shows that many reintegration candidates face problems on the basic conditions necessary for successful reintegration into society. In addition, people who face these problems are less likely to find work and more likely to be reconvicted. Therefore, it is important to continue to address these problems during detention and after release. Providing reintegration candidates with these necessary conditions gives them an opportunity to safely and successfully return into society.

For a large and increasing share of reintegration candidates there is no information on whether they have a valid ID. 15% of the candidates for whom there is information are released from prison without a valid ID, while people without an ID are less likely to find work and more likely to be reconvicted. Better cooperation between the Custodial Institutions Agency (DJI) and municipalities is necessary; to register whether people have ID, and to allow people to apply for ID during detention.

People who work or follow education are less likely to be reconvicted, compared to people with welfare benefits or no (legal) sources of income. Also job stability, matters, especially people who keep the same job for a longer time period are less likely to be reconvicted. These findings are in line with the theory of social control and the routine activities theory. Based on these theories it can be expected that not an income, but stable social contacts with pro-social others promote successful reintegration and decrease recidivism rates. Work is not (directly) feasible for all reintegration candidates. Policies that promote, besides work, also volunteer work, sports or other daytime activities that promote stable social contacts with pro-social others might therefore also be effective in reducing recidivism rates.

There are individual differences in the importance of basic conditions. Especially people with debts and people with more earlier convictions are less likely to be reconvicted when they receive benefits compared to when they have no (registered) income sources. Organising a legal source of income is thus especially important for these groups. Especially homeless women are more likely to be reconvicted compared to women with accommodation; organising accommodation is therefore especially important for women.

We find strong evidence that (stable) accommodation reduces recidivism. However, many reintegration candidates do not have stable accommodation after release. Policies that contribute to a larger share of reintegration candidates obtaining stable accommodation, independent or with others, can contribute to a more successful reintegration and lower recidivism rates.