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National reports of knowledge-based interventions for preventing juvenile delinquency within social care

A scoping review of publications from the Nordic countries

Innehåll

Summary	4
Background	4
Purpose and target group	4
National reports assessing knowledge-based interventions	5
— Differences and similarities between the Nordic countries	5
Potential domains for Nordic experience sharing	6
— Addressing knowledge gaps	6
— Contribute to dissemination of knowledge-based interventions	7
Methods	7
1 Introduction	8
Aim and purpose	8
Recipients and use	8
2 Background	10
Juvenile delinquency	10
Prevention in social care	10
Knowledge-based interventions	11
3 Method	12
Research questions	12
Selection criteria	13
Process for selection of reports	14
— Collection of reports	14
— Screening and assessing reports for relevance	15
Categorisation of reports	15
Selecting domains for Nordic experience sharing	16
Process for gathering feedback	16
Methodological limitations	16
4 Selection of reports	18
5 National reports assessing knowledge-based interventions to prevent juvenile delinquency	20
Scope of reports and differences between the Nordic countries	20
6 Domains for Nordic experience sharing	28
Address knowledge gaps	29
— Interventions that prevent recidivism in younger individuals	29
— Interventions during institutionalisation	29
Contribute to dissemination and application of knowledge-based interventions	30
— National coordination in dissemination of knowledge-based interventions	30
— Potential for broadening the scope of preventing juvenile delinquency	30
— Importance of cooperation without replacing access to concrete methods	31

7	Participants	32
	Project group	32
	— Experts	32
	— SBU	33
	— Reference group, Swedish authorities	33
	— Reference group, Nordic region	33
	— SBU scientific advisory board	34
	— External reviewers	35
8	Glossary	36
9	References	40

Summary

Background

Even if only a small fraction of children and young people who commit crime engage in criminal behavior over time, the risk of recidivism is high once a pattern of criminality becomes established. Interventions to prevent the development of reoccurring criminal behaviors among children and young people (i.e., juvenile delinquency), is imperative. Accessible interventions should be based on the best available knowledge in order to efficiently prevent juvenile delinquency. Several stakeholders, agencies, and authorities on national level contribute to the development, dissemination, and implementation of knowledge-based interventions. Increasing access to knowledge-based interventions is essential and recognised as a top priority within the Nordic countries in their efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency.

Purpose and target group

The purpose of this report is to review reports published by agencies and authorities on national level in the Nordic countries, assessing knowledge-based interventions for preventing juvenile delinquency. The report further aims to highlight differences and similarities in the reports specific to each country and recommend suitable domains for sharing Nordic experiences.

National reports assessing knowledge-based interventions

SBU has identified a total of 30 national reports assessing knowledge-based interventions published in the Nordic countries based on a set of predefined criteria. The identified reports, as well as differences and similarities between Nordic countries, are presented in a digital and [interactive map](#). The identified reports include a wide range of interventions, directed to different sub-groups of individuals, provided in different contexts with different preventive aims. The reports also vary in type of knowledge that has been included and assessed, as well as type of conclusions drawn about the efficacy of the interventions.

Differences and similarities between the Nordic countries

A summary of some of the observed differences and similarities between Nordic countries are provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Summary of some observed differences and similarities between Nordic countries.

	Examples of differences and similarities based on the Nordic reports
The preventive aim of the intervention for a specific population	<p>Interventions preventing the development or establishment of juvenile delinquency for high-risk individuals are most common across the Nordic countries.</p> <p>Interventions preventing the development of juvenile delinquency, directed to the general public or the whole population are only mentioned in reports from Denmark and Norway.</p>
Target age group for the intervention	<p>Interventions targeting young people or adolescents are most common across the Nordic countries.</p> <p>Interventions targeting parent of young children (<6 years) are only mentioned in reports from Norway and Sweden.</p>
Context in which the intervention is provided	<p>Interventions provided in out-patient care and social services are most common across the Nordic countries.</p> <p>Interventions provided in institutional care are most often mentioned in reports from Finland and Norway.</p> <p>Interventions provided within the context of civil society are most often mentioned in reports from Denmark and Finland.</p>
Aspect of the intervention perceived to facilitate change	<p>The most common interventions across the Nordic countries are those who target family relationships, parenting skills, and skills and abilities of the youth in question.</p> <p>Interventions providing education and job-related opportunities are most often mentioned in reports from Denmark.</p>

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Table 1
continued

Examples of differences and similarities based on the Nordic reports	
Whether the report was published before 2019 or after	The majority of identified reports were published prior to 2019. Denmark has the highest proportion of reports published prior to 2019.
Type of knowledge reviewed and method for synthesis	<p>The most common approach across the Nordic countries involved a systematic review of studies evaluating the efficacy of interventions. The most common approach to synthesise data regarding the efficacy of interventions was narrative.</p> <p>Meta-analysis as a method for synthesise data where only used in reports from Norway and Sweden. Assessing the relevance of data to Nordic conditions where more common in reports from Denmark and Finland.</p>
Type of conclusion drawn by the authors of the report regarding the efficacy of interventions	<p>In all countries, the most common conclusion is a description of the necessary conditions for an intervention to be successful, i.e. effective. The most commonly occurring prerequisite mentioned across the countries are the need for cross-sectional collaboration.</p> <p>Conclusions about the significance of context occurs most often in Norway, conclusions addressing the significance of targeting specific subgroups occurs most often in Denmark, and conclusions regarding interventions being ineffective or counterproductive occurs most often in Sweden.</p>

Potential domains for Nordic experience sharing

SBU has identified two overarching domains suitable for sharing Nordic experiences, based on differences and similarities in national reports assessing knowledge-based interventions for preventing juvenile delinquency.

Addressing knowledge gaps

The first domain involves addressing knowledge gaps and contributing to the development of knowledge regarding effective crime preventive interventions at the national level. This could involve adopting a more systematic approach to developing methods and models for the implementation and evaluation of promising interventions. SBU recognises the need to integrate perspectives related to childrens’ rights, particularly vulnerable groups, and the presence of co-existing issues into the knowledge development process. Examples of knowledge gaps identified by SBU based on the Nordic reports are:

- interventions aimed to prevent recidivism for children who commit serious crimes,
- interventions intended to be provided within institutional care, and
- interventions aimed to prevent the emergence of juvenile delinquency directed to the whole population or sub-groups of the population regardless of risk factors on individual level.

Contribute to dissemination of knowledge-based interventions

The second domain involves contributing to the wider and coordinated dissemination of knowledge-based interventions. For instance regarding:

- the possibility to coordinate the dissemination of knowledge-based interventions on national level in order to better guide professionals in social care,
- the opportunity to broaden the scope of how preventive approaches are defined, and
- the challenge of balancing the importance cross-sectoral collaboration for intervention success without collaboration replacing accessibility to evidence-based interventions.

Methods

The project has not been conducted according to the standard SBU methodology, but instead adopted an explorative and iterative approach with respect to the search process, selection, categorisation, and choice of domains for sharing experiences within the Nordic countries. The work has been carried out in close collaboration and dialogue with experts and representatives from Sweden and the other Nordic countries.

1 Introduction

Aim and purpose

The Swedish Government commissioned SBU to conduct the current project (S2022/04810, partially) which has the following two objectives:

- Review national reports assessing crime prevention methods within social care for children and young people published in the Nordic countries.
- Identify similarities and differences in the national reports specific to each country, and if possible, suggest suitable domains for sharing Nordic experiences.

Recipients and use

The project highlights the scope of published national reports of knowledge-based interventions in preventing juvenile delinquency. As such, the report can serve as a tool for planning and prioritising further development, assessment, and dissemination of knowledge-based interventions in the field. The intended recipients of this report are primarily policymakers, government officials and authorities at the national level.

SBU does not address the quality or reliability of the included reports or the efficacy of stated prevention methods. The project does therefore not provide support or guidance regarding what methods are effective in crime prevention.

2 Background

Juvenile delinquency

Only a small percentage of children and young people who commit crimes or engage in criminal behavior proceed to become repeat offenders [1]. However, once the criminal behavior is established, the risk of recidivism is high. Register data from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention indicate that the rate of recidivism is the highest among young people sentenced to institutional care [2]. According to two recently published reports, as many as 70 percent of young people sentenced to closed care in Sweden, became repeat offenders [3] [4]. Means to prevent the emergence, establishment, and persistence of juvenile delinquency is therefore imperative.

Prevention in social care

Various approaches can be used to describe and classify interventions used to prevent crime. One approach considers the purpose of the measure in relation to a particular population [5–6] while another involves whether physical or social factors are modified [7]. Crime prevention targeting the physical environment may produce visible results more quickly, while observable effects of social crime prevention can take time, sometimes several years. Regardless of how interventions of crime prevention are characterised, the objective is to influence or modify risk and protective factors associated with the individual's propensity to engage in criminal behavior. The social aspect of crime prevention, which holds significant relevance for social services, focuses on modifiable risk and protective factors pertaining to the individual (such as skills

and capabilities), or their immediate surroundings (such as relationships and employment) [8]. Preventive methods within social care are usually based on a specific theory of mechanisms that lead to change, i.e., the specific elements of an intervention that induce change in the individual, thereby reducing the inclination to commit crimes [9–10].

Knowledge-based interventions

The prevention of juvenile delinquency has gained escalating attention and there appears to be consensus among the Nordic countries regarding the need for crime prevention that is based on the best available knowledge and aimed at facilitating desired changes [11–15]. The concept “best available knowledge” refers to the aggregate understanding of the benefits of a method or intervention, which can serve as the basis for choosing an appropriate intervention for an individual [16]. At the national level, the development, dissemination, and application of interventions based on the best available knowledge can be facilitated through various non-binding tools such as national knowledge bases, guidelines, and recommendations [17]. A recently published report from the Swedish Agency for Public Management highlights the creation of numerous national-level knowledge bases, advocating for better coordination and planning at that level [18]. Similar findings are outlined in a recent report from Denmark’s VIVE, emphasising the necessity and potential for coordinated efforts, and planning among the Nordic countries to achieve more efficient and effective knowledge management [19].

3 Method

This project corresponds to a scoping review [20–21], aiming to identify and present national reports on knowledge-based interventions to prevent juvenile delinquency without synthesising their findings.

Research questions

The following questions comprise the foundation of the project:

1. Which national reports assessing knowledge-based interventions in preventing juvenile delinquency within social care have been published in the Nordic countries?
2. What is the scope and content of these reports?
3. Are there differences in the reports specific to each Nordic country?
4. Are there any suitable domains for sharing Nordic experiences based on these potential differences?

Selection criteria

Tables 3.1–3.3 establish the basis for the report selection process, defining which reports to include or exclude. These criteria clarify how SBU has defined key concepts in the report. SBU:s approach to defining concepts may deviate from previous SBU reports and other reports in the field. Decisions regarding the definition of concepts for this specific project were taken in collaboration with researchers in the field.

Table 3.1
Definitions of key concepts for the project regarding type of report, publication, included.

Concept	Included	Excluded
Assessment of knowledge-based interventions	<p>Reviews pre-existing knowledge about the efficacy of interventions.</p> <p>Synthesizes knowledge regarding the efficacy of interventions.</p> <p>Provides guidance regarding the choice of knowledge-based interventions.</p>	<p>Primary studies (i.e., based on new knowledge).</p> <p>Provides guidance on interpretation of laws and regulations.</p> <p>Reviews of interventions without synthesis of their efficacy (i.e., scoping reviews).</p> <p>Provides knowledge on the population.</p> <p>Scientific articles (i.e., published exclusively in scientific journals).</p>
Nordic countries	Publication from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, or Iceland.	Publication from the Faroe Islands, Greenland, or Åland.
National report	<p>Published for management, support, or guidance at the national level.</p> <p>Support for policymakers and practitioners at the regional and local levels.</p>	Published at the regional or local level.

Table 3.2
Definitions of key concepts regarding the population.

Concept	Included	Excluded
Juvenile	The population is mainly children and adolescents aged 0-18 years.	Limited to the population of young adults (older than 18 years), or adults.
Delinquency	<p>Individual who demonstrates a pattern of criminal activity requiring action from society.</p> <p>Individual assessed as being at risk of exhibiting a pattern of criminal activity.</p> <p>May include subgroups of criminality.</p> <p>Coexisting issues may be present.</p>	<p>Individual who commits occasional criminal acts or where the behavior does not require society to take action.</p> <p>Limited to specified types of criminality and violence (i.e., acting out or aggressive behavior, domestic violence, gang-related criminal activity and sexual offenses).</p>

Concept	Included	Excluded
Interventions*	<p>Aimed at deterring the emergence, entrenchment, or persistence of criminal behavior.</p> <p>Targeting all individuals in the population, specific risk groups, individuals at increased risk, or individuals with established criminality.</p>	Limited to modifying conditions within a dedicated crime prevention entity (e.g., methods aimed at increasing compliance, implementation, or coordination).
Within social care	<p>Aimed at changing modifiable risk or protective factors in the individual or in the individual's environment.</p> <p>Used to identify or assess risk and protective factors that can serve as a basis for guidance in choosing interventions (as described above).</p>	<p>Aimed at modifying factors at the societal level (e.g., public health policies) or in the physical environment (e.g., surveillance).</p> <p>Could deter crime, but without a distinct crime prevention aim (e.g., student health or child health services).</p>

Table 3.3
Definitions of key concepts for the project regarding type of interventions included (including their aims, i.e., outcome).

* In this report, SBU uses the term "intervention" to refer to a method, program or treatment that is 1) deliberate and designed to bring about change aimed at achieving a specific goal, and 2) can be summarised as transferable knowledge, either written or verbal, and accessible through means such as education, instruction, coaching, or independent study.

Process for selection of reports

Collection of reports

The project information specialist and project manager collected reports as follows:

- A thorough review of websites (Appendix 1) for identified Nordic organisations was conducted by keyword searching (where possible) for criminal behavior and juvenile criminality in the language of each country, and by screening lists of publications based on topics.
- Searching on Google with language and region settings set to the Nordic countries. For example, to find reports from Norway, Norwegian was chosen as the language, and Norway as the region in "Search Settings" on Google.se, leading to the domain Google.no. Consequently, the search results differ from the Swedish default settings provide uniquely Norwegian search hits.
- Searching national databases and library catalogues in the Nordic countries.
- Contact with experts in the fields and government officials from the Nordic countries.

The collection of Nordic reports was an explorative and iterative process, where the various activities in the search process continuously complemented one another, for example with suggestions for additional organisations and terminology. With regard to the different languages, Icelandic and Finnish posed a greater challenge than Danish and Norwegian which are quite similar to the Swedish language. A project group member whose native language is Icelandic, was consulted regarding the Icelandic language and government administration. Similarly, a SBU researcher who is a native Finnish speaker was consulted about the Finnish language. An EndNote library was created comprising of 300 reports in PDF format and categorised by their respective Nordic countries. Reports were collected throughout the spring of 2023 up to June of the same year.

Screening and assessing reports for relevance

Four reviewers (one for each country) assessed the relevance of the identified reports according to Tables 3.1 to 3.3. The reviewers who assessed the Finnish and Icelandic reports had Finnish and Icelandic language proficiency, respectively. The reports were reviewed in a two-step process. An initial review involved cross-referencing the titles, abstracts, and table of contents of the identified reports with the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. In step two, the reports were reviewed either in part or in their entirety to evaluate and address their relevance to the specific questions. In cases of uncertainty, another reviewer was consulted. Reports that did not fulfill the criteria were removed, and the primary reason for exclusion was documented by the reviewers. The report selection process was conducted in close consultation with the project's experts and the reference groups. In cases of disagreement whether a report should be included or not, the project group deliberated to reach a consensus.

Categorisation of reports

The reports were categorised according to several relevant domains. These domains were identified through discussions with the project's experts researchers and the reference group comprising Swedish government authorities. A project group member conducted the categorisation, which was reviewed with the project's experts and the project's two reference groups, one including representatives from Swedish authorities and the other including Nordic representatives. SBU categorised the reports based on how the authors themselves chose to describe them. To highlight any differences and similarities between the Nordic countries, all reports were also categorised based on the Nordic country of origin.

Selecting domains for Nordic experience sharing

The appropriate domains for sharing Nordic experiences were chosen based on the scope and content of Nordic reports, and domains for which similarities and differences were noted. Decisions regarding what domains for sharing Nordic experiences should be highlighted in the report were reached through discussions with the project's experts and the reference group comprising representatives from Swedish government authorities. In cases of disagreement regarding differences and similarities, as well as domains to highlight for sharing Nordic experiences, a discussion was held until consensus was achieved.

Process for gathering feedback

The project group sought ongoing feedback throughout the planning and implementation phases of the project. Multiple parties were able to provide feedback on the manuscript before publication. See Table 3.4 for an overview of from whom feedback was received, and Chapter 7, Participants, for more information on who contributed.

	Project plan	Selection	Categorisation	Manuscript
Project group	x	x	x	x
SBU's quality assurance group	x		x	x
SBU's method support for conclusions				x
SBU scientific advisory board	x			x
Special reviewers from the SBU scientific advisory board				x
Nordic reference group		x	x	
Representatives from Swedish authorities				x

Table 3.4
Overview of the feedback gathering process.

Methodological limitations

The methodology used in this report has limitations that should be considered when reading and interpreting the results and conclusions. One such limitation relates to the definitions of concepts. In the scientific literature, there is no gold standard for defining concepts such as children and youth or criminality. Previous literature uses the key concepts described in the current report (e.g., juvenile, delinquency, prevention) in somewhat different ways. For example, isolated criminal acts are often included in the concept of criminality. This report confines the concept of criminality to patterns of criminal acts that require society to take action, or that may potentially do so. The criteria and definitions used in this report are presented in Tables 3.1 to 3.3.

Another potential limitation of this report is that the search and screening process may have inadvertently excluded relevant reports. This may be due to the exploratory nature of the selection criteria and methods used, which were less standardised than typical SBU methodology. In addition, the project's experts and Nordic reference group were instrumental in identifying relevant reports.

The reader should note that the report's categories for tabulating reports are not mutually exclusive. As such, the outcome of one category can be associated with the outcome of another. This is notably the case for the categorisation of the methods and interventions included in the reports (Tables 5.1 to 5.4). For example, interventions for expectant parents and/or young children (Table 5.2) are more likely to be provided in outpatient care (Table 5.4). Moreover, it is virtually impossible for interventions targeting young children (Table 5.2) to aim at disrupting entrenched criminality and reducing the risk of recidivism (Table 5.1). In this report, the presentation of the number of Nordic compilations and the domains they cover should be viewed and interpreted as distinct perspectives describing similar or related phenomena.

4 Selection of reports

Figure 1 shows a flowchart of the identified and selected reports, including the number of reports from each Nordic country assessed to be relevant. A total of 30 national reports were identified based on the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria (Tables 3.1 to 3.3). A complete list of excluded reports, along with the primary reason for exclusion, is provided in Appendix 2.

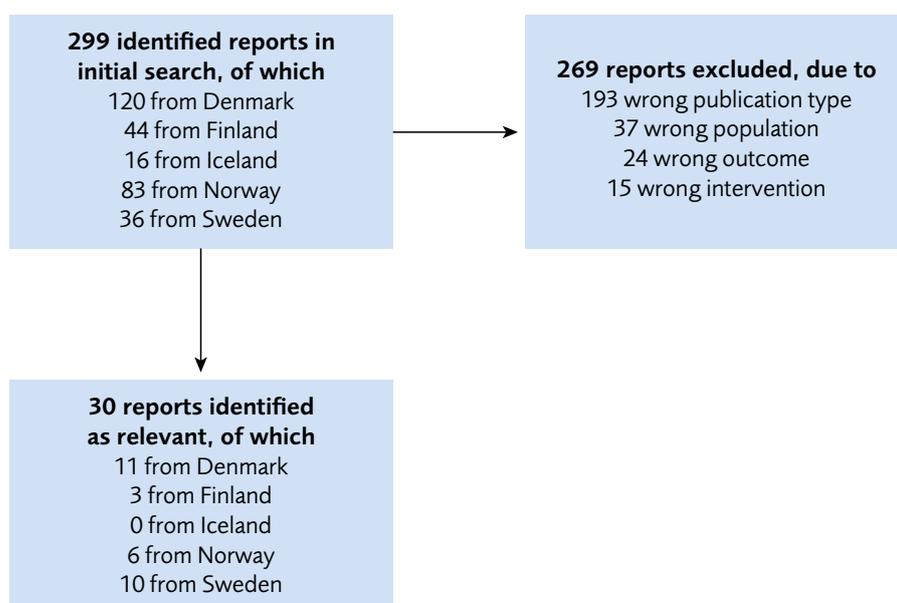


Figure 4.1
Selection of identified reports from each Nordic country.

5 National reports assessing knowledge-based interventions to prevent juvenile delinquency

The following section presents the results of questions 1 to 3: namely, the national reports published in the Nordic countries, including their scope and content, and the differences and similarities between countries.

Scope of reports and differences between the Nordic countries

SBU has identified a total of 30 national reports assessing knowledge-based interventions for crime prevention published in the Nordic region. SBU has summarized the scope of the identified reports in a digital and [interactive map](#), and through multiple tables presented in the report. The number of reports per Nordic country is presented separately to highlight any differences and similarities between countries.

The reports were categorised according to the following categories:

- The preventive aim of the intervention for a specific population
- Target age group for the intervention
- Context in which the intervention is provided
- Aspect of the intervention perceived to facilitate change, i.e., prevent or reduce delinquency
- Whether the report was published before 2019 or after
- Type of knowledge regarding the efficacy of interventions reviewed in the report
- Approach used in the report to synthesise reviewed knowledge regarding the efficacy of interventions
- Type of conclusion drawn by the authors of the report.

SBU has also summarised the authors' conclusions in Appendix 3. SBU has described the conclusions as formulated by the authors of the reports and has not assessed the reliability of these conclusions.

Table 5.1 Categorisation of the reports based on the preventive aim of the intervention for a specific population.

Target group for the intervention	Aim	Example	Total number	Number by country
Individuals at high risk of developing juvenile delinquency, or those with early manifestations of juvenile delinquency.	Prevent juvenile delinquency from developing or becoming established.	Individuals with behavioral problems, difficulties at school, at home, or with peers.	20 reports [22–41]	Denmark 7 Finland 2 Norway 5 Sweden 6
Individuals who are engaged in criminal behaviors and established in their juvenile delinquency.	Reduce criminal behavior and prevent recidivism.	Individuals who have been prosecuted for criminal acts, or who repeatedly engage in criminal behavior.	18 reports [23, 25, 27–30, 33–34, 38–47]	Denmark 4 Finland 2 Norway 4 Sweden 8
Individuals or subpopulations belonging to a specific risk group of developing juvenile delinquency, without displaying any risks on individual level.	Prevent juvenile delinquency from developing.	Individuals who live in a certain neighborhood associated with higher risk of developing juvenile delinquency.	15 reports [22–23, 26, 29, 31, 33–34, 37–38, 40–41, 48–51]	Denmark 6 Finland 2 Norway 3 Sweden 4
General public or whole population, regardless of risk at group or individual level.	Prevent juvenile delinquency from developing.	School-based programs or parent-programs directed to the whole population.	6 reports [22–24, 26, 31, 33]	Denmark 4 Finland 0 Norway 2 Sweden 0

Table 5.2
Categorisation of reports based on the target age group for which the intervention is intended.

Age group	Total number	By country
Young people The reports largely focus on the population of children aged 12 years and older.	19 reports [23–25, 28–31, 33–37, 39, 43–48]	Denmark 6 Finland 2 Norway 4 Sweden 6
Children The report largely focuses on the population of children aged 6–11 years.	14 reports [24, 28–35, 37, 43–44, 46, 48]	Denmark 5 Finland 2 Norway 4 Sweden 3
Not specified The report has no specified age limits for the population, but refers to the target group of expectant parents, parents of children and young people, or children and young people.	10 reports [22, 26–27, 38, 40–42, 49–51]	Denmark 4 Finland 1 Norway 2 Sweden 3
Young children The report largely focuses on the population of expectant parents, parents of young children (<6 years), or young children (<6 years).	2 reports [31, 37]	Denmark 0 Finland 0 Norway 1 Sweden 1

Table 5.3
Categorisation of the reports based on the context in which the intervention is provided.

Context in which the intervention is provided	Total number	By country
Outpatient care Interventions offered by service providers such as social services or pediatric health care, who are voluntary for those receiving them.	26 reports [22–26, 28–30, 32–34, 36–46, 48–51]	Denmark 10 Finland 3 Norway 1 Sweden 9
School Interventions provided at school, but not necessarily by school staff and resources.	14 reports [22–23, 26–27, 29–31, 33, 35, 38, 40–41, 50–51]	Denmark 5 Finland 3 Norway 3 Sweden 3
Institutional care Interventions provided in the institutional setting, offered either on a voluntary basis or through compulsory care.	11 reports [26–29, 33, 38, 41–43, 47, 51]	Denmark 2 Finland 2 Norway 4 Sweden 3
Civil society Interventions provided by and within the context of civil society, such as nonprofit organisations, registered faith-based organizations, foundations, economic associations, low-profit limited liability companies, and neighborhood associations and cooperatives.	7 reports [23–24, 27, 29–30, 49–50]	Denmark 4 Finland 2 Norway 1 Sweden 0

Mechanism in the intervention that leads change	Total number	By country
Family relationships Changes in relationship or interaction between the child or young person and their parents or siblings (e.g., FFT, MST and TFCO).	19 reports [22–24, 26, 28–31, 33–35, 37–40, 44, 46–47]	Denmark 5 Finland 2 Norway 5 Sweden 7
Parenting skills Enhancement in parenting skills and abilities in relation to the child or young person, such as responsiveness, boundary-setting and reinforcement of the child's positive behaviors (e.g., PMT and IY).	17 reports [22, 24, 26, 28–29, 33–35, 37–38, 40, 44, 46, 47, 49–51]	Denmark 6 Finland 2 Norway 3 Sweden 6
Individual skills and capabilities Developing or strengthening skills or capabilities of the child or young person, such as skills or capabilities essential for independent living, cultivating healthy social relationships, or coping with challenging emotions (e.g., CBT and GLM).	16 reports [23, 26–27, 30–31, 33, 38, 40–41, 43–44, 46–47, 49–51]	Denmark 4 Finland 2 Norway 3 Sweden 6
Education and employment Fostering purpose in daily life, such as modifying the school environment to improve attendance, providing skills to enhance employability, and offering activities such as vocational training, work experience and daily activities.	8 reports [22–23, 27, 41–42, 49–51]	Denmark 5 Finland 1 Norway 1 Sweden 1
Leisure and peers Broadening and building new relationships with adults and peers by offering organised activities and recreational options on the child or young person's spare time, (e.g., sports and café activities).	5 reports [27, 29, 38, 41, 49]	Denmark 1 Finland 1 Norway 1 Sweden 2
Mentorship Offering organised relationship with a trusted adult who can serve as a role model (e.g., volunteer, mentor or contact person).	3 reports [21, 48–49]	Denmark 3 Finland 0 Norway 0 Sweden 0
Standardized assessment tools Standardised questions intended to provide support and guidance for assessing risk of criminal activities (e.g. Savry and YLS/CMI).	3 reports [32, 36, 45]	Denmark 1 Finland 0 Norway 0 Sweden 2
Mediation Promoting dialogue and resolving conflicts between various parties, such as ongoing conflicts, or between an offender and a victim (e.g., VOM).	3 reports [22, 25, 29]	Denmark 2 Finland 1 Norway 0 Sweden 0

Table 5.4
Categorisation of the reports based on the mechanism in the intervention that leads to change, i.e., contributes to a reduction in criminal behavior.

CBT = Cognitive behavioral therapy; **FFT** = Functional family therapy; **GLM** = The Good Lives Model; **IY** = The incredible years; **MST** = Multisystemic therapy; **PMT** = Parent management training; **SAVRY** = Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth; **TFCO** = Treatment Foster Care Oregon; **YLS/CMI** = Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory; **VOM** = Victim-Offender Mediation

Table 5.5
Categorisation of the reports based on whether they were published before 2019 or from 2019 onwards.

Period for which report was published	Total number	By country
Published prior to 2019	18 reports [22–25, 27, 30–33, 38–42, 47–48, 50–51]	Denmark 9 Finland 2 Norway 2 Sweden 5
Published from 2019 onwards	12 reports [26, 28–29, 34–37, 43–46, 49]	Denmark 2 Finland 1 Norway 4 Sweden 5

Table 5.6
Categorisation of report based on what that of knowledge regarding efficacy of interventions that are reviewed.

Type of knowledge regarding efficacy of interventions reviewed	Total number	By country
Systematic reviews The authors have systematically identified scientific studies based on a specifically formulated research question, using a clearly described methodology.	17 reports [23–25, 28–29, 32–33, 35, 39, 41, 43, 45–48, 50–51]	Denmark 8 Finland 2 Norway 2 Sweden 5
Professionals and practices The authors use knowledge from the profession and practitioners, for example through a survey of common practices or consensus process.	15 reports [22, 24–26, 28–29, 35–37, 39–40, 44–45, 47, 49]	Denmark 5 Finland 1 Norway 2 Sweden 7
Selection of scientific articles The authors included a selection of scientific studies published in scientific journals, such as primary studies or systematic reviews.	12 reports [26–27, 31, 34, 36–38, 40–42, 44, 51]	Denmark 1 Finland 1 Norway 4 Sweden 6
Selection of reports The authors included a selection of reports (not published in scientific journals) such as published guidelines and/or evaluations.	12 reports [22–23, 26, 30, 35–36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 49, 51]	Denmark 5 Finland 2 Norway 1 Sweden 4
Assessment for risk of bias The authors have assessed the risk of bias for the included literature.	10 reports [23–25, 28, 39, 45, 47–48, 50–51]	Denmark 5 Finland 1 Norway 1 Sweden 3
Experts and researchers The authors have included knowledge based on dialogue or interviews from experts and specialists (e.g., researchers).	8 reports [22, 25–26, 35–36, 38, 40, 44]	Denmark 3 Finland 0 Norway 1 Sweden 4

Table 5.7
Categorisation of the reports based on the method used to synthesise included knowledge regarding the efficacy of interventions.

Methodology used to synthesize knowledge regarding the efficacy of interventions	Total number	By country
Narrative synthesis The authors have synthesised knowledge through words and text to summarise and explain data.	25 reports [22–27, 29–38, 40–44, 48–51]	Denmark 11 Finland 3 Norway 5 Sweden 6
Relevance assessment in the Nordic context The authors have synthesised knowledge in relation to conditions and circumstances within the relevant Nordic country.	13 reports [22–26, 29, 39, 42, 45–47, 49, 51]	Denmark 6 Finland 2 Norway 1 Sweden 3
Cost-effectiveness analysis The authors have synthesised knowledge in relation to costs and savings for society or a specific entity.	10 reports [24, 28–29, 34, 38–39, 45–47, 51]	Denmark 1 Finland 2 Norway 2 Sweden 5

The table continues on the next page

Methodology used to synthesize knowledge regarding the efficacy of interventions	Total number	By country
Meta-analysis The authors used statistical analysis to synthesize the knowledge.	6 reports [28, 34, 39, 45–47]	Denmark 0 Finland 0 Norway 2 Sweden 4
Ethical analysis The authors have synthesized knowledge in relation to ethical problems.	5 reports [28, 39, 45–47]	Denmark 0 Finland 0 Norway 1 Sweden 4

Table 5.7
continued

Type of conclusion drawn by the authors of the report	Total number	By country
Specific condition required in order for the intervention to be effective. The authors conclude that one or more specific conditions are required for intervention to be effective.	20 reports [23, 25–29, 31, 33–37, 40–41, 43, 46, 48–51]	Denmark 7 Finland 2 Norway 6 Sweden 5
A specific type of intervention is effective. The authors conclude that one or more types of interventions are effective. Examples may include overarching intervention categories such as "parental support" or "family therapy."	16 reports [22–26, 28, 31, 33, 37–38, 40, 42, 44, 48–50]	Denmark 9 Finland 0 Norway 3 Sweden 4
The intervention is effective for a specific subpopulation. The authors conclude that a particular category, or a specified intervention, is effective for a particular subpopulation (i.e., not for everyone).	11 reports [22, 25–26, 31, 37, 40, 42, 45, 48–50]	Denmark 6 Finland 0 Norway 2 Sweden 3
A specific intervention effective. The authors conclude that one or more specific interventions, locally or internationally recognised, are effective.	10 reports [26, 31, 34–39, 44–45]	Denmark 1 Finland 0 Norway 3 Sweden 6
The knowledge is too vague or unreliable to draw a definite conclusion regarding the efficacy of the intervention. The authors conclude that the knowledge base is too uncertain or insufficient to draw any conclusions about the efficacy of interventions.	9 reports [27, 29–30, 32, 38, 41, 43, 46–47]	Denmark 1 Finland 2 Norway 2 Sweden 4
The intervention is ineffective or counterproductive. The authors conclude that one or more interventions are ineffective or potentially harmful.	6 reports [29, 32, 38, 44–46]	Denmark 1 Finland 1 Norway 0 Sweden 4
The intervention is effective in a specific context. The authors conclude that one or more interventions are effective when implemented within a particular environment or context.	5 reports [26, 31, 34, 37, 51]	Denmark 0 Finland 1 Norway 3 Sweden 1

Table 5.8
Categorisation of the reports based on type of conclusion drawn by the authors of the reports, regarding the efficacy of the interventions.

6 Domains for Nordic experience sharing

This chapter presents the results for question 4, i.e., if there are domains particularly suitable for sharing experiences among the Nordic countries. SBU has identified two overarching domains for sharing Nordic experiences:

- Address how knowledge gaps are dealt with and how stakeholders at the national level can contribute to the knowledge development process in relevant domains in a way that also considers perspectives related to children's rights, particularly vulnerable groups, and coexisting issues.
- Address how national stakeholders can contribute to a wider dissemination and application of knowledge-based interventions, for example through common scope and communication.

These domains are described in more detail below.

Fact box 6.1
Summary of suggested domains for Nordic exchange of experiences.

Suggested domains for Nordic exchange of experiences:

- Address the lack of national guidance on knowledge-based interventions for children committing serious crimes and interventions intended for use in institutional care.
- coordinating the dissemination of knowledge-based interventions on a national level
- share perspectives and experiences to be inspired by each other's preventive work within the social field
- continue to stimulate cross-sectoral collaboration, while at the same time ensuring that evidence-based interventions are disseminated and made assessable in practice.

Address knowledge gaps

One domain for sharing experiences between the Nordic countries relates to how knowledge gaps are handled and how stakeholders at the national level can contribute to the knowledge development. This could involve a more systematic approach, using a variety of methods, to implement and evaluate promising strategies at the national, regional, and local levels [52, 53]. When discussing how to address knowledge gaps, the Nordic countries should also consider perspectives related to children's rights and the inclusion of children and young people in the knowledge development process. Discussions should also include and address vulnerable groups and groups with coexisting issues.

Interventions that prevent recidivism in younger individuals

One area that lacks national guidance involves interventions to prevent recidivism among children and young people who are not yet of legal age. This issue is particularly pressing since serious crimes are being committed by increasingly younger individuals, as highlighted by a recent report from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ) [54]. A recently published report from Sweden assessing interventions specifically aimed to prevent gang-related crime [55] indicates a paucity of research on interventions evaluated for children.

Interventions during institutionalisation

Another domain is the lack of national guidance on effective interventions intended to be provided within institutional care. This is particularly important since institutionalisation in one form or another is used in all Nordic countries [56], and that institutionalisation without concurrent support may lead to an increased risk of recidivism [4, 57]. Providing effective interventions to prevent recidivism during institutional care (whether voluntary or coercive) is therefore

crucial for preventing juvenile delinquency. Examples of interventions that can be provided in conjunction with institutionalisation are described in a recently published report from Norway [43].

Contribute to dissemination and application of knowledge-based interventions

An additional domain for sharing Nordic experiences involves discussing how national stakeholders can help ensure that knowledge-based interventions are widely disseminated and made available in practice on a broad scale.

National coordination in dissemination of knowledge-based interventions

Multiple national reports have been published about knowledge-based intervention with the aim to guide professionals in social care to choose evidence-based interventions. These reports vary on national level, in type of knowledge being reviewed, methods for synthesising the knowledge, and type of conclusions drawn about the efficacy of interventions. This could present a difficulty for stakeholders and professionals within social care on regional and local level to prioritise and choose between different interventions. One domain for sharing Nordic experiences could therefore be to discuss opportunities for coordinating the dissemination of knowledge-based interventions on a national level. This could involve agreeing on key definitions and to communicate information collectively.

Potential for broadening the scope of preventing juvenile delinquency

Reports published in the Nordic countries varies in how interventions to prevent juvenile delinquency has been defined. On the total, across the Nordic countries, interventions to prevent juvenile delinquency varies from different types of methods, for different populations, age groups and contexts. This variation is less notable within a nation as it is between nations. This is likely due to differences in national legislations and how each Nordic country has organised for example public health, social care, education, child services, justice and police. Nevertheless, SBU recognises an opportunity for the Nordic countries to share perspectives and experiences to be inspired by each other's preventive work within the social field. How Denmark works with social crime prevention in the school [35], within civil society [49], and within specific neighborhoods [58] could be interesting perspectives to discuss in greater detail.

Importance of cooperation without replacing access to concrete methods

The most common conclusion drawn by the authors of the reports regarding the efficacy of interventions are not regarding the efficacy of the interventions, but instead regarding conditions necessary for the intervention to be successful. Most reports mention cross-sectoral collaboration as the most important prerequisite for intervention success [23, 24, 26–31, 35–38, 40–41, 43, 49–50], which is reasonable since crime prevention requires a holistic approach [15]. However, the strong need for collaboration and availability of various models and approaches to facilitate collaboration [59–62], poses the risk of collaboration itself replacing the accessibility to evidence-based interventions [63]. One domain for sharing Nordic experiences could therefore involve discussing how the Nordic countries can continue to stimulate cross-sectoral collaboration, while at the same time ensuring that evidence-based interventions are disseminated and made assessable in practice.

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External reviewers

The following authorities and organisations have submitted comments on the manuscript:

- Ombudsman for Children
- Children's Rights in Society (BRIS)
- Public Health Agency of Sweden (Folkhälsomyndigheten)
- Institute for Human Rights (Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter)
- County Administrative Board (Counties Dalarna, Skåne and Stockholm)
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- Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor)
- National Agency for Education (Skolverket)
- Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, SKR)

The invaluable comments submitted by these agencies and organisations have improved the quality of the report. However, SBU is not always able to accommodate all proposed changes, and therefore the external reviewers do not necessarily agree with all the conclusions and text in the report.

8 Glossary

Age of criminal responsibility	Age at which all laws apply to an individual. In the Nordic countries, children reach the age of criminal responsibility at 15.
Assessment for risk of bias	Evaluation of the potential for bias, or outcome error, in the research process that may have occurred in the design, implementation, publication, evaluation of effects, or other handling of the results of a study, and which is not due to chance.
Cost-effectiveness analysis	Analysis and evaluation of available knowledge regarding an intervention in relation to costs and savings for society or a specific entity.
Children	Population mainly aged 6-11 years.
Civil society	Interventions provided by and within the context of civil society, such as nonprofit organisations, registered faith-based organisations, foundations, economic associations, low-profit limited liability companies, and neighborhood associations and cooperatives.
Collaboration	An organisational approach to solving challenging tasks that an individual entity cannot accomplish on its own. Collaboration can also be described as a form of systematic cooperation.
Collaborative model	A model for a collaborative process, usually developed by different parties, such as representatives of civil society and the public sector.
Crime	Actions that violate a country's legislation. There are different types of crime, ranging from less serious to more serious.
Criminal behavior	An ongoing pattern of repeated criminal acts requiring society to intervene or take action. Actions does not have to lead to prosecution.
Cross-sector collaboration	Work carried out across organisational boundaries between different parties but aimed at a common goal.

Education and employment	Interventions aimed at fostering purpose in daily life, such as modifying the school environment to improve attendance, providing skills to enhance employability, and offering activities such as vocational training, work experience and daily activities.
Ethical analysis	Analysis and evaluation of available knowledge in relation to ethical problems. Decision-making support when conflicts arise between interests and values.
Exclusion criteria	Circumstances that prevent a particular article in the literature from being included in the compilation.
Experts and specialists	Synonyms. Usually, a trained and knowledgeable person in a specific field, such as a researcher.
Factors for success	A factor that contributes to the effectiveness of an intervention, thereby leading to the desired outcome.
Family relationship	Intervention aimed at changing relationship or interaction between the child or young person and their parents or siblings.
Individual skills and capabilities	Intervention aimed at influencing skills or capabilities of the child or young person. These may pertain to skills or capabilities essential for independent living, cultivating healthy social relationships, or coping with challenging emotions.
Institutional care	Placement of children and young people, on a voluntary or compulsory basis, in various types of residential facilities, such as HVB (homes for care or residence) housing and SIS secure residential care.
Intervention	Method, program, or treatment. A deliberate measure, designed to bring about change and aimed at achieving a specific goal, which can be summarized as transferable knowledge, either written or verbal, and can be made accessible through means such as education, instruction, coaching, or independent study.
Juvenile delinquency	Children and adolescent who demonstrates a pattern of criminal activity requiring action from society.
Knowledge-based intervention	Intervention that is based on best available knowledge
Leisure and peers	Broadening and building new relationships with adults and peers by offering organized activities and recreational options on the child or young person's spare time, (e.g., sports and café activities).
Mechanism of change	Also known as program theory. A term for the proposed mechanism of the intervention intended to promote intervention intended to promote change in the individual (i.e., reduce the propensity to commit crime).
Mediation	Intervention aimed at promoting dialogue and resolving conflicts between various parties, for example ongoing conflicts, or between an offender and a victim.
Mentorship	An organised relationship with a trusted adult who can serve as a role model (e.g., volunteer, mentor or contact person).
Meta-analysis	Statistical analysis method for synthesising best available knowledge.
Narrative synthesis	The process of synthesising knowledge through words and text to summarise and explain data.
National report	Published by the national-level in a country in or to support or guide policymakers and practitioners at the regional and local levels.

Outpatient care	Interventions offered by service providers such as social services or pediatric health care, that are voluntary for those receiving them.
Parenting skills	Intervention aimed at enhancing parenting skills and capabilities in relation to the child, including responsiveness, boundary-setting and reinforcement of the child's positive behaviors.
Population	Refers to the population or population group about which conclusions are to be drawn from the data collected in a study.
Primary study	A report or evaluation based on newly gathered information, as opposed to a compilation of existing information.
Professionals and practices	Refers to information obtained from the profession and professionals in the field (e.g., a practice survey), or clearly describes a process of having acquired experience-based information from the profession and professionals (e.g., a consensus procedure).
Relevance assessment	An assessment of relevance based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.
Relevance assessment for the Nordic context	The process of synthesising available knowledge in relation to conditions and circumstances within the relevant Nordic country.
Scoping review	Systematic review without synthesising the results.
Selection of reports	Refers to a selection of reports (not published in scientific journals) such as published guidelines, evaluations and/or compilations of information.
Selection of scientific articles	Refers to a selection of scientific studies published in scientific journals, such as primary studies or systematic reviews.
Situational crime prevention	The aspect of crime prevention that focuses on changing the physical environment.
Social crime prevention	Focusing on modifiable risk and protective factors pertaining to the individual (such as skills and capabilities), or their immediate surroundings (such as relationships and employment). Can either target all individuals within a population, specific risk groups, individuals at increased risk, or individuals with established criminality.
Standardised assessment methods	Standardised questions intended to provide support and guidance for assessing risk of criminal activities.
Subpopulation	A specific subgroup, within a larger population, that shares certain characteristics or traits that distinguish them from others.
Systematic review	A process of systematically identifying scientific studies based on a specifically formulated research question, using a clearly described methodology.
Young children	Population including either expectant parents or children under 6 years.
Young people	Population mainly aged 12 or over, but not yet considered to be adult.

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