Summary

Track development in and around correctional institutions for juvenile offenders

The National Agency of Correctional Institutions (DJI) is an agency of the Ministry of Justice. It enforces custodial sentences and measures, i.e. sentences and measures that involve detention. Part of the task of the DJI is the management and co-ordination of the sixteen correctional institutions for juvenile offenders in the Netherlands. There are two main types of correctional institutions for juvenile offenders: custodial institutions and treatment institutions. Custodial institutions serve both as pre-trial detention centres and as ‘youth prisons’ for juvenile offenders convicted by a juvenile court. Young offenders are placed in treatment institutions by a juvenile court if it is judged that their offending behaviour is due to a developmental disorder. Another (large) group in the treatment institutions consists of young people who are placed under a supervision order (a child protection measure) and who for some reason cannot continue living at home, with relatives, with a foster family, or in a residential care home. These young people have not necessarily committed an offence.

The correctional institutions for juvenile offenders are meant to ensure safety for society, and to prepare the young inmates to re-enter society such that they will not revert to criminal conduct on their return.

In order to improve the realisation of these goals, DJI considers stimulating and supporting the implementation of tracks in the juvenile correctional institution sector. In this report, a track is defined as a process consisting of a number of consecutive, clearly distinguishable phases of care, guidance or treatment, characterized by planned and stepwise activities, and aimed at the solution of problems that have been diagnosed in the first (or a later) phase.

Research goal and research questions

This study is meant to provide insight in the methods and procedures currently in use in the correctional institutions for juvenile offenders. In particular, it aims to evaluate these methods and procedures from the viewpoint of the track approach, and to assert to whether and to what extent the track approach is already part of current methods and procedures. It further aims to formulate suggestions for developing and improving tracks in and around the juvenile correctional sector. In order to realize this research goal, we assess whether the present-day methods and procedures in the correctional institutions for juvenile offenders display features of the abovementioned definition. The following six research questions are answered.

1. To what extent are treatment and supervision based on explicit planning?
2. Which procedures and criteria are being used in decisions on selection and (re)placement?
3. To what extent do the institutions use temporal and structural differentiation?

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1 In this summary, we use the words ‘track’ and ‘track approach’ as translations of the Dutch words ‘traject’ and ‘trajectbenadering’ (in line with Schuengel et. al., 2000)
To what extent are the institutions involved in aftercare?
Which sector-transcending tracks have been developed and implemented?
To answer these questions, in June and July 2000 we interviewed representatives (mostly general managers and treatment managers) of all sixteen juvenile correctional institutions.

Planning

Track development requires that treatment and guidance activities are part of a plan. Planning includes diagnosis, the formulation of a treatment or guidance plan in terms of goals and means, and a periodic progress evaluation. In chapter 2, we find that all custodial institutions and all treatment institutions formulate written plans for guidance and treatment. In the plans, goals are typically formulated in terms of learning concrete behavioural capabilities, especially in the custodial institutions. Rarely do plans contain a completely specified track in advance. They are rather a written representation of the daily program of the pupil and (in the treatment institutions) of the treatment process, in which the realisation of previously formulated goals is periodically evaluated, and in which goals and means for the next period are formulated.

With the exception of the sector-transcending tracks described in chapter 6, institutions do not have a planning system that goes beyond the borders of the own institution or the borders of the juvenile correctional institution sector.

Differentiation

Stepwise problem solving through phasing is a second defining feature of tracks. Three levels of phasing can be distinguished, group-level phasing, institution-level phasing en sector-level phasing. Group-level phasing means that a pupil moves through consecutive phases of treatment while staying in the same group of pupils. Group-level phasing is not a subject of inquiry in the present study. Institution-level phasing means that within a single institution a pupil moves through groups, such that each group corresponds to a next phase of treatment, and each new phase is accompanied by a change of group. Sector-level phasing means that the pupil moves through institutions rather than though groups in the same institution. Institution-level phasing is discussed below under the heading of selection and (re)placement.

Phasing is a form of temporal differentiation, en can be contrasted with structural differentiation. An institution is characterized by temporal differentiation if the composition of the groups and the treatment methods in the groups are structured as to promote that pupils move from ‘basic’ to ‘advanced’ groups as their capabilities and prospects improve. In structural differentiation, on the other hand, the composition of groups and the treatment methods used are not primarily based on a phase model, but on other criteria, such as the main type of problem of the pupils (e.g. psycho-sexual, drug abuse, or aggression regulation), on their cognitive abilities, or on their ‘vulnerability’ in peer-groups. Chapter 3 describes institution-level differentiation in the sixteen juvenile correctional institutions. In general, the custodial institutions are characterized by little differentiation. The most common structural differentiations in custodial institutions are the expected duration of stay (short-term versus long-term) and the vulnerability of pupils. The main type of temporal differentiation in the custodial institutions is the existence of a separate residential unit where pupils live during the first few weeks of their stay.

Temporal differentiation is uncommon in the treatment institutions as well. Although most treatment institutions use phasing as a general part of their treatment method, moving through consecutive stages is only part of the standard flow in De Hunnerberg and in Rentray. Many treatment institutions have so-called ‘end-stage facilities’ (typically supervised independent living projects) but these do not function as a standard final treatment phase.
It is recommended that geographical differentiation should be facilitated, because placement in the region of origin widens the opportunities for developing and implementing tracks. We emphasize that structural differentiation and temporal differentiation (phasing) are communicating vessels: the more structural differentiation (e.g., dorm composition based on gender, age, cognitive capabilities, main type of problem), the less opportunities for temporal differentiation remain, and vice versa.

**Selection and (re)placement**

Tracks require the definition of consecutive and clearly distinguishable phases. Demarcation of phases is expressed in the criteria used to decide whether a certain phase has been passed. Criteria play a role both at entry (referral from previous phase) and exit (referral to next phase). This subject is taken up in chapter 4.

Custodial institutions are strictly required to accept every young offender assigned to them. The central planning office of DJI uses only two main criteria for placement in a custodial institution: gender and severe psychiatric disorder. Institutions for boys and for girls are separate, and inmates who require intensive psychiatric care are referred to the specialized institution De Hartelborgt. Placement in the region on origin is preferred but cannot be guaranteed. In general, custodial institutions are supplements and very little differentiation in placement is exercised.

Amongst treatment institutions, on the other hand, we find extensive differentiation. Some institutions or residential units are designed for young people with weak cognitive skills, for young people with severe drug addiction, or for young sex-offenders. Also, treatment institutions are more diverse with respect to pedagogical philosophy than custodial institutions. Criteria also play a role at the exit side, where the young offenders are referred to a next phase. A particular demarcation point is the transition from a closed institution or closed residential unit to an open institution or unit. In deciding whether a young inmate is ready for an open unit, most institutions rely on clinical judgement, on progress in the realization of treatment goals, and on whether the young boy or girl has proven trustworthy on trial-leaves. Standardized risk-assessment instruments are only used experimentally in a single treatment institution.

**Aftercare**

Aftercare includes all forms of residential and ambulatory care, guidance and treatment that is offered after the custodial sentence of measure on which detention is based, has ended. As described in chapter 5, providing aftercare is not a part of the (subsidized) tasks of the juvenile correctional institutions. Therefore, the role of the institutions is mostly facilitating: they help to formulate the need for aftercare services, they contact relevant institutions and, if necessary, mediate the application for aftercare. Referral to aftercare services is hindered by the bad reputation that juvenile offenders have as being notoriously difficult to handle. Initiating and maintaining contacts with potential suppliers of aftercare is time-consuming, especially with extra-regional aftercare providers.

Ten juvenile correctional institutions are involved in the nation-wide aftercare program Workwise, which is implemented in cooperation with the commercial employment agency Manpower and focuses on reintegration in society through (re)employment.

We suggest that the willingness of aftercare providers to accept juvenile offenders could be stimulated by granting them the option to return a young offender, within a certain period, to the original custodial institution or treatment institution if he or she poses serious problems to the aftercare provider. Cooperation with
aftercare provides is another reason to stress the need for placement of young offenders in the region of origin.

**Sector-transcending tracks**

Two juvenile correctional institutions, De Kolkemate in Zutphen and Teylingereind in Sassenheim, have together with partners originations developed ‘care programmes’ in which custody and treatment are part of a programme-track that may extend outside the borders of the juvenile correctional institutions (i.e., the Ministry of Justice). Both programmes have assigned case-managers who co-ordinate the tracks that individuals follow. Chapter 6 describes these programmes in terms of the type of young offenders they are targeted at, the participating institutions, and the contents of the programme and the procedures followed.