

Exodus Groningen - The Netherlands

Introduction

Exodus Groningen, located in the Netherlands, is part of the NGO "Stichting Exodus Nederland." This organization, founded in 1979, is committed to creating a safe society in which individuals are given new opportunities and can build meaningful lives. Their dedication extends to assisting individuals in or after detention, as well as their families, in the transition back into society.



One of the Exodus houses is located in Groningen, near the central train station and downtown Groningen. Together with the participants, a specialized program is developed to promote successful reintegration. Within the range of forensic care, Exodus offers forensic protected living, outpatient supervision and day care. In the area of forensic protected living, Exodus has eleven houses throughout the Netherlands, of which Exodus Groningen is one. Each Exodus house follows a uniform program and approach, aimed at individuals who need support during their final stages of detention or after release, making them eligible for placement in an Exodus house.

Scale

Exodus Groningen has room for twelve individuals. It can be seen as a small-scale facility.

RESCALED-principles in practice:

- Small-scale
- Differentiated
- Community-integrated

Differentiation

Target group:



Exodus Groningen offers forensic-protected living to both men and women. There are several indications in place for admission. Applicants must be eighteen years of age or older, with rare exceptions for those convicted under adult law. Residents must have a (forensic) care need related to aspects of living, working, relationships and meaning during or after their period of incarceration. Furthermore, a condition of admission is possession of or entitlement to a valid ID. The fundamental expectation is a genuine willingness to stop criminal behaviour. People seeking admission must be motivated to participate in the program and commit to following the mandatory program components, keeping appointments and adhering to established rules. In addition, they must be able to demonstrate that they can handle a certain level of consultation, be willing to commit to personal development and behaviour change or learn new skills if necessary. It is also necessary that they are open to counselling or support.

Exodus houses also involve specific contraindications, which may vary from one Exodus house to another. In general, people who need a lot of care due to addiction or other mental health problems can not be placed in Exodus houses.

Participants can enrol in the program through the municipality or directly from prison. Registration happens through the Forensic Care Information System (IFZO) or through a municipal designation (WMO).

Forms of security:

Security within Exodus Groningen consists of measures of static, procedural and relational security, with an emphasis on the latter. One or more social workers are present in the facility throughout the day, conducting mentoring interviews with participants and maintaining communication with chain partners, including the probation department. In addition, a team is present during the week consisting of junior and senior supervisors, a job coach and a team leader, while night shifts provide guidance and supervision and remain on-site at night. Exodus Groningen also organizes joint activities, which foster a sense of community through activities such as cooking together and special holiday celebrations.

Static security measures include camera surveillance 24/7. Staff wear an emergency button to summon emergency services in unsafe situations. Participants have their own drop to check in and out and must be inside between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. The front door is locked at night. In addition to these fixed static security

measures, there is a range of tools such as urine checks and room inspections. These tools are used as routine measures or when drug use or criminal activity is suspected. They may also be part of conditions imposed on participants by the probation department.

Procedural security measures are present through specific rules. These rules include having a meaningful daily activity, the active pursuit of personal goals, a strict ban on drug and alcohol use and participation in room checks and bladder and urine tests.

Activities:

Exodus Groningen follows the "Your Power" methodology. This methodology focuses on identifying and leveraging the strengths of each resident and their network, which are assessed at the beginning of the program. By empowering residents to drive their own recovery, the approach aims to encourage their engagement and motivation so they can rebuild their lives. Mentors play a central role in overseeing this process and provide guidance and support as needed.

A crucial element for successful reintegration into society is a meaningful daily activity, whether through paid work, education, or volunteer work. For participants in whom such activities are not yet present, Exodus offers assistance in identifying their strengths and interests.

Participants have the opportunity to cook independently and, if desired, eat with the communal meals. However, communal eating is never mandatory.



Community-integration

Location and architecture:

Groningen, known as a vibrant student city, has about 238 179 inhabitants and is the capital of the province of Groningen in the Netherlands (2023).¹ Exodus Groningen is located in a residential area conveniently close to the city center, with only an 11-minute walk to the central train station.

¹Groningen (Municipality, Groningen, Netherlands) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map and Location. (2023). City Population. Retrieved November 10th, 2023, from https://www.citypopulation.de/en/netherlands/admin/groningen/0014__groningen/



The facility itself consists of individual rooms of standardized design, varying slightly in size, allowing residents to add their own personal touch to their living space. On the first floor, there is a shared space with a communal kitchen and living room. There is a large dining table where conversations for work can be held for those who want to. A separate room is available for more private discussions, where people can meet with professionals. Adjacent to the kitchen, a garden leads to a small separate building where the staff has office space and where mentoring interviews also take place. On the second floor, you will find the bedrooms and communal bathrooms located. In addition, there is always a room reserved for the night supervisor who remains

on site at night.

Interaction with the community:

Residents are expected to do work or attend activities outside the facility, which promotes ongoing interaction with the community. Furthermore, Exodus makes various efforts to promote interaction with the neighborhood and society by motivating participants to contribute to their living environment. An example of this is that participants engage in maintaining gardens of vulnerable local residents or engage in other types of activities, such as an environmental day and so on.

Exodus Groningen

Founded 2001

Capacity: 12

Security level: Low

Nearest city/town:

Groningen

Nature of interaction:

Visited by RJN

(26/06/2023)

Publicity/ read more

- About Foundation Exodus Nederland at the official website of Exodus: Exodus hulp na detentie. (n.d.). *Exodus*. Retrieved November 1st, 2023, from <https://www.exodus.nl/>
- Document about the houses of Exodus and how they work (in dutch): Informatieboekje voor (ex-) gedetineerden. (2023). *Exodus*. Retrieved June 21th, 2023, from <https://files.enflow.nl/6ffbb417-1260-4c26-83de-726071701f4b/ae735d93-b6b0-4e31-8967-22c fb77b9e0a/promotiemateriaal/exodus-nederland-infoboekje-def.pdf>