



Dutch Police for everyone

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Introduction

Police for everyone: safe, competent and effective teams

Helping people, protecting those who are vulnerable in society and enforcing the law where necessary: it is what police officers do and it is what motivates us. In addition, everyone is equal to us: we are a Police for everyone and it is the most natural thing in the world to us. It is also the norm that we are an organisation with very different people with wide-ranging talents. Together, we form the Police and we are all committed to a safe society. It is also in that respect that we are a Police for everyone.

Police for everyone is our new perspective in the coming years which follows on from the existing themes of diversity, inclusion and diverse professionalism: it is a perspective aiming for safe, competent and effective teams in which different police officers work for everyone who needs us.

We are continuing to develop the programme: 'the Power of the Difference' and the many initiatives the force has taken. It has generated many benefits for us: in many respects, we are taking the lead within government institutions and operationally, we are in a strong position. Police officers act professionally in difficult situations, we ensure peaceful social conditions and we interact well, even if it is not always and everywhere the case. We notice that projects, programmes and separate interventions have short-term effects and it is important to keep the themes of diversity, inclusion and diverse professionalism 'special' rather than considering such themes common place. We are determined to change it. The following sets out the objectives the Police wish to achieve together for everyone and what it will be like in the future.

What is our vision?

The Police have its legitimacy in *Police for everyone*.

- *We are there for every citizen who needs help or protection but we are also there for every citizen when limits need to be set.* We consider every citizen equal and we do not differentiate on the basis of personal backgrounds whatsoever. Every citizen must be able to identify with their Police and must feel free to approach us. The Police must be able to contact anyone to have a good flow of information. At times, we have to do our work inconspicuously and secretly which is why we have a wide variety of members.
- *Everyone is welcome to come and work with us.* The Police have a wide variety of police officers who are professional and who have the skills to relate to different citizens and colleagues. It does not matter what your background is as long as you wish to authentically contribute to a safe and secure society and you meet the professional requirements and standards.
- *Every member matters.* Whether you have just started or whether you are the member who is about to retire, it is essential that all members feel safe and appreciated. At the same time, all of the members must be able to distinguish themselves professionally with their unique added value as it makes a difference. A socially safe environment in which everyone takes part – regardless of different backgrounds.



Safe, competent and effective teams

Police work is carried out in big and small teams. It is the team to which police officers mostly feel connected: it is the level on which we are proceeding to work in *Police for everyone*, which has as its objective to have safe, competent and effective teams.

Safe teams

We wish all of the members to use their unique talents and skills and also, to feel at liberty to be discerning, critical and to share opinions. At the same time, police work literally requires uniformity, a strong mutual connection and being action-oriented. The aspirations set out in for *Police for everyone* consist of aiming to get a balance in the future into being independent and to work in teams.

From the beginning of the new Police organisation, the objective has been to change the organisation by improving performance and technical issues. The result was that there was too little attention to the day-to-day operations within the teams and the care for the persons forming part of the team. In addition, many managers were at the time specifically selected for their operational management, but the span of control often doubled and support was not available. It is essential to focus on getting a better balance and to give more time and attention to the social safety and the interactions within teams. It complements the efforts of increasing the mental resilience of police officers: it has become clear that experiences during work 'outside' may affect the working atmosphere 'inside' and that managers must be aware and active. We also follow on from the direction already taken out of care for each other, we must bring back the human dimension into central management and we must provide better assistance to the team management which, in turn, pays more attention to the staff. The management of all of the basic teams is supplemented by a staff member providing all-round support

What are the changes?

- Managers will be assisted by having time and support to improve the social safety and the interactions within the team. The idea is to find a reasonable and suitable solution in the context and the priority of 'a safe team' will become part of the agreements within the Police in respect of the results we wish to achieve. During the course of selecting and developing the talents of managers, the potential for realizing a safe working atmosphere forms part the considerations. In addition, we particularly focus on the appreciation for the current and future managers and to be well-equipped to handle the diversity within the teams.
- A check-up is organized periodically for every team. The situation of the team is discussed, specific sticking points are analysed and agreements are made to provide support. Our HRM Department and our Safety, Integrity and Complaints department (*Afdeling Veiligheid, Integriteit & Klachten* or VIK) provide support to the team management in the process.
- Any incidents or tensions within a team will always be followed up as well as signs of a low satisfaction rate. Experienced experts always make an analysis of the situation together with the team management after which it is decided what is needed to improve the situation ("triage"). Such a team is formed of experts from HRM, VIK and our communication members; any other expertise is added where needed. Once a situation becomes tense, we will take a bigger step ahead in our internal and external communication: we will clearly put forward our vision and we will show that we have the necessary self-reflection.

Competent teams

A police team as a whole must be competent to do good police work which corresponds to the duties: the Police as a whole are available for every citizen and every colleague contributes in a unique manner. In the coming period of time, we will continue to work on diversity in the workforce as we consider it operationally necessary for the proper performance of our work. We define diversity as all of the backgrounds and characteristics which differentiate people from each other: it is a much wider concept than only cultural diversity or gender diversity. In addition, we consider sufficient measures of visible and cultural diversity in teams as a pre-condition to be able to operate effectively as *Police for everyone*.

We will continue to use target figures to prevent any relapse and we are in the process of improving the approach. We no longer keep to a national target figure for intake in all of the teams: the target figure will depend on the local context and the way the team is made up. We are aware that it takes extra efforts from the team management in the current process of recruitment, selection and career paths; it is done in the preparation of talks that concern results and development and in formulating at an early stage what profile is necessary for the team.

At the same time, we start on a step-by-step basis by turning round the recruitment and selection process of visible diversity to competences, such as being able to empathize with other lifestyles and cultures, being able to speak several languages and having a network within a certain community. Recruitment which is of a visible, cultural diversity does not sufficiently take into account individual talent and professionalism and the added value of such aspects to the team – it is now extremely important to ensure that we are and continue to be a *Police for everyone*: it is ultimately what our organisation is all about. We are convinced that in the long term, quantitative target figures will no longer be needed for visible, cultural diversity, as the focus on competences will naturally result in a better mix of diversity.

What are the changes?

- Each team management will make an analysis as to what specific mixture of results of competences are necessary in relation to the context and specific matters and safety issues in a team. Such an analysis will have the support of specialists. Following that, it is decided how to bridge the gap between the desired mixture and the current situation and how such a balance may be kept. Again, people will give support other than providing instruments and tasks which take even more time from the managers.
Within the current system of generic competences for positions within the Police, it is possible and even desirable to always provide context-dependent and specific results to comply with the set of competences which fit certain positions. It is the reason why further developments are made to consider how a number of relevant competences must be conceived together with the contexts and safety issues in which diversity is a significant factor. Diversity in this case is not only limited to cultural background but it can relate to age, gender, sexual preferences, ways of working, lifestyles etc. Such a development will actually become that evident that it can be used in the management of the team in operations and during recruitment. It means that we can take account of the generic competence 'social skills' for a police constable in the area named Schilderswijk in The Hague which will have a different meaning and interpretation than the same competence for a police constable in the area of Overijssel.

- The target figure for visible, cultural diversity for incoming recruits in the basic teams will not be the same in every unit but it will be based on population composition and security issues in the area covered. It means that a team in Noord-Groningen has a different target figure than a team in Amsterdam-West. Visible and cultural diversity as well as gender diversity amongst managers are of primary importance. Such managers are role models and they show that every position is open to everyone, which is why we also use target figures in this case.
- The realization of such a target value by way of recruitment activities will be on a local basis and the unit will implement it.

Effective teams

Teams are effective if they are well aware of their tasks, if they are practically proficient and if they are able to go along with changes in society. The Police are able to tackle large and small tensions which are a direct result from an increasing diversity in society. There are no contrasts between the Police and minority groups as is the case in some other western countries. At critical moments, we are professionally in the middle of all parties and we have sufficient skills to keep the peace regardless of whether it is the arrival of *Sinterklaas* or an attack in a tram in Utrecht. We operate effectively in such contexts.

At the same time, we are aware that we have to keep developing professionalism and that we are able to become more effective in our day-to-day actions. *Police for everyone* typically means to us that we always have to be able to explain that our actions and our work are based on objective considerations: it is not part of skilled policing to be carried along with conscious or unconscious prejudices such as ethnic profiling. In a case of the abuse of a transsexual, just to give an example, it is part of our work to be sufficiently aware of how to protect those who are vulnerable and how to deal with those who are perpetrators.

To establish if we make progress in the development of our professionalism, we must ensure that we know how various communities think of our organisation and especially our actions. We are proud that we have the confidence in the Police from citizens and the appreciation for our work has increased over the years but the same does not apply in the case of minorities. It is part of *Police for everyone* that we wish to know how specific groups think about our organisation and our actions. In this way, we organise our own counterbalance, contradictions and countervailing powers to be able to be *Police for everyone*.

What are the changes?

- Enhancing the skills in the police profession within the units is aimed at the diversity in the area covered and it will become a structural component of support for the operation. Diverse professionalism is wider than bringing it in line with cultural backgrounds. It also involves age, gender, sexual preferences, lifestyles etc. The Network Diverse Professionalism (*Netwerk Divers Vakmanschap* or NDV) has been involved for a long time in the provision of knowledge and skills in this area; it will continue in its current form but it will be more in line with the work and the organisation in the units themselves. Better facilities are made for the Network Diverse Professionalism where necessary.
- At a group level, the Operations Board together with others is responsible for the development of the profession (by way of portfolios and key areas for force management), the professional groups (via the Q system) and professionalism (via training courses and professional development). From now onwards, any issues related to the increasing diversity in the Netherlands become a natural component of the above. The

development of policies and instruments takes place on the basis of practical experience and field studies and it is aimed at developing professionalism during operations and by way of training courses. The knowledge and the skills of the Network Diverse Professionalism play an important role in developing policies and instruments at a group level.

- There are three ways in which we are better able to shed light on what minorities think about our organisation and our work., both within and outside groups:
 - Periodically, we conduct studies into our reputation among minorities or within an existing study, we pay more attention to these groups.
 - Informal staff networks within the Police have a clear idea of what is happening in minorities, both within and outside groups. They regularly provide valuable information on the subject. We secure their signals at a group level with the setting up of the internal advice group *Police for everyone* where such networks can join. The Network Diverse Professionalism provides a chairperson and it prepares the meetings. The advice group provides signals and gives advice to the police organisation, either voluntarily or on request. This group is not aimed at lobbying within the meaning of participation in decision-making, unlike the Committee Diversity & Inclusion of the Central Works Council. The Network Diverse Professionalism aims for professional development.
 - We have dialogues with formal and informal representatives of groups in society at different levels. which brings as valuable insights into our organisation and the way it operates and vice versa. The aim is to safeguard this information and at a group level, the external board of advice *Police for everyone* has been set up which signals issues and it provides advice to Police Management, either voluntarily or on request; this advice board focuses on how the Police should deal with developments in society.

Further development

The programme named *the Power of the Difference*, which ended in the middle of 2020 – has been used to focus on diversity, inclusion and diverse professionalism and it generated significant results. During the course of our regular work, we tend to use this temporary help structure – not only during incidents and crises, but also in the development of our professionalism and in our accountability to the outside world. It needs further development. Rather than making a choice for a separate programme structure, we are making a choice for the regular line which means that every manager is responsible for diversity and inclusion. There is the danger that topics which concern everyone are no one's topic when it comes to results; solid agreements are concluded which contain obligations and engagement in the management cycle, as well as using target figures. We know from experience that such a sound basis is necessary to get results. How such agreements are created within teams requires a local approach which suits the situation as well as the development stage within a team. The advice group *Police for everyone* embarks on a clear path for the Dutch Police, it is up to units independently to determine how tight a ship each unit keeps. To keep the attention for *Police for everyone*, a group of police chiefs together with the force management take the lead supported by the regular departments of staff and operations.

We make it manageable to handle the themes of diversity and inclusion with *Police for everyone* and it is engaging for the whole of the force. In the last few years, consciousness and acceptance of the difference between people and groups have been the focus, we now aim more to what binds us as Police in all of the diversity. Where the approach used to be aimed at specific groups or phenomena - a first and rigorous impulse which was truly needed – we now focus more on day-to-day situations in all of the teams within the organisation. It does not mean that our new direction is immediately acceptable to the whole inner and outer world. Working on *Police for everyone* generates practical dilemmas and difficult questions, particularly as the new direction affects opinions about the way in which diversity is dealt with both in society and at work; it requires a base as well as clear choices made out of our professionalism and good employment practices. We have to make the choices ourselves, collectively, from our shared drives and professionalism. If we wait too long, we note that choices are imposed from the outside. Politicians, those in authority and lobbies – rightly so – conduct debates about our organisation and they adopt points of view which directly affect our organisation. The time has come to take the initiative as an inseparable element of our daily work as *Police for everyone* is the most natural thing in the world.