



Punishment that makes a difference?

RESCALED principles practiced in existing Norwegian prisons

Katrine Antonsen
Fabian Wahl Sandvold

RESCALED Norway
June, 2022

6.0 Half-private initiatives

According to the Norwegian Execution of Sentences Act § 12, a sentence may be partly executed in the form of 24-hour detention in an institution. The purpose behind this act is to provide an offer to sentenced people who might require special assistance the prison cannot provide, or if the Norwegian Correctional Service determines that the offender does not belong in an ordinary prison. People with a severe drug problem may for instance be placed in a drug-rehabilitation institution instead of a prison, and young offenders may be placed in the care of the Norwegian Child Welfare Services. Some people may also serve the final part of their sentence in an institution, if the Norwegian Correctional Service approves the application. People with longer sentences can benefit from a gradual progression from high-to-lower security, and afterwards serve the remainder of the sentence in an institution.

6.1 Elevator (The Salvation Army)

Introduction

Elevator is an institution for people who are getting close to the end of their sentence. It is run by the Salvation Army, and fully financed by the government, through the Directorate of the Norwegian Correctional Service. There are no prison officers from the Correctional Service employed at Elevator, and the employees are usually educated within social work or nursing.

Elevator assists the residents in the process of gaining safe housing, meaningful employment, a predictable economy, a clarified health situation and a positive social network. Their aim is that this is obtained for all residents by the time of release.



Photo: Elevator / The Salvation army

Prison size

Elevator has 30 beds and is a small-scale institution.

Differentiation

Security level:

There are no particular static security measures at Elevator, except that the front door is locked at all times. To enter, one has to ring the doorbell. As Elevator can only house 30 residents, the selection process excludes people who require more extensive security measures.

There are yet routinely drug controls, with breathalysers and urine samples. The urine samples are not taken at Elevator, but at a nearby medical lab. This is to ensure that Elevator remains a drug-free community.

RESCALED-principles in practice:

- Small scale
- Differentiated
- Community-integrated

Target group:

Elevator house all genders, and welcomes detainees from every region of the country. Their target group is people with 3 to 12 months left of their sentence, who are motivated for change. It is a requirement that the applicant has been sober for at least 4 months.

Elevator also house more vulnerable groups of residents, such as developmentally disabled or people on preventive detention. In these cases, the stay is adapted to their specific needs.

Activities:

The residents of Elevator are required to be at least 50% employed, or alternatively engaged in programmes at the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration ('NAV'). Elevator offers a broad range of different activities and services to their residents. Each resident is given debt counselling and assistance in the process of contacting different welfare services.

Each resident is given a primary contact for the duration of their stay at Elevator. The resident and their primary contact map their needs, plan the given person's goals for the stay, and write a plan for probation or release. The judicial responsibility for the residents is, however, ascribed to the Probation Service. The Probation Service follows up each of the residents' sentences, and is the contact centre for questions regarding each case (e.g. probation, use of electronic monitoring, community services etc.).

The residents live together in shared apartments, and they perform daily activities together, such as cooking and cleaning. The employees also help the residents with their daily chores, such as paying bills or grocery shopping.

Elevator has employed an activity coordinator, who oversees weekly activities in the evenings and weekends. They also arrange reflection groups hosted by formerly incarcerated people.

Community-integration:

Location and architecture:

Elevator is located in an apartment complex near Tveita in Oslo. There are five floors with different facilities and living quarters for the residents. The first floor is the common area for the whole apartment complex, where the service desk of the employees is also located. There are also offices, community rooms, and a shared kitchen on the first floor. The community rooms have cable TV and pool tables available.

The residents' rooms are located on the 2nd and 3rd floor. Each resident is given a dorm on arrival, with a bed, dresser, fridge, closet and an armchair. The residents on these floors share a kitchen, showers and toilets. Elevator also has a larger apartment which the residents may use for visits from children and family.

«I am generally very pleased with Elevator. It means that I can begin to organise and facilitate my everyday life on my own, which I otherwise wouldn't bother with at all. I think it's a bit challenging to grade my stay here, as a lot of the things I think should have been better is a result of a bureaucratic public system, and not the employees here. They do their absolute best in my opinion. And the most important for people of our situation is to have a feeling that someone cares about you. »

Former resident at Elevator



Photos: Elevator / The Salvation army

The 4th and 5th floors have separate apartments available for the residents. Vulnerable groups are however given priority. The female residents are always given an apartment of their own, as well as residents who are dependent on a wheelchair.

Additionally, there is a music and fitness room in the building, as well as a playground outside the building. The playground can be used for family visits.

Interaction with the community:

Elevator is an institution that cooperates with several different services and organisations. Additionally, the residents interact with other members of the community on a daily basis, such as when grocery shopping, being on public transport and at their daily employment. Even though it is classified as an institution, Elevator resembles more of a neighbourhood community and is thus a natural part of the surrounding area as much as any other apartment complex.



Elevator is located in the narrow apartment building in the centre of the aerial photo. Photo: Gule sider

Publicity/read more:

- About Elevator at the official websites of the Salvation Army: <https://frelsesarmeen.no/fengselsarbeid/elevator>
- Read the brochure with a presentation of Elevator here: <https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/frelsesarmeen/Elevator-brosjyre-low.pdf>

Elevator

Built: 1966

Capacity: 30 males and females

Security level: § 12 institution

Nearest city/town: Oslo