

Landelijk kader voor de veiligheidshuizen

Invoering, ontwikkelingen en knelpunten

Policy framework Veiligheidshuizen

Implementation, Developments, and Perplexities

Summary

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Summary

Veiligheidshuizen are networks of organizations that combine punitive with care-interventions. In these networks they fight criminality and disorder by means of a neighbourhood-, system- and personalized approach. By combining interventions of criminal law, care and sanctions from civil law the networks aim at improving behaviour and crime-inducing factors of offenders and thus lowering recidivism rates and improving social safety in society. In 2016 in the Netherlands there are 33 of such networks covering the entire country¹.

Policyframework Veiligheidshuizen and the changing environment

Since 2013 the responsibility for controlling the networks was shifted from the Public Prosecutor's Office to the local authorities (i.c. municipalities). In the same year the Ministry of Justice in cooperation with keyplayers developed a policyframework to stimulate *veiligheidshuizen* to focus more on complex cases. A policyframework was necessary for the *veiligheidshuizen* because of future developments in its direct surroundings. Most important in this respect is the decentralization of several government tasks to the municipalities. Due to three important new laws (on youthcare, participation-work and income, social support) municipalities have become crucial partners within the networks of *veiligheidshuizen*. Furthermore new penal procedures set up by the Public Prosecutor's Office together with the police, rehabilitation organisations and child protection services (hereafter called the 'ZSM-procedure') and the start of social teams in municipalities imply that triage (i.c. concerted selection) of cases becomes far more important (Bureau Regioburgemeesters, 2014). On top of this *veiligheidshuizen* also have to adjust to the set up of new child protection consulting groups (*jeugdbeschermingstafels*) as well as the new *Veilig Thuis* organizations. These new organizations are concerned with receipt and handling of possible domestic violence and child abuse reports.

Altogether we see a very complex institutional situation where *veiligheidshuizen* have to take their position. The policyframework setup by the Ministry of Justice is meant to point out the direction for *veiligheidshuizen* to help them find this position and states two functions: (1) the processmanagement of complex cases; (2) giving (strategic) advice to local authorities and partner organizations. The policyframework also elaborates a definition for such complex cases. In short it states that (risk of) criminality/disorderly behaviour should be concerned and problems on more than one *leefgebieden* with impact on the family/social system or neighbourhood. It has to be a case where a single intervention cannot be successful (expectedly) or wasn't so in the past. ²

¹ On average in every district there is one municipality that's not connected. Nationwide the coverage rate is 91%.

² The exact definition is more elaborate and can be read in appendix 5.

Research objectives and methods

The research was carried out for the WODC (Research and Documentation Centre) of the Ministry of Justice by BTVO and Bureau Alpha. Research objectives are to get insight in:

- the implementation of the Policyframework Veiligheidshuizen;
- the way *veiligheidshuizen* handle the various transformations in its surroundings.

In this way should be clarified whether or not the Policyframework Veiligheidshuizen sufficiently helps the *veiligheidshuizen* to find its position.

We started the research with a scan of all *veiligheidshuizen* in the Netherlands. The study of relevant documents of the *veiligheidshuizen* and answers of managers of *veiligheidshuizen* on a questionnaire (response rate: 94%) gives an overall view of the main features of *veiligheidshuizen*. Subsequently we did in-depth case studies of 12 carefully selected *veiligheidshuizen* that varied as much as possible on relevant features. In total 142 professionals were interviewed. In every *veiligheidshuis* the following perspectives were represented in the sample: (1) internal organization; (2) governance/municipality; (3) partner organizations within the network; (4) organizations/platforms in direct surrounding of the network. We additionally spoke to six key persons of various organizations involved in the field of *veiligheidshuizen* on a national level.

The Policyframework Veiligheidshuizen in practice: convergence and divergence

Central conclusions based on the research are the fact that two directions that the policyframework showed for *veiligheidshuizen* are actually seen in practice.

The first we see is an increased focus on complex cases within *veiligheidshuizen*. The second is the fact that municipalities duly took control over these networks.

Apart from these two developments we see that *veiligheidshuizen* can be characterized as being divergent on various aspects. The functions that they fulfill (more than the two mentioned in the policyframework) are various. On an operational level we see a lot of different ways that these functions are elaborated. Also the way in which *veiligheidshuizen* are connecting to surrounding (new) organizations and platforms is very different between *veiligheidshuizen*.

Value of veiligheidschuizen: process management

There is consensus that the focus on complex cases gives *veiligheidshuizen* a valuable position. Its value lies in the fact that a facility for handling complex cases isn't available anywhere else. *Veiligheidshuizen* in most instances show that they can offer the facility where a process manager is found when various partner organizations have to cooperate. A few *veiligheidshuizen* chose to give up the distinction between process management and

case management. But mostly the *veiligheidshuizen* take care of process management and case management is done by one of the partners in the network.

Veiligheidshuizen want to be held accountable for the primary role they have, the role of process management. We also see that in the past years they were less concerned with formulating output or outcome goals for their activities.

Preconditions: budget and staff

In general the manager and staff of *veiligheidshuizen* function adequately. We derive this from the fact that there are no difficulties stated in the interviews in this respect. We see that the manager has quite a solid position in the district.

A *veiligheidshuis* on average has 6.6 employees (full time equivalent). The variety in budgets is quite large: from 2.3 million euro's to only 200.000 euro's. On average a *veiligheidshuis* had a budget of 750.000 euro's. Municipalities are (55% of total) the largest contributors financially. One third is paid by the Ministry of Justice. The way the money is divided between *veiligheidshuizen* in the districts is called into question by some smaller *veiligheidshuizen*. In the current formula the basic facilities that every *veiligheidshuis* needs are not taken into account as much as necessary, they state. In the research we see that all *veiligheidshuizen*, large or small, continuously have to invest in an equal amount of partners: municipalities plus various care- of justice organizations in the network. Due to the current formula of division this task and other basic tasks are at stake more than in *veiligheidshuizen* with a larger budget some managers say.

Meeting agreements

Respondents are satisfied with the extent to which agreements made in *veiligheidshuizen* are met. In *veiligheidshuizen* where process managers have the task to do case management as well as process management the research shows more satisfaction on this. In other instances respondents more often complain about a case manager of a network partners that doesn't always accomplish what he should do. The issue of mandate is still problematic to some extent. The same goes for privacy issues, that are mostly well arranged on paper but do cause difficulties in every day practice.

Tackling complex cases in veiligheidshuizen

Because the criteria in the policyframework are formulated pretty broadly opportunities for individual *veiligheidshuizen* are open to operationalize it in a way that fits the problems of individual municipalities and that fits the local overall situation. The given space is appreciated and used to be able to perform with tailor-made solutions. In large cities the definition of 'complex cases' often holds other kinds of problems than in smaller villages. More and more often *veiligheidshuizen* work with an approach in which professionals are

involved that know the clients from first hand. In stead of working only with representatives per partner. This development goes hand in hand with the abolishment of periodical case consultation meetings.

Due to the focus on complex cases the total amount of cases handled bij *veiligheidshuizen* (in some instances strongly) decreased. It's mainly the police and the municipalities that bring cases to the *veiligheidshuizen*. Also in this respect there are again large differences between *veiligheidshuizen*. The proportion of cases that have primarily care issues versus where punitive cases cannot be estimated in this research. The fact that some organizations can hold cases from both perspectives makes it too complicated to do so.

The processing of complex cases sometimes exists besides a so called Top-X approach. In a Top-X approach (found in four out of every five *veiligheidshuizen*) not always the complexity of a case matters. Its primary goal is to reduce the category of crimes that have a large impact on society (like the focus on HIC: High Impact Crime). In some *veiligheidshuizen* working with Top-X cases is the core activity. In other *veiligheidshuizen* it's done 'on the side'. There are various ways to construct such Top-X lists of persons. Sometimes justicelike criteria are used to make a selection of persons and sometimes the criteria have more focus on care issues. It's not clear whether Top-X cases in *veiligheidshuizen* are always complex according to the definition in the policyframework. Sometimes the first selection is further specified in a second step of concerted selection by checking on this criteria, but there are also *veiligheidshuizen* where Top-X cases are directly handled without performing this second check.

An estimation of the proportion of complex cases (according to the criteria) that are handled by *veiligheidshuizen* on average amounts to more than fifty percent³. In total 21 managers could make an estimation of this although these estimates must be interpreted with great caution. The estimate *does* make clear that not all complex cases reach *veiligheidshuizen*. The fact that a lot of persons/organizations do not know what *veiligheidshuizen* are and what they do is the most important cause of this. The fact that connections with social teams are sometimes not effective is also important. Finally: the fact that these teams are not yet operational at all can also be the cause of missing connections.

Although overall we can see a focus on complex cases in *veiligheidshuizen*, this doesn't mean that it is the only task that is carried out. In most instances additional tasks like reintegration of ex-delinquents or new tasks regarding jihadism are part of the activities of *veiligheidshuizen*. The new theme of jihadism specifically worked as an accelerator in some instances. It showed the value of *veiligheidshuizen* in the way they facilitated and connected the organizations involved in fighting jihadism. Working on cases in regard to 'verwarde personen' (i.c. 'confused persons'⁴) is mostly not seen as a new task. These cases are processed within the regular activities and after checking on the criteria that are used.

³ Ten managers did not estimate this proportion because it is very hard to do so. It is difficult to estimate this proportion because managers can only partly overview the amount that does not reach their *veiligheidshuis*.

⁴ 'Verwarde personen' literally means 'confused persons'. It is an expression used in policy papers to point out a specific group of persons with a psychiatric disease and risks of committing violent/deadly crimes.

Municipalities in control/ruling over veiligheidshuizen

The research shows that municipalities actually do take control. *Veiligheidshuizen* really have become 'their thing'. The extent to which they feel responsible for ruling over *veiligheidshuizen* varies. Not only between *veiligheidshuizen* but also between municipalities within the district. It's remarkable to see how often mayors are involved in steering the network. Also we see some municipalities where the mayor also is involved on an operational level. Also aldermen concerned with the social domain are more and more often active in *veiligheidshuizen*. This is of importance because municipal interventions are crucial in a large proportion of all cases in *veiligheidshuizen*. The research clearly shows that *veiligheidshuizen* succeed in connecting to small municipalities in the district as well. On the other hand we also see that in every district on average one municipality does not participate in the network. The governance structure is diffuse and has a lot of different configurations. Mostly the scope of the board is regional, but the actual ability to determine the strategic agenda is sometimes limited. There are too many other forums where decision making on *veiligheidshuizen*-subjects are done to do so.

Position veiligheidshuizen versus surrounding organizations and forums

Although the value of *veiligheidshuizen* is clear for most respondents, the position they hold in the region is not easy. They operate on an intermediate scale in between municipalities (small scale) and organizations on the side of criminal justice (big scale). Connecting these organizations in the network, which is the core business of *veiligheidshuizen*, is thus not an easy thing to do. *Veiligheidshuizen* clearly made connections to municipalities, with different ways to involve the social domain in the network. If connections with the operational level of municipalities are made via local departments of Public Safety then occasionally they can be hampering. The departments concerned with 'safety' versus 'care/youth/social welfare' within municipalities can be quite different.

Connecting to the surroundings can be troublesome as can be seen in the fact that on the operational level there are hardly any working connections with ZSM or *Veilig Thuis*⁵. For the police and the Public Prosecutor's Office other important partners/forums like *Veilig Thuis*, ZSM and the social domain in municipalities ask more and more attention. It means that *veiligheidshuizen* have less priority for them than before. Possibly (professionals in) this new organizations and forums reckon that they can tackle (a part of the) complex cases themselves. A start with tuning up with *veiligheidshuizen* on scaling-up procedures has yet to be made. The subject of downsizing interventions away from *veiligheidshuizen* is (also in the policyframework) not addressed.

⁵ Organizations concerned with receipt and handling of possible domestic violence and child abuse reports.

In these complex surroundings it is hard for municipalities to find the right positions and roles for social domain and *veiligheidshuizen* and to determine how they should work together. *Veiligheidshuizen* are clearly putting energy in accomplishing connections with municipalities. And we see that municipalities are trying to find solutions for various categories of new cases that the municipalities are responsible since the decentralization operation started. We see some new local facilities emerging that tackle complex (carefocussed) cases, which are more or less similar to the complex cases that *veiligheidshuizen* are supposed to focus on. Future will tell in which positions will be taken and what role *veiligheidshuizen* will perform in this respect. Controlled by local authorities *veiligheidshuizen* in every region are in search of their new position.