

Nordre Vestfold prison, Horten unit - Norway

Introduction



Horten unit in the Nordre Vestfold prison (from now on "Horten unit") is a prison unit with a high level of security. This facility is based in Horten, in the south of Norway. Horten unit was established in 1862 and falls under the direct supervision of the Norwegian penitentiary administration (Kriminalnsorgen).

Scale

Horten unit has room for 13 residents, which makes it a small-scale facility.

RESCALED-principles in practice:

- Small-scale
- Differentiated
- Community-integrated

Differentiation

Target group:

The target group of Horten unit are adult men. As a high-security facility, its primary emphasis is on individuals with long sentences who encounter challenges when confined in large prison environments. Horten unit does not have any contraindications (such as types of crime).

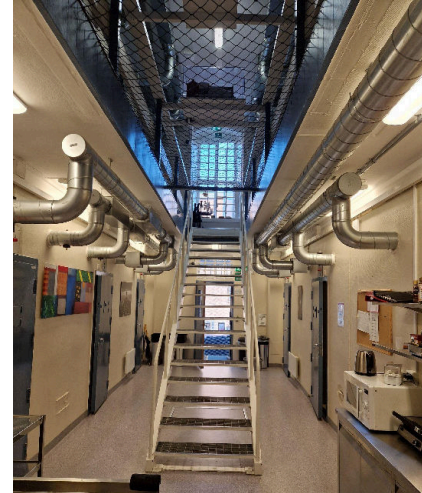
Forms of security:

Horten unit is a high security unit and combines static, procedural and relational security measures. The high security level is mainly visible from the outside because the facility is surrounded by high fences. Inside the facility many doors are open and residents can move around freely. However, the facility has a lot of camera surveillance in the common rooms and one staff member is constantly overseeing this footage from the control room. In addition, the facility makes use of several locks, room checks and a transceiver.

With regard to procedural security measures, general prison rules from Norway are applied, although these rules are negotiable and staff have the option to change these rules. Residents can move freely around the

building, but cannot go to the yard whenever they want. This is at set times and they must always be accompanied by staff. There is almost no restriction on communication and visits are checked by the staff. The use of a laptop or tablet is allowed but will be monitored.

Lastly, relational security plays an important role in the Horten unit. Even though the target group of this facility are people with a long prison sentence, there is a safe and friendly environment in the facility between the residents and staff. This is partly due to the fact that staff is always present and accessible. Staff also participate in informal activities with residents, such as participating in yard golf tournaments, having coffee together, helping with work, etc.



Activities:

Between 7:00 and 19:00, residents leave their rooms for activities. These all take place in the facility. It is mandatory to work/participate in daily activities in the facility. Residents are slightly in control of their schedule and can e.g. choose if they want to work or follow education. During their stay, residents will learn more about which work they can do or education they can follow. If they work, they receive a wage of 78 NOK a day (approx. €6,80). When residents choose to follow education, it takes place in the computer room.

Besides work and education, residents can go outside for a walk in the courtyard, watch television in the relax-room, do sports, receive visits and do voluntary work. Before 2020, residents could go outside, to the courtyard, twice a day but since 2020 the facility has decided to let people go to the courtyard whenever they have nothing to do. If a walk is organized, residents can go to a yard outside of the facility. However,



this yard is still surrounded with high fences. The voluntary work consists mostly of small projects in the facility, like creating a greenhouse with plants or designing the new yard and decorating it. A few years ago small holes in the artificial grass were made, in order to play mini-golf and organize tournaments. Since then, residents have played golf almost every day with the staff. Residents can only go outside the facility exceptionally. For example, once a year everyone goes bowling together.

In general, Horten unit gets meals delivered by catering, although two people are still assigned to cook something extra for the group, such as cake, dessert or soup. Residents within the Horten unit have the right of receiving visitors and making telephone calls. These interactions are scheduled at specific times and are limited to their immediate household and family members.

Community-integration

Location and architecture:

Horten unit is based in Horten. Horten is a municipality in Vestfold, which is located along the Oslofjord, in the South of Norway. It has approximately 27 862 inhabitants (2023).¹ The facility is situated within a residential area in the city center, being surrounded by flats, parking and an entire district with many houses. Horten unit is easily accessible by public transportation.

In terms of architecture, the facility feels twofold. On the one hand, the common areas in the facility are decorated homely. There is a living room with a sofa, television and playstation. They have a small courtyard with chairs and a small space for sports, a visitor room and one space has been converted to a kitchen. All these rooms are decorated with plants and paintings. On the other hand, the private areas, a bedroom and bathroom, and the working-space are not decorated and do not feel as homely.

Interaction with the community:

Despite the location of Horten unit in the middle of the city, the residents do not interact much with the community. Once a year, however, the facility is part of a local market to sell some of the products made by the residents in the facility.

Nordre Vestfold prison, Horten unit

Founded: 1862

Capacity: 16

Security level: High

Nearest city/town: Horten
(Norway)

Nature of interaction: Visited by
VZW De Huizen (10/04/2022)

¹Horten (Municipality, Vestfold og Telemark, Norway) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map and Location. (n.d.). *City Population*. Retrieved August 15th, 2023, from https://www.citypopulation.de/en/norway/admin/vestfold_og_telemark/3801__horten/

Publicity/ read more

- About Nordre Vestfold prison, Horten unit at the official website of the Norwegian Correctional Service:

Nordre Vestfold fengsel, Horten avdeling. (n.d.). *Kriminalomsorgen.no*. Retrieved August 14th, 2023 from

<https://www.kriminalomsorgen.no/nordre-vestfold-fengsel-horten-avdeling.5030537-237612.html>