



Integrated Supervision of Youth Affairs  
*Youth and Families*

# Integrated Supervision of Youth Affairs





## Young people in the Netherlands: opportunities and risks

Things are going well for the large majority of young people in the Netherlands. There are sufficient services to support them in their development and to provide assistance to young people with problems. And yet the problems of young people are not always solved. On occasion, services realise too late that something is wrong and the right assistance is not offered or not offered at the right time. To tackle, solve and prevent problems it is necessary that the services involved cooperate with one another. Cooperation is not only necessary for youth services but also for the inspectorates in the youth sector. By working together they will have an overview of the entire spectrum of youth services.

## Who are we and what do we do?

In Integrated Supervision of Youth Affairs (in Dutch: Integraal Toezicht Jeugdzaken, ITJ) five government inspectorates work together: the Health Care Inspectorate, the Inspectorate of Education, the Inspectorate for Youth Care, the Inspectorate for Public Order and Safety and the Inspection Service for Work and Income. The Minister for Youth and Families is the minister responsible. In our supervision, the focus is on the child and our basis is the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We concentrate on the problems young people have, face and create. Examples of these problems are child abuse, obesity, youth criminality, addiction and poverty. We examine how the various youth services involved cooperate to solve these problems and, even better, to prevent them.

This also applies to the Youth and Family Centres, which have been or are being set up in every municipality. These centres comprise various services and organisations that are aimed at parents, children and young people. Everyone can visit the centres for anything concerning growing up and upbringing. We not only examine the cooperation within a Youth and Family Centre but also the cooperation of the Youth and Family Centre with youth services that are not represented within the centre.

## How do we work?

First, we determine what problem we will be investigating. We perform the investigation in municipalities severely affected by this problem and in which the risk of young people coming into contact with the problem is high.

Every ITJ investigation starts by setting down the 'hard facts': how many young people are involved? What have the municipalities and services already done to tackle the problem? What policy are they implementing? Which services are involved in resolving the problem? What do we as supervisors already know about these services?

In the municipalities in which the investigation is carried out, we assess how the cooperation between the services is progressing and what results it has produced for young people. In our investigations we employ different methods and techniques. These include questionnaires, interviews, observing meetings, dossier studies and talks with young people and/or their parents. We believe it is important that young people themselves are involved in solving the problems. In certain parts of the investigations we therefore ask young people to play an active role, for example by interviewing other young people.

## The role of the municipality

We set down the findings of the investigation in a report, that also contains conclusions, recommendations and an administrative message. This report is intended for the municipality, that is responsible for the local youth policy. Based on the report, the municipality draws up an action plan together with the relevant services. This plan lists the measures they will take to tackle the problem in the short and long term. A summary of the findings, the action plan and a response from ITJ are combined in a final report. An ITJ inspector monitors the implementation of the action plan. An agreement is made with the municipality about how long this monitoring will last. After this, the municipality performs a self-evaluation that makes clear what the effects of the action plan are and whether or not the cooperation is leading to improved results.

Some local issues may require a solution at the national government level. For instance, some statutory regulations and provisions of the government can make cooperation between local services more complicated. This can have adverse consequences for providing assistance to young people. ITJ therefore reports on any such problems to the Minister.



## Only the result counts

As a partnership of five inspectorates, we can contribute to realising improvements that the individual parties would find difficult or even impossible to achieve on their own. We examine what is happening in the municipalities and how effective cooperation can make a difference. We do not only assess, but we also try and get everyone to take concrete actions. Through our supervision we desire to contribute to solving problems that involve young people. What is most important to us: does the result make a difference for young people, parents and society?







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