

LANZAROTE COMMITTEE

Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe
Convention on the protection of children against sexual
exploitation and sexual abuse

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Replies to the thematic questionnaire

“Screening of professionals, volunteers and other
persons in contact with children”

NETHERLANDS

Replies received by the Secretariat on 30 June 2026

Main relevant provisions of the Lanzarote Convention and previous recommendations

Article 5 paragraph 3 of the Lanzarote Convention requires Parties to take the necessary legislative or other measures, in conformity with their internal law, to ensure that the conditions to accede to those professions whose exercise implies regular contacts with children ensure that the candidates to these professions have not been convicted of acts of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse of children. The Explanatory Report to the Lanzarote Convention indicates that this obligation can be also applied to voluntary activities (see paragraph 57).

In the 2nd implementation report of the 1st monitoring round (2018), the Lanzarote Committee urged those Parties that limited mandatory screening to certain professionals to extend it to the recruitment of all professionals (public or private) in regular contact with children (R19) and invited Parties to encourage continuous screening of all professionals (R20) and volunteers (R21) in regular contact with children.

Article 27 paragraph 3.b of the Lanzarote Convention requires Parties to take the necessary legislative or other measures to deny the perpetrator, temporarily or permanently, the exercise of professional or voluntary activity involving contact with children in the course of which the offence was committed.

Article 37 paragraph 3 of the Lanzarote Convention requires Parties to take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the information referred to in paragraph 1 (i.e. data related to the identity and to the genetic profile (DNA) of persons convicted of the offences established in accordance with the Convention) can be transmitted to the competent authority of another Party, in conformity with the conditions established in its internal law and the relevant international instruments.

Whenever the term “screening” is used in this questionnaire, this should be understood as “verification of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children”.

In all your answers, please provide details to the extent possible and refer to specific laws, policies, programmes, measures, etc.

Please describe the legislation, policy and practice which are in force on 27 March 2026 or are in the process of adoption (in this case, please specify the planned date of entry into force).

Please indicate:

- a. State Party in respect of which the questionnaire is submitted
Netherlands
- b. Entities and bodies which have been involved in responding to this questionnaire
 - Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport
 - Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
 - Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
 - Ministry of Justice and Security
 - Justis (the screening authority of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security)
 - Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers

Coordination also took place via the ministries with relevant stakeholders in the field and sectors concerned.

Persons concerned by screening requirements

1. Is the absence of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children required as a pre-condition in order to accede to professions, employment or volunteer positions whose exercise implies regular contacts with children? Please specify whether such restrictions apply to professions, employment or volunteer positions in the following sectors or areas of activities (additional details to be inserted below the table):

	Criminal conviction check for employment in public sector?	Criminal conviction check for voluntary activity?	Criminal conviction check for employment in private sector?	Criminal conviction check for self-employed professionals?	Please specify the professionals to whom this requirement applies
1. Education – Pre-school *	Not applicable (N/A) for the Netherlands, Childcare is a private sector.	Yes, all the people that are structurally present in the Childcare sector are checked before and during their	Yes all the employees in the Childcare sector are checked before and during their work for criminal convictions	Yes, all the self-employed professional and temporary workers in the Childcare sector are checked before en	Everybody who works or lives at a place where children are cared for must register in the Childcare Personnel Register. This is only possible with a valid Certificate of Conduct. After registration,

		work for criminal convictions		during their work for criminal convictions	everybody is continuously screened.
2. Education – Primary*	Yes	Partially (only lunch supervisors)	Yes	Yes	Teaching staff, support staff, (deputy) principals, staff providing additional education during or outside school hours, persons who supervise children during lunch break, persons establishing a new school.
3. Education – secondary*	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	All school staff, persons establishing a new school, staff providing additional education during or outside school hours
4. Education – Tertiary*	MBO (vocational education/upper secondary education): Yes Hoger onderwijs (higher education): No	MBO: No Hoger onderwijs: No	MBO: Yes Hoger onderwijs: No	MBO: Yes Hoger onderwijs: No	
5. Education – Extracurricular (e.g. language schools)	No	No	No	No	Only when related to formal school activities
6. Childcare (e.g. kindergartens, crèches, childminders*)	Not applicable (N/A) for the Netherlands, Childcare is a private sector.	Yes, all the people that are structurally present in the Childcare sector are checked before and during their work for	Yes, all the employees in the Childcare sector are checked before and during their work for criminal convictions.	Yes, all the self-employed professional and temporary workers in the Childcare sector are checked before and during their	Everybody who works or lives at a place where children are cared for must register in the Childcare Personnel Register. This is only possible with a valid Certificate of Conduct. After registration, everybody is

		criminal convictions		work for criminal convictions.	continuously screened
7. Institutional or residential care (e.g. foster homes, orphanages, closed residential facilities) *	Yes	Yes (volunteers who have regular contact with children)	Yes	Yes	
8. Detention*	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	All employees, external staff and volunteers must submit a VOG before they can start work.
9. Migration facilities (e.g. reception centres)*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10. Sport*	Partially	Partially	Partially	Partially	
11. Culture and leisure activities *	Partially	Partially	Partially	Partially	
12. Entertainment sector *	Partially	Partially	Partially	Partially	
13. Faith and religion *	N/A Religious communities are not part of the public sector in the Netherlands.	Partially	Partially	Partially	This could include for example: youth workers, pastors, staff members, and board members.
14. Healthcare (including psychological and psychiatric services)*	Partially	Partially	Partially	Partially	
15. Social protection services	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	
16. Law enforcement	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	- Police: screens its own staff - Public Prosecution Service: certificate of conduct

					- The Royal Netherlands Marechaussee: security screening for positions involving confidentiality - Special Investigation Services: certificate of conduct
17. Judicial*	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	- Public Prosecution Service: certificate of conduct - Dutch judicial system: certificate of conduct
18. Civil society organisations *	Partially, (where required by sector-specific legislation or organisational policy particularly for positions involving regular contact with children.	Partially Frequently required for volunteers who have regular contact with children.	Partially Yes, where required by law, collective standards or organisational policy, particularly for positions involving regular contact with children.	Partially, In certain sectors, clients, contracting organisations or regulatory frameworks may require a VOG	
19. Victim services (including Barnahus, domestic violence services) *	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
20. Any other sectors (please specify)					

Here you can insert additional details or specify any exceptions.*

1.1 :

- Please note that pre-school in the Netherlands is provided by Childcare organisations.
- For Childcare & pre-school, everybody who works or lives at a place where children are cared for must register in the Childcare Personnel Register. This is only possible with a valid Certificate of Conduct. After registration, everybody is continuously screened.
- Permanent staff, childminders and their adult household members¹ must register. The same applies to interns, temporary agency workers, and volunteers. This also applies to individuals who are structurally present at the childcare facility. Structurally means for at least half an hour once every 3 months. Therefore, there is a broad requirement for registration in the Netherlands.

1.2 & 1.3: Volunteers working in education are generally not required to obtain a Certificate of Conduct (VOG). This differs in the case of individuals supervising the lunchtime break (lunch supervisors, often parents), who are required to hold a VOG. A legislative proposal to introduce a VOG requirement for volunteers in education is currently open for internet consultation.

1.4: In the Netherlands, students usually finish secondary school between the ages of 16 and 18. Vocational education (MBO) can start earlier, usually from around age 16, while higher education (HBO and WO) typically starts at around 18 after completing secondary school.

1.6: Please note that in the childcare sector in the Netherlands after registration, everybody is continuously screened whether an individual has committed criminal offenses incompatible with working in childcare. A person must be suspended from work if there is a signal about this person in the screening. The signal starts even before a conviction, for example if a person is suspect.

1.7:

- Youth care & child protection: In the Netherlands, a Certificate of Conduct (VOG) is mandatory for youth care employees as part of the application procedure, allowing verification of whether the employee has been criminally convicted of a sexual offense. Professionals working for youth care providers (including institutions offering mental health care for youth) and child protection services are required under the Youth Act to provide a Certificate of Conduct (VOG) to the youth care provider. A Certificate of Conduct (VOG) is mandatory for volunteers who have more than incidental contact with young people or parents receiving youth care services, or who are subject to a child protection measure.

The mandatory Certificate of Conduct also applies to these self-employed professionals in youth care and youth protection. If you cannot provide a Certificate of Conduct, you cannot work in youth care.

- Foster homes: To become a foster parent in the Netherlands, prospective foster parents must obtain a VGB (a Certificate of No Objection). The assessment for obtaining a VGB is conducted by the Council for Child Protection. In the event of a conviction for a sexual offense or child abuse, the Council for Child Protection will, in principle, refuse to issue a VGB.

¹ The household members of childminders that are 18 years or older must register.

1.8:

Employees of the Custodial Institutions Agency (DJI) are required to provide a Certificate of Conduct (VOG) upon appointment. DJI employees must renew this screening every four years. In addition, if the nature of the work changes such that a different screening profile applies, a new VOG must be obtained. For certain positions, a more extensive screening, which also includes police data (VOG P), is required. The VOG requirement does not only apply to employees: external contractors including self-employed individuals who work within or require access to DJI facilities and volunteers who have contact with prisoners outside the visiting area are also required to obtain a DJI-specific VOG before commencing their activities. This applies, for example, to volunteers who supervise parent-child days or projects.

1.9: For volunteers and employees who work with children at the reception centres (for example, in playrooms, Open Learning Centers, or other activities involving regular contact with children), a Certificate of Conduct (VOG) is mandatory

1.10: In the sports sector in the Netherlands, a VOG (Certificate of Conduct) is not legally required for all paid staff and volunteers working with children, but it is encouraged by the government and the sector. It is often required by sports organizations as part of their safeguarding and integrity policies, for which common guidelines have been developed. Volunteer organizations in the sports sector can apply for the free VOG scheme to screen volunteers for any relevant criminal convictions. [Basiseisen integriteit sportaanbieders - NOCNSF](#)

1.11 & 1.12: There is no general legal requirement for a Certificate of Conduct (VOG) in the culture and entertainment sector. Screening requirements are therefore not set at sector level by law. However, individual organisations may require a VOG as part of their own employment or volunteering policies, particularly where staff or volunteers work with children, young people, or vulnerable persons.

This is common in organisations such as music and dance schools, youth theatre groups, museums with educational programmes, libraries offering children's activities, and organisations providing cultural or recreational activities for children (for example during holidays or after-school programmes). In these cases, the VOG requirement applies at organisational level and may concern both employees and volunteers, but it is not a statutory obligation.

1.13:

- Religious communities are not part of the public or private sector in the Netherlands. They are regarded as part of civil society.
- A number of, mostly Christian, religious institutions and communities require their staff and volunteers to hold a Certificate of Conduct (VOG). When religious institutions and communities require their staff and volunteers to hold a Certificate of Conduct (VOG), it mostly applies to anyone who holds a church position.
- The Protestant Church has made this mandatory since 1 July 2025. In many other religious communities, a criminal conviction check is not (yet) systematically organised.
- The Dutch government encourages voluntary organisations to apply for a VOG for their volunteers through the Free VOG Scheme. Under this scheme, volunteers can apply for a VOG from the government free of charge.

1.14: In healthcare settings involving children, such as child and adolescent mental health services (youth psychiatry, psychology, and related care), VOG screening is in practice standard for both professionals and volunteers. While there is no single overarching legal provision mandating VOG checks for all healthcare roles involving children, screening is widely required as part of institutional policies, contractual requirements in youth care commissioning, and child safeguarding standards. Professionals and volunteers who work in youth care (including youth mental health care) are subject to the Youth Act, under which a valid Certificate of Conduct (VOG) is mandatory prior to commencing work.

As a result, professionals such as child psychologists, psychiatrists, and youth care workers, as well as volunteers working with children in these settings, are generally required to provide a VOG prior to commencing their activities.

1.15: Social protection services involving children (such as youth care, child protection services, and social work with families and minors) include professionals such as youth care workers, child protection officers, social workers, and case managers, as well as volunteers in supportive roles. In the Netherlands, VOG screening is in practice universally required for both professionals and volunteers working directly with children in these services. While there is no single statutory provision mandating VOG checks for all roles in this sector, screening requirements are embedded in the Youth Act framework, municipal commissioning contracts, and organisational safeguarding policies.

1.17: The so-called *VOG P* (Certificate of Conduct police data) is legally required for positions such as public prosecutor, team leader, administrative staff member, and intern at the Public Prosecution Service. Such a VOG is only requested for roles that require a higher level of integrity and means that Justis, the authority issuing VOGs, also consults police data in addition to judicial documentation. The police data alone can be decisive in refusing a VOG P, even if a person has no criminal record. The Public Prosecution Service is required to apply for a VOG P for its employees.

In addition to the Public Prosecution Service, the VOG police data applies to other positions that require a high level of integrity and involve the authority to use force, access to sensitive information relating to public order, security or law enforcement, or involvement in integrity assessments carried out by public authorities, such as law enforcement officers, or persons working for the Custodial Institutions Agency.

1.18: Within the Dutch charity sector, there is no single legal requirement applicable to all organisations. Rather, screening obligations arise from a combination of legislation, sector-specific regulations and self-regulation. Many charities and civil society organisations require a VOG for staff and volunteers working with children as part of their safeguarding and integrity policies. In certain sectors, clients, contracting organisations or regulatory frameworks may require a VOG before allowing self-employed professionals to work with children.

In addition, sectoral standards and quality frameworks encourage organisations to implement screening procedures. Organisations holding the CBF Recognition (the Dutch accreditation scheme for charities) are expected to have appropriate integrity and safeguarding measures in place, including risk-based screening of staff and volunteers where relevant. As a result, the use of criminal background screening is widespread in the Dutch charity sector, even where not explicitly mandated by law.

1.19:

- Sexual Violence Centre (CSG): In many regions in the Netherlands, the Sexual Violence Centre is a partnership of several organizations. A Certificate of Conduct is also requested from employees who are employed by one of the collaborative organizations such as Veilig Thuis (Save home organisation) or the GGD (Public Health care service)
- Victim Support Netherlands: A Certificate of Conduct (VOG) is compulsory for paid and unpaid/voluntary staff. This applies to every member of staff (including those in the support departments and IT who do not have direct contact with victims). They are asked to provide a VOG every four years.

2. In requiring the verification of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children in order to accede to the positions listed in question 1, does your State:

- a. define the level or threshold of contact with children (one-off, regular, etc.) which necessitates such a verification
- b. distinguish between direct, indirect or online contact with children?

If yes, please provide details.

In the Netherlands, screening requirements are regulated through a combination of general legislation and sector-specific legal framework.

The requirement to verify criminal convictions for sexual offences against children is generally not based on formally defined legal thresholds of contact (such as one-off versus regular contact) or on a legal distinction between direct, indirect, or online contact. Instead, screening through a Certificate of Conduct (VOG) is primarily linked to the nature of the position and the associated risk profile and is applied broadly in sectors involving work with or access to children.

However, in certain subsectors the concept of contact is operationalised in more concrete terms. For example, in the childcare and pre-school sector (1.1.&1.6), screening applies to all individuals who are structurally present at a childcare facility. In this context, “structurally present” means being present for at least 30 minutes once every three months, thereby extending screening beyond permanent staff to individuals with recurring access.

Positions (1...)	2.a	2.b

3. Is the absence of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children required to become:

- a. an adoptive parent

The absence of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children is required to become an adoptive parent. In the home study (the assessment of the family situation of prospective adoptive parents), the child protection board reviews the criminal documentation. Also during the phase of mediation an adoptive parent has to provide a declaration of conduct. This also contains the absence of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children.

b. a foster parent

For foster parents, the VGB - Certificate of No Objection (a Dutch screening instrument) is used in the Netherlands. A prospective foster parent must obtain a VGB from the Child Protection Council in order to formally become a foster parent. This is a strict requirement. The Child Protection Council is responsible for the judicial screening of the prospective foster parent. For example, the Child Protection Council looks at criminal offenses and reports that have been received by the Council. The foster care provider is responsible for assessing whether the prospective foster parent can provide a pedagogically responsible living environment for the foster child. That is why a VGB is mandatory for: The prospective foster parent(s) and housemates and (own) children aged 12 and older who are registered at the same address or actually live there. This also applies, for example, to the LAT relationship of a prospective foster parent. This is legally determined under the Youth Act. The foster care provider applies for the VGB on behalf of the prospective foster parent to the Child Protection Council. This consults information from 1) the Basic Registration of Persons, 2) the Judicial Documentation System. This gives the Child Protection Council access to, among other things, data on all criminal cases that the public prosecutor has handled. Those are all crimes and misdemeanours. Even if the treatment did not lead to a conviction and even if the treatment took place more than four years ago. Justis carries out extra strict testing for violent and sexual crimes. Some foster care organizations have made agreements in their own agreements that they will have a new judicial screening carried out in the meantime (for example every 3 or 5 years). Foster care providers are not obliged to do this. However, the substantive pedagogical rescreening takes place by the foster care supervisor via the annual safety check and (regular) home visits.

c. a child's legal guardian (including for unaccompanied children)?

Yes, if the legal guardian is a professional he or she needs to have a VOG (statement of conduct) for which the criminal record is checked. Everybody who is working in youth care, youth protection or juvenile justice needs to have this VOG.

Please provide details.

4. Is the absence of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children required for the household members of:

a. persons carrying out professional activity in their home who are in contact with children

This depends on the applicable sectoral framework. In general, sectors themselves establish whether and to what extent screening requirements apply, including any requirements relating to household members.

In the case of for example childcare this requirement applies also to the adult household members of all childminders that work in their own home. For more information see answer 2.a.

b. persons carrying out volunteering activity in their home who are in contact with children. [See answer to 4.a](#)

c. persons wishing to become an adoptive parent, a foster parent, or a child's legal guardian?

Yes.

- Adoptive parent: The absence of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children is required for the household members to become an adoptive

parent. In the home study the child protection board reviews the criminal documentation of all household members. See also answer question 3 a, b and c.

- Foster parent: for everybody above the age of 12 who lives at the same address as the foster parent the criminal record is checked. See also answer to question 3.

Please provide details.

5. Does the requirement to verify the absence of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children also apply to:

- a. children applying for professional or volunteer positions

Yes, the Certificate of Conduct can also be requested by minors. This also happens, for example, by minor coaches in the voluntary sports sector.

- b. adults in respect of criminal convictions received before the age of 18?

Yes

Please provide details

Where a sector imposes a requirement to verify the absence of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children, this requirement applies to the function or role itself and is not dependent on the age of the applicant. As a result, it also applies to minors where they perform work or voluntary activities within that sector.

The Certificate of Conduct (VOG) can therefore also be requested for and issued to minors. This occurs in practice, for example in the voluntary sports sector, where minor coaches may be required to provide a VOG. In such cases, the requirement is linked to the position rather than to whether the age of the individual.

6. If a person legally changes their name, how does your State ensure that their criminal record remains linked to their new name?

A legal name change does not affect the link between a person and their criminal record. Criminal records are linked to the individual's identity through the citizen service number (BSN) and other identifying data recorded in the Basic Registration of Persons (BRP), rather than through the person's name alone. Once a legal name change is registered in the BRP, the updated name is reflected in the Criminal Justice Database (SKDB) and the Judicial Documentation System (JDS), while the existing criminal record remains linked to the same individual.

Please provide details.

7. Is access to public funds for projects implying contact with children conditional on the absence of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children for persons employed in or volunteering for such projects?

Please provide details.

In the Netherlands, access to public funding for projects involving contact with children is not, as a general rule, legally conditional on the absence of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children for all persons employed in or volunteering for such projects. There is no overarching statutory requirement linking eligibility for public funding to individual criminal record screening.

Instead, the requirement to obtain a Certificate of Conduct (VOG) is primarily determined by the nature of the position and the sector in which the activity takes place, particularly where individuals work with or have access to children. This means that screening obligations apply irrespective of whether a position is publicly or privately funded.

In practice, public funding bodies may include safeguarding requirements in grant agreements or commissioning frameworks, which can require organisations to ensure that staff and volunteers working with children have a valid VOG. However, such requirements operate at the level of funding conditions and implementation practice, and do not constitute a general legal condition for access to public funds.

Information included in screening

8. Does the criminal record check include criminal convictions for:
- a. sexual abuse of a child (Article 18 of the Lanzarote Convention) [Yes](#)
 - b. sexual exploitation of a child ("child prostitution" Article 19 of the Lanzarote Convention) [Yes](#)
 - c. acts involving child sexual abuse material ("child pornography" Article 20 of the Lanzarote Convention) [Yes](#)
 - d. offences related to the participation of children in pornographic performances (Article 21 of the Lanzarote Convention) [Yes](#)
 - e. corruption of a child (causing a child to witness sexual activities) (Article 22 of the Lanzarote Convention) [Yes](#)
 - f. solicitation of a child for sexual purposes ("grooming"), including online (Article 23 of the Lanzarote Convention) [Yes](#)
 - g. aiding and abetting or attempting the above offences (Article 24 of the Lanzarote Convention) [Yes](#)
 - h. any other convictions (please specify)?

Please provide details. [See the answer to question 12](#)

9. Does the screening of persons applying for roles or positions specified in questions 1 and 3 above extend beyond criminal convictions for sexual offences against children to:
- a. relevant administrative or disciplinary sanctions
[No, not in general for the Certificate of Conduct by the screening authority Justis.](#)
 - b. other information available to the authorities (e.g. judicial decisions in civil proceedings)?

[Justis may also consult police files and ask the Public Prosecution Service and the probation service for information.](#)

Please provide details. [See the answer to question 12. For foster care: see answer question 3.](#)

10. If restrictions on the exercise of the relevant activities apply as a result of a criminal conviction for sexual offences against children, in line with Article 27 paragraph 3.b:
- a. are they life-long?
 - b. if they are not life-long, please specify the time-limits applicable see below
 - c. are they applied only to activities in the public sector?

Please provide details.

[Regarding the VOG screening \(certificate of conduct\), the following applies: for everyone applying for a VOG \(public and private\), an unlimited lookback period applies to the criminal record for sexual offenses, and an enhanced assessment framework applies to sexual offenses in combination with working in a job in which there is a relationship of authority or dependency, or working at a specific location. The retention period for criminal records relating to sexual offences is, in principle, 80 years.](#)

11. Does the criminal record check verify the existence of an expunged or spent criminal conviction for sexual offences against children for persons applying for roles or positions specified in questions 1 and 3?

N/A

Please provide details.

The Netherlands does not operate a system of “spent convictions” that automatically excludes a conviction for sexual offences against children from consideration in screening procedures after a fixed rehabilitation period.

Judicial data are retained in the Judicial Documentation System in accordance with the retention periods laid down in the Dutch legal framework (*Wet justitiële en strafvorderlijke gegevens* and subordinate legislation). These retention periods vary depending on the nature and seriousness of the offence and are particularly long for serious offences, including sexual offences. The longest retention period is 80 years.

For the purpose of the Certificate of Conduct (VOG), sexual offences are subject to an unlimited look-back period. This means that, where relevant judicial data are still lawfully available in the Judicial Documentation System, sexual offences may be taken into account irrespective of how long ago they were committed. The assessment is carried out by Justis on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the nature of the offence, the risks associated with the position concerned, the vulnerability of the persons involved, and all other relevant circumstances.

As a result, convictions for sexual offences against children do not automatically cease to be relevant for screening purposes after the lapse of a fixed period of time.

Screening procedure

12. How is the screening procedure set out in your legal framework (in a single piece of legislation, sector-specific legislation, or other)?

In the Netherlands, screening requirements are regulated through a combination of general legislation and sector-specific legal frameworks. The main screening instrument is the Certificate of Conduct (Verklaring Omtrent het Gedrag – VOG).

A Certificate of Conduct/VOG is a document by which the Dutch Minister of Justice and Security declares that the applicant has not been convicted for any crime relevant to the performance of his or her duties. Sometimes the submission of a certificate of conduct is required by law, in other cases it is up to the employer to decide whether the certificate is required.

In the Netherlands, the Certificate of Conduct/ VOG may be requested for any job or position in society. That means potential employees for any work-field. For instance, the financial sector, the logistics industry such as the harbours or other main ports in that sense. As well as screening of the government employees. Aside from paid positions, the Dutch government also encourages volunteer organisations that work with vulnerable persons (such as children) to only employ persons who can provide a Certificate of Conduct/VOG.

The screening authority Justis issues the VOG and is the only authority to do so. After applying for a certificate of conduct Justis consults the Criminal Records System. The Criminal Records System contains data relating to criminal offences and their outcomes, ranging from custodial sentences to payment in lieu of prosecution or the dropping of charges. Justis may also consult police files and ask the Public Prosecution Service and the probation service for information.

The VOG does not provide access to criminal records. If the VOG is rejected, the applicant (not the employer) will be informed about which judicial records are relevant. The investigation/screening is bound to policy rules. The consideration of the interests of the applicant on the one hand and the risks for society on the other hand, is also part of the screening.

For organisations working with children, including civil society organisations, sports clubs, youth organisations and volunteer-based organisations, a VOG is often required or strongly recommended. In certain sectors (child protection, education, childcare and health care) a VOG is compulsory. Certain sectors are also subject to continuous screening mechanisms.

Additionally, there are sector-specific legislation in place for different sectors. Some examples:

- o In the childcare sector: stating who in the childcare sector needs to have a Certificate of Conduct and must register in the Childcare Personnel Register.
- o *The Certificate of Conduct is legally required for persons who work professionally in youth care, youth protection or youth probation.*
 - *The Youth Act: The Youth Act (and the associated Youth Act Decree) states that youth care providers and certified institutions are obliged to have a Certificate of Conduct for employees.*
 - *Professional registration (SKJ / BIG): In order to register in the Youth Quality Register (SKJ) or the BIG register—which is mandatory for many positions in youth care—you must be able to submit a valid VOG.*
 - *When registering for the first time, this Certificate of Conduct may not be older than 3 months.*
- o In foster care, the emphasis is on a safe home environment. Here the screening works through a combination of the Youth Act and the Child Protection Council.
Certificate of No Objection (VGB): Formally, prospective foster parents (and all resident family members aged 12 and older) must obtain a Certificate of No Objection from the Child Protection Council. To obtain this statement, the Council investigates the judicial documentation (the criminal record).

In addition to mandatory screening requirements, self-regulatory mechanisms play an important role within Dutch civil society organisations. Many organisations working with children have adopted safeguarding policies that include screening requirements, codes of conduct, reporting procedures and risk management measures that go beyond legal minimum standards.

A relevant example is the certification framework administered by the CBF (the Dutch regulator and accreditation body for charities). Organisations holding the CBF Recognition are expected to meet governance and integrity standards, including policies aimed at ensuring a safe environment for beneficiaries, volunteers and staff. Although the CBF does not impose independent legal screening obligations, its standards encourage organisations to implement appropriate safeguarding measures, including the use of screening procedures where relevant. As a result, compliance with screening requirements in the civil society sector is supported not only through legislation but also through sectoral self-regulation and quality assurance mechanisms.

Please provide details.

13. If screening is required, who is required to act?

- a. the employer, volunteer recruiter or child protection authority is expected to obtain the necessary information directly from the authorities
- b. the candidate must provide proof of absence of convictions

In most cases, the employer or volunteer organisation initiates the application process, after which the candidate applies for and submits a Certificate of Conduct (VOG). The VOG is issued by Justis, the screening authority of the Ministry of Justice and Security. The screening is not limited to final convictions. Justis may also take into account other judicial data recorded in the judicial documentation system, including ongoing criminal proceedings, public prosecutor decisions, settlements (transactions), and certain dismissals of cases, where relevant under Dutch law.

- c. another scenario. Please specify
In foster care, the foster care provider applies for the VGB from the Child Protection Council.

Please provide details. See also the answer to question 12

14. If screening is required, who bears the costs of screening procedures?

The applicant pays the costs but can often claim them from the employer who requires a certificate of conduct from the employee.

The allocation of costs depends on the sector and the organisation concerned. In many employment contexts, employers reimburse or directly cover the costs of obtaining a VOG. For volunteers, various arrangements exist. In many sectors involving volunteer work with children, the VOG can be obtained free of charge through government-supported schemes. In other cases, the volunteer or the organisation may bear the costs.

The collective labour agreement for youth care states that employers pay these costs.

Please provide details.

15. How does your State monitor that employers, volunteer recruiters or child protection authorities comply with the relevant regulations on screening?

Yes

Please provide details.

Monitoring mechanisms differ by sector. Some examples:

- Within the civil society sector, compliance is often linked to funding conditions, sectoral quality standards, safeguarding policies and oversight by relevant authorities, depending on the legal framework applicable to the organisation.
- Education: Employers in primary, secondary and vocational education account in their yearly rapport on the screening.
- Childcare: Every year all childcare locations are inspected. During this inspection, the inspector checks if all the persons present at the location are registered and connected to the organisations in the register. The inspector can also investigate the history of the persons working and if they are correctly connected in the register. In the Netherlands, the supervision and enforcement of the childcare organisation are decentralized. This means that the supervision is executed by Municipal Health Services. The local municipality is the enforcement authority. If an inspector determines a violation of the law, the municipality can use sanctions for this offense.
- Youth care: In the Netherlands, the Healthcare and Youth Inspectorate (IGJ) is responsible for supervision. She carries out (often unannounced) inspections and audits at youth care institutions. They randomly check the personnel files to verify whether there is a valid and current Certificate of Conduct for every employee and

permanent volunteer. Youth care and foster care organizations must meet strict quality standards

16. If screening is required, are there sanctions foreseen for failure to comply with it? If yes, what type of sanctions?

Yes

Please provide details.

This varies depending on the sector. Some examples:

- o Education sector: A general 'herstelopdracht' (remedial assignment) from the Inspectorate of Education
- o Childcare: Yes, the municipality has a variety of sanctions available if a childcare organisation fails to apply to the law, for example:
 - Instruction (by the Municipal Executive) or order (by the supervisor)
 - Administrative fine
 - Order subject to administrative coercion
 - Order subject to a penalty payment
 - Prohibition of operation
 - Withdrawal of operating permit
- o If a foster parent does not receive the VGB, he or she cannot become a foster parent.

17. Is regular screening, beyond the initial recruitment process, required, for:

- a. professionals in contact with children

Partially, It depends on the sector

- b. volunteers in contact with children

Partially, it depends on the sector and function of the person

- c. foster parents and legal guardians?

Yes.

The foster care provider screens for safety annually by completing an extensive risk assessment/safety check, which is completed together with the foster parents. The foster child is also spoken to. In addition to this, foster care providers can make their own agreements that the VGB must be re-applied for periodically. This is not mandatory. However, there are a number of conditions when a VGB must always be applied for again: for example, if no foster child has been placed with a foster parent for more than 2 years, if the foster parent changes foster care provider or if the family composition changes (for example due to a relationship).

If regular screening is required, please specify its frequency and provide other details.

The frequency and scope depend on the sector concerned.

For some professional groups, continuous screening mechanisms apply rather than periodic resubmission of a VOG. For example, in the childcare sector continuous screening takes place in accordance with Dutch law.

For youth care: If a youth care provider, youth protection organization or the inspectorate suspects that a person working in youth care cannot re-issue the Certificate of Conduct, it is mandatory to apply for a new one. Self-employed employees in Youth Care must apply for a new Certificate of Conduct every 3 years. No hard term has been set for professionals in service, but many municipalities make agreements about this with youth care providers in their contracts.

18. Where a person working or volunteering in contact with children is under investigation for a sexual offence against a child, are law enforcement or other authorities allowed to inform the employer or volunteer organisation about the ongoing investigation? If yes, what is the consequence?

Yes

Please provide details.

A criminal record contains more than just convictions. However, in general, there is no proactive information-sharing mechanism towards employers through the VOG system. Justis does not have a 'notification' or tip-off function. Justis only sees the criminal record upon a requested screening. The certificate of conduct is sent only to the applicant, not to the employer. But fortunately, the system in these regulated professions is as follows: no certificate of conduct means no work.

An important exception exists in the childcare sector, where a system of continuous screening applies after (compulsory) registration in the Childcare Personnel Register. Individuals working or volunteering in childcare are continuously screened to determine whether they have committed criminal offences that are incompatible with working in this sector. A signal may be triggered even before a conviction, for example if a person is a suspect. If such a signal arises, the individual must be suspended from work or voluntary activities pending further assessment. After the person is suspended, he or she can request a new Certificate of Conduct. If the certificate is granted, the person may resume work; if it is refused, the individual is no longer permitted to work in the childcare sector, which in practice results in termination of employment or volunteering. The supervisory organisation oversees this process.

A different mechanism applies under the framework of the Public Prosecution Service (OM), which operates under the Dutch Judicial and Criminal Records Act (*Wet justitiële en strafvorderlijke gegevens*, *Wjsg*) and the associated Directive. In specific cases, the OM may proactively provide criminal procedural information to third parties at an early stage and for defined purposes. Employers in sensitive sectors, including those working with children, may be informed. This may occur, for example, for the purpose of preventing criminal offences, enabling school boards or organisations to take measures to ensure internal safety, or allowing employers to take employment-related measures where a suspect is considered no longer able to perform their duties with integrity.

Cross-border screening

19. If the candidate for roles or positions specified in questions 1 and 3 has previously resided or worked in different countries, is it required to verify the absence of criminal convictions for sexual offences against children in each of those countries in respect of:

- a. professionals
- b. volunteers
- c. persons wishing to become an adoptive parent, a foster parent or a child's legal guardian?

Please provide details.

In some cases, information from other EU Member States is consulted (through ECRIS). If a person with another EU nationality (other than Dutch) wishes to work with children and applies for a certificate of conduct in the Netherlands, a request is sent to his/her country of nationality to obtain any possible criminal record information from the country of nationality. When a national of one Member State of the EU is irrevocably convicted in another Member State, that Member State of conviction shall inform the Member State of nationality of the offender. In this way, the Member State of nationality has a complete overview of all final convictions in the EU for all its nationals.

20. Is there a mechanism to:

- a. request data about a person's criminal convictions for sexual offences against children from the competent authority of another State outside the context of criminal proceedings² (please specify)
- b. provide data about a person's criminal convictions for sexual offences against children to the competent authority of another State outside the context of criminal proceedings (please specify)?

Please provide details. [See the answer to question 19.](#)

21. Is there an obligation to provide data about a person's criminal convictions for sexual offences against children at the request of the competent authority of another State outside the context of criminal proceedings?

Please provide details. [See the answer to question 19.](#)

Additional details and reflections

22. Please add any further details regarding the modalities of the screening procedures applicable in your State, if relevant.

Please provide details.

² For purposes of recruitment, volunteering, adoption, foster care or guardianship.

23. What challenges related to the screening for criminal convictions for sexual offences against children of professionals, volunteers and persons wishing to become adoptive parents, foster parents or a child's legal guardian exist in your State in practice (e.g. administrative costs, delays, cross-border co-operation)?

Please provide details.

As mentioned above, the Certificate of Conduct (VOG) is generally issued by Justis, the Dutch screening authority. The procedure is carefully structured and includes multiple safeguards, ensuring reliability but also requiring a substantial administrative organisation.

The increasing number of sectors in which the VOG is made mandatory, including through government measures such as the scheme providing free VOGs, may pose challenges for Justis. While this policy aims to lower barriers and strengthen safeguarding, it leads to a higher volume of applications. This may have organisational consequences, including the need for additional funding and staffing to ensure timely and effective processing of requests.

In the education sector in particular, practical challenges may arise. For example, when individuals work across multiple schools, it is not always possible to obtain a VOG in a timely manner for each appointment. In addition, monitoring and keeping track of valid VOGs across different employers and assignments can be complex in practice.

24. What promising practices, if any, would your State like to highlight in the screening of professionals, volunteers and other persons in contact with children?

Please provide details.

In the Netherlands, screening of volunteers working with children is strongly supported across society and is widely embedded in safeguarding practices. There is broad commitment from government, sector organisations and civil society to ensure appropriate screening, in particular through the Certificate of Conduct (VOG).

A key instrument is the Regulation on Free Certificate of Conduct for Volunteers (gratis VOG). Under this scheme, volunteer organisations that work with vulnerable groups, such as children or persons with disabilities, can be admitted to the scheme if they meet certain conditions, including having a prevention and integrity policy in place. Once admitted, these organisations can provide free VOG applications for their volunteers.

The scheme is widely used in practice by organisations in sectors such as the sports sector, youth work, education-related volunteer activities (e.g. after-school supervision), and other community-based organisations, provided that they have been formally approved under the scheme. The aim is to reduce financial barriers for volunteers while maintaining high safeguarding standards.