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CASE STUDIES OF HALF-WAY HOUSES IN THE WESTERN CAPE: OPERATIONS AND CHALLENGES

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SECTION A: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. INTRODUCTION

The majority of offenders sentenced to incarceration will be released at some stage during their sentence. Their release will mean that they have to return back to the same environment that contributed to their involvement in crime in the first place. Some of them might return back to crime while others might become law abiding citizens. It is therefore important that the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) and communities form a partnership to assist with the smooth reintegration of these offenders back to their community of origin. The White Paper on Corrections (2005) emphasises the fact that corrections is a societal responsibility. It is based on this principle that the DCS formed partnerships with different organisations to establish Halfway houses within the communities from which parolees originally hail from to facilitate the reintegration of parolees in South Africa.

This research paper provides findings of two case studies on the operations and challenges faced by the existing Halfway houses in the Western Cape. The aim of this research is to consider the manner in which the existing Halfway houses operate as well as some of the challenges faced by these Halfway houses since their establishment.

2. PAROLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1. Definition and background

Most countries have mechanisms in place that allow for offenders to be released before the completion of their full sentences.¹ One of these mechanisms is the system of parole. A number of definitions are provided to describe what parole is. The DCS describes parole as an “internationally accepted mechanism that allows for the conditional release of offenders from a correctional centre into the community prior to the expiration of their sentences of imprisonment, as imposed by a court of law”.² Nesor, describes parole as “a continuation of the court’s sentence in the community by which certain enforceable conditions are agreed upon by the Department of Correctional Services and the parolee”.³ Cromwell and Del Carmen describe parole as the release of an offender before his or her sentence expiry under certain conditions as stipulated by a paroling authority.⁴

Parole is said to originate from the French word parole or term *parole d’honneur*, meaning “spoken word”, as in giving ones’ word of honour. The term became associated with the offender’s promise or word of honour to behave in a law-abiding manner and according to certain restrictions or conditions in exchange for release.⁵ Parole is not a new concept, as the system of parole was used during a time of war as a means of releasing prisoners with the promise that they would not resume arms in the current conflict.⁶

¹ Louw, 2008

² www.dcs.gov.za/Services/CorrectionalSupervisionandParoleBoards.aspx

³ Nesor, 1993

⁴ Cromwell & Del Carmen 1999

⁵ Petersilli, 2002

⁶ Abadinsky, 2003



2.2. Purpose of Parole

The role of parole is to facilitate the following:⁷

- To acknowledge offenders for compliance to their sentence plans- and thus promote the rehabilitation of offenders
- To combat the probability of re-offending by ensuring gradual integration back into the community under controlled circumstances
- To serve as an instrument of continual rehabilitation in the community
- To provide opportunities for communities to accept their responsibility in the rehabilitation process of offenders.⁸

2.3. Policy and Legislative Framework governing Parole in South Africa

2.3.1. *Correctional Services Act, 111 of 1998*⁹

Chapter VII (Seven) of the Correctional Services Act, 111 of 1998 deals with the release from a correctional centre and placement under correctional supervision and on day parole and parole. Of particular importance in this chapter, is section 73. This section, especially subsection 73(4) states that, a sentenced offender may be placed under correctional supervision, day parole, parole or medical parole before the expiration of his or her term of incarceration. In addition, section 73(5) states the following:

- (a) A sentenced offender may be placed under correctional supervision, on day parole, parole or medical parole (i) on a date determined by the Correctional Supervision and Parole Board or (ii) in the case of an offender sentenced to life incarceration, on a date to be determined by the Minister.
- (b) Such placement is subject to the provisions of chapter VI and such offender accepting the conditions for placement.

Section 73(6)(a) further states that a sentenced offender serving a determinate sentence or cumulative sentences of more than 24 months may not be placed on day parole or parole until such sentenced offender has served either the stipulated non-parole period, or if a non-parole period was stipulated, half of the sentence. Day parole or parole must be considered whenever a sentenced offender has served 25 years of a sentence or cumulative sentences. Conditions referred to in paragraph (b) includes but not limited to the followings: placed under house detention; seeks employment; lives at a fixed address; refrains from visiting a particular place; pays compensation or damage to victims; or takes part in treatment, development and support programmes.

2.3.2. *White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2005)*¹⁰

The White Paper on Corrections (2005) is an important strategic policy document guiding the DCS This policy document makes provision for social reintegration of persons under corrections. In this regard the policy document mentions the following:

⁷ <http://www.dcs.gov.za/docs/landing/Parole%20public%20pamphlet%202012%20Eng.pdf>

⁸ Department of Correctional Services, 2015 (Presentation on Parole and Correctional Supervision)

⁹ Correctional Services Act, 111 of 1998

¹⁰ White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2005)



- The Department regards the effective social reintegration of offenders as the most challenging and most crucial aspect of their rehabilitation. The Department also realises that this is the point at which offenders are at the most vulnerable stage in their progression to sustainable correction and rehabilitation.
- Social reintegration does not start once offenders leave the correctional centre, or at the point that they leave the care of the Department of Correctional Services. The preparation for social reintegration of offenders commences from their admission into the care of the Department of Correctional Services and continues throughout the time that they are under the care of the Department. The social reintegration of offenders will also be an ongoing and important part of their Correctional Sentence Plan. The main objective with the After-Care plan is to rebuild and nurture the relationships between offenders and their victims, the communities of victims, the communities of origin of the offenders, and society at large.

2.4. The use of Parole in South Africa

Many people tend to confuse parole placement and correctional supervision. In South Africa, parole placement differs from correctional supervision in that, parole placement is the conditional release of an offender subject to continuous good conduct and adaptation from a correctional centre after a minimum prescribed portion of sentence has been served in the centre and under specific conditions that allows for the offender's re-incarceration in the event of non-compliance of conditions of placement. Placement under correctional supervision, on the other hand, is a community-based sentencing option used by the court which an offender serves under set conditions in the community. It also refers to an option where the Commissioner may convert a sentence of imprisonment after a portion has been served in a correctional centre under certain set conditions.¹¹

Currently, there are three kinds of parole in South Africa as provided for in the Correctional Services Act, 111 of 1998, namely, full parole, day parole and medical parole. The following highlights how these parole systems differ from each other:

- **Full Parole:** this is a period whereby an offender who has served the prescribed minimum detention period of his or her sentence in a correctional centre is conditionally released to serve the remaining sentence in the community under supervision and control of the Department of Correctional Services.¹²
- **Day Parole:** day parole is a management mechanism preceding full parole intended to gradually assist an offender to be released into the community under controlled circumstances. This kind of parole is said not to be widely used in South Africa because of the lack of capacity within DCS to manage this effectively. The correctional centres currently do not have facilities to house day parolees without interfering with the lock-up times of the general population.¹³
- **Medical Parole:** The Correctional Services Act, 111 of 1998 provides for parole on medical grounds to any person serving any sentence in a correctional centre and who, based on the written evidence of the medical practitioner treating that person,

¹¹ www.dcs.gov.za/Services/CorrectionalSupervisionandParoleBoards.aspx

¹² Department of Correctional Services (Policy options on Parole System in SA presentation) 2015

¹³ Department of Correctional Services (Policy options on Parole System in SA presentation) 2015



is diagnosed as being in the final phase of any terminal disease or condition. These persons may be considered for placement under correctional supervision or on parole, to die a consolatory death.¹⁴

The placement of certain categories of offenders on parole is done by either the National Commissioner of Correctional Services, the Correctional Supervision and Parole Board or the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services. Section 75(1) (a) of the Correctional Service Act, 1998 provides that a Correctional Supervision and Parole Board may place a sentenced offender serving a determinate sentence of more than 24 months under correctional supervision or day parole or grant parole or medical parole subject to the provisions of Section 52 of the Act, and set conditions of community corrections imposed on the sentenced offender. In addition, Section 75(7)(a) provides that the National Commissioner may place under correctional supervision or day parole, or grant parole or medical parole to a sentenced offender serving a sentence of incarceration for 24 months or less and prescribe conditions in terms of Section 52 of the Act.

The role of the Minister in granting parole or placement under correctional supervision is regulated by Section 78(1) of the Act, 1998 which provides that, having considered the record of proceedings of the Correctional Supervision and Parole Board and its recommendation in the case of person sentenced to life incarceration, the National Council may, subject to the provision of Section 73(6)(b)(iv), recommend to the Minister to grant parole or day parole and prescribe the conditions of community corrections in terms of Section 52 of the Act.

2.4.1. Correctional Supervision and Parole Board (CSPB)

The Correctional Supervision and Parole Board is a structure established to deal with matters related to release or placement on parole or correctional supervision of certain categories of offenders in correctional centres. This structure is established in terms of section 74 of the Correctional Services Act, 111 of 1998 and consists of members from the community, a member of the DCS. It may also co-opt members from the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. There are currently 52 Correctional Supervision and Parole Boards country-wide. These Boards are chaired by community members who are regarded as suitable and capable of carrying out their responsibilities. The Department of Correctional Services provides intensive training to the Boards after appointment in respect of the processes, policies and legislative implications.¹⁵ According to Section 74(7) (a)(i) a member of a Board holds office for such a period and on such conditions as the Minister may determine. Section 75 of the Correctional Services Act, 111 of 1998 provides for the powers, functions and duties of the CSPB as follows:

Section 75(1) A Correctional Supervision and Parole Board, having considered the report on any sentenced offender serving a determinate sentence of more than 24 months, submitted to it by the Case Management Committee in terms of section 42 and in the light of any other information or argument may-

- (a) Place a sentenced offender under correctional supervision or day parole or grant parole or medical parole and, subject to the provisions of section 52, set the conditions of community corrections imposed on the sentenced offender

¹⁴ Department of Correctional Services (Policy options on Parole System in SA presentation) 2015

¹⁵<http://www.dcs.gov.za/Services/CorrectionalSupervisionandParoleBoards.aspx>



- (b) In the case of any sentenced offender having been declared a dangerous criminal in terms of section 286 A of the Criminal Procedure Act, make recommendations to the court on the granting or placement under correctional supervision, day parole, parole or medical parole and on the period for and, subject to the provisions of section 52, the conditions of community corrections imposed on the sentenced offender
- (c) In respect of any sentenced offender serving a sentence of life incarceration, make recommendations to the Minister on granting of day parole, parole, or medical parole, and subject to the provision of section 52, the conditions of community corrections to be imposed on such an offender.

3. HALFWAY HOUSES IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1. Definition and Background

The DCS defines a Halfway house as a community based residential facility for probationers and parolees without monitorable address or support system.¹⁶ Realistic, which is one of the partnership bodies involved in the running of Halfway Houses, defines a Halfway house as a community based residential facility for offenders who, having been sentenced to a term of incarceration, are serving a portion of their sentence under supervision in the community.¹⁷ Halfway houses offer an opportunity to offenders who meet all the requirements to be placed on parole but who do not have fixed addresses that can be monitored to which they can return to in communities. A Halfway house is said to be the final part of an offenders' rehabilitation process.¹⁸

In her Budget Vote speech in 2011, the then Minister of Correctional Services, Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula indicated that the Department of Correctional Services would start a pilot project for the establishment of Halfway houses in South Africa. The Minister mentioned that, initially the pilot would focus on juveniles who had not been released on parole due to lack of formal addresses, as well as young people who were homeless at the time of their incarceration.¹⁹ Immediately after the announcement, the Department explored two options, to establish Halfway houses owned by DCS or to form partnerships.

Desktop research was conducted and experimental visits were undertaken to establish best practice in other countries. It was after this research and study tour that a partnership option was the approved method.²⁰ The DCS has therefore established partnerships with different non-profit organisations (NPOs) to run Halfway houses in South Africa. These partnerships are managed through Service Level Agreements.

The first Halfway house pilot project was launched in February 2012 at Naturena in Johannesburg. This Halfway house is a product of a partnership between the Department of Correctional Services and three non-profit organisations collectively called 'Victory House'. Victory House is home to six male parolees aged between 18 and 25.²¹ Currently DCS has

¹⁶ Nesengani, 2015

¹⁷ Realistic presentation on halfway house project on reducing offending, 2015

¹⁸ <http://www.gov.za/about-government/government-system/justice-system/correctional-services>

¹⁹ Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, 2011

²⁰ Nesengani, 2015

²¹ <http://www.dcs.gov.za/UploadedFiles/First%20halfway%20house.pdf>



partnered with six NPO's to establish Halfway houses in four regions. The partnerships with NPOs are distributed in various regions as follows:²²

Table 1: Distribution of Halfway house partnerships

Region	Number of NPOs partnership
Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West	4
Western Cape	2 ²³
Eastern Cape	2
Gauteng	1

Source: Department of Correctional Services (2016)

The Department of Correctional Services has recently taken a decision to establish a Halfway house for each and every management area.²⁴ There are currently 46 management areas in the country and they are distributed as follows per regions:

- Eastern Cape: 6
- Gauteng: 8
- Free State/Northern Cape: 7
- Western Cape: 10
- Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Northwest: 8
- Kwazulu-Natal: 7.²⁵

Currently, a total of 66 parolees and probationers are said to have been reintegrated into their community of origin through the Halfway house model and most are reported to be permanently employed and will most probably not return to crime.²⁶ Over the years, the Department intends to gradually increase this number. In their Strategic Plan for 2015/16, the Department stated that they intend increasing the number of parolees reintegrated through Halfway house partnership from a projected 80 in 2014/15 to 170 in 2017/18.²⁷ The initial budget allocated for the Halfway house project when it started in 2011/12 was R40 000. Since then the budget has increased per financial year as follows:

- 2012/13: R120 037.33
- 2013/14: R1 400 000.00
- 2014/15: R3 630 535.00
- 2015/16: R8 980 000.00.²⁸

3.2. Why the need for Halfway houses?

The need for Halfway house is reinforced by a number of factors which include amongst others:

- Family of offender live in impoverished circumstances with no extra resources to help them change their life;

²² Responses received from DCS to questions from research unit on budget allocation for halfway house project, 2016

²³ One NPO (Beauty for ashes) runs two houses

²⁴ Modise, 2016

²⁵ Annual Report of the Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services (2012/13)

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Department of Correctional Services, Strategic Plan 2015/16

²⁸ Responses received from DCS to questions from research unit on budget allocation for halfway house project, 2016



- Relationship between offenders and family is sometimes fraught with unresolved emotional issues;
- The family is often not willing to take the offender back;²⁹
- Releasing offenders on sentence expiry dates does not protect communities nor does it assist inmates with reintegration;
- Reoffending rates among juveniles are extremely high. Halfway houses can assist in reducing potential for reoffending; and
- Reoffending in Halfway houses is reported to be lower.³⁰

3.3. The role of Halfway houses

A Halfway house can fulfil the following functions:

- It is a replacement of a family or a home within the community;
- It cater for parolees and probationers without support systems or monitorable addresses;
- It enhances the process of successfully reintegrating parolees and probationers;
- It acts as a bridge between the correctional centre and the community for those who do not have support system;
- It provides scheduled programmes that prepare parolees and probationers for employment;
- It can instil family values to parolees and probationers; and
- It can assist in enhancing moral regeneration to parolees as part of their preparation for successful reintegration.³¹

²⁹ Van Wyk, 2011

³⁰ Realistic presentation on halfway house project on reducing reoffending

³¹ Realistic presentation on halfway house project on reducing reoffending



SECTION B: METHODOLOGY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research aims and objectives and key research questions

The aim of the study is to understand the day to day operation of the two Halfway houses in the Western Cape as well as challenges faced by the two houses. The study addressed the following key questions:

- How are these Halfway houses operated?
- What are the day to day activities of parolees in these Halfway houses?
- What are the programmes provided for parolees in the Halfway houses?
- What are the challenges experienced by residents of the houses?
- What are the general challenges experienced in operating a Halfway house?

4.2. Research approach and design

The focus of this paper was to understand how these Halfway houses are operated and what are some of the challenges faced in operating these houses. This study aims to create a frame of reference for other researchers who will study this phenomenon in the future. An empirical study has been conducted in the form of interviews with operators of Halfway houses in the Western Cape. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used as the method of data collection. Interviews were conducted with the people who operate the two Halfway houses in the Western Cape. The first interview was conducted on 2 February 2016 with Beauty for Ashes Halfway House situated in Observatory. The second interview was conducted on 8 February 2016 with Realistic Halfway House founder in his offices based in Gugulethu.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS (CASE STUDIES)

5.1. Case Study 1: Realistic Halfway House

Realistic Halfway house is based in Strandfontein Cape Town whereas their offices are based in Gugulethu . This house was established in 2013 by Mr Solomon Madikane. Mr Madikane is the founder of Realistic Organisation. This is a community based organisation located in GugulethuThe Halfway house is a partnership between the Department of Correctional Services and Realistic Organisation.

The house can accommodate a total of eight (8) residents and currently there are eight parolees in the house. The house accommodates male parolees from the age of twenty (20) years with the oldest parolee being 54 years old. This 54 years old parolee has just recently been placed in an old age home. The current profile of residents of the house includes youth



offenders who had committed less serious offences including theft, drug possession and mostly its residents had been given sentences of less than 12 months.

Since its establishment, a total of 30 parolees have successfully passed through the house and have not returned to crime since. Normally a resident spends a period of 12 months residing in the house but Realistic tries to reintegrate parolees in 6 months. All residents in the house are currently employed.³² The house is managed on a day to day basis by a house parent who is a female and who is assisted by a mentor. A house parent for Realistic is someone who has a background of working with street children. This person is given training on running the house including training on parenting. A mentor, on the other hand, is somebody who was previously a parolee and a resident of the house and successfully completed the programme. The advantage of having a mentor is that it is somebody who has lived the experience and thus 'knows the tricks' of how the residents might bring contraband into the house including drugs and he will be there to advise on them not to engage in that. He is there to motivate them as well. The Realistic Halfway house conducts random drug tests using a five (5) panel drug test. This is an easy to use multi-drug test which typically test for commonly abused substances including, Cocaine, Opiates and Amphetamines.³³ The tests are conducted on everybody staying in the house including the house parent and the mentor.

The partnership between the Realistic Halfway house and Department of Correctional Services is managed through a Service Level Agreement. The Department of Correctional Services pays a stipend of R30 000 a month to the house. This amount normally covers the rent for the house and salary for the house parent. This amount does not cover the costs of running the house and it does not depend on the number of parolees in the house. The Realistic Halfway house depends on sponsors for the costs of running the house. These sponsors includes business people and people from the community as well as individual members of the community who donate clothes and food.

5.1.1. Typical day of parolees in the house during the week

The activities of residents in the house is managed through a roster system. According to the roster, residents wake up at 6am, make their beds, have a shower and eat breakfast, after which they go to work. When they return from work at around 5pm they take a shower. After their shower they have a group session which start at 6pm until 7pm. This group session is facilitated by a house parent and a mentor where discussions on held on what the day was like, what were the challenges experienced during the day and how can these be addressed, and what are some of the positive experiences during the day. This means for a parolee that all positive or negative experiences during the day are shared, in the evening, during this group session.

5.1.2. Typical day of parolees in the house over weekends

On Saturday, those who are in the house over the weekend (after they are done with house chores), may take a walk to the beach. The house is not far from the beach. While at the

³² The parolees are mostly employed on projects contracted to the Realistic Organisation in the community and surrounding areas which includes amongst others, painting of schools, churches, cleaning etc.

³³ <http://www.mobilehealth.net/business-solutions/drug-screening/5-panel-drug-test/>



beach, the house parent and the mentor conduct therapeutic sessions with parolees. After the session, the parolees are allowed to relax at the beach. On Sunday residents normally attend church in the morning and come back to the house after church. Weekends are normally regarded as free days for parolees in the house. Those given free time over a particular weekend are allowed to visit their families from Friday until Sunday. Realistic will liaise with Community Corrections offices not to visit the parolee at the Halfway house but they can monitor them at their families. On Sunday evening, there is a group session for residents in the house to reflect on their weekend. Those who took the weekend off to visit their families will share with the group their experiences of their weekend, including the challenges and positive experiences about their family visit. Normally the family of residents are given feedback forms which they must complete after a weekend visit noting challenges they experienced with the parolee and the experience over the weekend. Both the family and the parolee must provide written feedback about their weekend experience. Normally the family will make conditions such as “unless the parolee changes certain behaviour then he will not be accepted back”. This also forms part of restorative justice process between the family and the parolee.

5.1.3. Programmes provided to parolees in the house

Parolees in the house undergo a number of programmes including the following:

- Yoga;
- Life skills;
- Restorative justice programme;
- Training on manual work to teach them discipline; and
- Therapeutic programmes.

5.1.4. Challenges experienced by residents of the house

Parolees experience a number of challenges which include the following:

- The fear of the family not accepting them back;
- The fear of the family not trusting them;
- The fear of relapsing back into crime and drugs; and
- Taking instructions from house parents.

5.1.5. Challenges experienced by house parents

House parents experience the following key challenges:

- Behaviour of parolees in general;
- Resistance from parolees to take instructions;
- Dealing with parolees who have an attitude of thinking they know they are right because they are adults;
- Parolees who want to test their authority; and
- Parolees who want to manipulate the system.

5.1.6. How these challenges are addresses?



The Realistic Halfway House acknowledges that these challenges do exist and as such there is constant interaction between Realistic management and the house parent to talk about these challenges and find ways of addressing them. House parents are also provided with training to address some of these challenges. With regard to challenges experienced by parolees, there is constant interaction between the house parent, mentor and residents of the house through group sessions to try and talk about these challenges and find common ways of dealing with them. Social workers are also invited to assist parolees in dealing with some of these challenges.

5.2. Case study 2: Beauty for Ashes Halfway House

The Beauty for Ashes Halfway house is situated in Arnold Road in Observatory, Cape Town. The house was established in 2003 by Stephanie van Wyk. The house is also run as a partnership between the Department of Correctional Services and Beauty for Ashes.

The house can accommodate a total of five (5) residents but currently there are seven (7) parolees in the house. The house accommodates females only. The current profile of residents of the house includes women who have been incarcerated for domestic violence, drug abuse, and theft. Generally these residents have a low level of education (between grade 7 and 8). These women have been incarcerated at Pollsmoor and Worcester Correctional Centres. Currently one woman in the house has been electronically tagged.

Since its establishment, a total of 76 parolees have successfully passed through the house, most of which have not returned to crime since. A resident in Beauty for Ashes normally spends a period of about 12 months at the house. In this house, three (3) women work part time and only one is employed on a full time basis as a receptionist at the house. The house is managed on a day-to-day basis by two house parents. These house parents come from a needy background and are people who like to work with other people. House parents are employed on a contract basis for a usual contract period of 12 months. House parents receive training and they have a supervisor who helps them with their stress and debriefs them when there is an incident. Beauty for Ashes conduct random drug tests to everyone in the house including house parents.

The partnership between Beauty for Ashes and the Department of Correctional Services is managed through a Service Level Agreement. In contrast to Realistic Halfway House, Beauty for Ashes receives a stipend for each resident in the house from the Department of Correctional Services.³⁴ The Department only started contributing the stipends in the past two years (the house has been running since 2003). There are a number of sponsors who contribute to the cost of running the house including:

- National Lottery;
- Individual people in the community;
- Uthando;
- Community Trusts;
- The church, and
- Family members.

³⁴ The responded did not disclose how much the Department contributes to the house



5.2.1. Typical day of parolees in the house during the week

Beauty for Ashes also has a roster for residents of the house. Normally Monday are a cleaning day especially for those who are not working. But others will go to work or attend computer classes and special group sessions.

5.2.2. Typical day in the house over weekends

For parolees at Beauty for Ashes Saturday is normally free time whereas Sunday is a day for church. There are some parolees who perform voluntary work at church on Sundays. In contrast to Realistic Halfway House, Beauty for Ashes allows children of the residents to come visit them over the weekend.

5.2.3. Programmes provided to parolees in the house

Parolees in the house undergo a number of programmes including:

- Personal health growth programme;
- Alcohol Anonymous programme;
- Narcotics programme;
- Diversity training;
- Computer courses; and
- Individual courses depending on their qualifications such as ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training).

5.2.4. Challenges experienced by residents of the house

A number of challenges confront residents of Beauty for Ashes Halfway house which include:

- Getting along with house parents;
- Accepting authority of house parents; and
- Not being able to conform to restrictions.

5.2.5. Challenges experienced by house parents

House parents experience the following key challenges:

- Working 24 hours;
- Setting their own boundaries (not getting involved where they should not be involved);
- Taking things personally when comments are made; and
- Parolees coming back late in the evening smelling of alcohol.

5.2.6. How these challenges are addressed?

Beauty for Ashes encourages house parents not to engage themselves too much in conflict situations of parolees. They also need to keep themselves separate but also in charge. There is regular training provided to house parents on managing conflict situations. House parents also have their own supervisor who assist them with their stress and debrief them when there is an incident.



6. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The two cases studies suggest the following:

- At least there is anecdotal evidence as to the effectiveness of the Halfway house concept as both operators stated that in the vast majority of cases residents do not recommit crimes after leaving the house.
- The payment models in the two cases differ. While both houses are run with some financial contribution by the Department of Correctional Services in the first case DCS pays across a lump sum stipend (to cover the rent of the property and the salary of the house parent) and in the second case DCS pays a stipend for each resident. In all cases, additional funds are required which include donations from the community.
- The internal running of the house also differs. In the first case responsibility is given to a house parent who is supported by a mentor (who is an ex resident of the house). In the second case responsibility is given to two house parents who are supported by a supervisor.
- In terms of employment and programmes there are also stark differences. In the first case all residents are employed, while in the second case only one of the residents has full time employment.

In the light of the above the following general recommendations are made with regard to the operations of Halfway houses and challenges faced:

- More research should also be done specifically on the recidivism rate among those reintegrated through Halfway house. Residents that leave the facilities should be tracked and data collected systematically on how many of them are successful with their lives and how many of them reoffend. What are the characteristics of persons that are susceptible to reoffend after they leave the house? How can this data assist in the selection of residents for the houses? The partnership between the Department of Correctional Services and all non-governmental organisations operating Halfway houses should be standardised.
- The Department should stick to a system that pays a stipend per resident like the situation with the current Public Private Partnership correctional facilities in Mangaung and Kutama-Senthumule where the department pays the contractor for each offender incarcerated at the facility. This allows for consistency, efficiency and accountability.
- The Department of Correctional Services should prioritise the establishment of Halfway houses in all management areas to facilitate the smooth reintegration of offenders into the community.
- The Department should look into prioritising persons that have undergone lengthy sentences for this programme since they have spent a considerable amount of time incarcerated. This will assist them in adjusting to changes in the outside world when they are released on parole.
- More resources should be invested in this initiative as this seems like a promising initiative to assist in reducing the recidivism rate. These resources will need to include both financial and human resources. There is especially a need for a direct link



- between these houses and professionals such as social workers and psychologists to assist parolees in adjusting to community life.
- The community should be informed about the need and role of Halfway houses in their communities.
 - The community should be encouraged to be more involved in assisting those in Halfway house to reintegrate successfully back in the community.
 - Families of victims should also be informed when an offender is placed in the Halfway house.
 - Families of the offender should also be informed about the role of Halfway houses and how they could assist the parolee to adjust back into the family and the community.
 - Programmes provided in the Halfway house should be informed by the need for such programmes. This means individualised plans should also be developed for each parolee in the Halfway house.
 - There is a need for standardized training to be developed and provided to house parents and a standardised support system for house parents
 - The local business community should be encouraged to be involved in Halfway houses in their area and assist with funds or other resources to sustain Halfway houses in their area.
 - More research needs to be conducted on the successes or challenges of Halfway houses in South Africa.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This research has shared some light on the operations of Halfway houses in the Western Cape and some of the challenges faced by both parolees in the house and house parents. The paper has identified some recommendations which could be implemented in order to successfully implement the Halfway house project in South Africa. Of paramount importance is the need for more research on this topic especially as it relates to failures and successes of Halfway houses. In addition, research should also focus on the recidivism rate among those reintegrated through Halfway houses. This will also establish the kind of intervention programmes necessary to address recidivism in society.

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