

# Criminal exploitation of children



## What is the criminal exploitation of children?

The criminal exploitation of children is a form of human trafficking in which adults force minors to engage in criminal activities. This could take the form of theft, pickpocketing or begging. It is designated as 'petty crime' and 'mobile banditry'.

## Victims, not offenders

These minors should be seen as victims, not as offenders. They are vulnerable children whose development is jeopardised through their exploitation.

## Comprehensive approach to the criminal exploitation of minors

The criminal exploitation of children is not always recognised. These children are not given the protection they are entitled to. They are often punished and then end up back on the streets or with their exploiter, while the exploiter stays out of the picture. The National Expert Group on Tackling the Criminal Exploitation of Minors aims to change this but cannot succeed alone.

Tackling criminal exploitation has been assigned as a joint task to the Ministries of Justice and Security; Social Affairs and Employment; Public Health and Sport; and Foreign Affairs/Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. It forms part of the comprehensive programme strategy 'Joint action against Trafficking in Human Beings'.

For more information on tackling human trafficking and victim support, please see: [www.wegwijzermensenhandel.nl](http://www.wegwijzermensenhandel.nl).

## Joint mission policy & strategy perspective

The National Expert Group on Tackling the Criminal Exploitation of Minors encourages care partners to cooperate by involving them directly in the criminal process. It also sets out to raise awareness of criminal exploitation. For this purpose, it has developed the film on criminal exploitation and a toolkit. These provide professionals working in the police and judiciary and the Fast Track Tables\* with more knowledge to identify the problem. The toolkit can also be used to raise awareness of criminal exploitation among professionals working in the security and social domain.

The Centre for Crime Prevention and Security facilitates knowledge sharing and knowledge development and provides professionals and administrators in the security and social domain with hands-on support in identifying and tackling human trafficking through various activities.

For more information: dossier mensenhandel:

- human trafficking file: <http://hetccv.nl/onderwerpen/mensenhandel/>
- multi-problem families with a Roma background (tackling criminal exploitation): <https://hetccv.nl/onderwerpen/multiprobleemgezinnen-met-een-roma-achtergrond/>

The Association of Netherlands Municipalities has appointed a national project leader to support municipalities in the development and implementation of policy to tackle human trafficking.

For more information:

<https://vng.nl/kwartiermaker-aanpak-mensenhandel>

Comensha supports municipalities in creating a nationwide network of care coordinators for human trafficking.

An overview of care coordinators is available at

<https://wegwijzermensenhandel.nl/Zorgcoordinators/Zorgcoordinator.aspx>

Or contact Comensha: +31 33 448 11 86

\*) Fast Track Tables

A working method in which the PPS, the Probation Service and Victim Support cooperate in accelerated (fast track), effective and high-quality approach to settling police reports and arrests in frequently occurring offences such as shoplifting, vandalism and street robbery.

## What can you do as a professional? practical perspective

### The following applies to everyone

#### Learn to recognise the signals

How do you recognise signs of criminal exploitation? The Barrier Model (see reverse side) shows that many different professionals may encounter signals. To learn to actually see them, you can follow training courses and join national peer review meetings.

<https://www.comensha.nl/projecten/gemeenten/> <https://hetccv.nl/onderwerpen/mensenhandel/>

#### Know what to do if you suspect human trafficking

- Acute threat? Contact the local police on 112 or 0900-8844 and ask for the AVIM (immigration, identification and human trafficking department) or the police human trafficking team.

### Employed in the educational or social, judicial or medical domain

- Share your suspicions with the local or regional human trafficking care coordinator: <https://www.wegwijzermensenhandel.nl/Zorgcoordinatoren/Zorgcoordinatoren.aspx>.
- If your local authority does not yet have a human trafficking coordinator, please contact the Public Order and Security officer in your municipality.

### and

- Follow the protocol for reporting domestic violence and child abuse.
- Report to Veilig Thuis (organisation providing assistance in cases of domestic violence and child abuse) in the event of an acute and/or structural threat where it is not possible to provide assistance.
- In the event of a suspicion of criminal exploitation, Veilig Thuis will call in the Dutch Child Care

and Protection Board (Raad voor de Kinderbescherming).

### Employed at the Child Care and Protection Board

- Open a child protection investigation.
- Focus on the victimhood aspect and do what is necessary to safeguard the child.
- Consult with the AVIM of the regional police.
- If a child protection measure is required, ask to have the measure assigned to the Salvation Army (LJ&R).

The working method and contact details can be found in the fact sheet Tackling criminal exploitation: [https://hetccv.nl/fileadmin/Bestanden/Onderwerpen/Multiprobleem\\_gezin/factsheet\\_Aanpak\\_Criminele\\_kinderuitbuiting.pdf](https://hetccv.nl/fileadmin/Bestanden/Onderwerpen/Multiprobleem_gezin/factsheet_Aanpak_Criminele_kinderuitbuiting.pdf)

### Employed by the local authority

- Contact the dedicated post holder or chain director for human trafficking at your local

authority. The Public Order and Safety officer at your local authority will be able to help you if it is not clear who the first point of contact is.

- In case of emergency: contact the police human trafficking team.

### Employed by police & Public Prosecution Service

- Follow the Oceans protocol (intranet & Kompol).
- Contact the AVIM or the human trafficking team by telephone.
- Contact the police expert on human trafficking and the human trafficking officer for consultation.
- Contact the Child Care and Protection Board.

## Barrier model

# Criminal exploitation of foreign minors

### Signallers, Signals, Barriers

#### Signallers – Who picks up the signals?

##### Entry

- Immigration and Naturalisation Service
- Police
- Royal Netherlands Marechaussee
- Customs
- Dutch embassies
- Interpol/Europol (EMPACT)

##### Accommodation

- Police (AVIMs, district teams)
- Local authority (special investigators, Register of Non-Residents desks, Safe Houses, Youth and Family Centre, GGD)
- Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA)
- Veilig Thuis
- Housing corporations/private landlords
- Holiday parks / campsites / hotels

##### Identity

- Police
- Regional Information and Expertise Centre
- Child Care and Protection Board
- Stichting Leger des Salvation Jeugdbescherming & Reclustering (Foundation for the Salvation Army's Child Protection and Probation)
- Crisis Intervention/ Youth Protection
- Local authority (compulsory education officer)
- Schools
- Medical assistance (out-of-hours GP surgery, emergency room, gynaecology)

##### Offences

- Police
- Public Prosecution Service
- Interpol/Europol (EMPACT)
- Regional Information and Expertise Centre
- Fast Track
- Child Care and Protection Board
- LJ&R
- Crisis Intervention Team/Youth protection
- Nidos Foundation
- Fier
- Defence for Children
- Expertise Centre for Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling (EMM)
- CoMensha
- Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland (Dutch Council for Refugees)
- Retailers/entrepreneurs
- Dutch Railways (NS)

##### Finances

- Police
- Tax department
- Money transfer offices
- Local authority

#### Signals – What are the signals?

##### Entry

- Constantly travels to and stays in in various European countries
- Has applied for asylum in several European countries (bypassing/using Dublin claim)
- Has not arranged the transport and his/her travel and identity documents himself/herself
- Is unfamiliar with the itinerary and/or destination
- Is single, travels without actual parents / guardians
- Travelling with a large family, where it is unclear whether all children really belong to the family

##### Accommodation

- Makes unclear or changing statements about the duration of the stay and the place of residence in the Netherlands
- Is unfamiliar with the location/address of his/her place of residence
- Does not have a temporary or permanent place of residence or an address known in the country of origin
- Supposedly stays with family members in the Netherlands (parents in the source country), but is unwilling or unable to give an address
- Staying with a large family, where it is unclear whether all children really belong to the family
- Does not have access to his/her own living space and/or often moves within a short period of time
- Resides illegally in the Netherlands or with asylum seekers' status (non-EU)
- Staying with many people (of foreign origin) in a relatively small house -> nuisance
- There are significantly more people staying in a house than there are registered at the address
- Many international contacts, often travels abroad
- Leaves the reception centre at unusual times (in relation to age/school hours)

##### Identity

- Is presumably underage or pretends to be: claims to be < 12 years (no possible prosecution) or < 18 years of age
- Is a minor with no (clear) legal guardian
- Explains indistinctly or changeably about mutual (family) relationships
- Has no identity documents or of questionable origin
- Attempts to prove his/her identity with other types of 'forms' (e.g. temporary residence permit in another country)
- Is known in Europe by different identities/ aliases
- Is of Central or Eastern European origin, possibly with a certain ethnicity (Roma)
- Does not speak or understand the local language and/or does not fully master any foreign language
- Is pregnant as a minor and/or already has several children (in various countries)
- Is involved as a minor in unregistered cultural marriage
- Is subject to compulsory education, but is not at school/does not (structurally) attend school in the Netherlands or country of origin
- Found to be illiterate at school, has a very substantial learning deficit and/or an inexplicable absence

##### Offences

- Steals goods not appropriate to his/her age or situation
- No or doubtful statement concerning offences
- Operates together with adults and/or minors, in ever-changing compositions
- Has a "work phone" with only a few numbers, stored under nickname / abbreviation
- Has been detained several times for property crimes, also in other European countries
- Commits "voluntary" offences, also in case of illness and/or pregnancy
- Is instructed by others at or around the crime scene
- Is picked up by an adult from the police station, even before the family has been informed
- Makes every effort to be released after arrest as soon as possible (health problems / baby taken to the police station to apply pressure)

##### Finances

- Is forced to "earn" a minimum daily amount
- Has to hand over a disproportionate proportion of illegal earnings (to a man, often a husband or father)
- Misuses social services/commits fraud with government benefits
- Deposits illegal earnings via Western Union to client (in source country)
- Has assets/capital in other (European) countries
- Sells illegally acquired goods to pawnshops/jewellers

#### Barriers – What can we do?

##### Entry

- Reduce the age limit for fingerprinting (14 years)
- When entering the country with minors, obligation to provide proof of legal custody or the consent of the parents with custody

##### Accommodation

- Outreach work by welfare organisations in response to requests for assistance from the target group
- Housing inspection by the local authority in the event of nuisance reports regarding the target group
- Intelligence gathering on place of residence via social media (international)

##### Identity

- Registration and verification of supposed legal guardians
- Identity analysis using international pickpocket lists
- Official report of school attendance officer (full absenteeism)
- Advies Landelijk Knooppunt Huwelijksdwang en Achterlating (National centre for advice on forced marriages and abandonment)
- National analysis of children registered in the personal records database for children without parents with parental authority

##### Offences

- Information campaign modus operandi for signallers
- Confiscation and reading out mobile phones
- Contact with Veilig Thuis: insight into the agencies already involved
- International target group analysis by Europol/EMM
- Board inquiry (Child Care and Protection Board)
- Imposition of (provisional) family supervision order and/or (provisional) guardianship, connected to a ban on leaving the country and/or authorisation for placement in care.
- Temporary placement in a closed care institution with a child-specific care programme
- Strict supervision of minors in the provision of medical assistance in connection with escape
- (International) criminal investigation into human trafficking

##### Finances

- Hold (supposed) legal guardians responsible for damages as a result of theft
- Add search terms to Financial Investigation Unit query MH in relation to unusual and suspicious transactions
- Investigation into benefit fraud in the target group that comes into the picture
- Additional enforcement of purchase register
- Intelligence gathering on finances via social media (international)