



POLITIET

KEEPING AHEAD OF CRIME

Prevention as a Primary Police Strategy (2021-2025)



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FOREWORD



The police must help reduce crime and ensure greater safety for the citizens. The police are most useful if their overall efforts help reduce crime and other unwanted incidents, reduce their harmful effects and prevent recurrence. Therefore, prevention is a primary police strategy and must underlie the performance of all police duties.

Society as well as crime are undergoing rapid changes. Globalisation, technological development, digitalisation, urbanisation, migration and climate and environmental challenges are among the factors that affect this development. To be able to formulate good priorities and implement the right measures, the police must have ample knowledge of the developments in both society and crime and be aware of the causes of crime and other unwanted incidents.

However, prevention is not a job for the police alone. There are many stakeholders who have a role and responsibilities in the preventive work. It will very often be actors outside the police who will have the right tools and initiatives. Cooperation ensures greater knowledge and an improved basis for making decisions to implement measures that collectively have a preventive effect.

Prevention is and will continue to be a separate professional field in the police. At the same time, all professional fields within the police must contribute to prevention as the primary police strategy. The police must have a comprehensive strategy, where long-term preventive work is given the necessary priority.

The police must work to keep ahead of crime and other unwanted incidents. Our job is to keep society safe!

Benedicte Bjørnland
National Police Commissioner of Norway



1

INTRODUCTION

Prevention is at the heart of the social mission of the police. Prevention includes everything done by the police, alone or in cooperation with others, to reduce crime and other unwanted incidents, reduce harmful effects and prevent recurrence.

Crime prevention is a key part of the overall preventive efforts of the police. The police have a broad social mission that necessitates the use of the term prevention rather than crime prevention in this overall strategy. Emergency preparedness and contingency planning, traffic safety, building trust and safety among citizens are also key elements of the preventive work of the police.

An ambition in the operational strategy «The Police towards 2025», is keeping ahead of crime. Guidelines are provided for the police to have a systematic, planned and knowledge-based approach to prevention and cooperation across professional fields and sectors.

Section 1 of the Norwegian Police Act

The police shall through preventive, enforcing and helping activities contribute to society's overall effort to promote and consolidate the citizens' security under the law, safety and welfare in general.

Section 2-1 of the General Service Instructions for the Police

In either case, the police are of the most benefit if they manage to prevent or avert crimes or disturbances of the peace in advance.

“

In 2025, citizens will experience a safe society, where the police engage in targeted prevention, with systematic utilisation of knowledge and cooperation with other actors.

National Police Directorate (2017). *The Police towards 2025* (p. 16).

This strategy document provides guidelines for the implementation of measures until 2025, while setting the following ambitions:

- To contribute to a more uniform understanding of and approach to prevention in the police.
- To anchor the notion that prevention is a shared responsibility for all professional fields and functions within the police.
- To emphasise the need for interaction and cooperation in order to reinforce the preventive work, both internally in the police and with external actors.

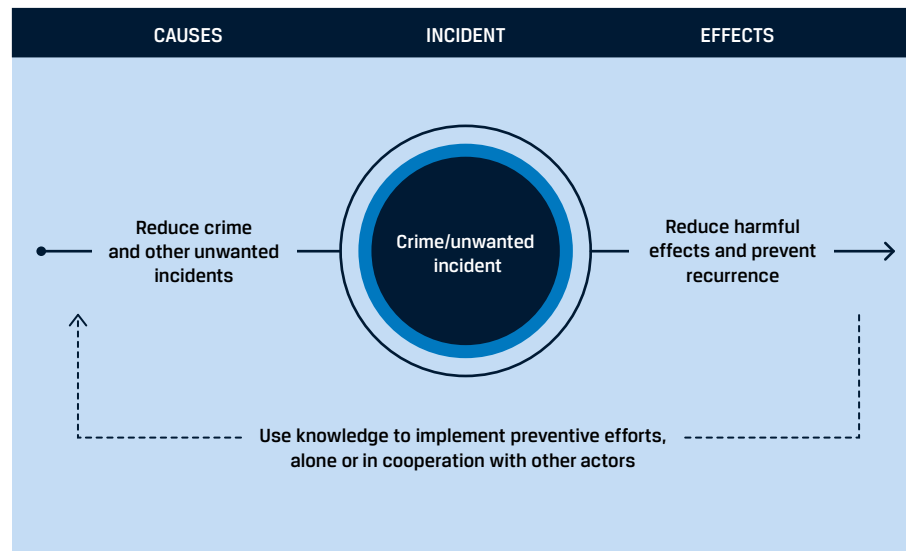


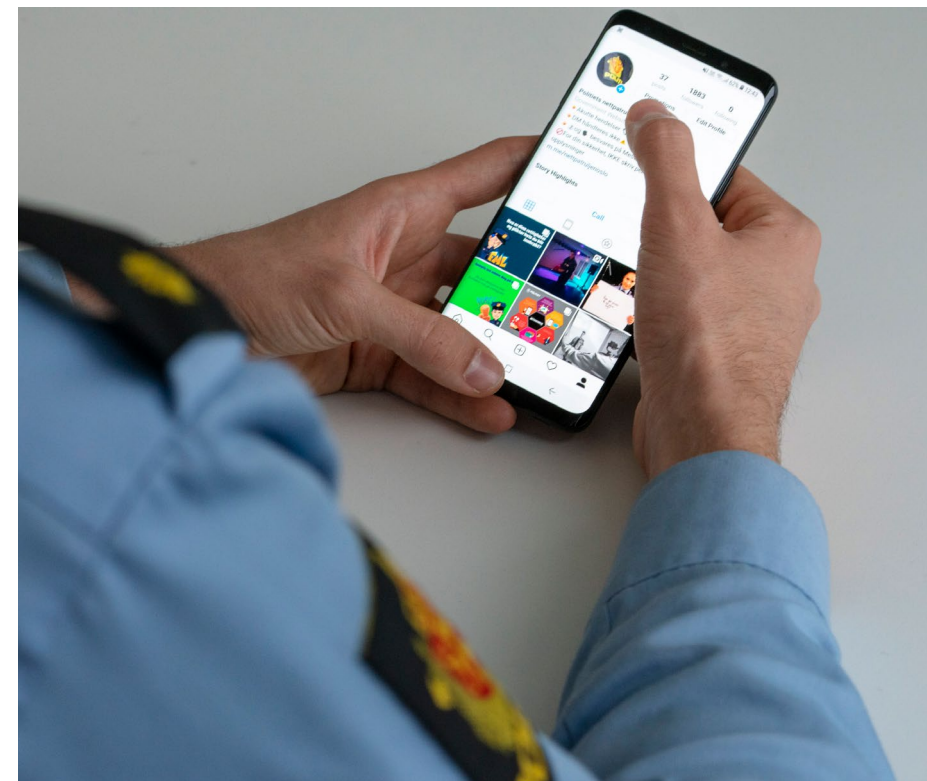
Figure 1: Timeline illustrating a holistic approach to prevention.

Preventive action can be taken both before and during as well as in the aftermath of a criminal act or unwanted incident. Prevention must be the objective along the entire timeline. The strategy must help reinforce the preventive approach, both within the different professional fields of the police and in the overall performance of the duties of the police. It is also an important goal to reinforce the interaction and cooperation of the police with other sectors with a role and responsibilities in the preventive work. Comprehensive preventive efforts generate immense benefits.

The strategy provides overall guidelines. A separate implementation plan will specify follow-up through various measures. The follow-up takes place through the ordinary management processes (performance agreements and management dialogue with police districts and special bodies), within the existing budgetary framework.

Instructions for reading

The strategy is divided so as to first provide a discussion of cross-disciplinary strategic issues, that are assessed to be particularly important for the implementation of prevention as a primary police strategy. This is followed by an overall discussion of the potential contribution of the various professional fields in the police. Ambitions for how to reinforce the preventive efforts are formulated for each strategic issue and professional field.





2

STRATEGIC ISSUES

Knowledge and competency
Leadership and management
Interaction and cooperation
Dialogue and building trust

During the work on this strategy, we have identified four areas that are assessed to be of particular importance for the establishment of a preventive approach across professional fields and functions in the police:

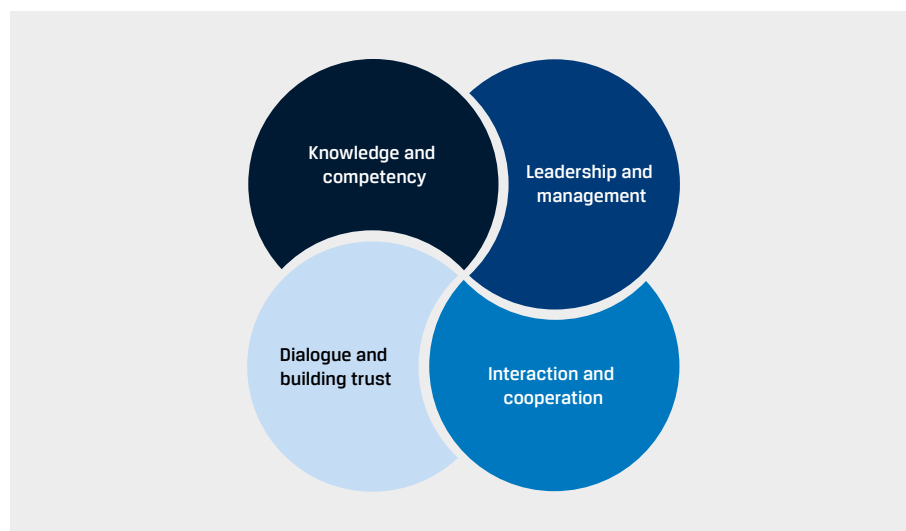


Figure 2: Strategic issues for the implementation of prevention as a primary police strategy.

2.1 KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY

Police work must be based on knowledge of developments in society and crime. We need to perform professionally and methodologically adequate analyses of the police work and the external factors affecting this work. Together with other relevant knowledge, they can serve as a basis for prioritisation of efforts, so that we can make sure that the combined resources of the police will be used for the benefit of society and the citizens.

In order to formulate the right priorities and implement effective measures, the police need knowledge about conditions that induce or may induce crime or other unwanted incidents. Intelligence constitutes a key part of this knowledge base.

In many contexts, actors outside the police will have more relevant and more comprehensive knowledge that can fill the gaps in the situational awareness of the police. Therefore, there must be a culture in place for systematic sharing and exchange of knowledge, and the police must have good collaborative skills. This provides a better basis for decisionmaking in order to make the right priorities and implement measures that overall have the greatest preventive effect.

Knowledge found in research is an important contribution for ensuring a more comprehensive knowledge base. Research can provide an insight into the causes and underlying factors that explain why crimes and other unwanted incidents occur and into the factors that help prevent them. Research is also an extremely important source of information about the effect of various preventive measures.

The police must also have knowledge of the expectations and needs of the citizens. Local knowledge and dialogue with citizens are important to ensure a targeted preventive and safety-creating effort.

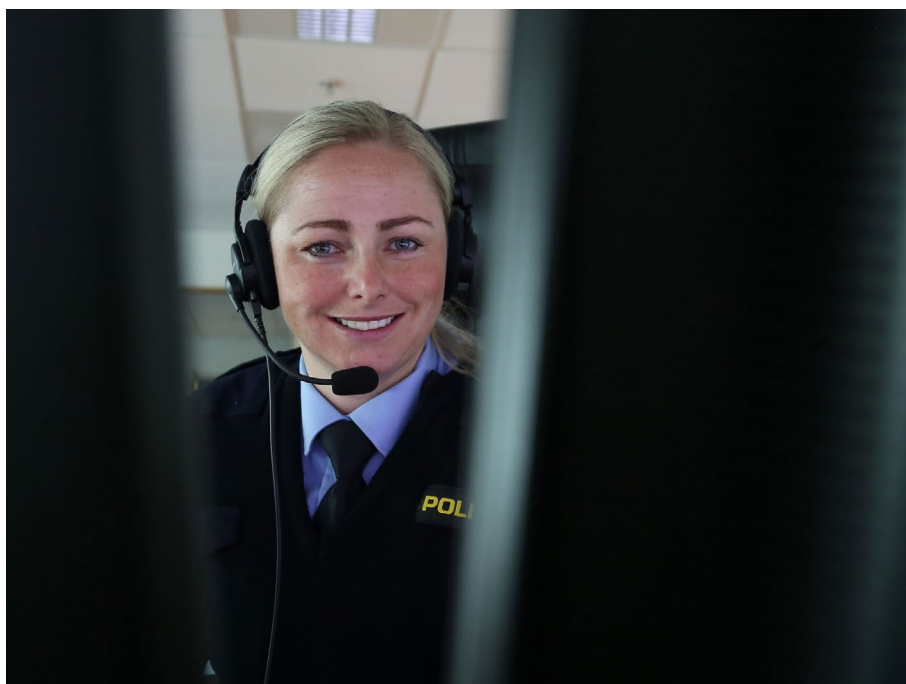
AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- Knowledge-based police work must be developed further, where focus areas are given priorities and measures are selected on the basis of intelligence products, other analyses as well as other experience- and research-based knowledge.
- There is a continuous professional and methodological development, knowledge building and sharing of experience about the effect of preventive methods and measures.
- The police share knowledge of crimes and other unwanted incidents and give preventive advice to citizens, media, businesses and cooperation partners.
- The development of competence and knowledge in prevention shall address priority needs in the police's competence and knowledge strategy.

2.2 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leaders at all levels must be aware of what is expected of them and must serve as good role models in the development of the police. Leaders have a special responsibility for contributing to the establishment of a common understanding of what prevention as a primary police strategy signifies for each individual professional field and level in the police organisation and for the police as a whole. To ensure a more uniform understanding in the police organisation going forward, prevention as a primary strategy must be an element in leadership development.

To be able to make good decisions, leaders depend on the existence of a good knowledge base. Therefore, they must be able to order and use intelligence products. Such products combined with other knowledge will provide leaders with decision-making aid when formulating priorities and managing resources. In their decision-making process, leaders must be aware of what supports the objective of preventing crime and other unwanted incidents.



It is important to make sure that priorities at the different levels of the organisation correlate and that the overall effort points in the same direction.

Prevention very often requires cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral interaction and cooperation. Therefore, leaders must have good collaborative skills. This means having knowledge of the responsibility that lies with other professional fields within the police and with actors outside the police. In addition, knowledge is required with regard to the possibilities and framework for information sharing and cooperation across professional fields and sectors. It is the responsibility of each leader to ensure that there are good relations across the professional fields within the police and with external cooperation partners, as well as ensuring broad involvement early on in the planning and assignment phases.

AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- Leaders prioritise, decide and manage working procedures based on intelligence products, other analyses as well as other experience- and research-based knowledge.
- Leaders ensure good relations and necessary involvement across the professional fields within the police.
- Leaders have knowledge of the responsibilities of other sectors and contribute to good cooperation and necessary involvement.
- Leaders take responsibility for ensuring that the police are in dialogue with the citizens and listen to their needs and expectations.
- Management processes are designed in such a way as to ensure that prevention is given the necessary priority.

2.3 INTERACTION AND COOPERATION

Interaction and cooperation across professional fields within the police and with external actors contributes to a holistic approach to the social mission of the police, thus generating immense benefits. This is also a decisive success factor for creating a knowledge-based police force.

A number of measures have been initiated in connection with the police reform, which are supposed to contribute to a more uniform police force that provides services of a better quality. An objective for each of the functions and the interaction between them is to contribute to reinforcing prevention.

The police are not responsible for prevention alone. The contribution of the police to society's overall preventive efforts requires their presence and active participation in permanent collaboration structures in the local communities.



The police must cooperate actively with other public stakeholders, businesses, non-governmental organisations and civil society in general.¹ This is important for building trust and as a foundation for the knowledge-based policing.

International cooperation is important for exchanging knowledge about developments in society and crime as well as experiences with preventive strategies and measures. Many crimes are committed across national borders, and their prevention requires international cooperation.

AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- There are adequate procedures for interaction and cooperation between the various professional fields and functions within the police.
- There is a high awareness of the role and responsibility of the police and other actors in the work on preventing crime and other unwanted incidents.
- The police are an active participant and have a driving role in both national and local cooperation structures for reinforcing prevention.
- There are adequate procedures for sharing information and reporting concerns (internally within the police and with external actors).
- Nordic and international cooperation has been established and is used for exchanging knowledge of crime, work practices and experiences with various measures.
- The police take active part in the international police cooperation for preventing cross-border crime.

1 Cf. Section 10-1 and Section 15-1 of the Norwegian General Service Instructions for the Police.

2.4 DIALOGUE AND BUILDING TRUST

Building trust with the community is fundamental to effective policing. Citizens' trust in the police is influenced by how effective and competent the police are at solving their tasks, as well as how the police act in performance of their duties.

The police must be present and accessible in order to help create closeness, dialogue and a sense of safety among the citizens. The police must have knowledge of local conditions and maintain presence wherever the citizens are – in both the physical and digital domain. Thanks to various communication channels and digital platforms, the police have an immense potential to maintain dialogue with the citizens, get to know their expectations and needs, and share and distribute knowledge and preventive advice.

The police must act and communicate fairly and respectfully with the citizens and its cooperation partners in all kinds of situations. The police must have knowledge and competence about diversity and build good relationships with all segments of the population.



AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- The police meet citizens in their local community and online, are attentive and concerned about their sense of safety.
- The police are open to the citizens and explain their proceedings as well as the measures they implement.
- The police provide preventive advice, thus contributing to the citizens' sense of safety.
- Diversity, dialogue and building trust are highlighted through a separate plan in the police.
- The police have good communicative and collaborative skills.
- The police work for greater understanding of diversity and are in dialogue with groups exposed to racism, hatred and discrimination.



3

CONTRIBUTION OF THE VARIOUS PROFESSIONAL FIELDS TO PREVENTION

All professional fields in the police are responsible for supporting prevention as a primary police strategy. This chapter describes the role and ambitions of the professional fields going forward.

3.1 INTELLIGENCE

The police need a good knowledge base about conditions that lead to or may lead to crime or other unwanted incidents. Intelligence, or more precisely intelligence-based decision-making support, is part of this knowledge base. By processing and analysing information about persons, groups and phenomena related to crime and other unwanted incidents from both internal and external sources, intelligence will contribute to shared situational awareness and analyses of future developments. These are supposed to contribute to reducing the uncertainty with regard to priorities and decisions about approach, prioritisation and choice of preventive measures.

To ensure that the information underlying such intelligence is as good as possible, all professional fields within the police must contribute with information and report trends that give cause for concern.

AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- Intelligence contributes to shared situational awareness and is a common starting point for choosing measures across professional fields and levels in the police organisation.
- The intelligence doctrine of the police forms the basis for the intelligence work in all police districts and special agencies of the police.²
- Leaders must understand the importance of intelligence and be able to identify intelligence requirements and gaps.
- The knowledge of and assessment of future threats is shared with relevant external actors, so that each individual actor as well as society at large are able to prevent crime and other unwanted incidents by protecting themselves and their assets.

3.2 PREVENTION (AS A SEPARATE PROFESSIONAL FIELD)

The regional prevention units have a particular responsibility for professional and methodological development and for ensuring that prevention is knowledge-based and incorporated into the strategic work of the police. The local units have a particular responsibility for preventive work within their geographic area and for ensuring interaction and cooperation with municipalities and other actors in the local community.

Prevention requires close interaction and cooperation between the police, municipalities and other external actors. Police councils are established as permanent cooperation bodies between the police and the municipalities. The objective is to have cooperation agreements with all of Norway's municipalities. All municipalities are assigned a separate contact person at the police, who is meant to function as a point of contact between the police, the citizens and other actors in the local community.

The SLT model (Coordination of Local Crime Prevention Enterprises) is established in many municipalities in order to contribute to adequate cooperation with regard to the target group of children and young people. The police must take active part in the SLT cooperation wherever such a cooperation structure is established, and use other cooperation structures in municipalities that have opted for a different type of organisation of their preventive work with regard to children and young people.

The professional field of prevention contributes with good knowledge about current crime challenges and ensures cooperation and adequate information flows between relevant actors. A comprehensive effort usually requires measures taken across sectors. Separate cooperation functions/structures are established in several priority areas. This applies, for example, to domestic violence, violence and sexual abuse of children, crime affecting businesses as well as radicalisation and violent extremism.

² National Police Directorate (2014). *Etterretningsdoktrine for politiet* [Intelligence Doctrine for the Police]. Oslo: National Police Directorate.

AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- The police have a focus on learning by doing, sharing of best practices and a high degree of accountability in the preventive work.
- The use of police conversation intervention is developed further.
- Police councils and police contacts are developed further and are used actively to help ensure adequate cooperation between the police and the municipalities, thus guaranteeing a comprehensive preventive effort.
- Key professional functions at the district level are developed further, including specialist functions related to the prevention of domestic violence, crime against businesses, radicalisation and violent extremism etc.
- The police must contribute to an overall preventive effort in the digital domain. Responsibilities and coordination are clarified with other public authorities with the intention of achieving common objectives.
- The police's online presence is developed further – with a particular focus on dialogue, trust building and safety-creating work.
- The police cooperate closely with other actors, both in the implementation of alternative punitive measures and preventive follow-up measures.
- The police must contribute to crime prevention measures being taken into account in planning, cf. the Norwegian Planning and Building Act (Section 3-1 f).

3.3 INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION³

The main purpose of the criminal case proceedings is to contribute to reduced crime. The investigation of criminal offences and personalised penal sanctions can help perpetrators refrain from committing new, or more serious, acts of crime (individual deterrence). Criminal case proceedings can also have a more general deterrent and moral-forming effect (general deterrence).

The use of alternative penal sanctions must be developed further. In order to fill the penal sanctions with additional rehabilitative, individual-oriented content, it is important to ensure adequate cooperation with other agencies. Good follow-up is particularly important for reversing the unfortunate development in young people committing crimes.

Criminal case proceedings provide the police and the prosecuting authority with knowledge of crimes, perpetrators and victims that can be used to prevent new crime from taking place. Patterns of crime can be identified and measures can be initiated to prevent recurrence.



Photo: Berit Roald / NTB

³ See also the discussion of prevention in The Director of Public Prosecutions' circular on the objectives and priorities in criminal case proceedings (Circular no. 1/2020).

AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- There is cooperation and sharing of information between the criminal case proceedings, investigation and other professional fields in the police.
- Risk assessments are made in relevant criminal cases, with the intention of preventing recidivism.
- Criminal cases against young perpetrators are processed quickly, in particular, when they are related to recidivism.
- The police have knowledge about the use of restorative justice⁴ both in and outside criminal case proceedings.
- There is knowledge and awareness of the use of confiscation, including the opportunities that lies in preventive confiscation.⁵
- The police assess the need for preventive measures before closing a criminal case, and there is a uniform practice in place for how to communicate and follow up on this.
- The Childrens Houses arrange for the police to secure evidence in investigations in a child-friendly manner (interrogations as well as clinical forensic investigations) and to prevent children from falling victim to new criminal offences.
- The Support Centres for Crime Victims assist people who are victims of crime with information, guidance and support and help prevent the recurrence of such crimes.

⁴ Restorative justice refers to a process where the individuals involved in/affected by an offence or conflict jointly identify the damages, needs and obligations created by the incident and jointly find ways to restore injustice and repair harm.

⁵ The legal basis for preventive confiscation is provided for in Section 70 of the Norwegian General Civil Penal Code.

3.4 POLICE OPERATIONS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The police patrol is present for the citizens and safeguards the 24/7 emergency preparedness of the police districts. The police patrol works, to the extent possible, to stay ahead of crime by preventing acts of crime and other unwanted incidents, reduce the harmful consequences of such acts or incidents that have already happened and preventing similar events from happening again.

The police operations command centre guides and coordinates activities of the police district. It is a key link to other parts of the police organisation as well as external actors through notification, information sharing and coordination of preventive measures.

Emergency preparedness and contingency planning aim to prevent, limit and deal with extraordinary events and crises. The preventive element takes place at all stages by means of analyses, intelligence and other information, preparation of plans, internal and external collaboration, competence building, exercises and learning by evaluating exercises and events.

AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- A visible and accessible police force that contributes to a good dialogue and communication with the citizens.
- The police operations command centres and the police patrols work knowledge-based to contribute to targeted preventive efforts.
- Evaluations are conducted to safeguard learning by doing and knowledge of how future incidents can be prevented, in particular, in connection with serious incidents.
- Preventive competence is safeguarded in police operations, emergency preparedness and contingency planning.

3.5 ADMINISTRATION (PERMITS)

A key objective of the administrative tasks of the police is to prevent crime and serious incidents. Administrative prevention enables the police to refrain from granting permits to individuals who do not meet the conditions for obtaining a permit (weapons, driving licences, security work, passports, second-hand shops, etc.) or to revoke such permits from individuals who no longer meet the conditions for them.

Administrative prevention is a matter of using information that is already in the possession of the police, across various professional fields, for preventing crime and serious incidents.

AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- All professional fields in the police have knowledge of and competence in administrative prevention.
- There is a uniform practice and a low threshold for reporting concerns regarding permits (administrative prevention).
- Interaction and cooperation with external actors in the administrative work must be developed further - in order to raise the knowledge of risk factors for crime and other unwanted incidents as well as enable third parties to implement preventive measures themselves.
- The police make sure that sufficient information is obtained and provided in application procedures so as to enable making good assessments of whether applicants are fit for holding the permit they apply for.
- To ensure greater understanding of regulations and their enforcement, the police provide advice and guidance to citizens on the rights and obligations associated with the areas of administration.

3.6 ENFORCEMENT, CONCILIATION AND DEBT SETTLEMENT

The police perform important civil justice duties comprising, among other things, enforcement and debt settlement, a secretariat function for the conciliation boards as well as a court bailiff function. The enforcement authority is part of a legal order that ensures that individuals, groups and companies can trust that concluded agreements will be kept. This is important for maintaining payment ethics in society. The function contributes to preventing crime by ensuring that those with outstanding claims can be assisted by the enforcement authority to have these covered if debtors fail to make voluntary payment. Debt settlement helps individuals gain control over their own finances, which can reduce the incidence of crime.

AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- Information and guidance are provided to everyone involved throughout the entire case management process for the purpose of reducing the incidence of crime. Information about the help options of other actors must be provided as early as possible.
- Knowledge is shared on a general basis with other actors who can contribute to the work on preventing financial trouble and the consequences thereof.
- There is knowledge concerning what information may and should be shared for preventive purposes in order to avoid indebtedness and prevent crime.
- The police contribute to training in personal finances management through lectures, campaigns and information.

3.7 ID-MANAGEMENT

IDs are essential in all work done by the police. Good ID work is important for protecting public safety and the rule of law as well as for preventing crime and other unwanted incidents in both the physical and digital domain. Making the necessary arrangements for the secure issue of strong ID certificates, physical as well as digital, will eliminate, in the long term, the possibility for creating false Norwegian identities or for operating with several identities in Norway. The development of good control procedures/routines also prevents ID theft and abuse of services by means of ID fraud.

AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- The greatest possible distribution of national ID cards.
- Requirements for a more secure process of issue of passports and national ID cards, including use of automated face recognition. Adequate control systems in connection with the issue and subsequent checks of IDs.
- Ensuring good competence with regard to ID and control in the police.
- The police inform citizens and cooperation partners of the significance of ID and secure IDs and how to prevent abuse.
- Dialogue with service owners on the requirements for presentation and control of IDs.
- Offering services for lost/stolen status and authentication check for Norwegian IDs for actors who need to check documents.

3.8 BORDER AND IMMIGRATION CONTROL

The border and immigration administration aim to prevent illegal migration as well as crime and other unwanted incidents across national borders. This is realised through border control (entry and exit control as well as border surveillance), immigration control on Norwegian territory, police responsibility in the areas of asylum, residence and returns as well as other immigration administration in the police. The control exercised on the border or on Norwegian territory permits expulsion from the country of foreign nationals who are considered to pose a risk in accordance with the Norwegian Immigration Act.

It is the police who are responsible for border control in Norway. This applies to the sea, air and land border. The National Police Immigration Service and the immigration administrations of the individual police districts help facilitate legal immigration and ensure that those who meet the conditions are permitted to come to Norway. Moreover, the police, as part of the immigration administration, have a control function and are supposed to prevent the abuse of the system.

AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- The entire police have knowledge and awareness of the opportunities available in prevention through border and immigration control.
- Border control is developed further as a tool for preventing and detecting cross-border crime and terrorism-related travel activities.
- Intelligence products and other knowledge are shared between the border and immigration administration and other professional fields in the police as well as other relevant actors.

3.9 TRAFFIC SAFETY

The police are entrusted with duties related to traffic safety on the road, at sea and in the air. The main purpose of the road traffic safety work of the police is to prevent accidents with fatalities and serious injuries.⁶ Vision Zero of no fatalities or serious injuries lies at the root of all cross-sector cooperation on traffic safety in Norway.

The police contribute, through checks and enforcement, to a greater awareness of and a good attitude to traffic safety and to preventing accidents and traffic offences. Such control activities also contribute to the detection and identification of other types of crime. The traffic safety work of the police is an important arena for building trust among citizens. The police must treat everyone in a welcoming and balanced manner in their control activities.

AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- Cooperation between the police and other actors in the traffic safety work is developed further.
- The control activities of the police are knowledge-based and target traffic behaviour that is a frequent cause of traffic accidents resulting in fatalities and serious injuries.
- There are effective routines for reporting concerns regarding permits on the basis of traffic incidents (administrative prevention).
- Knowledge from investigations of serious traffic accidents is used to prevent future incidents.

3.10 DETENTION

Detention in police custody is used to prevent loss of evidence as well as recurrence of acts of crime. It is also used with regard to individuals who are unable to take care of themselves, e.g. due to intoxication, or who disturb the public peace and order. The period of detention is limited. As a rule, children are not placed in police custody.

AMBITIONS FOR REINFORCING PREVENTION:

- Life and health considerations, rule of law, privacy, human rights and human dignity are safeguarded throughout the stay in police custody.
- Information is obtained, recorded (cf. current instructions) as well as shared with the other professional fields in the police for the purpose of preventing crime and other unwanted incidents.
- Further development of cooperation with various actors (public, private and NGOs).
- Use dialogue to identify motivation for change, provide guidance and establish contact with support organisations.

⁶ Cf. the ambitions and milestones in the National Transport Plan (NTP 2018-2029) and the obligations in the National Action Plan for Road Safety 2018-2021.



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