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Restorative Justice in Prisons and Probation

International Learning Exchange – Phase 2

*Visit 1: Avans University of Applied Sciences,
's-Hertogenbosch
22–25 February 2026*

Dr Jonathan Hobson - University of Gloucestershire (jhobson@glos.ac.uk)

Welcome

Thank you to Annemieke, Bart, Nicole, and colleagues at Avans for hosting us.



avans
hogeschool

Netherlands



**Restorative
Justice
Council**

United Kingdom



Åbo Akademi

Finland



**UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

United Kingdom



An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh
The Probation Service

Ireland



**REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
AND DIGITAL AFFAIRS**



Estonia

Phase 1: What We Did

2023–2024 | UK · Ireland · Estonia



Reciprocal Country Visits

Site visits to prisons
and community
justice services in
each jurisdiction



Roundtable Dialogue

Cross-jurisdictional
discussions between
policymakers,
practitioners, and
academics



Joint Briefing Paper

Co-authored policy
briefing capturing
shared insights,
challenges, and
recommendations

Phase 1: Key learning

I. RJ is gaining traction in prisons and probation

...but access remains inconsistent, limited by geography, offence type, or commissioner priorities

II. Coordinated national strategies are essential

...to embed RJ into mainstream criminal justice, ensuring consistency while enabling local innovation

III. Public and political awareness must be strengthened

...to build support, drive demand, and develop the evidence base

IV. Shared metrics and robust evaluation are needed

...to evidence impact, inform commissioning, and build system-wide confidence

V. Equitable access should be based on need

...not on offence type, geography, or local commissioning variation

VI. International learning and exchange offer critical value

...supporting cross-fertilisation of ideas, models, and frameworks

Phase 2: Expanding the Network

2025–2026 | Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, UK

01

Deepen cross-national understanding of RJ in custodial and probation settings

02

Co-produce comparative policy and practice insights and recommendations

03

Produce a high-quality academic paper based on cross-national learning

04

Build towards a longer-term European funding bid (Horizon Europe / JUST Programme)

The Programme of Visits



Netherlands

Avans University

22–25 Feb 2026

◀ Visit 1 — We are here now

Prison visit · possible Belgian RJ colleagues · group planning for subsequent visits



London, UK

University of Gloucestershire & RJC

22–25 March 2026

Visit 2

Youth detention setting using RJ · parliamentary conversations on policy and practice



Estonia & Finland

Estonian MoJ (Social Insurance Board) · Åbo Akademi

19–23 April 2026

Visit 3

Estonia 19–21 April · ferry to Helsinki 21st evening · Finland 22–23 April



EFRJ — Poznań

European Forum for Restorative Justice

11–13 June 2026

Conference

Conference presentation and European network engagement



Ireland

Probation Service, Dept of Justice

September 2026 (TBC)

Visit 4

Dates to be confirmed

Learning Together: The Reflection Circle

At the close of each visit, we will hold a structured reflection circle (approx. 60 minutes)

Q1

What stood out most to you during this visit, particularly in comparison with how restorative justice operates in your own context?

Q2

Were there any practices, ways of working, or features of this setting that felt particularly relevant or thought-provoking for your own context, even if they may not be directly transferable?

Q3

What tensions, uncertainties, or unanswered questions are you leaving this visit with, and why do they matter for how you think about restorative justice going forward?

I will also send the questions round to everyone online after the trip for reflections

Monday 23 February

- 09:00 – Arrival at Avans premises
 - 09:15 – Opening by Bart Claes and Annemieke Wolthuis
 - 09:30 – Introduction round and update on project plans by Jon
 - 10:30 – Introduction by Bart on our work at our research line THW & Annemieke on RJ and youth and current projects
 - 11:30 – Evert Kampert, RJ coordinator in prison about *Puinruimen*
 - 12:15 – Lunch at the campus
 - 13:15 – Taxi to PI Vught
 - 13:45 – Arrival (bring passports)
 - 14:00 – Through security gates
 - 14:30–16:30 – Prison visit, guided by Eva van Vugt
 - 17:00 – Return to hotel by taxi
 - 18:00 – Dinner in town (not far from the hotel)
- Short wrap-up of the day followed by dinner

Tuesday 24 February

- 09:00 – Arrival (after checking out at the hotel) at Avans
- 09:15 – Short reflections on Day 1 and agenda Day 2
- 09:30 – Workshop by Elsbeth Kamphuis & Terry Akins on parenthood and imprisonment
- 11:00 – Break
- 11:15 – Winie Hanekamp and Annelyn Smit on the work of the CHILD Centre (KIND). Marieke van Zwam, Exodus, adds some information on the camps for children
- 12:00 – Angela Verhagen-Braspennincx on her PhD research on fathers in prison. Q&A
- 12:45 – Lunch, including a meeting with our director, Nienke Fabries
- 13:30 – Group meeting to discuss follow up, the workshop in Poznań, EU calls, etc.
- 14:15 – Reflection circle
- 15:15 – Departure for the airport