



Punishment that makes a difference?

RESCALED principles practiced in existing Norwegian prisons

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5.2 Oslo overgangsbolig, Gamlebyen avdeling

Introduction

Oslo overgangsbolig, Gamlebyen avdeling (Oslo transition house, Gamlebyen department, from now on "Gamlebyen transition house") is a transition house for men. It is the second transition house in Oslo, in addition to Torshov. The two transition houses are run by the same Prison Governor, and the practice is therefore relatively similar. However, there are some differences in their location, architecture and target groups.

Prison size

Gamlebyen has 20 beds and is a small-scale prison/transition house.

Differentiation

Security level:

The security measures at Gamlebyen transition house are similar to the ones at Torshov⁴², with no CCTV, no phone or computer restrictions, and no fences. The only physical security measures are barriers for entering and leaving. Residents also occasionally have to take a drug test upon return to the transition house, as one is not allowed to drink alcohol nor use other illegal substances during temporary release. This is common practice in all transition houses, and also accounts for Torshov.

Target group:

Similar to Torshov, the target group of Gamlebyen is people who are at the end of a longer sentence. As opposed to Torshov, however, Gamlebyen does not accept female residents. They do accept people imprisoned for sexual offences.

Activities:

The daily activities at Gamlebyen are similar to those at Torshov. The residents leave the house during the day, to study or go to work, and are able to go on temporary release for other purposes relatively often. Gamlebyen also offers a few activities arranged by the prison, for example seasonal activities during the weekends and workouts in the backyard gym. Both Gamlebyen and Torshov has a close collaboration with Red Cross and Wayback, and the residents occasionally participate in activities arranged by these organi-



Photo: Jan-Tore Egge / Wikimedia Commons

RESCALED-principles in practice:

- ☑ Small scale
- ☑ Differentiated
- ☑ Community-integrated

Proximity: Oslo transition house, Gamlebyen department is located only a few minutes' walk away from Oslo prison, one of Norway's largest high-security prisons with 243 beds.

⁴² See 4.1. Oslo overgangsbolig, avdeling Torshov.

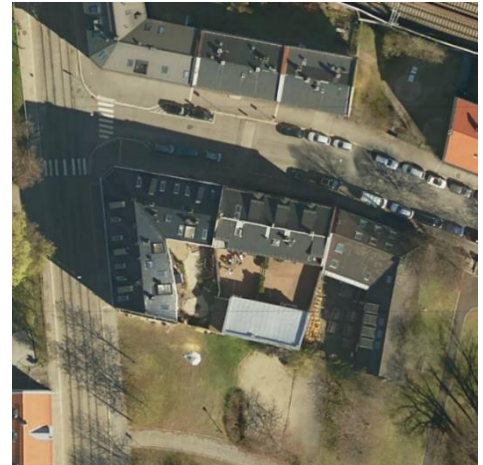
Community-integration

Location and architecture:

Gamlebyen transition house has a very central location in the Old Town of Oslo, a district that has about 59,000 inhabitants. It takes about 15 minutes to walk to the city centre/train station, and buses, trams and the underground leave regularly from (almost) right outside the entrance. The transition house is also easily accessible by car, with free parking in the nearby streets. The buildings in the area are predominantly from the 1890s, and many of them are protected. The building where the transition house is located was built in 1877 and was originally a private school. The Norwegian Correctional Service now uses the whole building, which consists of three floors. The transition house is surrounded by a couple of businesses, but mainly regular apartment buildings.

Interaction with the community:

As at Torshov, the residents interact with the community on a daily basis, and take part in society through e.g. work, studies and the use of regular service providers.



Gamlebyen transition house is located in the apartment building in the centre, south of the crossing street. Photo: Gule sider

Publicity/read more:

- About Gamlebyen transition house at the official website of the Norwegian Correctional Service:
<https://www.kriminalomsorgen.no/oslo-overgangsbolig-gamlebyen-avdeling.5025025-237612.html>

Oslo overgangsbolig, Gamlebyen avdeling

Built: 1877

Capacity: 20 males

Security level: Low / transition house

Nearest city/town: Oslo

Nature of interaction: Visit