



geestelijk gezond Vlaanderen

Vision Paper: Quartermaking and the Detention House

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1 Introduction – creating space for recovery and connection.

Quartermaking is a military term referring to an advance party moving ahead to create a safe and welcoming place, so that the rest of the army can make use of it without additional effort. Quartermakers are therefore bridge-builders and pathfinders. They create the conditions for safe spaces where people who are excluded are made welcome. They work towards an inclusive community in which vulnerable people are not only accepted, but can also be meaningful to others. For some, reciprocity is important in order to belong again. Quartermakers work in a target-group-oriented way with people in vulnerable or marginalised positions, and strengthen cooperation and solidarity as levers for inclusion. Connection is central.

Quartermakers are aware of barriers that prevent or hinder social participation. They seek ways to lower or remove these barriers. Through a proactive and broad-based approach, they contribute to a society in which excluded people can regain their place.

In this way, quartermaking seeks to foster a social climate in which people at the margins can participate according to their own wishes and possibilities.

1.1. Quarter making is a vision, a methodology and can also be a function.

Drawing on a number of philosophical core concepts, Doortje Kal developed a vision of inclusion in her 2001 doctoral dissertation, *Quartermaking: Creating Space for People with a Psychiatric Background*.

The methodology focuses primarily on verbal, but also non-verbal, activities aimed at fostering understanding and connection. To date, particularly in Flanders, it has mainly been applied to people with psychological vulnerabilities. In Flanders, the approach began with a pilot project, *Quartermaking Practices among Mental Health Professionals*, initiated at the request of Minister Vandeurzen in 2017 in the context of the deinstitutionalisation and social integration of mental health care. (1)

Later, quartermaking in Flanders also became aligned with the concept of caring neighbourhoods (*zorgzame buurten*), a project launched by Minister Beke. (2) This alignment stems precisely from the fact that quartermakers focus not only on the target group they work with, but also on the receiving society, the caring neighbourhood.

Through a new role, Quartermaking Neighbourhood Workers in Mental Health Care, care for everyone in the neighbourhood was given very concrete form. (3)

Quartermaking is grounded in the concepts of exclusion and inclusion and is therefore not limited to people with psychological vulnerabilities. It can also be applied to other groups facing exclusion, such as people with intellectual disabilities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and people in detention.

People in detention serve their sentences of deprivation of liberty at a distance from society and are, in that sense, literally separated from it. From the perspective of a traditional prison, reintegration is often very difficult. At the macro, meso and micro levels, quartermaking can help people in detention reconnect with the social world, including in relation to work, leisure and family relationships. Because quartermakers focus on connection, they also pay close attention to the persistent stigma surrounding prisoners and former prisoners. Destigmatisation promotes inclusion.

Quartermaking is about connecting. It brings together different people, stakeholders and organisations (such as sports clubs, neighbourhood organisations and the local community) to deepen understanding and pave the way for those who are excluded. It is about creating opportunities for people to meet one another in ordinary, natural ways. It starts from the recognition that not everyone can participate in society in the same way. A person in detention who feels excluded longs for hospitality. What hospitality entails is discussed collectively by all partners involved. The assumption is that ordinary ways of doing things may not be sufficient to achieve inclusion, and that something unusual (something beyond the ordinary) may be needed to make it possible. This is referred to as the suspension of the ordinary, guided by the central question: "What needs to be done beyond the ordinary for an extraordinary other?"

Quartermaking (in relation to housing, work, leisure and education) therefore focuses not only on people in detention themselves, but also on their surrounding environment. By creating new organisations or adapting existing structures, barriers to the integration of people in detention can be reduced.

1.2. Some basic concepts of quartermaking applied to people in detention.

1.1.1 Hospitality

In a detention context, hospitality means creating space for a person's humanity within clear boundaries.

People in detention are often approached primarily as offenders or risks. Hospitality calls for seeing them also as citizens, parents, partners, workers, and human beings with talents. This can become visible through:

- respectful treatment by staff;
- seriously listening to the story behind the offence;
- room for personal input (for example in daily activities or reintegration plans).

Hospitality strengthens a sense of recognition, which is essential for motivation and behavioural change.

The quartermaker's bridging role is to create a climate in which someone is allowed to exist, even when their behaviour is subject to limits. "What does it mean to welcome someone who is different and has a criminal record?" Quartermaking helps citizens distinguish between setting boundaries and excluding people. By sharing stories (for example through gatherings, lived-experience testimonies and projects), quartermakers show that hospitality can also be safe and realistic. The quartermaker ensures that the door does not open only once someone is 'perfect'.

1.1.2 Wonder

The quartermaker can approach the story told by a person in detention with wonder. They listen without judgment and, in doing so, create space for what they as a listener did not yet know.

With people in detention, stereotyping is never far away ("they are just like that"). Wonder invites questions such as: "How did this person get here?" and "What qualities or resilience do I see, despite everything?"

Wonder helps professionals avoid becoming trapped in cynicism or routine. For people in detention themselves, wonder can arise when they realise that someone has not given up on them. From this sense of wonder, space is created for unexpected growth and change.

The quartermaker's bridging role consists in building a relationship with local residents that feels safe enough to allow such wonder to emerge. A degree of hospitality is already needed for that wonder to arise. Citizens can listen openly and without prejudice to someone's story and be surprised by previously unseen qualities.

Quartermakers bring people in detention and citizens together in contexts where the criminal past is not central (for example through art, sport, work and education). They invite citizens into wonder: "Would you have expected this from this person?"

At the same time, they encourage people in detention not to see citizens only as rejecting or judgmental. Wonder emerges when both groups discover that their assumptions do not hold.

1.2.3 The Value of difference

People in detention do not form a homogeneous group, and neither do citizens. Differences in culture, life history, psychological vulnerability, intelligence and coping styles can be considerable.

Quartermaking emphasises that differences do not need to be erased in order to belong. In practice, this may take shape through:

- tailor-made support and individual pathways;
- recognition of cultural or philosophical backgrounds;
- space for different ways of learning and developing.

This contributes to inclusion: not adapting in order to participate, but participating with difference.

The quartermaker's bridging role aims to normalise difference: a criminal record is not denied, but neither is it seen as defining everything.

Quartermakers support initiatives in which people in detention do not have to assimilate, but are able to bring their own experiences with them. By working through reciprocity (contributions, talents and social roles) the relationship shifts from citizen–detainee to human being–human being. The bridge is not a force for sameness, but a place where difference can exist.

This also recognises that being different can be difficult. Helping people learn to live with the burden of being different is an important part of the quartermaker's work. They help citizens tolerate difference without immediately wanting to correct or control it, and to distinguish between "being different" and "being unsafe."

Statements such as "we agree to disagree" and "I still do not agree, but I now better understand why you think that way" are valuable examples of respect for difference, where continued encounter and dialogue remain central.

1.2.4 Vulnerability

Detention often intensifies existing vulnerability. Behind tough or withdrawn behaviour there are often traumas, shame, experiences of loss, and fear of rejection.

Quartermaking calls for vulnerability to be seen and acknowledged, without someone being immediately judged for it.

This implies safe relationships with professionals, space to fail and to express doubt and fear, and attention to mental health and meaning-making. Recognising vulnerability is not a weakness, but a precondition for recovery.

Here, **the quartermaker's bridging role** lies in creating safe spaces where vulnerability can be shared.

They help people in detention find words for shame, fear and insecurity in their contact with citizens. At the same time, they support citizens in recognising their own vulnerability, such as fear, uncertainty and prejudice.

By making vulnerability mutual, the power balance shifts. And where vulnerability can be shared, human connection can emerge.

2 Detention houses and quartermaking

Below, we discuss four levels at which quartermaking can be applied. For the last three levels, we also indicate where and how training can be provided, depending on the level at which quartermaking takes place.

2.1/ From government to local authorities

2.2/ The detention area

2.3/ The detention house

2.4/ The resident of the detention house

At the first three levels, we speak of quartermaking because the focus is on working with groups and organisations. At the fourth level, we use the term quartermaking support because the quartermaker acts as a bridging figure between the individual they support and his or her environment.

When we speak of quartermaking from the level of government, we refer to the implementation of a detention house in interaction first with local authorities and subsequently with residents of the neighbourhood surrounding the detention house..

1.3. The government als quartermaker: Implementation of a the detention house

Within quartermaking, there is often a focus on developing niches and recognising their diversity. In biology, a niche refers to the role an organism plays within its ecosystem.

A niche for vulnerable people can be described as a specific, bounded socio-ecological domain that responds to the unique needs of groups requiring additional protection, including in situations of poverty, disability, old age, detention or marginalisation. Within the ecosystem, this refers to their relative position, their dependence on particular resources, and the interaction between their well-being and their living environment.

The diversity of detention house (ranging from closed to more open regimes) forms a spectrum of safe, normalised places that empower people. Within these spaces, people in detention can rediscover their social roles, such as parent, child, partner, friend or worker.

Moving through successive niches offers new opportunities at each stage, enabling the person in detention ultimately to reclaim their own place in society.

A detention house functions as a quarter: a warm, safe and hospitable place in the neighbourhood where people can feel at home and make choices. The relationship between people in detention and staff differs from that in a traditional prison: they know each other better and can assess expectations more realistically.

Communication lines between staff and management are short, which reduces frustration. Staff are more sensitive to changes in the attitudes of people in detention and can respond more quickly to their needs. Smaller facilities offer more varied work and a better living environment, which benefits morale. This gives rise to dynamic security, based on contact and interaction, in contrast to passive security, which relies on bars, walls and technology. Dynamic security requires suitable infrastructure in which staff and people in detention can maintain contact, and it is a precondition for the success of passive security. An active regime with stimulating activities reinforces this process (Van Zyl Smit & Snacken, 2009).

Detention houses are not isolated places; they form part of caring neighbourhoods. People can mean something to one another there, which gives life meaning. People in detention are given opportunities, both during detention and in society, to participate in projects, work, learn and pursue training, enabling them to prepare for life in freedom. From this place, they can also maintain contact more easily with family, the neighbourhood and society.

Dialogue with local authorities

Planning detention houses by government requires careful consultation with the neighbourhood, so that there is meaningful alignment with the local community. Ideally, this planning takes place in such a way that society (citizens, entrepreneurs and others) experiences that it can play an active role in recovery and in facilitating the reintegration of people in detention, as is, for example, emphasised in the concept of Welcoming Places (Hartelijke Plekken).

A detention house can evoke feelings of uncertainty within a municipality. Local authorities often balance public support, safety concerns and unfamiliar territory. Quartermaking therefore begins not with persuading, but with meeting and listening. Government, acting as quartermaker in seeking to establish detention houses in neighbourhoods and municipalities, is best positioned to do so from a negotiating stance with local authorities.

An interesting avenue could be for VZW De Huizen, with each newly planned house, to engage its quartermaker (drawing on built-up expertise in negotiating with local governments) as part of this process.

The first step with local authorities is a conversation in which the project itself is not central, but rather its meaning: building together a society that is solidaristic, just, safe and humane. What would it mean for our municipality to have a place where people take responsibility and learn to live together again? Such a conversation shifts the focus from fear to possibility. A reintegration-friendly neighbourhood is a necessary condition for effective sentence implementation, as it reduces the risk of recidivism.

A second step places greater emphasis on communicating about the project itself. Quartermakers bring stories from existing projects in other municipalities to local authorities, they make visible the human being behind the concept, and they use language that connects rather than polarises. Where safety is often associated with separation and isolation, rather than proximity, quartermakers show precisely that safety and proximity can reinforce one another. This is framed through the concept of dynamic security.

A detention house should not be externally recognisable as a care facility. A care facility designed as a gated community or fenced residential enclave would only reinforce the stigma surrounding detention. For that reason, a detention house is best integrated within a broader operation that provides services to the neighbourhood.

Dialogue with local authorities should also address the added value a detention house can bring to the neighbourhood. This includes discussing vacant buildings that, once converted into a detention house, can become inhabited again while serving the municipality through a service-oriented function. Furthermore, an existing neighbourhood analysis can serve as a starting point for mapping the needs of local authorities and exploring whether the development of a detention house can help respond to those needs.

A neighbourhood analysis includes both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data may include, among other things, vacant properties and an inventory of local services and associations. Qualitative data are gathered through conversations with neighbourhood residents. For developing a neighbourhood analysis, the snowball method can be used. In this approach, one resident interviews another resident, after which the interviewee takes on the role of interviewer. In this way, knowledge from within the neighbourhood network is collected and deepened step by step. From the justice sector, cooperation with universities and universities of applied sciences can be proposed to municipalities in order to carry out this task.

Such an analysis can also help map more clearly the existing interplay between formal and informal care. From these findings, opportunities may emerge within the neighbourhood to which a detention house can respond. If no neighbourhood analysis yet exists, it may be advisable to have one developed. (4)

In urban areas, where people often do not have gardens, a park may be an asset. In a municipality where neighbourhood shops and meeting places have disappeared, a local shop (possibly based on a short supply chain) combined with a neighbourhood café could offer added value. A mobile neighbourhood service (buurtkar), for example in rural areas, may also serve a wider area and create additional value. Another added value of the detention house may lie in the shared or dual use of spaces. (5)

Bringing citizens together around the table

Following consultation with local authorities, meetings are organised with neighbourhood residents. A detention house requires social embeddedness: it should not be a foreign island, but a house in the street.

Quartermakers create moments of encounter, neighbourhood gatherings, round tables, walks and working groups, in which residents and local associations are present. Not merely to be informed, but also to have their voices heard through questions, concerns, objections, shared reflection, and the opportunity to imagine together. Transparent and authentic communication is essential. This includes naming the added value for society, the neighbourhood and the person in detention, as well as possible tensions and problems that may arise, together with potential sources of support for addressing those challenges. It can be valuable to share experiences from neighbourhoods with other detention houses. At the same time, placing too much emphasis on places that are doing exceptionally well may sometimes increase resistance. Quartermakers start from the understanding that people are different and that difference and otherness may generate tensions. They work in a process-oriented and proactive way, while also remaining responsive to what happens within the community, including in its interaction with the detention house.

Based on these initial conversations with the neighbourhood, it is important to further refine the neighbourhood analysis and better align the added value of the detention house with local needs.

Alongside allies and key community supporters (people with strong social networks) it is important to pay attention to the strongest opponents of the project as well, because they may potentially become committed collaborators. Opponents are, after all, people who make the effort to attend these meetings. Quartermakers explicitly acknowledge

that engagement. Building in sufficient time to listen to resistance is an important element.

At each stage, it is useful to assess whether there is already room for stories from supporters, such as former prisoners and staff members from a detention house, but especially stories from residents of neighbourhoods where another detention house is already present. Within that group, some of the most valuable stories come from people who have evolved from resistance to cooperation. They often also describe the process through which their position changed. During these meetings, it is also important to make clear that, alongside responding to neighbourhood needs, there is room for residents themselves to contribute to the success of the project. In other words, they can not only benefit from the added value for themselves and for the neighbourhood, but can also become collaborators and take on responsibility. This can foster a sense of ownership and pride in the project, and can help residents become ambassadors for the project among other members of the community.

Questions that can be central in this process:

- How do we want this house to be visible in our neighbourhood?
- What forms of contact would be desirable?
- What do we need in order to feel comfortable with this project?

Trust begins to emerge, and the neighbourhood comes to know the residents of the detention house not as “prisoners,” but as new neighbours with responsibilities and a story.

A few observations drawn from Recommendations for High-Quality and Successful Halfway Houses (p. 29):

- Make clear agreements with the municipality and specific services about the communication role of each actor. This helps avoid inconsistent messaging towards citizens.
- Start communication as soon as there is certainty about the opening of a halfway house, and before any (potential) works begin. The methodology of living-room conversations, for example through *Straatwoordenaar*, can be very useful in this regard.
- Ensure regular communication on progress during the period between the announcement and the actual opening of the halfway house: approximately once every three months before opening (Deprez, A. (2014). *Communication Strategy to Address the NIMBY Problem in Detention Houses*).

- Organise an information meeting with the nearest residents. How communication should continue afterwards can be agreed together with the residents themselves (letter, meeting, etc.).
- Consider organising a dedicated meeting for schools, preferably in small groups led by someone with sufficient skills to work with children and young people.
- Have the designated contact person introduce themselves in strategic places (such as the pharmacy or bakery). This can positively influence the attitudes of neighbourhood residents. This also highlights the importance of key community supporters.
- Inform residents living further away, where appropriate, by letter.
- Organise a guided visit. Ideally in small groups, allowing people to form a clearer understanding of what a halfway house is.

After the Opening:

- Organise a follow-up meeting approximately six months after opening.
- Provide further information through the website or the municipal newsletter. If the neighbourhood already organises events, connect to those or take initiatives yourself.
- Allow members of the responsible organisation to speak for themselves. After all, they know the subject best.
- Appoint a contact person and make this clearly known to the neighbourhood. Ideally, this should be someone who will also be working in the halfway house afterwards.
- Be honest, transparent and clear. Name the risks, but also the possible ways of addressing them. This can, where appropriate, be done in consultation with neighbourhood residents.
- Make constructive use of the power of the media, while determining the narrative yourself.
- Respond immediately to incoming complaints and communicate openly about them with other neighbourhood residents. Interaction with the neighbourhood should be understood as a reciprocal relationship between the halfway house and the community. For both parties, this interaction should create added value. Interaction may take the form of shared facilities and infrastructure, shared training, the provision of services and work opportunities, and more. The extent to which interaction is possible depends on the regime and level of security.

To bring together the points above, establishing a neighbourhood consultation platform could be a valuable approach, possibly linked to a contact point for complaints and remarks. Depending on the context and available possibilities, this could be organised

by the local authority, by the detention house itself, or through a collaborative arrangement.

The consultation platform would be a periodic meeting (for example every three months) attended by staff from the detention house, neighbourhood residents, local associations, police, and a representative of the local authority. In the first instance, complaints received through the contact point would be discussed, without naming individuals. Residents present would thus have insight into these issues, which contributes to a high degree of transparency. The platform could also be used to inform the neighbourhood about activities organised by the detention house and to encourage residents to become involved in the project. Ideally, it could grow into a platform where all neighbourhood concerns and activities can be discussed, including issues unrelated to the detention house. In this way, the consultation platform itself becomes an added value for the neighbourhood: an interactive and participatory forum, with the additional strength of a direct line to local authorities.

Over time, it may be important to provide feedback, for example through data shared by a community police officer, to help correct heightened feelings of insecurity associated with the presence of a detention house.

A particularly interesting avenue is for the detention house to connect to an already existing neighbourhood consultation platform, provided that the underlying vision of that platform is grounded in inclusion, connection and respect for difference. The platform should not become a lobbying group aimed at keeping “people who are different” out of the neighbourhood.

In the long term, such a platform has the advantage that complaints from new residents can be given a place within the already existing inclusive discourse of the platform. These new residents then come into contact there with neighbourhood ambassadors for the detention house. Organising a combination of a contact point and a consultation platform has proven to be a very positive experience (from 2004 to the present) for the Psychiatric Centre Ghent-Sleidinge (Campus Sleidinge) and the surrounding neighbourhood. (6)

In this way, a shared sense of ownership gradually grows: the detention house is no longer seen as something imposed from outside, but as part of the local community.

1.4. Quartermaking and the detention region

If one assumes that a region will contain a differentiated range of detention houses, it may be useful to develop a number of quartermaking approaches (aimed at increasing hospitality) at the regional level in relation to housing (Housing First), work (Open Hiring), and leisure (for example Welcoming Places / Hartelijke Plekken).

The person responsible for the region surrounding the detention houses can introduce these and other ways of thinking into organisations and among employers, in order to create a more hospitable climate for residents of the different detention houses. This could also be organised at the provincial level.

Housing first

Quite a number of people lose their housing during the period they spend in prison. (7) For that reason, it is important to invest in Housing First. Housing First is an evidence-based intervention model grounded in the principle that stable housing is a fundamental precondition for successful social reintegration. Applied to former prisoners, Housing First means that they gain direct access to permanent, independent housing immediately after detention.

Within this model, housing is not seen as an end goal or reward, but as a structural basic provision from which further support can take place. In addition, integrated and long-term support may be offered, focusing for example on psychosocial functioning, addiction issues and mental health. The Housing first principle lowers barriers to finding housing for a former prisoner. Searching on the rental market after a period in prison is often difficult because of the stigma associated with detention.

Open hiring

This approach originated in the United States and was first introduced at Greyston Bakery. There is no need to apply for a job in the traditional sense. By using open hiring, opportunities are created for everyone: women, men, people of colour, people of all faiths and sexual orientations, immigrants and refugees, veterans, economically disadvantaged people, former prisoners, and all others who may be excluded from contributing to the health and strength of society. Everyone receives on-the-job training and support. (8)

Anyone seeking work is given a job. This helps ensure, among other things, that former prisoners (who are often stigmatised, including in the labour market) can still gain access to employment.

In Mechelen, '12 Work' operates according to this principle. (9) Everyone who wants to work is given a chance. No attention is paid to prior experience, qualifications or

background. People register on a waiting list, and the order on the list determines who gets to start work first.

Welcoming places (Hartelijke Plekken)

Enchanté, a network of Welcoming Places (Hartelijke Plekken), operates in cities and municipalities. These are cafés, restaurants, shops and cultural venues where everyone is welcome and where people care for one another.

Enchanté engages in quartermaking. Characteristic of this approach is the collaboration between professionals (social workers) and non-professionals (shopkeepers, citizens, schools, and others). As a result, businesses and schools become Welcoming places where everyone is welcome and where people can find rest and connection within society. The best-known element of the Welcoming places approach is the “suspended coffee.” A customer pays for two coffees, drinks one, and leaves the other in the form of a voucher for someone who cannot afford one.

The idea of a prepaid service (which could also include, for example, concert or museum tickets) is used as a means of fostering encounters between people who might otherwise never meet. A municipal map showing the different services offered by participating businesses provides a clear overview for those who wish to make use of these small acts of support. There are now 26 welcoming municipalities in Flanders. (10) The person responsible for each detention region could introduce these (and other emerging) methodologies to the appropriate people and organisations, in the hope that they will develop them further. This person can also connect like-minded people and interested actors working around these methodologies. In this way, quartermaking practices within society can continue to grow, and the threshold between the detention house and society can be further lowered.

Education and training

How do you build a regional network of hospitality? How do you introduce the above methodologies within organisations?

This requires knowledge of the methodologies as well as the social skills needed to engage and inspire people. Training can be offered to interested local authorities.

1.5. The Detention House: Quarter Making and the detention house.

General

Quartermakers start from a basic attitude: a positive view of humanity in which one sees the person behind that for which they have been punished. A person becomes fully human only in relation to others, with respect for human rights. Quartermakers focus not only on the person in detention, but also on that person's environment. Safety is not an end in itself, but the foundation from which to work on connection. And connection, in turn, can foster greater safety.

The quartermaker moves between the house and the local community. This quartermaker engages in dialogue with neighbourhood residents, associations and local partners. They are the point of contact for the house and, in that way, are also known within the neighbourhood. They organise moments of encounter and dialogue. They help transform concerns and problems into mutual involvement. Strengthening existing ties, addressing misunderstandings and working towards destigmatisation are all part of building connection. They work towards normalisation so that the detention house becomes an ordinary and recognised part of the neighbourhood.

The goal is inclusion: making the house visible and meaningful within the social fabric. Not by "selling" the idea that the house is safe, but by allowing people to experience together that it brings added value — a place of recovery, cooperation and human growth.

We have already referred to the added value of the detention house. In that sense, it can be understood as a neighbour that contributes to meeting needs within the neighbourhood. This can generate goodwill from the community towards the residents of the house and encourage a shared search for solutions to conflicts. Quartermaking from within the house requires flexibility and adaptability on the part of the quartermaker in responding to an ever-changing process. Establishing or joining a consultation platform and setting up a contact point can be methods to monitor and support this process more closely and in a more structured way.

Methodologies

There are also methodologies such as Photovoice, shared reading (Samen Lezen / Come Read), poetry trails, and buddy initiatives, which may be organised by the detention house itself or joined by residents of the detention house when organised by others. The quartermaker from the detention house can explain these activities to others and encourage them to organise them, after which the detention house can participate in the activity. For example, they might explain to a librarian what a living library is or what

a poetry trail entails, offer practical tips on how to organise it, and then participate from the detention house itself.

It would be valuable to provide specific training or intervision for the person taking on this role within the detention house, so that they have knowledge of these methodologies. This may include community building and participation skills, mediation competencies, dealing with resistance and tensions in the neighbourhood, and communication on public perceptions of detention and recovery..

1.6. The resident of the detention house: Supporting through quartermaking

A detention house exists at the intersection of two worlds: that of community-building and that of individual support. Those who work there therefore move between fostering social inclusion in the neighbourhood and supporting the personal recovery of the resident. This latter dimension is the work of the quartermaking support worker.

The quartermaking support worker starts from the individual: a resident of the detention house. He or she supports (former) people in detention in their search for a place to live, work or participate in social life. This support goes beyond practical assistance; it is about preparing encounters between the resident and the world beyond the walls.

The support worker asks questions such as:

- Where would you like to live? Where do you feel welcome?
- Who could you connect with? What could you contribute to?
- What do you need in order to become part of ordinary life again?

Working on the social embeddedness of the detention house within the neighbourhood is sometimes separate from the trajectory of an individual resident of the house — for example when that person intends to live in a different neighbourhood, municipality or city than the one in which the detention house is located. The aim is both to contribute to repairing the harm caused to victims by the offence and to support reintegration into free society.

At the core is relational hospitality: the support worker creates space for the resident's own story and choices. He or she acts as a forerunner — someone who explores the barriers the resident may encounter, such as prejudice, distrust and fear, and seeks to lower those barriers. It is quartermaking at the individual level: preparing society, in a

small but meaningful way, for the return of someone coming back.

Training for this role includes:

- *restorative practice: shifting from punishment towards growth;*
- *stigma awareness: recognising how language, expectations and small interactions can reinforce stigma or, conversely, help break it down;*
- *empowerment: developing the sensitivity and judgment to know when to engage in quartermaking on behalf of residents, and when to support them in making contact themselves and taking responsibility.*

Starting from the needs and wishes of the resident means mapping out a pathway together in which barriers in the surrounding environment are lowered or removed.

Staff working at the last three levels inspire one another. In practice, roles across the different levels often overlap: the support worker may engage in quartermaking gestures in the neighbourhood, while the community-supporting quartermaker may inspire residents to take initiative themselves. Continuous reflection and exchange are therefore essential. Team meetings, intervision and joint training help ensure that the individual and collective dimensions of quartermaking reinforce one another.

In this way, a culture emerges in which every staff member is aware of their role as a bridge-builder, whether in the life world of one person or in the dynamics of an entire neighbourhood.

1.7. General education

In terms of training, there are foundational elements to be practised by everyone engaged in quartermaking:

- Empathy: being curious about difference in the other (as distinct from sympathy, which seeks what is similar in the other).
- Diplomacy: remaining unflappable, cool-headed and calm.
- Not being deterred by the tragedy inherent in this work: being able to deal with grief and loss.
- Speaking in conditional terms: using words such as “perhaps” and “possibly.”
- Not seeking to be right, but opening up choices for others.
- Curiosity.

- Starting from the assumption that people are naturally hospitable, while recognising that some barriers may need to be removed. Hospitality sometimes needs to be structured into clear and manageable tasks.
- Being able to hold the emotions of others, including those of neighbourhood residents.
- Embracing resistance rather than pushing against it; seeing criticism as a source of energy.
- Being willing to work in an environment marked by distrust.
- Sprezzatura / humour.
- Selflessness as a strength in striving for the common good: a better world for everyone.
- An outward-looking perspective.

3 Conclusion – A house that connects

A detention house can only succeed if it is rooted in its environment. When a community is willing to make space for recovery, and when staff learn to build bridges between residents and neighbours, something new can emerge: a place where safety and humanity go hand in hand.

In this way, the detention house becomes not merely a place of temporary detention, but a symbol of inclusion. It offers opportunities to those who wish to participate again, but also to the neighbourhood, which learns to see itself anew as a community in which every person counts.

Quartermaking then becomes not a project, but a way of living together.

Notes

(1) https://www.demorgen.be/nieuws/dit-project-leert-psychisch-kwetsbare-mensen-zich-thuis-te-voelen-in-hun-buurt~bff40e17/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

and

Flemish Mental Health Action Plan: Strategic Plan 2017–2019 (p. 25)

<https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/view-file/25569>

(2) Quartermaking aligns both substantively and normatively with the concept of caring neighbourhoods, as is evident, among other things, from Wouter Beke's foreword to Peter Dierinck's Handbook on Quartermaking.

See also the quotation below from 'Report of the Meeting of the Committee on Welfare, Public Health, Family and Poverty Reduction', Tuesday 7 July 2020.

"A final pilot project I would like to mention is the Quartermaking project in mental health care, because this project also clearly brings together the different dimensions of the social integration of care and community-oriented care. Through this methodology, the aim is to make society more hospitable for people with a particular vulnerability. At present, support services focus mainly on the individuals themselves. The emphasis lies on people's strengths, restoring functioning, increasing skills and adaptability, and building a network around the person.

With the methodology of Quartermaking, however, the reasoning starts from the opposite direction: the aim is to work on society and the local social fabric in order to create more hospitable places and connections for people with psychological vulnerabilities, based on the philosophy that society itself must also adapt to vulnerable people and make space for them.

Recovery-oriented care from within a mental health facility and Quartermaking are complementary to one another. Their aim is to find a place for the individual in society where vulnerability itself is also allowed to exist. There is a mutual effort to find such a place for every citizen within a local community. This is being tested in Maasmechelen, Oostende, Aalst, Brugge and Gent." — Wouter Beke

(https://www.vlaamsparlament.be/nl/parlementair-werk/commissies/commissievergaderingen/1409942/verslag/1412554?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

(3) from the website of the Department of Care

<https://www.zorgenvoormorgen.be/zorgzamebuurten/bridging>

(4) From the website of the Flemish Department of Care:

<https://www.departementzorg.be/nl/analyse-en-plan> (these pages contain a number of references to tips and approaches for developing a neighbourhood analysis).

(5) “Which spatial facilities (classrooms, creative spaces, parking facilities, sports infrastructure, etc.) can be used for shared or dual use, both by residents of the house and by neighbourhood residents, and what the impact of this is — not only on the management of those spaces, but especially on their location and their visual presence in the urban landscape. Such dual use can be either passive or active: spaces may be used by neighbourhood residents when they are not being used by residents of the halfway house, OR neighbourhood residents and residents of the halfway house may use, from a reintegration perspective, facilities such as creative spaces or sports infrastructure simultaneously. Within the vision of a halfway house for a maximum of ten residents, the feasibility of, for example, an internal or external sports space (basketball, volleyball, etc.) for people in detention and their support workers may become more realistic in terms of making it available to residents of the immediate neighbourhood. This understanding of multiple use of spaces fits within a broader vision of sustainability.” (from , https://www.dehuizen.be/media/aanbevelingsnota-loopplankhuizen_03102019_web.pdf p.21)

(6) Peter Dierinck, Hoopverlenen, Witsand, 2017, p. 105-112

(7) Ager, E.E., Hewlett, M.M., Augustine, D. *et al.* Homelessness Following Jail Exit Among Previously Housed Individuals. *J Urban Health* 102, 977–988 (2025).

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-025-01016-4>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11524-025-01016-4>

(8) website Greyston Bakery https://shop.greyston.org/pages/open-hiring-jobs?_pos=1&_sid=f685e0a57&_ss=r

(9) website 12work <https://www.12work.info/>

(10) website Enchanté vzw <https://enchantevzw.be/nl/>

Appendix 1

Quartermaking at the four levels can be translated into practice, based on the texts concerning De Huizen, through the following proposed roles:

Government and Local Authorities: This concerns the way in which a detention house is established. A local authority is engaged and encouraged to receive a detention house. In a second phase, meetings are organised with residents from the neighbourhood surrounding the future detention house.

Director (Quartermaking in the Detention Region): Contributing to the development and support of barrier-reducing initiatives in relation to housing, work, leisure, and education/training within the detention region for people who are stigmatised or excluded.

House Support Worker (Quartermaking: The Detention House in the Neighbourhood): Serving as a point of contact for the neighbourhood; participating in or organising neighbourhood consultation. The house support worker is concerned not only with the living climate within the house, but also with the social climate in the neighbourhood.

Individual Plan Support Worker (Quartermaking Support: The Solution Plan, Together with the Support Worker Contracted from Society)

Providing quartermaking-oriented individual support through the solution plan, together with the support worker engaged from the wider community.

Appendix 2.

Different methodologies for project-based work on inclusion between the neighbourhood/municipality/city and the detention house

Photovoice is a participatory research methodology in which people take photographs themselves to make their experiences, perspectives or life world visible and open for discussion. It combines visual representation with stories and dialogue to explore social issues, needs or problems and to raise awareness.

In a detention house, people in detention could take photographs of their daily lives or challenges and discuss these images in group sessions. In this way, they gain a voice in how their living environment can be improved, and support workers can better understand what matters to residents. This can contribute to better coexistence within the house. Photovoice only becomes quartermaking, however, when people in detention use it to foster greater empathy among others, for example neighbourhood residents.

A Living Library is an interactive programme or event in which people (“books”) share their personal stories through conversations with readers (visitors). The aim is to break down prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination through direct, personal encounters.

Key Characteristics:

People as Books: Instead of physical books, the “books” are people with specific experiences, backgrounds or identities.

Dialogue at the Centre: Visitors “borrow” a person for a conversation and can ask questions about their experiences.

Empathy and Awareness: By hearing personal stories, visitors develop understanding of and respect for other perspectives.

Breaking Down Prejudice: The aim is often social change through reducing stereotypes and stigma.

A person in detention or a former prisoner can participate as a “book” and share their life story and experiences with detention. Visitors can ask questions and, in this way, come to know the person behind the label.

A Poetry Trail:

A quartermaking poetry trail is a route along different locations, both inside and outside a detention house, where poems written by residents are displayed so that poetry can be experienced and society can connect with the lived world of people in detention.

In a detention house, a poetry trail can be developed in which residents write and select their own poems. Rather than remaining visible only within the house, the poems are also presented outside the detention house, for example on windows, fences or in the surrounding neighbourhood.

Purpose: The poems reach the neighbourhood and the wider public, creating connection between the detention environment and society.

Impact: Visitors and local residents can read the poems, reflect on them, and perhaps engage in conversations about themes such as freedom, recovery, identity or social connection.

Participation: This makes the poems of people in detention visible and meaningful to society, and gives them a voice beyond the walls of the detention house.

Buddy Support:

Citizens are encouraged to accompany people in detention in everyday activities and outings. The volunteer offers a listening ear and helps with a number of practical matters (for example with administrative issues or finding housing). The volunteer may also accompany the person to appointments, thereby helping to lower barriers.