

***Recommendation from the Advisory Division of the Council for the Administration of
Criminal Justice
and Protection of Juveniles
- Summary -***

Prisoners with psychological problems

Recommendation to the Dutch Minister for Legal Protection, dated 20 June 2018

The Advisory Division of the Council for the Administration of Criminal Justice and Protection of Juveniles (hereafter referred to as 'the Division') issued a brief and unsolicited recommendation on the care for prisoners with psychiatric problems. This group is sizeable: approximately 60% of prisoners have psychological problems, including addiction.

While the Division appreciates the many improvements already achieved, it observes that serious bottlenecks still exist in several areas:

- The quality of care is under pressure owing to capacity problems, among other things. Waiting lists exist for the care departments in the prisons (the Extra Care Facilities (EZVs)) and for the Penitentiary Psychiatric Centres (PPCs). Psychologists are also short-staffed in prisons. It is recommended that the number of EZV places and the psychologist capacity is expanded. For the PPCs, it is recommended that the pressure on capacity is examined.
- According to the official guidelines, prisoners with an indication for clinical care are in principle to be treated in a forensic mental healthcare institution and not in the prison, unless there is a contraindication. This process requires intensive cooperation with the mental healthcare institutions and a flexible referrals policy. Such a policy has proved difficult to implement in practice. It is recommended that the underlying causes of this difficulty are examined and that cooperation is intensified.
- In the view of the Division, too little attention is paid to the approach towards criminogenic factors in the care for prisoners with psychological problems. It is recommended that this aspect receives a greater focus, also with respect to addiction counselling and treatment.
- With a view to improving the after-care provided, it is recommended to continue investing in post-detention follow-up care, in line with current policy.

*The recommendation can be obtained from the secretariat of the Council
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