

Review

Agreement on Good Behaviour – two municipalities’ experiences with a pilot project on preventive measures against youth crime

Background and objectives:

- The aim of the report is to describe the experiences of two municipalities in Denmark with the pilot project Agreement on Good Behaviour.
- Agreement on Good Behaviour is a pilot project carried out in two municipalities in Denmark aimed at minors who have committed less serious crime or shown other forms of worrying behaviour.

Research design:

- The report is based on interviews with key employees involved in the pilot project and participation in meetings. Besides, the report is also based on quantitative information on the minors considered fit for an Agreement on Good Behaviour.
- 88 minors were considered fit for an Agreement on Good Behaviour. Of these, 29 entered into an agreement on good behaviour and 59 did not participate. The primary reason for not participating was the parents’ refusal to participate.
- The report presents the types of crime committed by the minors in the pilot project. It also presents the experiences of the key employees and specialised workers with Agreement on Good Behaviour in terms of both the organisation and use of the pilot project as well as their attitudes towards Agreement on Good Behaviour in relation to its crime prevention capabilities.

Findings:

- The participating minors were 15 years old on average and 80 per cent of them were boys.
- The meetings revolve around the minor’s thoughts and reflections on his or her own situation. It is important that the minor feels some sort of ownership of the agreement.
- In one municipality, there is always two follow-up meetings, while in the other municipality it depends on the case. In both municipalities, there have been breaches of agreements. What qualifies as a breach and the consequence of breach is a grey area.
- According to caseworkers, several parents have expressed that the pilot project has been helpful and supportive.
- Especially one municipality has been excited about Agreement on Good Behaviour. They believe that it can help them identify troubled minors much sooner, that it has been a good measure resulting in increased involvement and accountability of the minor’s parents. The other municipality believes that the pilot project does not differentiate considerably from previous practice with the exception of a higher degree of follow-up meetings.

