



Government of the Netherlands

Recognizing, acknowledging and respecting each other's wishes and boundaries

*National Action Programme for tackling sexually
transgressive behaviour and sexual violence*



13 January 2023

Image use

In order to properly show the importance of this action programme, we worked with an urban photographer. For two whole days, she asked random people about their experiences with sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. The results can be seen in the portraits and stories in this publication. This is not a complete image, but it does clearly show the need for this action programme. We would like to thank everyone depicted in this document for their cooperation and openness.

Photography and interviews: Saskia van den Boom
Illustrations: Rachel Sender



Foreword

We need to take better care of each other. Every day, people are affected by sexual violence and sexually transgressive behaviour. This is unacceptable. We would like to see it become a thing of the past forever. Unfortunately the reality is different, and new victims are made every day. It's time for action!

That is why the National Action Programme for tackling sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence was launched on 13 January 2023. The goal is to protect you, your children, friends, neighbours, colleagues and everyone who should be the boss of their own boundaries.

Almost half of all women and one-fifth of all men are affected by sexually transgressive behaviour at some point in their lives. Sexual, denigrating or sexist remarks are not counted in this statistic. The pain caused by this issue is everywhere and anyone can be affected by it. As a victim or a bystander. At school, at work, at home, at the gym, in the streets, online or in the bar.

We would love to hold the keys to the solution and make this problem disappear in one go. But there is no quick solution. This is a case of working hard, day in and day out, in many areas. The action programme will help us in this. Of course we want everyone to be able to count on suitable and effective counselling and support. But it takes more than that. That is why we are actively working towards starting the conversation, raising awareness and instigating a cultural shift in our society. Because it's better to be safe than sorry. This last part of our approach might be the most difficult.

Because something needs to change structurally in how we treat each other, how we respond to stories about sexually transgressive behaviour and violence and how we support and stand up for victims. This is a task for us all. We will need to speak to each other more frequently and more urgently when we see, think, or 'simply' feel like a boundary is being crossed somewhere. And we should be open to this conversation more. That is something that needs to keep happening, again and again.

This is the only way we can increase our chances of finding better protection from each other, preventing pain and suffering, and creating a society that is safe for everyone.

Robbert Dijkgraaf
Minister of Education, Culture and Science

Karien van Gennip
Minister of Social Affairs & Employment



Action lines and objectives

Action line 1: There are shared societal values and standards about how we want to treat each other in society

- Objective 1: There are shared societal values and standards about how we want to treat each other in society. Without sexism, gender stereotypes, prejudices or forms of discrimination.
- Objective 2: In every educational, healthcare and welfare organization, employees know how to address the topic of sexuality, so everyone can recognize and acknowledge each other's wishes and boundaries.
- Objective 3: Young people recognize and acknowledge each other's boundaries and wishes and are capable of articulating and guarding them.

Action line 2: Legislation and regulations reflect changing societal values

- Objective 1: The Working Conditions Act contains clear standards on how to prevent and tackle sexually transgressive behaviour.
- Objective 2: The Sex Crimes Act and its standards are widely known.
- Objective 3: Sports disciplinary law is evaluated and improved to tackle behaviours that threaten a safe sports environment.
- Objective 4: The government sets the standards in relation to purchasing and if possible the funding of other organizations.

Action line 3: Organizations have processes in place for prevention, detection and monitoring

- Objective 1: Employers and workers are supported in drawing up and implementing this policy.
- Objective 2: The government is a role model as an employer in regards to sexually transgressive behaviour and being that places the focus on raising awareness and research.
- Objective 3: Organizations have actions against sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence that are appropriate to the sector.

Action line 4: Everyone recognizes sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence and can respond to it

- Objective 1: Bystanders recognize sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence and know when to react, how to take action or respond to it.
- Objective 2: Bystanders feel sufficiently safe to take action.

Action line 5: There is good care provision that is easy to find

- Objective 1: Care provision is easy to find and is easily accessible.
- Objective 2: Formulating principles for good care provision.
- Objective 3: Laying the foundation for good care provision.
- Objective 4: We are committed to setting up good care provision.



Contents

<u>Foreword</u>	3
<u>Action lines and objectives</u>	4
<u>Contents</u>	5
<u>Introduction</u>	7
<u>Action line 1: There are shared societal values and standards about how we want to treat each other in society</u>	14
<u>Action line 2: Legislation and regulations reflect changing societal values</u>	22
<u>Action line 3: Organizations have processes in place for prevention, detection and monitoring</u>	28
<u>Action line 4: Everyone recognizes sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence and can respond to it</u>	32
<u>Action line 5: There is good care provision that is easy to find</u>	40
 <u>Annex 1: Research overview</u>	 44



Tjakai:

'I don't talk about transgressive behaviour with friends. It's such a taboo subject. And as men we have the idea that we should be strong and tough.'

I look at it differently now than when I was younger. About ten years ago I was at a party where a guest behaved very inappropriately with a woman. He kept dancing up against her and grabbed her everywhere. Everyone saw it happen but nobody did anything. It was dismissed as a joke, but later on it turned out that she left the party in tears. I wouldn't stand for something like that now, I would definitely tell him to stop.'



Introduction

Background

Sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence are a painful and persistent societal problem. The scope and seriousness of the problem became painfully clear over the last year. Things happened in the sports, media, culture and political sectors and in student life that clearly showed how pervasive this issue truly is. At the same time we see a growing movement in society to turn the tide. Sexual forms of interaction have increasingly become the subject of the societal debate in recent years and a large number of people think that for too long society turned a blind eye to the sexual harassment of women.¹

We would like to see a society in which everyone feels safe and contributes to a safe environment. This may seem obvious, but it isn't. Anyone can be faced with sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence, and in all cases the percentages are too high and this is unacceptable. Women and girls are faced with this type of behaviour at a disproportionate rate compared to men and boys. LGBTIQ+ individuals are also victimized more often.²

The following figures reflect the scope of the issue:

- 22% of women and 6% of men have experienced sexual violence at some point, by which we mean they were forced to have sex, or had sex against their will.¹
- If we include unwanted touching of a sexual nature and kissing, then those numbers go up to 50% of women and almost 20% of men.²
- 14% of girls and 3% of boys under the age of 25 have experienced sexual violence.³
- Over 13% of women and approximately 4% of men have experienced sexual harassment without physical contact over the last twelve months. In 2020, this was over 10 and 3% respectively.⁴
- Approximately 28% of young women and 9% of young men (between the ages of 18 and 24) have experienced sexual harassment online over the last twelve months.⁵ This is an increase compared to 2020 (of 5% and 1% respectively).⁶
- LGBTIQ+ individuals will experience sexual violence more often on average. This applies specifically to bisexual women. Almost half of them (44%) were victims of physical or online sexual harassment or violence in 2021. The experiences of bisexual women are often long-lasting in nature and tend to have psychological, physical or social consequences for their lives.⁷
- Transgender people are the victims of sexual violence at least four to seven times as often as cisgender people.⁸
- Over 37% of bisexual women and approximately 11% of bisexual men have experienced non-physical sexual harassment over the last twelve months.⁹ This percentage is higher than in 2020. Back then, the numbers were over 34% of bisexual women and approximately 14% of bisexual men.¹⁰ Gay and bisexual persons are also more vulnerable to online sexual harassment than heterosexual men and women.¹¹
- Half of women and almost one third of men who have experienced sexual violence will experience this again later on in their lives.¹²
- Over 24% of the victims of non-physical sexual harassment experiences consequences of this. When it comes to forced sex acts or forced sex, 71% of victims indicate that they experiences consequences of this. These include physical, relational, and/or sexual problems.¹³

You will find the source references of these key figures at the end of this chapter.

¹ Statistics Netherlands (2022), *Emancipatiemonitor 2022* (Emancipation monitor 2022).

² We are aware that not everyone who has experienced sexually transgressive behaviour or sexual violence will see themselves as a 'victim', to use the most frequently used term. In addition to that, only using this term inadequately emphasizes the fact that people are more than that and that victimhood doesn't define them. For the sake of readability, the term 'victim' is used in this action programme but we use it to mean people who have suffered sexually transgressive behaviour or sexual violence.



Analysis

The figures show that lots of people in the Netherlands have experienced sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence or know someone who has experienced it or who has perpetrated sexually transgressive behaviour. The consequences are often serious and long-lasting and disrupt victims' lives. The impact goes far beyond just the victim themselves; lives are disrupted, and families, friendships, relationships, studies and careers impacted. While this suffering alone is unacceptable, the result is also high societal costs for people who were deprived of the opportunity to reach their potential and who need more long-term counselling and support on average. Due to all these factors, the urgency to tackle the issue is great.³

The figures above show that girls and women are victims of sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence far more often. An uncomfortable answer to the question why sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence against women still occurs so often in our society is that the behaviour is embedded in our culture to an important degree. This is because our culture contains assumptions about how men and women 'should behave', which start as early as childhood, when boys and girls are raised differently. Girls in particular are made aware of the risks from an early age.

These views and opinions play an important role in the occurrence and maintenance of sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. In addition, these assumptions can lead to inequalities, dependencies, power imbalances and control. It is often about role perceptions of men and women, that can result in anything from 'innocent jokes' about women to harassment and intimidation by making obscene gestures on the street or catcalling. A culture in which this is accepted results in many women feeling unsafe. One is not independent of the other, because in cultures where this is acceptable it is also easier to continue to push the boundaries with even more serious forms of sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. For these reasons it is important both in the problem analysis and for the solution to pay attention to boys, men and the applicable standards for masculinity.

In order to tackle sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence on a fundamental level, we should therefore look critically at ourselves and our culture. Because sexually transgressive situations are not just about 'a single person who crossed the line'. They do not occur in a vacuum. It's about a dominant culture in which sexism, sexualization, objectification and inequality are tolerated. A culture that creates a context in which sexually transgressive behaviour is normalized. For example, it has been shown that 40% of Dutch people think that if a woman dresses provocatively, she should expect comments of a sexual nature.⁴

This shows that we have a societal problem, and not an individual problem.

At the same time there should be scope for more awareness and there should be room for discussion and consideration for each other's perspective. For example the power imbalance between people, the context in which something takes place or the tone in which something is said can determine whether a boundary is crossed or not. It is also important that people don't get the idea that nothing is allowed or possible anymore, because this is not the case and it also hinders the conversation. As such we will continue to keep watch to ensure the subtle balance between clear and strict standards and that we safeguard an open and constructive conversation.

Carefully taking care of and doing research into possible offenders⁵ and reports is also important. Firstly, to do justice to the suffering of the victim and to understand why someone has perpetrated sexually transgressive behaviour or sexual violence. For this reason it is also important to prevent wrongful accusations of possible offenders and the resulting onsequences. The point is for all of us to be aware of our own behaviour and to enter into discussions on the topic in safety and with respect for each other. After all, sometimes people are unaware that they have crossed a boundary or do so unintentionally. This way awareness is raised and more mutual understanding is created, and we work towards a societal standard about how we can treat each other respectfully and as equals.

Vision

The scope of the issue has once again become painfully clear to us in recent months. What is new is that the government has observed a growing movement in society where this inequality and social insecurity are no longer accepted and a different standard is required in terms of how we treat each other. We see and support the victims who dare to share their experiences, bystanders who initiate conversations on the topic and a society that calls for action. We want to continue to have conversations about this, so we can create new social standards about how we want to treat each other and what to do to make society safer for everyone. The government cannot do this alone. The government aims to use this action programme to take the next step towards achieving a cultural shift that is necessary, and aims to (and has to) involve the whole of society. We are working jointly to stop sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence and are developing an approach for how to deal with it in the event that it does occur.

³ Rutgers (2022) *Fenomenen van Seksueel Geweld* (Phenomena of Sexual Violence).

⁴ Statistics Netherlands (2022) *Emancipatiemonitor 2022*.

⁵ We are aware that not everyone who has (potentially) perpetrated sexually transgressive behaviour or sexual violence will see themselves as a (potential) 'offender'. In addition to that, only using this term inadequately emphasizes the fact that people are more than that and that it doesn't define them. For the sake of readability, the term '(possible) offender' is used in this action programme but we use it to mean people who have (potentially) perpetrated sexually transgressive behaviour or sexual violence.



Approach

In February of 2022, the government kickstarted plans to develop an action programme; a broad-based approach to tackle physical, verbal and non-verbal sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence that occurs both in the physical space and online. An approach that opens up the conversation, continues to build on what happens in society, supports good developments and tries to force a breakthrough. The appointment of Mariëtte Hamer last April as independent government commissioner was an important step in this.

Working with society

The government cannot change a culture alone. This makes the action programme truly by, for and of society. We see good initiatives arise in many places. Pioneers should be supported to explore these initiatives and include people. This is because pioneers can raise awareness and inspire people who would like things to be different, but don't know how. They can also offer different perspectives for action.

Focus on sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence

In this action programme we will be focusing on sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence, but we are aware that those problems often occur in conjunction with types of domestic violence, harmful practices, and gender-related violence in general. In the everyday practice of counselling and support organizations, these various types of violence and transgressive behaviour often come together. The underlying causes and reasons are often the same.

Coherence with related projects

In order to effectively tackle sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence, a cultural shift is required. This is an important goal of the action programme. In addition to this action programme there are other projects that contribute to combating sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. Consider the approach to tackling domestic violence and child abuse, the supplementary sexual healthcare scheme of the municipal health service and the modernization of criminal law in which a clear signal is given about which behaviour is not only not acceptable but also punishable.

A programme under development

We understand that a lot of patience is necessary to facilitate the much-needed cultural shift. All the more reason to set up a multi-annual action programme that builds on what is already in continuous development. As such there will be plenty of scope for new experiences, ideas and measures. For this reason we will closely listen to the government commissioner, societal partners, experts and society and follow what is happening abroad in regard to this topic. This will help us make sure we are still on the right path. The government will also continuously explore new ideas and measures, and is not afraid to include unorthodox, stimulating measures.

In order to improve the approach, collaboration is needed in various domains between the government, science and societal organizations. Measures the government can take independently have already been implemented where possible and current actions will be continued. Effort is also required on a regional level. For example, municipalities have an important responsibility and role in the area of sexual health and in the approach to tackling sexually transgressive behaviour. In addition to this, the challenges we are currently facing require specific interventions that align with a specific context, sector, or organization. Some sectors are already vigorously working on it, which we will continue to promote. Other sectors can learn from this. We also want to work towards alliances of societal organizations that have been working together for a longer period of time to reach their goals within the action lines mentioned. This way we promote cooperation between parties that are now making important contributions individually. An approach carried by the sectors themselves requires time of course, which is why measures in this category are not yet definitive. The government commissioner was asked to bring parties together so they can strengthen each other in the form of an alliance. Finally, at the start of the programme, the government commissioned studies on a number of topics.⁶

Attention paid to different perspectives

The action programme is aimed at the whole of society. For this reason, in the performance and facilitation of the actions, the wider target group that was or may be affected by this theme is taken into account. In this we look at which needs the various target groups have and we strive for an intersectional approach. This means that we always look at how different forms of inequality relate to and reinforce each other.

6 See annex 1 – Research overview.



Action lines

The action programme consists of three types of measures: measures taken by the government, such as regulations; measures taken by societal sectors and organizations, which the government can promote and facilitate; and measures that are ultimately only successful if society as a whole no longer accepts sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence by addressing undesirable behaviour when they witness it and by supporting victims.

The main objective of the action programme is combating sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. That's not something you can do overnight. For this reason, an important second objective of this action programme is limiting the damage caused by sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence, by quickly detecting and stopping the behaviour and by offering victims and those around them the right support and taking the proper action against (assumed) offenders.

The action programme contains five action lines that delineate a point on the horizon. The lines of action are based on the outlines⁷ and were chosen based on advice from over 100 organizations, experts and experience experts.

Action programme lines of action

1. There are shared societal values and standards about how we want to treat each other in society
2. Legislation and regulations reflect changing societal norms
3. Organizations have processes in place for prevention, detection and monitoring
4. Everyone recognizes sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence and can respond to it
5. There is good care provision that is easy to find

Role of the government commissioner

The government has appointed Mariëtte Hamer as government commissioner for sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. She serves as the figurehead for the intended cultural shift. For this purpose she has an independent position and provides the government with solicited and unsolicited advice. She continues the societal debate and puts topics on the agenda for discussion. She is continuously in contact with her network of employers and other societal organizations, experience experts, scientists, young people, and professionals.

Together with her network, the government commissioner undertakes the following activities for the National Action Programme for tackling sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence:

1. She organizes thematic expert sessions and round tables with experts and people involved, for new perspectives, problem analyses and potential solutions. Those help to further refine the action programme.
2. Together with experts, she will write advice for everyone affected by sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence.
3. She encourages and facilitates the business community, healthcare, education, sports, the media and the cultural sector to form alliances and get in action.
4. She commissions research into the mechanisms of power and power imbalances at play, the role of language, cultural patterns and gender-related aspects. This should provide more insight into the causes of sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence.

The government commissioner's approach is aimed at 'work in progress'. As time goes on, new activities or recommendations will be included and others will be completed. At this point, such an analysis about the current situation in the Netherlands is off to a flying start.

The action programme comes with many specific measures and activities, that can only succeed if society acknowledges this problem at the same time and wishes to tackle it. For this reason, the assignment of the government commissioner to spur on the societal debate and force a cultural shift remains more overarching.

⁷ Parliamentary papers II 2021/2022, 34 843, no. 58. Letter to Parliament on National Action Plan for tackling sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence.



Good example: alliance against sexual harassment, Denmark

In June of 2022, the government of Denmark and social partners set up a broad alliance to tackle sexual harassment. Its goals are: a) a continuous focus on prevention; b) furthering the conversation on this theme; c) disseminating knowledge and exchanging best practices. The alliance supported by the government unites administrators from employers' organizations, unions, providers of education and courses, and administrators from the youth and volunteering sectors who are committed to practical actions for tackling sexual harassment and promoting a cultural shift. The members of the alliance are obligated to contribute to the above-mentioned targets and promoting the work of the alliance. The alliance runs campaigns, develops interventions, conducts research and organizes events for sharing knowledge and experiences.

Implementation and reporting

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science and the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment oversee the government's actions and measures. In this they will be working closely with the Minister for Long-Term Care and Sport, the State Secretary of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Minister for Primary and Secondary Education, the State Secretary for Culture and Media, the Minister for Security and Justice and the Minister for Legal Protection. They also work closely with the Minister of Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations. They also receive solicited and unsolicited advice from government commissioner Mariëtte Hamer. This action programme was set up in close cooperation.

The government will pay close attention to see if the programme has the desired results. The government commissioner is asked to issue advice on how to design, implement, monitor, account for and guarantee the programme. The House of Representatives is informed at least annually about the progress of the programme.

In the start-up phase of the programme, the government commissioner was asked to advise on the expected impact of the programme on components of the implementation, in an effort to prevent problems. The focus in this is on the consequences of the increasing attention to sexual violence and sexually transgressive behaviour for the number of reports made to agencies.

Funding

In the Spring Memorandum of 2022, an amount of approximately 11 million euros was made available for the action programme. The budget has been used for the appointment of the government commissioner and her office in the period of 2022-2025, performing a first set of studies and explorations, large-scale public communication, a scouting mission, and a kick-off conference with the field and additional capacity for the departments involved, as further explained in this programme.

On the one hand the measures in this action programme consist of current projects that align with existing policy and on the other hand new measures for which participating departments have made funds available in their budgets. It is a multi-year programme that is in development and that will continue to take shape as time goes on. In this, based on exploratory sessions with the field, the outcomes of current studies and the discussion with your House, the action programme for the years 2024 and 2025 will be further elaborated.

Because the contents of the programme will become more and more specific in the coming period, the scope of both the possible additional load and any additional funding required will also become clearer. The government commissioner will contribute to this impact analysis. Based on the results of this analysis, we will determine how best to handle the possible additional load for the implementation organizations. In the event that additional funding is required, as also stated in the previous letter on the action programme, it has been agreed that any additional costs resulting from the budgets of the departments involved will be covered.

Knowledge development and sharing

The government believes it is important to utilize the scientific knowledge developed while also pushing for the development of relevant information that is lacking and sharing existing knowledge. Knowledge management is vital in this to prevent fragmentation and ensure sustainable safeguarding. In this action programme you will be informed about current research conducted by the government and various good examples are shared that serve as the basis for new approaches. In the coming period, we will work on structurally safeguarding knowledge development, knowledge management and knowledge sharing in the programme and how to optimize cooperation with the field. In this context we will aim towards creating an evidence-based working method that makes it possible for knowledge and research to be applied in practice.

In conclusion

It is up to all of us to tackle sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. With the actions that have been announced in the action programme, we take an important step in the right direction, but we are not there yet. In the coming years we will continue to shape these actions in cooperation with the government commissioner. We will be working towards creating a society in which we recognize, acknowledge and respect each other's wishes and boundaries.



Source references key figures

- 1 Rutgers (2021) Position paper intended for the Round Table discussion on the topic of sexual violence on 9 December.
- 2 Rutgers (2017), *Seksuele gezondheid in Nederland 2017* (Sexual health in the Netherlands 2017).
- 3 Idem.
- 4 In non-physical sexual harassment, it is about experiences with sexual harassment in which there has been no physical contact between the offender and the victim, but that occurred in the 'real world', i.e. not online. Non-physical sexual harassment can include anything from comments with sexual overtones to having to witness sex acts. Source: Statistics Netherlands (2022), *Prevalentiemonitor Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel Geweld 2022* (Prevalence monitor for Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence 2022).
- 5 Statistics Netherlands (2022), *Prevalentiemonitor Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel Geweld 2022*.
- 6 Statistics Netherlands (2020), *Prevalentiemonitor Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel Geweld 2020*.
- 7 SCP (2022), *LGBT monitor 2022*.
- 8 Transgender Netwerk Nederland (2018). *Overal op je hoede: geweld tegen transgender geweld tegen transgender personen in Nederland* (Being on guard everywhere: violence against transgender individuals in the Netherlands).
- 9 Statistics Netherlands (2022), *Prevalentiemonitor Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel Geweld 2022*.
- 10 Statistics Netherlands (2020) *Prevalentiemonitor Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel Geweld 2020*.
- 11 For example, 26.1% of homosexual men and 18% of bisexual men were the victims of online sexual harassment over the last twelve months. For heterosexual men this is 3.5%. For lesbian women and bisexual women, 14% and 23.1% respectively were the victims of online sexual harassment over the last twelve months. For heterosexual women this figure is 7.2%. Source: Statistics Netherlands (2022), *Prevalentiemonitor Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel Geweld 2022*.
- 12 Haas, S. de, Berlo, W., van, Bakker, F. & Vanwesenbeeck, I. (2012). Prevalence and characteristics of sexual violence in the Netherlands, the risk of revictimization and pregnancy: Results from a national population survey.
- 13 Statistics Netherlands (2022), *Prevalentiemonitor Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel Geweld 2022*.



Mirella:

'I am always on guard when I am out with my friends. If a man gets annoying or goes too far, we strategically exclude him. If that doesn't help, I say something. I'll tell him to stop touching me or my friend and that he should leave. That usually stops them. It doesn't make any sense that you have to say no all the time, but I'm used to it.'



Action line 1

There are shared social values and standards about how we want to treat each other in society

A preventive approach requires insight into the causes of sexually transgressive behaviour. These can be found on both a social/cultural level and on an individual level. Examples include the social inequality between men and women, and a subculture with damaging gender-stereotypical assumptions about masculinity, femininity, and sexuality. A focus on the emancipation of men and boys is therefore necessary to ensure a breakthrough in these cultures and subcultures.





Examples include the social inequality between men and women, and a subculture with damaging gender-stereotypical assumptions about masculinity, femininity, and sexuality. This (sub)culture normalizes and downplays sexually transgressive behaviour and sexism. These factors play a role in some contexts and for some target groups and play a major role in how the problem started. More insight into the backgrounds of sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence in specific contexts contributes to targeted and preventive policy. In the coming period, the government has therefore commissioned various research assignments.⁸

Our goal is a sustainable cultural shift, in which sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence are quickly identified and prevented. A step in the direction of this intended cultural shift is increasing awareness in society. The societal debate is vital in this, specifically in terms of prevention. It should be seen as normal to talk to each other about your wishes, where your boundaries are and address each other when boundaries are crossed or threatened to be crossed. We learn from experiences and reflect on conscious and unconscious behaviour or mistakes. We do not have all the answers immediately, but opening up the conversation is a good beginning.

A next step is for the government and organizations involved to provide society with knowledge about sexuality, consent, wishes and boundaries and sexual assertiveness. That makes it easier to talk to each other about shared societal values and standards regarding sex and how we want to treat each other in society. In this broad societal discussion, the first phase of the action programme requires specific attention for the next generation, parents and supervisors and the professionals who are specifically connected to various areas of society such as education and healthcare. In addition to the above, this action line pays specific attention to men and how they can be included in finding a solution.

In order to achieve this, we focus on the following targets:

Objective 1

There is an open and inclusive debate on how we want to treat each other in society, without sexism, gender stereotypes, prejudice and types of discrimination.

In order to anchor shared standards and values in regards to sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence, the societal debate is crucial. This debate has to be held in various places and at multiple times, in order to get through to all layers of society. Promoting this conversation, in which we focus on awareness and prevention, is done in a variety of ways.

Catalyst of the societal debate: the government commissioner

The government commissioner is tasked with driving the societal debate. The government uses this tool to speed up the approach. The various activities of the government commissioner in this action line are explained in the box below. For example, she will be working more closely with ambassadors and she is busy setting up an ambassador network.

Public communication

In order to further the societal debate, awareness needs to be raised among more people regarding the issue of sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence, even among those for whom the topic is not or barely a part of their lives. This awareness contributes to understanding about how important having this debate is. Based on this, new joint values will arise. In order to achieve this, we will focus on broad-based public communication that brings the topic closer and activates us all. The large-scale public communication mentioned in action line 4 about the role of bystanders is also intended to contribute to this.

8 See annex 1 – Research overview.



Activities of the government commissioner

Given her assignment of being a catalyst of the societal debate and a figurehead for the intended cultural shift, many of the government commissioner's activities are an extension of this first action line. The societal debate is the starting point of and the driving force behind the intended cultural shift and also serves to deliver an important contribution to prevention. She is not alone in her efforts to push for discussions on the topic at home, in the cafeteria at work, and in meeting rooms for example. Ambassadors, including cultural producers, have an important role to play here. They are capable of striking the right tone each in their own way, and shaping the discussion with the use of theatre, film, music, and the spoken and written word. In addition to that, the government commissioner will be setting up broad network of ambassadors spanning a wide range of sectors. They will take on a leading role in the discussion and work to develop specific sample cases to help in prevention, detection and care provision within their sector.

The government commissioner will be initiating the societal debate on sharing the stories about and experiences with sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence of victims, offenders and bystanders. She will do so in various ways, and using various platforms. In this way the government commissioner ensures the subject hits close to home, and will be raising awareness in society about the fact that this problem is part of our culture, and that we have to talk to each other about having shared values and standards suitable for a culture in which sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence does not occur or does not occur frequently. In this way we can begin taking steps towards a culture in which we respect, recognize and acknowledge each other's wishes and boundaries and where we can help each other and are able to address unwanted behaviour from others.

Men's emancipation

In a preventive approach it is important to pay attention to the power imbalances and stereotypical assumptions about masculinity and femininity that play a role in the occurrence and continuation of sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. It is clear that boys, men and masculinity play a role in these and many other issues. It has been shown that involving boys and men in the prevention of sexual violence is vital.⁹ Their role in breaking through stereotypical gender assumptions and the prevention of sexual violence therefore plays an important role in the implementation of the programme. Within the action programme, we therefore work together on the project 'Men's emancipation as part of the solution'. In this we aim to increase awareness among men that they are part of the solution in tackling sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence, and interventions are developed.

GREVIO research recommendations¹⁰ on the digital dimension of violence

In reference to the report and the recommendations from GREVIO on the digital dimension of violence against women, a study will be conducted. This research explores what is needed to implement the recommendations surrounding the digital dimension of violence. This research is expected to be completed in 2023.

Institutional grant for *Verandering van binnenuit* (Change from Within) 2.0

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science also supports the *Verandering van binnenuit* (Change from Within) alliance. This inter-institutional partnership between the Consortium Zelfbeschikking (Consortium for Self-determination), LCC+ and Movisie aims to increase equality, safety and acceptance of women and LGBTIQ+ individuals within closed communities. Taking down stereotypes about femininity, masculinity and relationships is part of this. For this reason the alliance focuses on involving government officials and professionals in driving and facilitating change.

9 WHO (2007). Engaging Men and Boys in Changing Gender-based Inequity in Health: Evidence from Programme Interventions.

10 Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.



Objective 2

In every educational, healthcare and welfare organization, employees know how to address sexuality, so everyone can recognize and acknowledge each other's wishes and boundaries.

Employees, volunteers and administrators of educational, healthcare and welfare organizations are in contact with the various layers of society and can fulfil a key role in speaking openly on this theme. They also often work with young people and relatively vulnerable groups, in which it is vital that they learn to recognize and acknowledge their own wishes and boundaries and those of others. In order to be able to discuss this theme, professionals need the right knowledge and skills.

We see that tools and support are present, but in a fragmented way, and that they can be difficult to find for those in need. We also see that there may be some shyness or fear to act in terms of creating an environment for discussing sexuality among students, clients and patients, while this is especially important in breaking taboos and making it easier to seek help when there are concerns, problems or other questions regarding sexuality. Helping to make it easier to discuss these issues can therefore contribute to prevention, detection and referrals to aid agencies.

Institutional grant for Alliance Act4Respect Unlimited

From 1 January 2023, the government will be supporting the alliance *Act4Respect Unlimited* for a period of five years. Within the alliance, Rutgers, Atria and the LGBT organization COC focus on reducing sexual violence against girls, young women and LGBTIQ+ persons, with specific attention for intersections and cyber violence. This includes developing interventions to create positive standards surrounding sexuality among young people and young adults. In addition they increase the support, knowledge and instruments with which professionals in education and in healthcare and welfare organizations can support young people in healthy sexual and relational development. The activities of this alliance also contribute to objective 3 of this action line.

Signposts for primary and secondary education in regards to advice on sexting

With a view to prevention, there will also be attention for the online lives of children and young people. This guide¹¹ provides an overview of programmes developed to prevent unwanted sexting. It was made for professionals who work with pupils in education, partners in the criminal justice chain and the social domain. The Guide provides an overview of the steps that can be taken in the event that something goes wrong (or threatens to go wrong) and which contacts can be approached. Information materials on how to develop lessons about unwanted sexting is part of the guide. In the coming period, the Ministry of Security and Justice, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport as well as relevant parties will look into appropriate next steps to the information in this guide.

Foundation of Expert Centre for Citizenship

Education in citizenship is one way through which young people learn about sexuality and sexual diversity within the sexual rights theme. To support schools in providing education in citizenship, the Expert Centre for Citizenship (*Expertisecentrum Burgerschap*) was founded on 1 July 2022.¹² The Expert Centre supports school governing boards, school administrators and lecturers in the details of the citizenship assignment and citizenship regulations.

Citizenship experts have been appointed who help schools shape their citizenship policy. For primary education, secondary education and secondary vocational education, information and tools have been made available through the School and Safety Foundation, on the theme page about sexuality and sexual integrity. In developing lesson materials, the experts work together with Rutgers, which is responsible for www.seksuelevorming.nl.

Fine-tuning professional codes for health and wellbeing

Professional codes in healthcare contain important values and standards of professional groups and help in the proper performance of a profession. Professional groups themselves determine the content of the professional codes. At the same time we have established that these professional codes currently give little to no attention to the risk of sexually transgressive behaviour, for example by patients towards care providers and vice versa. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport therefore promotes the dialogue with professional associations, in order to see where the professional codes might be fine-tuned.

¹¹ Guide for primary and secondary education in regards to advice on sexting (NL) can be found through : <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/seksuele-misdrijven/vraag-en-antwoord/wat-kan-ik-als-school-of-ouder-doen-tegen-ongewenste-sexting>.

¹² The Expert Centre was created by the School and Safety Foundation (Stichting School en Veiligheid), the senior secondary vocational education knowledge centre on citizenship, the Curriculum Development Foundation (SLO) and ProDemos.



Exploration of the openness to discuss sexual health in healthcare and welfare relations

Various tools and measures have already been developed to make sexual health and sexuality open for discussion in healthcare. But there are consistent signs that sexual health and sexuality are difficult to discuss in practice. This is why Rutgers – commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport – is researching what healthcare and other care providers (in general practice care, youth care and disabled care) need to proactively discuss the topic with their clients without discomfort. The results of the study are expected in early 2023.

Safe care relationships

Research from the Health and Youth Care Inspectorate¹³ has shown that approximately one third of the reports that are received by the inspectorate on disabled care are about violence in the care relationship. Sexually transgressive behaviour (between clients or between healthcare providers and clients) is included. The former Minister for Medical Care has agreed to conduct qualitative research, in which they will look at the effectiveness of the existing instruments from the perspective of the client. This will include a review of prevention of physical and mental violence and the options for increasing the impact and effectiveness of these instruments.¹⁴

In addition to what is shared from the client's perspective, the proposals that are being done based on research in order to improve effectiveness relate to at least the following:

- Whether the toolbox adequately leads to openness in discussing sexuality and intimacy and self-awareness in what people enjoy and the resilience of people with a disability;
- Whether the toolbox adequately leads to making sexuality and having intimacy and intimate contact possible, including sexual contact should there be a need;
- Whether the toolbox leads to an adequate response from healthcare staff and other relevant actors (persons or organizations) when violence or sexually transgressive behaviour has taken place.

In addition we will look at the scope people have within disabled care to work out their own sexuality and what healthcare professionals and care organizations need to support people in this.

Objective 3

Young people recognize and acknowledge each other's boundaries and wishes and are capable of articulating and guarding them.

Making it possible to discuss the theme of sexuality can lead to taboos being broken, also between young people and those raising them. Sexual development starts with young people and young adults and will continue to play an increasingly important role in their lives at an age when they are developing their identity. This includes plenty of experimentation with sexuality, intimacy and entering into and maintaining relationships. Most young people know how to find their own way in this, sometimes with the help of good information. Prevention needs to start early, which is why attention is paid to both children and young people. Because if they learn how to deal with their own sexual wishes and boundaries in a positive way, both in the real world and online, chances are smaller that they will act in a sexually transgressive manner or become the victim of this behaviour.

Research into the beliefs of young people and parents

Not much is known about how young people think about sexually transgressive behaviour and which factors play a role in the upbringing. In the context of the action programme, Rutgers conducted the 'Waar ligt de grens' (Where is the boundary) study into the beliefs of young people and their parents about sexually transgressive behaviour. The study provides insight into the assumptions about sexuality and sexually transgressive behaviour, gender norms, the educational climate surrounding sex and transgressive behaviour in this context and which factors align with assumptions about sex and sexually transgressive behaviour. Finally, there is a need for parental support. In a conversation with relevant stakeholders and ministries, the topic of how results and recommendations can be taken up in the action programme will be discussed. The outcomes of the study were sent to the House with this action programme.

Curriculum review: updating the core objectives of sexual education and modifications of digital literacy

In the current primary and secondary education curriculum, the core objectives sexuality and sexual diversity have been included. In this, resilience and sexual integrity are important themes and the intention is to prevent sexually transgressive behaviour and promote sexual resilience. At the moment we are considering whether or not the core objectives require fine-tuning, starting with the core objectives for basic skills.¹⁵ In January 2023, a mid-term progress review was drawn up. Based on this the decision will be made whether fine-tuning of other learning areas, such as 'orientation on yourself and the world' – which now also includes sexuality – will also begin. Clarify clearer core goals for

¹³ IGJ (2021) *Wat kunnen we leren van meldingen seksueel grensoverschrijdend gedrag in de gehandicaptenzorg? Analyse van SGOG-meldingen in de gehandicaptenzorg in 2017, 2018, 2019* (What can we learn from reports of sexually transgressive behaviour in disabled care? Analysis of sexually transgressive behaviour in disabled care in 2017, 2018, 2019)

¹⁴ Parliamentary papers II, 2020/21, 24 104, no. 321.

¹⁵ Language, numeracy/mathematics, citizenship and digital literacy.



Sonja:

'The things you see and hear are just terrible. It happened to me too the other day. A very pushy man came to my flower stall. He wanted to take a picture of me because I was so beautiful. When I said no he kept insisting and refused to leave. That was rather unpleasant.'

I was happy when an acquaintance stopped by. He wasn't someone I knew all that well, but I hugged him like he was my husband. The creep left soon after.'



schools and what is expected from them in terms of sexual education. This can help the next generation to respect each other's wishes and boundaries and make healthy choices.

Promotional programme for 'Comprehensive Sexuality Education' within the Healthy School programme

Within the Healthy School programme¹⁶ – which is financially supported by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality – a promotional programme called 'Comprehensive Sexuality Education' (*Seksuele en relationele vorming*) was developed. This promotional programme ensures that schools in primary, special, secondary and secondary vocational education will structurally work on the theme 'relationships and sexuality'. Schools can choose from accredited interventions and optional components for comprehensive sexuality education. This way, children and young people will receive information on topics such as healthy relationships, safe sex and pregnancy in a timely manner, and they learn to speak freely about wishes, consent and boundaries.

Secondary vocational education qualification requirements

In secondary vocational education, schools design their curricula based on qualification dossiers with qualification requirements. The theme of sexual education is part of the qualification requirements for citizenship. At this time, the qualification requirements for citizenship are recalibrated as part of the approach to boost citizenship education in secondary vocational education. The House of Representatives was informed about this on 1 July 2022.¹⁷

¹⁶ An inter-institutional partnership between the councils of primary education and secondary education, the secondary vocational education council, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, and the municipal health services/Regional Medical Assistance Organization GHOR The Netherlands.

¹⁷ Parliamentary papers II, 2021/22, 31 524, no. 509.





Action line 2

Legislation and regulations reflect changing societal norms

The government believes it is important to determine clear frameworks in legislation and regulations that reflect changing societal norms. Everyone should feel safe, without fear of unwanted sexual advances: at home, at work, online and on the streets. That is the standard that should be the focus of legislation and regulations.

Clear legislation and regulations reflect norms that are about the type of behaviour that is considered unacceptable and even punishable in our society. Strongly embedding these standards in our society requires a broad approach, which is shaped in this action programme.





Objective 1

The Working Conditions Act contains clear standards on how to prevent and tackle sexually transgressive behaviour.

Modification of working conditions legislation and regulations

The current labour law and the Working Conditions Act make it mandatory for employers to implement a working conditions policy in order to prevent or limit the psychosocial burden. This also includes sexual harassment, bullying, aggression and violence, discrimination and workload. Employers have to draw up a risk inventory and evaluation (RI&E), including an action plan.

At this time a private member's bill has been submitted to the House of Representatives which, if it is adopted in both Houses, will obligate employers to appoint one or more confidential counsellors. The government believes this is an important first step in the battle against inappropriate behaviour.

A confidential counsellor for inappropriate behaviour works preventively, for example by providing information to employers and employees. In addition, a confidential counsellor is also important in the curative phase – in being there for the employees who make a report. The confidential counsellor can guide, help brainstorm and inform about informal or formal solutions, referrals and aftercare. The position of confidential counsellor will be strengthened by including a number of basic tasks and requirements. The proposal also regulates protection of the confidential counsellor from prejudice and dismissal. The treatment of the private member's bill has currently been set to 25 January 2023.

The government intends to tackle transgressive behaviour with far-reaching measures that contribute to this approach by making the use of measures less non-committal. The government is currently overseeing the implementation of the following legal obligations:

- **Legal obligation code of conduct**

Drawing up a code of conduct and frequently bringing it to people's attention works preventively. This contributes to a culture in the workplace in which talking to each other about behaviour goes without saying. Supervisors and management should clearly lead by example in this. In 2018, a study was already conducted into the added value of a code of conduct.¹⁸ Next, a guide was developed with societal partners about how to draw up a code of conduct and keep it alive within an organization. The guide will be updated with societal partners.

- **Legal obligation complaints regulation**

Moreover, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment is currently looking into the option of obligating employers to have a complaints regulation in place. It is important that formal complaints about inappropriate behaviour within companies and institutions are investigated and handled with great care.

In regards to the newly mentioned obligations, it remains to be seen whether further research is needed to come to a good legal interpretation. In this, we also need to look for example at enforceability and matters.

Ratification ILO convention 190

The government intends to ratify ILO convention 190 of the International Labour Organisation of 21 June 2019, on banishing violence and intimidation in the workplace. The convention covers measures in the following areas:

- Prevention and protection;
- Enforcement and satisfaction;
- Advice and education.

The convention touches on regulation and policy of various departments. You can expect to receive a parliamentary bill in the first half of 2023, which states how the convention will be worked into regulations and policy.

¹⁸ Parliamentary papers II, 2018/2019, 34 843, no. 35..



Objective 2

The Sex Crimes Act and its standards are widely known.

Modification to morality law

The *Parliamentary Bill for Sex Crimes* modernizes sex crimes in the Penal Code and has made more sexually transgressive behaviour punishable by law. The parliamentary bill makes criminal justice procedures possible for sexually transgressive behaviour that should be punished according to a modern and online society. This increases safety both online and in the real world for everyone in the Netherlands. The parliamentary bill is in line with the international obligations in this area. The Minister of Security and Justice presented the parliamentary bill to the House of Representatives in October 2022.

In addition to what is already punishable by law, the following will be included:

- An expansion of the definition of sexual misconduct, sexual assault and rape: It will be punishable to have sex with someone if you know or could have known that the other person did not want to have sex with you. Even if no force was used. Sexual contact should occur based on mutual agreement.
- Sexual harassment in public and/or online.
- Approaching children under the age of 16 in a sexual manner, for example by sending messages (sex chats).

In addition the minimum punishments for some offences will be raised, including for the assault and rape of children.

Criminal law is an indispensable capstone in the broad and integrated approach to tackling sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence that this government is aiming for. The adjustment of the parliamentary bill and other projects intended to strengthen the criminal justice chain, run parallel to drawing up and elaborating this action programme. These projects are very different but boost each other. The actions that are being developed in the context of this action programme and that apply to other domains than criminal law will deliver a meaningful contribution to generating attention to the standards in the parliamentary bill. For this reason and to promote the parliamentary bill, the implementation of the bill will align with the action programme.

The purpose of this parliamentary bill is to achieve a broad-based update of the sex crimes penal code. For an effective implementation, careful preparation with the most involved chain organizations such as the police and the public prosecution service is vital. With the goal of supporting and facilitating them, the Ministry of Security and Justice has set up an implementation process for the sex crimes parliamentary bill from a coordinating and facilitating role. In order to promote the effect of the new criminal justice standard in society, information and communication is important. In this context, we will align as much as possible with the broader public communication and other information activities that are being worked on in the context of this action programme.

Objective 3

Sports disciplinary law is evaluated and improved to tackle behaviours that threaten a safe sports environment.

Sports disciplinary law can tackle behaviours that threaten a safe sports environment and are in this way an addition to criminal law. Research is currently being conducted into safe and ethical sports, which should result in specific improvement proposals for sports disciplinary regulations. The results are expected in early 2023.



Lian:

When I was in secondary school, I was sexually abused by a teacher for years. It started when I was twelve. I was bullied and he was there for me when I was having a hard time. It didn't take long for an unhealthy relationship to begin in which I became dependent on him. He abused his position of power and led me to believe that this was normal. He touched me and kept going a step further, always in places or at times when nobody would see it. I am frequently asked why I didn't put a stop to it sooner or why I didn't report him to the police. A question like that is painful. As though it was my fault. But I was only a child.'



Objective 4

The government sets the standards in relation to purchasing and if possible the funding of other organizations.

As the largest employer in the Netherlands, the government is making extra effort as an employer to tackle and prevent transgressive behaviour in general and sexually transgressive behaviour in particular.

Purchasing

In the purchasing by various government agencies, conditions are currently being set in the area of diversity and inclusion. Where possible, this will be expanded to include purchasing by the entire government. In this we will explore in which way more attention should be paid to preventing and tackling sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence.

Exploration: defining conditions for the granting of subsidies

The aim is to design the frameworks of subsidy granting in such a way that organizations funded by the government may be given conditions about combating sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is currently exploring the options. These can include more stringent conditions for subsidies, and asking attention for this subject in the justification.

Activiteiten regeringscommissaris rond actielijn 2

The societal values and standards that are needed to achieve the desired cultural shift will need to be reflected through legislation and regulations. Below is an overview of the modifications and measures that the action programme intends to achieve. However, many of these modifications and measures will have to be elaborated on. The government commissioner will be advising on various aspects of this.

She will be organizing in-depth sessions in which experts, organizations and victims will jointly be discussing the various aspects of legislation and regulations, in order to offer advice based on expertise and with the widest support possible. As part of her work activities she will be organizing sessions on:

- Values and standards: Mapping which standards and values form the basis for combating sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence and how these standards and values can be integrated into our policy and legislation and regulations and regulations, for example via codes of conduct and assessment frameworks for sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence.
- Legislation and regulations aimed at organizations, about topics such as:
 - Confidential counsellors – What is required for confidential counsellors to properly perform their role?
 - Complaints committees – Which conditions should apply in the establishment of committees and the handling of complaints?
 - Investigation following a report – Which conditions should an investigation meet, based on a report within organizations, with a view to the interests of everyone involved and as the basis for a good trial?





Action line 3

Organizations have processes in place for prevention, detection and monitoring

Sexually transgressive behaviour is a frequently occurring issue within organizations.¹⁸

However, one third of people expect that reporting the problem will have a negative impact on their jobs.¹⁹ The government wants organizations to work on a socially safe culture and will see what organizations require for this, with specific attention for small businesses. Measures can include making the appropriate tools available and increasing knowledge and support in holding conversations within organizations. It is important that, where necessary, the needs of organizations within specific sectors are taken into account, building on the good initiatives that already exist.





Objective 1

Employers and workers are supported in drawing up and implementing policy within the organization.

The approach to sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence needs to be structurally embedded in the policy and processes of employers and employees should have a say. Only together can employers and employees ensure that there are effective and practicable measures that can make the difference in the workplace or in practice in order to achieve the necessary cultural shift. Unions, employer organizations and industry associations play an important role in this. In the coming period, societal partners will be developing a multi-annual programme on how to tackle the issue in the workplace. This approach can also relate to the other targets and lines of action in this action programme.

In anticipation of this, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment will be ramping up various current actions.

Better website for support in conducting the dialogue

In 2023, the website 'Route naar RI&E'²¹ will be improved, with a special focus on the dialogue between employers and employees. After all, it is important that they continue to communicate on all steps of the risk inventory and evaluation. This includes:

- Surveying the occupational risks, including psychosocial occupational burden. Sexually transgressive behaviour also falls under the psychosocial occupational burden.
- Drawing up an action plan with measures to combat these risks.
- Implementing and evaluating the measures.

Overview of range of measures

TNO is currently developing a digital decision aid that offers an overview of the range of preventive and other measures to tackle psychosocial occupational burden, including sexually transgressive behaviour.²² After being taken into use, the decision aid will be evaluated in 2023 and expanded after.

Dutch Work Inspectorate

The Dutch Work Inspectorate's multi-annual psychosocial occupational burden thematic programme aims to help deal with inappropriate behaviour, workload, aggression and violence at work. The programme focuses attention on the risk of psychosocial occupational burden in the RI&E, the action plan and the information, instruction and supervision by the employer.

The Dutch Work Inspectorate has conducted a Delphi study into inappropriate behaviour in house²³ The study provides insight into the risk factors for inappropriate behaviour in house and the measures that can be taken to tackle it. In the coming period, the Work Inspectorate will be working on a guide for employers. Employers can use the guide to shape the inventory of risk factors for inappropriate behaviour in their business and the measures they can use to combat the problem.

With the intention to focus specifically on inappropriate behaviour in house (including sexually transgressive behaviour), the Dutch Work Inspection cooperated in 2022 with stakeholders to study the underlying causes of the problems in the sector of sheltered employment organizations. In addition to that, research will be conducted into employer policy on combating inappropriate conduct behaviour in-house in the security, media and sports sectors. In the next annual plan, the Work Inspectorate will explain its efforts for 2023.

¹⁹ The 2021 Netherlands Working Conditions Survey shows that 10.6% of female and 1.84% of male respondents experienced unwanted sexual attention from customers (or patients, students or passengers etc.) in the 12 months leading up to the study. For unwanted sexual attention from supervisors or colleagues, the percentages are 3.4% of women and 1.04% of men. [Nationale Enquête Arbeidsomstandigheden 2021 - in a nutshell](https://www.nutshell.nl/nutshell/onderzoek/2021/01/nationale-enquete-arbeidsomstandigheden-2021) (tno.nl).

²⁰ [Summary – Emancipation monitor 2022 | Statistics Netherlands](https://www.csb.nl/en/summary-emancipation-monitor-2022).

²¹ <https://app.rie.nl>.

²² Parliamentary papers II 2021-2022, 25883, no. 421.

²³ A Delphi study (named after the oracle of Delphi) is a research method in which the opinions of a large number of experts are asked in regards to a subject on which there is no consensus.



Objective 2

The government is a role model as an employer in regards to sexually transgressive behaviour and in doing so places the focus on raising awareness and research.

As the largest employer in the Netherlands, the government will continue to focus its efforts on combating transgressive behaviour, including sexually transgressive behaviour.

Sharing information of the reporting options and raising awareness

The government has a system of confidential counsellors, integrity coordinators and complaints committees for employees. The basic training of confidential counsellors includes a focus on reporting options. Procedures and referral options, possible consequences and aftercare are all requirements of the basic training of confidential counsellors. The Ministry of Kingdom and Interior Relations has also developed a training for confidential counsellors in which they can increase their expert knowledge of the topic of unwanted behaviour (specifically discrimination and racism). The goal is that this will help them better support employees who come to them with these types issues.

In-depth study into factors and effectiveness

Based on the 2022 PER government employee survey and the 2019 Work Study, we recently researched which factors contribute to a safe working environment and less inappropriate behaviour. The research also looked into whether there are groups of employees who experience inappropriate behaviour and an unsafe working environment more often than others.²⁴

As it turns out, weak management forms a risk for an unsafe working environment. It was also shown that women, employees from migrant backgrounds and employees in operations and production experience inappropriate behaviour more frequently. The Ministry of Kingdom and Interior Relations plans to use the recommendations from this risk analysis to tackle inappropriate behaviour in the Government. The recommendations are intended to focus on those groups that run a greater risk of being faced with inappropriate behaviour, and to work on prevention and integrity and on the factors that make inappropriate behaviour possible.

Objective 3

Organizations have actions against sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence that fit in with the sector.

Each sector has its own characteristics and vulnerabilities that require interventions that align with the specific context. In the coming period, the government will focus on further driving sectoral action plans. Together with sector organizations, we will look at what is needed in specific sectors, what sector organizations can learn from each other and how they can move forward together. The government and the government commissioner play a facilitating and encouraging role in this.

Sports

Since the De Vries committee provided insight into the scope and nature of sexual harassment and sexual abuse in sports in 2017, a lot has been set in motion.²⁵ There is now a duty to report for managers and supervisors of sports clubs and associations in the event of sexual harassment or suspicion of sexual harassment. There is also a better follow-up system for reports, the possibility for easy reporting, and a Dutch Centre for Safe Sports (CVSN). The Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence recently observed that important steps have been taken in sports to make it possible to discuss sexually transgressive behaviour but that this is not yet happening at all levels.²⁶

A safe environment is necessary to enjoy a lifetime of playing sports. This is why we want more attention for sexually transgressive behaviour among those involved: sports providers, sports unions and municipalities.

Promoting safe sports

We are currently working to ensure a safe environment for sports by raising awareness among people involved, such as managers, trainers, coaches, players and sports unions. In this case it is about training confidential counsellors and educating trainers and coaches to recognize and prevent sexually transgressive behaviour. We are also working on making players and professional athletes more resilient, so they will develop skills to help them set boundaries. At the management level, we would like to draw attention to the Good Sports Management Code

²⁴ Risk analysis of inappropriate behaviour in the Government | Knowledge Bank Public Administration (Risicoanalyse ongewenst gedrag bij het Rijk | Kennisbank Openbaar Bestuur) (kennisopenbaarbestuur.nl).

²⁵ Twaalf procent van Nederlandse volwassenen die als kind aan sport deden, heeft op z'n minst één ervaring met seksueel grensoverschrijdend gedrag. Rapport van de Onderzoekscommissie seksuele intimidatie en misbruik in de sport (2017) – Kenniscentrum Sport en Beweging.

²⁶ Bouwen aan Bescherming - Onderzoek naar de aanbevelingen van vier onderzoekscommissies naar seksueel geweld in de Rooms-Katholieke kerk, de sport en de jeugdzorg | Rapport | Nationaal Rapporteur.



Tim:

'I've noticed that some of my male colleagues make jokes with sexual overtones. 'She's not just smart but also hot', they will say. It's a bonding thing for men. But you shouldn't be manifesting yourself like that as a man. I sometimes struggle to say something about it, because you can also be excluded because you're seen as some kind of social justice warrior. But I still do it. As a manager I feel responsible for setting the right example. Saying something like that is just wrong.'



(Code Goed Sportbestuur). This includes the basic conditions that sports administrators need to meet to offer members a safe and ethical environment for playing sports, for example the need to have a whistleblower policy and a confidential counsellor. In addition to that, sports unions are supported by the option of conducting specific research into transgressive behaviour per sport and by following up on it.

Sports Agreement on socially safe sports

The 2018-2022 Sports Agreement (Sportakkoord) has contributed to more awareness of social security and the importance of a positive sports culture. But more is needed to move on from awareness to a cultural shift.²⁷ This is why we will be continuing the Sports Agreement, with more attention, guarantees and a supporting infrastructure that ensures safe and fun sports.

Transgressive behaviour in dance

An investigation is currently underway into the nature and scope of transgressive behaviour in dance. The results are expected in the spring of 2023. In anticipation of the recommendations from the report, a project group has been set up with representatives from the sector. The Ministries of Health, Welfare and Sport and Education, Culture and Science will provide guidance on how to respond to the recommendations.

Research into safe and ethical sports and evaluation of sports disciplinary law.

The investigation into safe and ethical sports also researches the roles and responsibilities in a safe and ethical sport. The researchers will also look into the positioning of the Dutch Centre for Safe Sports (CVSN), where players can go to report transgressive behaviour and players and sports associations can receive support in taking follow-up steps. Another part of the investigation is an evaluation of sports disciplinary law. The results are expected in early 2023 at which time we will inform the House of Representatives.

Primary, secondary and senior secondary vocational education

Schools are obligated to actively and explicitly implement policy to ensure the safety of students and staff. Preventing and combating sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence is part of this. The following Government actions are aimed at primary and secondary education.

Research into the causes of sexually transgressive behaviour

In the autumn of 2022, an investigation was launched into the causes of sexually transgressive behaviour in education and the increase in the number of reports about personnel responsible for tasks, including teachers, support staff and/or non-teaching staff. The final report is expected at the beginning of 2023 and will then be presented to the House of Representatives.

Exploration for tightening the Certificate of Good Conduct

The goal of the research is to find out whether educational staff will have to comply with more stringent requirements to receive a Certificate of Good Conduct (VOG). The goal is to reduce the risk of sexually transgressive behaviour between students and teaching staff.

Intensification of social safety monitor

Schools in primary and secondary education should measure social security every year. They do this by asking students questions. The mandatory annual school monitor will be expanded with more in-depth questions and by asking more students. Secondary vocational education will get its own new integrated safety monitor.

Development of standards framework

We will develop a standards framework and an action plan for dealing with sexually transgressive behaviour in primary and secondary education. There is already a communication project for the sector councils, the School and Safety Foundation (SSV) and the Inspectorate of Education to provide more clarity to schools about legislation and procedures against sexually transgressive behaviour. Schools are not only told what to do, but they also receive practical advice. In November for example, the guideline *Zo klein als mogelijk, zo groot als nodig* (As small as possible, as large as necessary) was published,²⁸ which includes an overview of preventive and curative measures that schools can take to prevent sexually transgressive behaviour and act thoroughly and carefully in the event of potential incidents.

²⁷ Kamerstukken II, 2022/2023, 30 234, nr. 329, bijlage.

²⁸ Joint product of the councils of primary education, secondary education, School & Safety Foundation, Confidence Inspectorate, Sector Council for Practical Education, Sector Council GO and Ministry of Education Culture and Science (November 2022) Guideline 'Zo klein als mogelijk, zo groot als nodig'.



Expansion of reporting and consultation duty regarding sexual harassment

Expansion of reporting and consultation duty regarding sexual harassment. This certainly applies to primary and secondary education and will be further investigated for secondary vocational education.

Boards already have a reporting obligation, a meeting obligation and a notification obligation. This means that, if sexual abuse is suspected, they must immediately get in touch with the confidential inspector of the inspectorate. The confidential inspector listens, informs, and advises where necessary about doing a report. The confidential inspector also indicates when the problem needs to be reported to the police.

Higher education and science

There is also attention for tackling sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence in higher education and science. The following actions are focused on these sectors.

Administrative agreement

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science, universities and universities of applied sciences have a joint ambition to improve social security for both students and employees. For this reason they reached an administrative agreement in mid-2022 that includes plans to ensure social security in higher education and science.²⁹ One of the aspects of social security involves sexual violence and sexually transgressive behaviour.

It has been agreed that all institutions will draw up codes of conduct describing a no-tolerance policy for unsafe and transgressive behaviour. Universities and universities of applied sciences will also be ensuring an unambiguous and structural monitor of the social security experienced by students and employees. The results, aggregated at sector level, will be periodically made available to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. Institutions must also explicitly and recognisably address developments with regard to social safety and inclusion in their annual reports.

Integrated approach to social safety

In light of the joint ambition that was expressed in the administrative agreement, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science will present an integrated approach to social safety in higher education and research at the beginning of 2023. The approach will focus on both structural and cultural factors in education and research.

Expansion of reporting and consultation duty regarding sexual harassment

An investigation will be conducted to include the question of whether the reporting and consultation duty for sexual abuse can be expanded to include sexual harassment, and whether the applicable duty should be expanded from cases involving underage students to all students.

Complaints procedures

The Inspectorate of Education has called on the university executive boards to conduct research into the design of the complaints handling procedure, the information provided to students on this, how the complaints handling procedure works and the satisfaction of students about how their complaints have been handled. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science endorses this call and plans to consult with the institutions.

Media and Culture

Transgressive incidents have also been a topic of discussion for some time in the cultural, creative and media sectors. Revelations about abuse in programmes such as *The Voice of Holland* and *De Wereld Draait Door* demonstrate the urgent need for a safer working environment in media. In June of 2022 the Council for Culture issued a recommendation on this matter. In her letter of 2 November 2022,³⁰ the State Secretary for Culture and Media responds to the recommendations of the council. In order to tackle transgressive behaviour in the cultural, creative and media sectors, she will be taking the following measures:

Having a conversation with the sector

Having a conversation about transgressive behaviour with the cultural, creative and media sector. After the revelations about TV programme *The Voice of Holland*, the State Secretary held two round table discussions with media parties on the topic of transgressive behaviour. The goal was to explore a joint preventive approach by the sector in tackling sexually transgressive behaviour. This will result in a sectoral covenant against transgressive behaviour, which the State Secretary and the government commissioner will discuss with media parties.

Improve working conditions

For this, funding will also be made available by the State Secretary for Culture and Media. People in the cultural, creative and media sector need to be able to count on a safe working environment, good working conditions and a decent salary. These are the necessary preconditions for working in a safe and pleasant environment and it offers more security in discussing abuses. The large number of flex contracts in these sectors is therefore inadvisable. Efforts from the government to offer more safety and security and reach a new and higher standard for percentages

29 Parliamentary Papers II, 2021/2022, 31 288, no. 969, annex.

30 Parliamentary papers II, 2022/2023, 34843, no. 62.



of programme makers in permanent employment at public broadcasting corporations, as has also been requested by your House by means of the motion Mohandis et al.³¹ The State Secretary will talk to the NPO and the broadcasters about this.

Working on diversity and inclusion

We do this through the application of the Diversity and Inclusion code and via the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science's broad policy agenda on Discrimination and Racism.³² Specifically this means the following:

- Organizations subsidized by the Government or by the government culture funds now also have to endorse and apply the Diversity and Inclusion Code.
- Diversity and inclusion are standard components of the annual monitoring conversations that take place between the institutions and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science or the funds. The State Secretary works with the National Knowledge Institute for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts and to further boost the position of the Code of Diversity and Inclusion. In the autumn she will also include a more binding application of the code in the Request for Advice about the 2025-2029 basic cultural infrastructure to the Council for Culture.
- The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will conclude a performance agreement every five years with the Dutch Public Broadcasting System (NPO) which includes, among other things, further agreements on the reflection of women, people from a migrant background, and people with a disability. The Dutch public broadcasting system (NPO) must report annually on compliance with performance agreements.
- The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science's agenda on Discrimination and Racism includes actions and interventions for the cultural, creative and media sectors. Actions include investments in monitoring and efforts to better identify inequality in the sector and to promote equality.

Professionalization

Work is being done to professionalize business operations, governance and supervision in the cultural and creative sectors. This professionalization contributes to combating transgressive behaviour. For this purpose, the sector uses three codes with principles and agreements as instruments: the Fair Practice Code, the Diversity and Inclusion Code and the Governance Code for Culture.

Mores hotline

The funding of the hotline Mores will be continued. People who work in the cultural, creative and media sectors can report transgressive behaviour there.

It is good to note that the media and cultural sector themselves are taking initiatives to combat sexual and other transgressive behaviour. For example, the Dutch Association for the Performing Arts (NAPK) has developed the Policy Framework *Veilig de vloer op* (Safe in the workplace), and explains what an organization can do to prevent and tackle transgressive behaviour. It specifically discusses the extraordinary conditions in the cultural and creative sectors, such as using the body as an instrument, the role of artistic and other leaders and mutual interdependence.

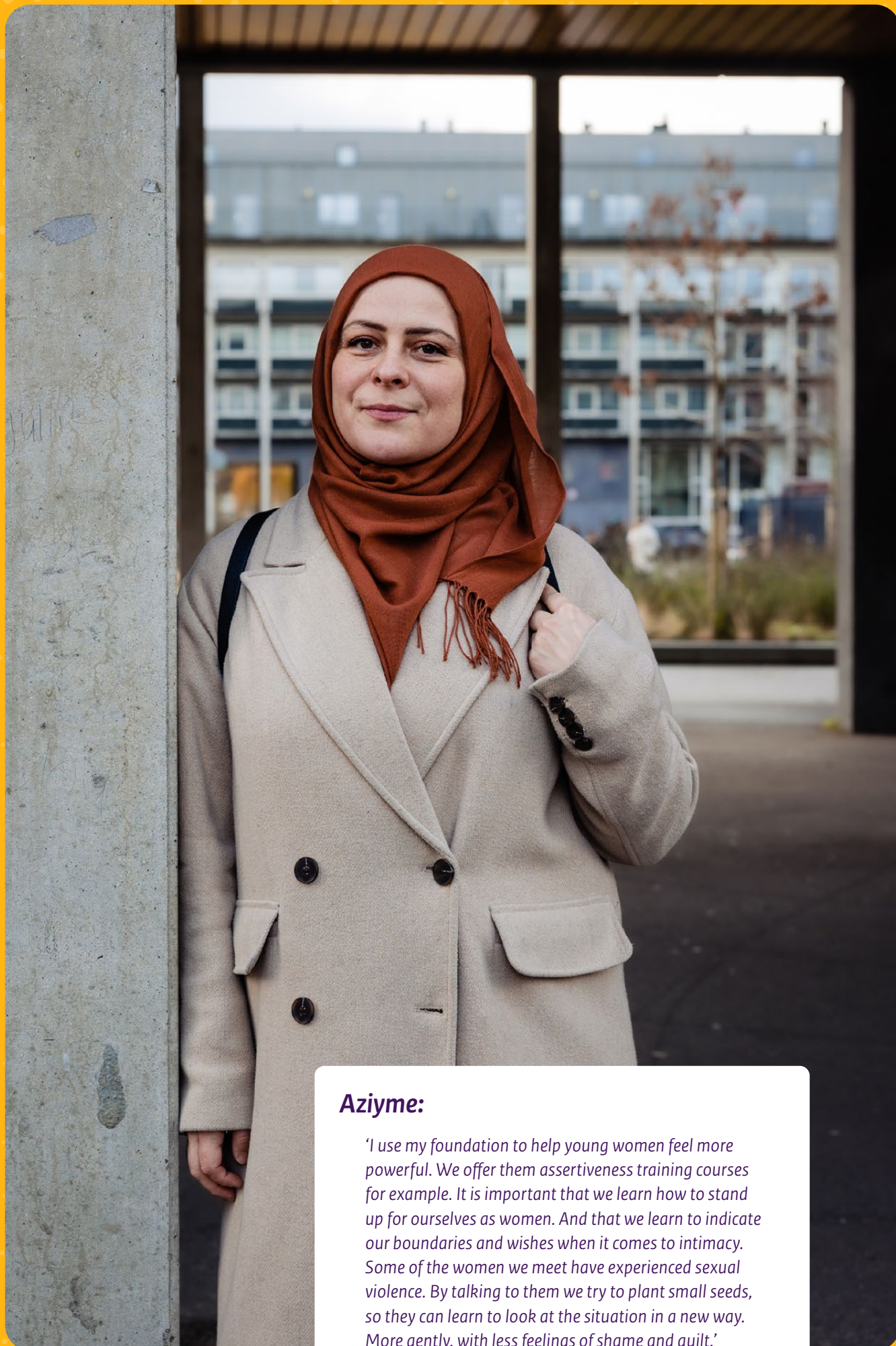
Activities of the government commissioner

The desired societal values and standards for a socially safe culture that are also reflected by legislation and regulations have to land in organizations. However it is important that they get plenty of support to get their processes in order. This will help contribute to the prevention of sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence aimed at children, young people and adults.

In order to support organizations in this, the government commissioner will undertake activities with various parties, including mapping the important preconditions for a socially safe culture within organizations. In this, we will specifically look at the role of the various parties involved in organizations, including directors and managers. In addition to that, the government commissioner will provide good examples of a socially safe culture and connect organizations to support each other in getting their processes in order. In addition to that she will work to incentivize specific sectors and target groups in the development and performance of a sector-specific approach to sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence.

³¹ Parliamentary papers II, 2022/2023, 36200, no. 166.

³² Parliamentary Papers II, 2022/2023, 30950, no. 318.



Aziyme:

'I use my foundation to help young women feel more powerful. We offer them assertiveness training courses for example. It is important that we learn how to stand up for ourselves as women. And that we learn to indicate our boundaries and wishes when it comes to intimacy. Some of the women we meet have experienced sexual violence. By talking to them we try to plant small seeds, so they can learn to look at the situation in a new way. More gently, with less feelings of shame and guilt.'



Action line 4

Everyone recognizes sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence and can respond to it

As the government, we would like bystanders to be able to recognize sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence and know what they can do when they find themselves faced with it. For example when they are a witness of this behaviour or if a victim or offender shares something in confidence. Bystanders can prevent or curb sexually transgressive behaviour, but only one in four will take action in the event they are faced with it in a public setting.^{32 33} They often don't know what to do, or are afraid to take action, for example because they are afraid of becoming a victim themselves. Sometimes, even, they don't see the situation as transgressive.





Objective 1

Bystanders recognize sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence and know when to react, how to take action or respond to it.

Public communication

In preparation of large-scale public communication, we are currently performing an inventory of the current and desired behaviour of bystanders and how to impact this using communication. Existing campaigns and communication campaigns from the Government and other organizations are included in this inventory. Future large-scale public communication must further strengthen and add to these campaigns and actions and will constantly be assessed with the various target groups. The goal is to commence the public communication in the second quarter of 2023.

An important aspect of the broad public communication is bringing the topic closer to the public. Excesses seem far away for many people, and 'smaller' incidents are often not considered seriously enough for people to relate to. As a result, people are insufficiently aware of the seriousness and proximity of the issue of sexually transgressive behaviour. In keeping with the efforts of action line 1, which aims to agree social standards, a discussion needs to be held on the topic in order to raise awareness.

In the meantime we will be raising awareness of this action programme and the resulting actions by responding to current affairs, we will hold talks on boosting the existing communication activities of societal organizations, and the theme of sexually transgressive behaviour will be added where possible to existing campaigns, such as the campaign of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment on the risk inventory, aimed at employers.

Promoting action and evaluation of bystander interventions

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science facilitates effective bystander interventions in the course of the programme. This will help bystanders and professionals to identify problematic and sexually transgressive behaviour, estimate the seriousness of the situation, increase their courage and sense of responsibility and take appropriate and safe action.

The goal is to ensure that more evidence-based interventions are being developed, disseminated, scaled up and used. This has special attention for risk areas such as the online world, on the streets, the hospitality industry and sports. The needs of specific target groups are also taken into account.

Institutional grant Change from Within 2.0

From 1 January 2023, the government will be supporting the alliance *Verandering van Binnenuit* (Change from Within) 2.0 for a period of five years. The alliance Change from Within 2.0 is a cooperation between the Consortium for Self-Determination, LCC+ and Movisie. The alliance aims to increase equality, safety and acceptance of women and LGBTIQ+ individuals within closed communities. This requires explicit attention for bystanders as the pioneers of change. The alliance also works to promote the social safety of women and LGBTIQ+ individuals both in private and in the public space.

Working together on supporting policy surrounding sexual harassment

Commissioned by the Ministry of Security and Justice, in the context of the implementation process of the sex crimes parliamentary bill and a project group under supervision of the Centre for Crime and Safety (CCV) that is tasked with translating the new crime of sexual harassment into a practical application. In the context of the project we are also working on preventive measures. For the development of these measures, a connection is being sought with the activities that arise from this action programme.

Good example: #WeTakeAction campaign Belgium

The goal of the campaign was to ensure that bystanders become more active.³³ The campaign consisted of a training that removed people's conscious or unconscious barriers and to find ways to practice or take action. In addition there were short videos of famous and regular people that explain how they took action or how a bystander helped them. This showed that you can also achieve a lot with small and simple actions. Various towns and organizations have taken up the campaign and created a local version.

33 We see bystanders as individuals who witness transgressive behaviour but who are not immediately involved as an offender or victim.

34 Facts and statistics - Stand Up (standup-international.com).

35 The campaign is based on the '4D' bystander intervention method. This method consists of four strategies for taking action as a bystander: distract, delegate, direct (direct action by talking to the offender) and delay.



Objective 2

Bystanders feel safe enough to take action.

Safe Cities programme

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is working together with fifteen Safe Cities, that work to improve the safety of women and girls in the public space. The participating cities have made great progress in tackling street harassment. The programme supplies knowledge about the local situation and raises awareness of residents and professionals about street harassment. The programme will run until the end of 2026.

Rainbow Cities Programme

In the coming four years, from 2023 until 2026, we will be working with the Rainbow Cities. For this purpose a total of €1.24 million will be made available to the municipalities annually. These 56 cities are working with local LGBTQ+ to increase the safety, resilience and social acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Rainbow Cities will be looking into options for doing more to combat sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence against LGBTQ+ persons.

Tackling street harassment

Commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Security, the Centre for Crime and Safety (CCV) will be working with municipalities on a quick scan into the scope and cause of street harassment, because there is not enough national data available on this. The results are expected in the first quarter of 2023. In 2017 a baseline measurement will be performed among 7 municipalities. The results provided a first global image of whether and how the theme of street harassment is dealt with at these municipalities. As such it is not a representative image of the national state of affairs. The results show that there is only limited insight into the scope of the problem, the victims and the offenders. In one municipality there are no specific signs of a major problem, but it is on the political agenda and in other municipalities it is mainly a practical issue among safety and care partners. Or it gets both political, administrative and official attention due to the high victim percentage among women. The phenomenon is also assessed differently by the municipalities: one considers it a nuisance, the other considers it violence of discrimination, a group issue, or a migrant problem. Municipalities also have a good idea of how to deal with street harassment, without a clear basis for the problem: criminalization based on the General Municipal By-law, information in schools, a combination of care and enforcement, campaigns and efforts to effect impact behaviour. Due to this previous survey, the quick scan will not only provide insight into the developments surrounding the phenomenon of street harassment, but also the situation

nationwide. Based on the results the follow-up steps will be determined.

Attention for bystanders within the entire action programme

The expectation is that the various measures within action lines 2 and 3 contribute to a safer social climate. This will have an immediate impact on the position of bystanders, who are often faces with the same dynamics as victims. Where relevant and possible, within the measures under action lines 2 and 3, explicit attention will have to be paid to the role of bystanders.

Activities of the government commissioner

The societal debate from action line 1 serves as a good contribution to this action line. The government commissioner will be promoting the recognition of sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence by bystanders, by sharing the stories about and experiences of victims, alleged offenders and offenders, and other bystanders, such as mentioned in the framework for action line 1. She researches the importance and the impact of bystander interventions by organizing in-depth sessions with experts and experience experts, in order to be able to issue a recommendation in a format to be determined. This is crucial because not understanding or understanding to a limited degree and actions taken by bystanders can sometimes have more significant consequences for the victim than the event itself.

The government commissioner assesses, provides insights, and opens her expert network in the development of large-scale public communication aimed at bystanders. She will also activate society in the societal debate step by step, asking them to talk to each other and, based on the results from the in-depth sessions, hand them tools for what to do in various situations, both online and offline, directly and indirectly. People are willing to help, but they are lacking the



Peter:

'Whether something is sexually transgressive is determined by the person at the receiving end. I would like to respect that boundary, but it is sometimes difficult to determine where it is. A few years ago I would say to other female colleagues that they look nice. But now I'm scared to make a flirtatious comment like that. Through everything you see in the media, I have become a lot more careful.'



Action line 5

There is good care provision that is easy to find

We want there to be good support for victims, offenders and loved ones. We consider good support to be support that has been proven to be effective and complies with certain principles. We will discuss these principles in more depth in this chapter. In addition, counselling and support should be easily accessible. When we speak of counselling and support we mean more than the help itself, we also refer to the phase that precedes it. This is the phase that can lead to getting counselling and support, such as accessible advice, a sympathetic ear or making a report.





There is a certain sequence to and coherence among the targets and actions. In 2023, we will be focusing on the first three goals, because we see these as an important foundation. From 2024 we will be focusing on the action plan *Stimuleren goede hulpverlening* (Promoting good counselling and support) of objective 4. The first three goals are interrelated and we will be working on these in parallel.

This action line touches on other projects that are also underway in addition to the action programme. This includes actions that are more in the area of criminal law. This action programme is not isolated but is part of broader efforts chosen by the government to combat sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. Based on this action plan relevant developments in related projects are also followed.

Objective 1

Counselling and support is easy to find and is easily accessible.

Research into helpdesks and advice centres

The Verweij Jonker Institute researches what the needs of victims and offenders of sexual violence are when it comes to the use of easily accessible help services. Easily accessible help services are seen as the full range of organizations that can offer a sympathetic ear, advice, where reports can be made and that can be accessed both with and without a referral.

The needs of victims and offenders in regards to these accessible help services are compared to the current situation. Do the current accessible help services meet the needs described by victims and offenders? And how easy is it to find appropriate help? The research also focuses on the question of which factors can make it more difficult and which factors can make it easier to take the step towards getting this help. The results from previous studies as they pertain to barriers experienced by victims of sexual violence will also be included.³⁶ In addition to that we will also research whether victims and offenders are in need of a general range of support services, or services that are aimed more at violence within a specific sector. The departments involved received the results from the study at the end of 2022.

Together with the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG) we will be talking to important stakeholders on what the results of the investigation will mean to the design of the current support landscape. Where necessary we will focus on setting priorities: which help is available for whom? We do this based on the targets to be formulated with the VNG and important stakeholders. Taken into account will be the fact that it can be difficult for victims, offenders and loved ones to formulate their own request for help considering the specific problems. Also taken into account is the fact that victims of sexual violence need something else compared to victims of sexually transgressive behaviour and that help and recovery can be different depending on the question of whether or not victims and offenders know each other.

Obtaining management information for monitoring

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Ministry of Security and Justice and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment are working to boost findability and accessibility of counselling and support services. This requires more than a one-off effort. It requires long-term monitoring so adjustments can be made when necessary. Together with the VNG and relevant stakeholders, we will determine which information is necessary for this monitoring, how we can efficiently obtain this information and who the owner is of this information. We will then work on organizing how to obtain this information.

Boosting the role of municipalities in the approach on a regional level

Municipalities have an important responsibility and role in the area of sexual health (among other things based on the Public Health Act) and in the approach to tackling sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence on a regional level (Youth Act and the 2015 Social Support Act). They have a coordinating role in working with the relevant organizations in the region on the safety of their inhabitants in the broad sense and specifically preventing and combating sexually transgressive behaviour.

This includes a risk that various initiatives and action plans will be taken up in a fragmented manner, reducing their effectiveness. The Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children has observed that a coordinated approach is lacking and is advocating for more attention to tackling sexual violence on a regional level. For this reason, in the coming period, efforts will be made to boost the municipal approach.

We will be talking to the municipalities about what is a reasonable contribution, what is necessary to promote sexual health on a local/regional level, what is necessary to combat sexually transgressive behaviour, which support they need in this and how it can be provided, including knowledge sharing on good

³⁶ NSR report on temporary regulations for victims of sexual violence 2021.



practices between regions. In this the findings from the pilot on developing an approach to sexual violence on a regional level will be involved. The result of this pilot was an instrument to gain a better overview of the nature and scope of sexual violence in the region. In addition national building blocks for a regional approach have been developed, with the aim of providing municipalities with tools to get to work on the design of an effective approach for tackling sexually transgressive behaviour on a regional level. In order to efficiently design a regional approach, attention is needed for prevention and detection and for offering support, with a focus on victims, offenders, loved ones and the environment. The goal is to achieve a comprehensive and integrated approach with cooperation from the various domains (social, healthcare and safety domains). Vital in this is good cooperation with and efforts by both municipal and non-municipal partners.

Objective 2

Formulating principles for good care provision.

What do we mean by good care provision? As far as we are concerned, good care provision must align with certain principles. Some of these principles may seem like stating the obvious, but that is not the case. We therefore believe that it is important to clearly formulate these principles so they can help with getting the foundations for good care provision in place (the next goal).

Formulating principles

Together with relevant field parties we formulate principles for good care provision for victims, offenders and loved ones. Based on conversations with chain parties, we are thinking of at least the following:

- Integrated and multidisciplinary working;
- Working according to the vision *Gefaseerd samenwerken aan veiligheid* (Phased cooperation to achieve safety);
- Gender sensitivity at work;
- Trauma sensitivity at work;
- Attention to intergenerational transfer;
- Attention to specific target groups such as people with mild intellectual disabilities;
- Promoting professional development with structural maintenance, which includes a distinction between the needs of generalists and specialists;
- As little transfer as possible, the same faces, a continuous line, intensive supervision, organizing in a team, speedy action and avoiding transfers as much as possible.

Objective 3

Setting up the foundation for good care provision.

The care provision that is needed has to be available and needs to be deployed in a timely manner. However, organizations are struggling with waiting lists and there is a shortage in the labour market, also in healthcare and other care services. At the same time we see that demand for care provision is growing now that there is more attention for sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence in the media.

Focusing on the preconditions

Together with relevant stakeholders, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and Security and Justice will work to provide a clear idea of what is needed to provide adequate, proper and timely care provision to victims, offenders and loved ones. What are the preconditions that need to be in place, what does adequate care provision look like, what is timely, and what is realistic in this? This investigation will also focus on including the perspectives of care professionals, victims, offenders and loved ones.

In this assignment we will utilize available monitoring information and we will keep track of the progress of this action using this information. Where necessary and where possible, we will include the monitoring information in the described action entitled *Verkrijgen monitoringsinformatie* (Obtaining monitoring information). For this assignment we will also use the results from the impact analysis as described on [page 11](#).

Based on the results yielded we will work with the stakeholders to devise a plan for the duration of this action programme about how we can improve the preconditions within the applicable frameworks and available options. As previously indicated, we realized that this overlaps with broad, complex challenges that are being taken up in other policy domains, such as addressing the waiting lists in Dutch mental healthcare and increasing the number of vice detectives. It is also important to keep track of these complex challenges from the point of view of the action programme.



Objective 4

We are committed to setting up good care provision.

Research that will positively impact good care provision

Together with relevant stakeholders, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Security and Justice will inventory existing knowledge and complete missing knowledge for the benefit of good care provision. How can existing knowledge be managed, shared and made available to help promote good care provision?

Promoting good care provision

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport plans to commit itself to promoting good care provision that aligns with the principles formulated under objective 2. The way in which the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport plans to achieve this will be made more specific based on the results of the previous actions in this action line.

Counselling young people on issues relating to sexuality

For questions about sexuality, GPs serve as a first point of contact, but sometimes this is too much of a hurdle for people. For example due to the excess, for privacy reasons or because of shame and fear of stigmatization. In order to remove these barriers, young people up to the age of 25 but also people from STD-endemic areas, men who have sex with men (MSM), and sex workers can turn to the municipal health service's Centres for Sexual Health for sense consultations (sexual counselling) based on the regulation Additional Sexual Health (Aanvullende Seksuele Gezondheid, ASG).

Based on the ASG, services including free and anonymous STD and HIV diagnostics and potential treatments are offered. For sexual transgressions, young people can also go to the municipal health services for counselling and referrals if necessary. The accessibility and openness of the municipal health services offers a safe environment for discussing issues surrounding sexuality.

In the context of sexual health, the municipal health services' services are an addition to for example GP services. We see that the demand for municipal health services within the ASG has increased since the regulation entered into force. In addition, the municipal health services are struggling with staff shortages and financial austerity, which means that only some of the risk groups can be seen and outreach activities for vulnerable groups can only be performed to a limited degree within the current scheme. With a view to these challenges, an exploration of options for the future within the healthcare system will be conducted into the positioning of the ASG regulation. In order to guarantee the

continuity of the ASG regulation, the regulation will be secured within the Public Health Act. Finally we will look into the options for improving cooperation and referrals between the ASG and other healthcare professionals involved.

Research into offender profiles of sexual offences

For an integrated and effective approach to sexually transgressive behaviour, it is important to not only focus on the victims but also on the offenders. With this research commissioned by Security and Justice, more insight will be obtained into sexual offences, its manifestations and the typologies of offenders based on a literature review. The results of the review that is being performed by the Scientific Research and Documentation Centre are expected in the second or third quarter of 2023.

Activities of the government commissioner

The government commissioner believes it is important to, in addition to preventive and repressive measures, also offer a good remedial range of assistance for victims, offenders and bystanders of sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. For this reason she will talk to all relevant parties about the range of treatment and counselling services and the way in which this is, or has been, adequate. In this she will specifically look at the best practices currently available and innovative working methods that require follow-up.

From the autumn of 2022, she has been on working visits to municipalities and local aid organizations to find out what works, what doesn't work, and what the opportunities and challenges are in further helping those involved. In parallel, she will meet with academics and care professionals to hear their views in a broad sense and where they believe are options for improvement in the curative dimension of sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. In addition, the government commissioner will map the increase in requests for care provision to be expected in the years to come and what that could mean in practice for the organizations involved.



Annex 1

Overview of studies

The government is working towards a research agenda. The agenda below contains ongoing research and research that will be conducted in the short term. An annual budget is available for this. Just like the National Action Programme for tackling sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence, the research agenda is in continuous development. At the moment an assessment framework for interventions and studies is being developed. This framework includes attention for knowledge gaps and specific target groups.

Action line 1. There are shared societal values and standards about how we want to treat each other in society

- **Research into the mechanisms of power and power imbalances at play, the role of language, cultural patterns and gender-related aspects**
This research provides insight into the causes of sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence.
- **Exploration of the openness to discuss sexual health in healthcare and welfare relations**
To make it possible to discuss health and sexuality in healthcare, Rutgers is researching what healthcare and other care providers (in general practice care, youth care and disabled care) need to proactively discuss the topic with their clients without discomfort. The results of the evaluation were published at the beginning of 2023 and will be shared with the House at a later date.
- **Research into views on sexual (transgressive) behaviour among young people and their parents**
In the context of the action programme, Rutgers conducted the 'Waar ligt de grens' (Where is the boundary) study into the views of young people and their parents about sexually transgressive behaviour. The outcomes of the study were sent to the House with this action programme.
- **GREVIO research recommendations³⁷ on the digital dimension of violence**
In reference to the report and the recommendations from GREVIO on the digital dimension of violence against women, a study will be conducted. This research explores what is needed to implement the recommendations surrounding the digital dimension of violence. This research is expected to be completed in 2023.

Action line 2. Legislation and regulations reflect changing societal norms

- **Legal obligation complaints regulation**
The Minister of Social Affairs and Employment is currently looking into the option of legally obligating employers to have a complaints regulation in place. It is important that formal complaints about inappropriate behaviour within companies and institutions are investigated and handled with great care.
- **Exploration: defining conditions for the granting of subsidies**
The aim is to design the frameworks of subsidy granting to be designed in such a way that organizations funded by the government may be given conditions about combating sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. The options for this are currently being explored.

Action line 3. Organizations have processes in place for prevention, detection and monitoring

- **In-depth study into factors and effectiveness**
Based on the 2022 PER government employee survey and the 2019 Werkonderzoek (Work Study), we recently researched which factors contribute to a safe working environment and less inappropriate behaviour. The Ministry of Kingdom and Interior Relations plans to use the recommendations from this risk analysis to tackle inappropriate behaviour in the Government.
- **Transgressive behaviour in dance**
An investigation is currently underway into the nature and scope of transgressive behaviour in dance. The results are expected in the spring of 2023.

³⁷ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.



- **Research into safe and ethical sports and evaluation of sports law**

The investigation into safe and ethical sports also researches the roles and responsibilities in safe and ethical sports. The results are expected in early 2023.

- **Research into the causes of sexually transgressive behaviour in education**

In the autumn of 2022, an investigation was launched into the causes of sexually transgressive behaviour in education and the increase in the number of reports about personnel responsible for tasks, including teachers, support staff and/or non-teaching staff. The final report is expected at the beginning of 2023 and will then be presented to the House of Representatives.

- **Exploration for tightening the Certificate of Good Conduct**

The goal of the research is to find out whether educational staff will have to comply with more stringent requirements to receive a Certificate of Good Conduct (VOG). The goal is to reduce the risk of sexually transgressive behaviour between students and teaching staff.

- **Exploration of the expansion of the reporting and consultation duty regarding sexual harassment**

An investigation will be conducted to include the question of whether the reporting and consultation duty for sexual abuse can be expanded to include sexual harassment, and whether the applicable duty should be expanded from cases involving underage students to all students.

- **Complaints procedures**

The Inspectorate of Education has called on the university executive boards to conduct research into the design of the complaints handling procedure, the information provided to students on this, how the complaints handling procedure works and the satisfaction of students about how their complaints have been handled. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science endorses this call and plans to consult with the institutions.

- **Independent research into transgressive behaviour at the public service broadcaster**

The investigation is being launched in response to revelations at the TV programme De Wereld Draait Door but will include the whole public service broadcaster. An independent committee has been tasked with formulating the final research assignment and heading up the research process. The results from the external independent study are expected in the first half of 2023.

Action line 4. Everyone recognizes sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence and can respond to it

- **Tackling street harassment**

Commissioned by the Ministry of Security and Justice, the Centre for Crime and Safety (CCV) will be working with municipalities on a quick scan into the scope and cause of street harassment, because there is not enough national data available on this. The results are expected in the first quarter of 2023.

Action line 5. There is good care provision that is easy to find

- **Research into helpdesks and advice centres**

We are commissioning the Verweij Jonker Institute to research what the needs of victims and offenders of sexual violence are when it comes to the use of easily accessible help services. The research also focuses on the question of which factors can make it more difficult and which factors can make it easier to take the step towards getting this help. In addition to that we will also research whether victims and offenders are in need of a general range of support services, or services that are aimed more at violence within a specific sector. The departments involved received the results from the study at the end of 2022.

- **Research that will positively impact the continued development of good care provision**

Together with relevant stakeholders, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Security and Justice will inventory existing knowledge and complete missing knowledge for the benefit of good care provision. How can existing knowledge be managed, shared and made available to help promote good counselling and support?

- **Research into offender profiles of sexual offences**

For an integrated and effective approach to sexually transgressive behaviour, it is important to not only focus on the victims but also on the offenders. With this research commissioned by the Ministry of Security and Justice, more insight will be obtained into sexual offences, its manifestations and the typologies of offenders based on a literature review. The results of the review that is being performed by the Scientific Research and Documentation Centre are expected in the second or third quarter of 2023.

January 2023

This is a joint publication of:

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

PO Box 16375

2500 BJ The Hague

Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment

PO Box 90801

2590 LV The Hague

www.government.nl