The Netherlands Institute of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology

The Netherlands Institute of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology (NIFP) is the centre of expertise for forensic psychiatry and psychology. It is a national service of the Ministry of Justice, incorporated in the National Agency of Correctional Institutions. The NIFP provides independent psychiatric and psychological expertise (diagnosis, care and advice) to judicial and social chain partners. In this way it contributes to the due course of justice, effective implementation of custodial psychiatric care and treatment, and a safer society.

Field of activity
The NIFP’s field of activity comprises the forensic diagnosis, treatment and security of children, juveniles and adult detainees in the Netherlands. In this respect, the NIFP has the following responsibilities:
• advising the judiciary on the suspect’s person
• the establishment of high-quality forensic diagnostics
• sound and equal psychiatric care and treatment for detainees
• independent and professional testing of the implementation of criminal measures
• promoting the professional standard, through training and scientific research.

Key concepts
The NIFP’s key concepts:
• Legal equality
• Medically sound care
• High-quality forensic diagnostics
• Understanding of vulnerability in detention
• Professional independence, based on the latest (scientific) knowledge.
NIFP activities

As a centre of expertise, NIFP plays an extensive role in the field of forensic psychiatry and psychology. The NIFR makes its expertise available to various government authorities and institutions. The NIFP’s main activities are:

Advice
The NIFP contributes to the due course of justice. It does so by advising the judiciary in criminal cases, with regard to:

- the need for examination of the suspect’s person in relation to legal accountability
- the chance of re-offending
- the treatment and security to be employed (clinical and ambulatory)
- the development opportunities of juveniles.

The NIFP can also be involved in decisions regarding children and juveniles whose development is at risk, or in custody and access arrangements following a divorce. For example, advice on the possibilities of expert examination. The NIFP advises the judiciary, the Child Protection Board and the Youth Care Agency.

Mediation and review
The NIFP acts as an intermediary in requests for forensic diagnostic examination. These requests are placed with 650 forensically trained psychiatrists, psychologists and environmental reporters, who perform independent ambulatory psychiatric and psychological examinations. The NIFP reviews the quality of the reports.

Hospital order advice
The NIFP contributes to the safe and efficient implementation of the measure of detention under hospital order (TBS). It does so by testing the effectiveness, security and continuation (or termination) of treatment independently and professionally for the Ministry of Justice and the judiciary at set times during the TBS treatment. The NIFP also provides the professional interpretation of the forensic security recommendations.

Observation
The NIFP has its own high-security clinic for observation and diagnosis: the Pieter Baan Centre (PBC), the psychiatric observation clinic of the Ministry of Justice. The PBC has the status of a detention centre. The examination of detainees placed in the PBC takes seven weeks and is based on a multidisciplinary approach. In certain cases, clinical observation has added value compared to ambulatory examination.

Care
The NIFP also provides forensic psychiatric care and treatment for detainees with psychiatric disorders. This takes place from the time when the detainee is remanded in custody until he/she is released again.

In addition:
The NIFP guarantees independent second opinions and counter appraisals in individual cases. It also conducts the chain management with regard to the development of a full and effective range of treatment together with the judicial and social chain partners. Finally, it coordinates the progression of forensic psychiatric patients to (subsequent) facilities.
Expertise

The NIFP's expertise is based on specialist knowledge, experience and scientific research in the field of (forensic) psychiatry and psychology, forensic environmental examination and interdisciplinary cooperation. With regard to expertise, NIFP uses the following points of departure:

- The NIFP aims to secure and further develop the available specialist knowledge in the field of forensic psychiatry.
- The NIFP integrates general behavioural expertise with specialities such as addiction psychiatry, neurobiology and transcultural psychiatry.
- The NIFP's knowledge domain covers child and juvenile psychiatry as well as adult and geriatric psychiatry.
- Risk assessment and advice on risk management are special areas of interest for the NIFP.
- The NIFP fulfils its forensic psychiatric and psychological expert role on the basis of professional independence.
- The quality provided by the NIFP is in line with international professional standards. This professional quality is guaranteed through registration and certification by forensic experts.
- Scientific excellence is the basis of the NIFP’s expertise. Therefore, evidence-based research is the framework for the professionals of the NIFP.
- The NIFP strives for scientific research and debate in collaboration with universities and professional associations in the Netherlands and abroad. This research is aimed at developing new insights, methods and instruments for the implementation of forensic psychiatry and psychology.
- The NIFP collaborates with universities and education centres to develop and provide an extensive training programme for psychiatrists, psychologists, behaviour experts, social workers and environmental reporters who work within the forensic sector.
- An active knowledge policy aims to provide constant knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing and network development with the professionals of the NIFP as well as colleagues in the field.

Training programmes

The disciplines of forensic psychiatry and forensic psychology require a large amount of specific expertise. Education and refresher training is therefore needed for the professionals involved. The NIFP has its own training bureau with specific educational expertise. The training bureau translates the substantive needs of the employees into concrete educational products, and coordinates and organises the education programmes. This concerns internal education programmes for NIFP employees, programmes for the reporters and education and refresher training for third parties.

In recent years, national education programmes for reporters have been developed for both adult and The education programme is aimed at trainee reporters (psychiatrists and psychologists), but can also be taken by experienced reporters who want to further their knowledge. The ‘Reporter’ education programme trains people in criminal examination of adults, children and juveniles who have come into contact with the law, as well as civil-law examination of children and juveniles who have come into contact with the Child Protection Board. The reporter education programme has a general component and three specific components (criminal adult, criminal juvenile and civil juvenile). The programme also includes a component on integrated intervision and supervision. The supervision part of the programme is taught by supervisors from inside and outside the NIFP, who have completed the supervisor education programme. There is a separate study programme for this.

For more information on the education programmes or to request an application form, please go to www.nifp.nl.
Portfolios

The development and implementation of the NIFP’s tasks are driven by five portfolios. Together these portfolios are responsible for the total range of forensic psychiatric and psychological services offered by the NIFP.

Adult Reporting-Mediation Portfolio

The main task of this portfolio is to guarantee the quality of the ambulatory forensic examinations and reports. This is done by e.g.:

- issuing recommendations on the need and the type of Pro Justitia examination
- mediation between commissioning authorities and independent reporters (psychiatrists and psychologists)
- developing and maintaining reporting formats and best practices
- education and additional training for new reporters
- contributing to scientific research

A unique aspect of Adult Reporting-Mediation is the management and maintenance of a special standardised digital expert system for indication in the context of the Pro Justitia examination. This instrument is called BooG (decision-support in examination of mental capabilities) and was developed to promote legal equality in the decision on Pro Justitia reporting. There are BooG modules for the Public Prosecutor, the courts, the Child Protection Board and the NIFP.

Clinical Reporting Portfolio

The Clinical Reporting portfolio’s task is to develop and guarantee the quality of clinical observation. This includes:

- development and maintenance of the best-quality approach with regard to clinical observation
- development and availability of expertise, research methods, test instruments and guidelines with regard to quality
- monitoring and adjusting the quality of clinical reports.

Juvenile Portfolio

The main task of the Juvenile portfolio is to promote and guarantee the quality of forensic diagnosis among children, juveniles and parents. The activities involved in this are:

- issuing recommendations on the need for forensic diagnostic examination among children, juveniles and parents
- mediation between principals and independent reporters (psychiatrists and psychologists)
- testing the quality of civil and criminal reports on children, juveniles and parents
- education and additional training for forensic juvenile reporters
- conducting scientific research on (and the development of) forensic diagnostic instruments (e.g. with regard to reporting quality, risk assessment or indication for placement in an institution for juvenile offenders).

The NIFP has developed the STER (Standard Evaluation of Reporting) for the examination of the quality of Pro Justitia reports. The STER is used for file research and supervision.

Tasks of the Juvenile portfolio that are still under development are forensic juvenile psychiatric care in detention, clinical Pro Justitia reporting for juveniles, criminal placement in an institution for juvenile offenders and the behaviour-influencing measure.

Care & Management Portfolio

The NIFP provides forensic psychiatric care and treatment to detainees. Approximately 25 to 50% of all detainees are faced with psychological problems; nearly 10% of all detainees are treated by psychiatrists of the NIFP. The treatment of these detainees is coordinated by a psychomedical team (the PMO) of the department in the penal institution. The PMO comprises a psychiatrist, a prison psychologist, the institution’s general practitioner and the medical service. The PMO is responsible for due provision of care to detainees and for a good atmosphere in the penal institution. The PMO works closely with the mental health care service (GGZ) for supplementary treatment during detention. Following the detention, the treatment is transferred to the GGZ.
Measure Recommendation Portfolio

Besides imposing punishments, the judge can also impose criminal measures. The most commonly used criminal measure is TBS. TBS stands for ‘Ter Beschikking Stelling’ (detention under hospital order). Custodial Clinics admit adults who have committed a serious crime, and who the judge does not consider (fully) legally accountable due to a psychological disorder. A wide range of treatment methods is used in the Custodial Clinics, with the aim of returning the detainee to society. Safe and effective implementation of a hospital order requires an independent professional assessment at various times throughout the treatment process. The Measure Recommendation portfolio is responsible for the implementation and quality assurance of independent forensic psychiatric and psychological advice in this area. This includes the involvement of a selected pool of senior psychiatrists and psychologists in the field of forensic psychiatry and psychology.

The portfolio prepares a register which lists reporters who are certified to fulfil this advisory role. The portfolio is also closely involved in the development of risk assessment instruments and a guideline for forensic diagnostics.

More information on the individual portfolios is available on the website www.nilp.nl
Products and services

Pro Justitia Reporting
When a magistrate or a public prosecutor wishes to have a suspect’s personality examined, this is done through the NIFP. Such an examination is called a Pro Justitia examination and is conducted by independent psychiatrists and psychologists. They draw up a Pro Justitia report on their examination. Because Pro Justitia reporters play an important role in the (sometimes far-reaching) decisions of the court, and because they serve as the basis for any treatment that may be required, these reports must satisfy high quality standards. The quality standards are developed and monitored within the NIFP. The NIFP has also developed special instruments for reporting and provides training programmes for reporters. An average of over 8,500 reports are drawn up per year, each of which need to be checked for quality.

The NIFP has six important tasks with regard to Pro Justitia reporting, which are summarised under the term reporting mediation.
- Indication
  The NIFP can give the judiciary a behaviour expert recommendation on the advisability or need to have a Pro Justitia report drawn up.
- Matching
  In the event that an authority commissions a report, the NIFP provides professional matching of the right behaviour expert with the issues to be examined.
- Monitoring
  The NIFP monitors the examination process, is available to the commissioning authority and the expert for consultation and advice, and monitors the administrative logistics procedures.
- Testing
  The NIFP tests the reports for independence, impartiality and professional competence, including the feasibility of the recommendations and the legal consistency.
- Management and maintenance of the BooG indication instrument
  The data collected via BooG are used for periodic maintenance of the instrument and for scientific research.
- Management of the registration system and filing of data
  Data concerning each assignment are stored and managed in the Forensic Registration and information System (FRIS) from the moment the request is received.

Juvenile Reporting
All Pro Justitia examinations of juveniles also proceed via the NIFP. This takes place in the same way as for the Pro Justitia reports (advising, mediation, testing and registration).

Sometimes civil decisions involve doubts or questions concerning the need for (psychological or psychiatric) examination, or the type of examination and issues to be examined. In that case, the commissioning authority (the court, the Child Protection Board or the Youth Care Agency) can first hold an indication consultation with the child and juvenile psychiatrist of the NIFP. If it turns out that an examination is indeed required, the NIFP mediates between the commissioning authority and an independent reporter. The NIFP also tests the resulting report.

The organisation wants to take on the task of forensic juvenile psychiatric care in detention and forensic clinical reporting on juvenile detainees.

Clinical observation and reporting
The Pieter Baan Centre (PBC) is the forensic psychiatric observation clinic of the Ministry of Justice. The clinic is unique due to the fact that it offers multidisciplinary clinical examination, under strict security, with regard to:
- the suspect’s person
- the degree of legal accountability of the suspect, at the time of the crimes of which he is suspected
- the chance of re-offending

An examination at the Pieter Baan Centre can lead to a recommendation to the judiciary on possible treatment.
The magistrate or the judge at the hearing orders the suspect to be placed at the Pieter Baan Centre, after which the suspect is admitted for seven weeks for observation and examination. The Pieter Baan Centre can also be involved for (six-year) extension recommendations of persons held under hospital order, or for recommendations with regard to placement in a long-stay department. The Pieter Baan Centre works with multidisciplinary teams, consisting of a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a legal counselor, a representative of the observation department and a forensic environmental reporter.

Care
Besides reporting mediation for the courts, the NIFP also provides forensic psychiatric care and treatment for detainees. This takes place from the time when the detainee is remanded in custody until he/she is released again. The NIFP provides these services together with the psychologists of the prison service and the GGZ institutions.

Care during detention
The psychiatric treatment provided by the psychiatrists of the NIFP in detention focuses mainly on:
- stabilisation of psychopathology
- reducing psychological suffering
- improving the disorder through treatment.

Care after detention
In the last few years, the NIFP has invested a great deal of time in creating a basis during detention for the reintegration of a detainee after his detention. There are a number of very important issues in this:
- extensive diagnosis
- Indication and referral for treatment during and/or after detention
- treatment programmes in collaboration with the GGZ
- sound file creation

Hospital Order Advice
Safe, effective and lawful enforcement of criminal (TBS) measures is only possible if requests for leave are tested professionally and independently, and if someone can assess the external recommendations for extension of a hospital order. The NIFP has the necessary forensic psychiatric knowledge for to do so, as well as extensive clinical experience. As a result, the NIFP can actively advise Custodial Clinics on individual treatment programmes. Moreover, one of the NIFP’s spearheads is to link practical cases and experts together effectively and efficiently. For example, the supervision of probation officers.

Research & Science
NIFP; is the centre of expertise for forensic psychiatry and psychology. This means that it not only focuses on reporting, care and advice, but also on scientific research. The NIFP encourages:
- working on the basis of scientifically-based methods;
- promoting a scientific attitude;
- accumulating new knowledge by conducting scientific research.

Within the NIFP, all the tasks relating to research and science are incorporated in the Scientific Bureau. This bureau has two main tasks. The first is to set up and conduct scientific research and the second is to encourage and support NIFP employees in the field of science. This includes conveying scientific knowledge. In addition, the bureau has the task of improving the reports through substantive support. Examples are applying new scientific insights and introducing scientifically-based questionnaires and interview methods. The Scientific Bureau works together closely with the NIFP’s training bureau. For research projects the Scientific Bureau enters into national and international partnerships with e.g. psychiatric departments of (university) hospitals, psychiatric institutions, Custodial Clinics and centres of expertise.
Addresses

The NIFP is divided into 5 districts throughout the Netherlands. The addresses of the different offices are to be found under 'contact' on our website.