

Vilnius halfway house - Lithuania

Introduction

Vilnius halfway house is located in the capital city of Lithuania, Vilnius. It is one of nine halfway houses in the country, although not all have been opened as of yet. Falling under the jurisdiction of the Lithuanian prison system, the halfway houses are dedicated to promoting reintegration and reducing recidivism. Vilnius halfway house was established in 2017. It has been part of various projects funded by Norway Grants, which were aimed to further develop specific aspects of the prison service.

Scale

Vilnius halfway house can accommodate up to 40 people and is therefore just above the proposed limit of 30 to be considered small-scale in terms of the RESCALED-principles.

RESCALED-principles in practice:

- Small-scale
- Differentiated
- Community-integrated

Differentiation

Target group:

Vilnius halfway house is a mixed-gender facility, housing people above eighteen years old. The selection process for placement takes into account several criteria, including displaying good behaviour while incarcerated, demonstrating motivation for successful reintegration into society, and being within six months of the initial conditional release date. The timing of conditional release varies depending on the specific sentence, which may involve one-third, one-half, or two-thirds of the total sentence. However, there are specific exclusions for placement in Vilnius halfway house. Individuals convicted of sexual offenses or murder are ineligible for placement in these facilities.

Forms of security:

Vilnius halfway house strongly emphasizes dynamic security as a key component of the collaborative project between Lithuania and Norway called the "Development of Quality Based Lithuanian Correctional Service System." Within this project, Norwegian partners are coordinating courses on dynamics between

staff and incarcerated people to introduce and enrich this concept within the Lithuanian prison system. The primary focus is on fostering positive relationships and promoting respectful communication.

In terms of static security, several static security measures are visibly present at the Vilnius halfway house. The halfway house is located on the prison site so it is surrounded by walls. The main entrance to the prison remains locked. However, residents have personal cards that allow them to enter through the door and their entries are recorded in the system. The facility is also equipped with cameras that monitor entrances and exits throughout the building.

Lastly, Vilnius halfway house implements several procedural security measures. For instance, residents must provide advance notice if there are any changes to their weekly schedule and travel routes. Staff members occasionally perform unannounced checks to verify the residents' presence by visiting their workplaces and requesting them to step outside for confirmation. While residents are permitted to go outside to visit their families, visitors are not allowed inside the Vilnius halfway house. As most residents have the freedom to leave the house for weekend visits, they can meet with their families outside the facility.

Activities:

Residents at Vilnius halfway house have a certain degree of autonomy over their schedules. They are responsible for arranging their appointments, within or outside the facility. The majority of activities take place in the community, enabling residents to move freely in the community, based on their individual schedules. The weekly schedule primarily revolves around work or studies since all residents are required to engage in employment or education outside the halfway house. Work hours typically are from morning to evening, although night shifts or weekend work are also allowed. During their job search, residents can receive assistance from a social worker. While residents have the freedom to choose how they spend their free time, they must adhere to their individual plans and allocate their leisure time accordingly. Additionally, residents are responsible for purchasing their groceries and preparing their meals independently.

Community-integration

Location and architecture:

Vilnius halfway house is situated in Vilnius. Vilnius is the capital city of Lithuania and has around 556 490 inhabitants (2021).¹ The halfway house is located on the grounds of the Vilnius prison, which is not the case with the other halfway houses in Lithuania. Due to NIMBY responses from the community, the halfway house could not be implemented at another location. For this reason, an available building of the Prison department was chosen.

Bedrooms are shared among multiple individuals, as well as common areas such as the bathroom, living room, kitchen, and garden. The facility aims to create a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere with efforts to cultivate a homely environment through the inclusion of elements such as plants, wall paintings, a sofa...

Interaction with the community:

Although the halfway house is located on the prison grounds, interaction does take place between the residents and the community. Vilnius halfway house prioritizes integration by actively promoting residents' involvement in several activities in the community. Opportunities for work, education, social programs, healthcare, volunteering, and sports activities are available within the community. This approach enables residents to actively engage in community life, contribute through gainful employment, fulfill their tax obligations, and access services outside the halfway house. The residents also participate in volunteer work to give back to the community. The local government may request the residents' assistance in various voluntary initiatives, such as crafting furniture.

Vilnius Halfway House

Founded: 2017

Capacity: 40

Security level: Low

Nearest city/town: Vilnius
(Lithuania)

Nature of interaction: Visited
by RESCALED and Wayback
(30/11/2022)

Publicity/ read more

- About the collaborative project between Lithuania and Norway known as the "Development of Quality Based Lithuanian Correctional Service System." on the website of the Lithuanian Prison Service:

Lithuanian Prison Service. (n.d.). *Ongoing projects - Projects*. Retrieved June 15th, 2023, from <http://www.kaldep.lt/en/prison-department/projects/ongoing-projects.html>

¹Vilnius (County, Lithuania) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map and Location. (2021). *City Population*. Retrieved June 16th, 2023, from https://www.citypopulation.de/en/lithuania/admin/10__vilnius/