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Digitalisation in Corrections
Recidivism Reduction

Implementing Telemedicine

Scenario Description

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DIGICOR Digital Scenarios

Recognising the marked resistance of European penitentiary services towards technological modernisation, the Digital Scenarios seek to directly influence senior officers and those responsible for the operational management of penitentiary settings by aggregating and disseminating innovative and evidence-based practices in the field of digital readiness in prisons.

Raising these stakeholders' awareness regarding the benefits of well-implemented digital solutions in the prison setting, namely in what concerns inmate rehabilitation, will contribute to enhancing the prison services openness towards modernisation.

Scenarios to be developed:

Inmate communications
- Scenario 1: Telephony
- Scenario 2: Videocall and video visitation
- Scenario 3: Secure e-mail/text messages/digital letters

Education and e-learning
- Scenario 4: e-learning and access to online resources

Digital self-service solutions
- Scenario 5: implementing integrated digital self-service solutions

Training and treatment using Virtual and Augmented reality
- Scenario 6: Inmate's treatment and training using VR
- Scenario 7: Officers training using VR and AR

Videoconference with courts
- Scenario 8: Implementing videoconference systems with courts

Telemedicine
- Scenario 9: Implementing telemedicine

Offender and Case Management Systems
- Scenario 10: Implementing offender and case management systems

Electronic monitoring in prisons and probation
- Scenario 11: Implementing an EM project (RFID and GPS)
- Scenario 12: Implementing an EM project (mobile phone)
- Scenario 13: Implementing an inmate monitoring system in a correctional environment

Smart Prisons and digital transformation in corrections
- Scenario 14: Implementing a "Smart Prison initiative"

Artificial Intelligence in corrections
- Scenario 15: Using AI and xAI in prisons and probation

DIGICOR Digital Scenario Form

Scenario #: 9 Implementing Telemedicine

Problem/problems that it aims to solve:

Over the past number of years, research has consistently shown that inmates' access to telemedicine generally improves their care, whether for the diagnosis of diseases that require specialised intervention or for problems common to prison populations, such as HIV and hepatitis. Along with expanding access to health care, telemedicine lowers travel costs and custody costs in an outpatient hospital setting and the safety risks associated with it.

Description of the solution:

Telemedicine regarding prisons can be solved in several ways:

- In prison treatment rooms as part of a therapeutic solution.
- In the Prison Hospital.

Expected benefits:

For the organisation and staff:

- Greatly enhances the medical care that can be provided for the inmates.
- Doctors/Psychiatrists may now offer enhanced and/or specialised health care by videoconferencing to specialists external to the prison.
- Reduces the security dangers of escape and issues with contraband.
- Reduces the costs associated with the transportation of inmates.

For the inmates:

- Rather than dealing with often long periods of travel inmates have their clinicians able to offer them enhanced care by videoconferencing.
- Inmates can continue with their daily routine without significant disruption.

Evidence of effectiveness:

Empirical evidence shows that the type of telehealth services chosen in a correctional setting is determined by: population demands, provider availability, and service feasibility (Tian et al. (2021). Following service selection, criminal justice officials must consider the impact of telehealth on their institutions. Roles and duties, scheduling and workflow, assessment methodologies, technical infrastructure, and physical space and security are all reviewed items. Finding a sufficiently private and secured area with connectivity within a facility may be challenging, and this must be factored into deployment planning.

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Additionally, coordination and information exchange between the location of the patient and the location of the provider must be considered. Legal and regulatory factors, such as changing legislation governing electronic consent, security, and provider types permitted to supply services, must also be watched (Kruse et al., 2018).

Key phases of the implementation:

Phases of implementation will vary depending on the extent of the project undertaken. The list below outlines some of the key phases for a successful implementation.

- Extensive market soundings are undertaken to ensure best-of-breed solutions.
- Consideration is given to having a Proof of Concept and/or Pilot Phase to ensure that the requirements are fully understood and agreed upon.
- A cost benefit exercise is undertaken to ensure the costs and benefits are understood and that sufficient funding is in place.
- A comprehensive tender process is undertaken once the requirements are agreed upon.
- Buy in is obtained from Senior Management, Staff and Staff representatives through extensive engagement.
- Communication to ensure the benefits are understood by management, staff and inmates.
- A change management exercise is undertaken and local champions of change are put in place.
- The project is carefully planned and managed from start to finish.
- Clear and agreed objectives are outlined so it is understood what success means.
- Post project reviews are undertaken.

Key success factors:

It is recommended that before undertaking any project of this type that it is understood what helps to ensure a successful project.

- Clear and clearly articulated project goals.
- A comprehensive and detailed Project plan.
- Early definition of deliverable quality criteria.
- Active senior management support with a shared vision throughout the project's life.
- A fully representative Project board in place from the start of the Project.
- Carefully planned Project implementation.
- Concise, consistent, complete, and unambiguous business and technical requirements.
- Realistic cost estimates and Project schedules.
- Early risk analysis and ongoing risk management.

- **A clearly defined business process change management implementation plan.**
- **Proactive Project issue resolution.**
- **Stakeholder involvement throughout the Project life cycle.**
- **Defined and consistently executed Project management to minimize scope increases.**
- **A skilled Project Manager experienced in the execution of project management best practices.**
- **Execution of a formal Project development methodology.**
- **An experienced implementation team(s).**

Key risk factors:

Key risks to note are:

- **No proof of concept and/or Pilot Phase to ensure that the requirements are fully understood and agreed upon.**
- **No cost benefit exercise is undertaken to ensure the costs and benefits are understood and that sufficient funding is in place.**
- **No clear understanding of the market options available that potentially lead to a poorly tendered solution.**
- **Lack of buy-in from Senior Management, Staff and Staff representatives.**
- **No change management and/or local champions of change.**
- **Lack of proper project planning.**
- **Insufficient engagement to ensure the benefits are understood by management, staff and inmates.**
- **No clear and agreed objectives for the project.**

Jurisdictions in which it has been implemented:

Some countries in Europe have implemented a Telemedicine/Telehealth solution for the inmates in their prisons for example Austria and Romania. This is particularly true since the Coronavirus pandemic when access to healthcare was often more difficult. However, in general, the solutions are more widely adopted in countries where significant distances separate the inmates from specialist health care for example Australia and the USA.

Specific Regulations to consider

These will vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction it is therefore recommended that an exercise to consider the specific regulations in your jurisdiction is undertaken as part of the pre-project planning phase.

For example, electronic consent and the provider types that are permitted to supply these services.

Estimated implementation period:

This will vary depending on the extent and complexities of the project undertaken. It is recommended that a detailed project plan is developed and agreed upon in conjunction with the selected service provider.

Estimated cost

This will vary depending on the option chosen. It is recommended that detailed market soundings are undertaken in advance of tender commencement to gain an understanding of potential solutions that best suit the requirements of the jurisdiction. The tender process itself will also serve to ensure the most economic and advantageous solution is obtained.

Useful resources:

https://letstalkinteractive.com/jail-administration
https://www.scnsoft.com/blog/telemedicine-in-prisons
https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/10/2/e035837
https://www.visionflex.com/solution/prisons/
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1357633X19869131

Main suppliers:

There are several suppliers in the market. The following list serves to give examples of some of the service providers. It is recommended that jurisdictions carry out detailed market soundings in advance of project commencement to gain an understanding of the market suppliers in their area.

- Let's Talk Interactive Inc
- Visionflex
- SA Prison Health Service
- Bernoulli

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reduced recidivism