

## **Activity plan 2021**

### **Summary**

In 2021 PrisonWatch will increase its activities in the penitentiary institution (PI) of Alphen aan den Rijn as a result of the positive results of its work. Furthermore, PrisonWatch hopes to start working in PI Nieuwersluis (female prisoners) and in PI Ter Apel (foreign national prisoners). Due to the covid 19-virus we couldn't adhere to these plans, as well as the creation of the network of Volunteers. In 2021 PrisonWatch likes to become listed as an officially accepted non-governmental organisation for the National Agency of Custodial Institutions and to obtain funding for its activities.

### **Continuation of activities in PI Alphen**

In 2021 PrisonWatch will expand its current activities in unit West to the other units of the penitentiary institution in PI Alphen. The reason for enlarging the scope of PrisonWatch work is that its involvement has been regarded as having a positive impact on foreign national prisoners and on daily prison life. In Alphen around one in five prisoners has a foreign background. With an annual flow of 8,000 prisoners, there is a large group that encounters language difficulties because they do not speak or read Dutch. By helping this group PrisonWatch contributes to a humane, inclusive and fair detention.

#### *PrisonWatch Team*

To address the language and social issues PrisonWatch works in PI Alphen with a dedicated group of members of staff who have special attention for foreign nationals and try to address their needs. The PrisonWatch Team consists of around twenty members and together they speak over twenty-five different languages. In practice they are often contacted by their colleagues to provide language support, for example during the intakes in prison but also try to avoid that prisoners end up in isolation cells due to communication problems. The PrisonWatch Team meets once every eight weeks to discuss the voluntary work. There is one dedicated member of the Team, Ana Bibic (quality controller), who visits the wings on a weekly basis to increase the visibility of PrisonWatch, to keep an eye on its activities and to ensure that no foreign prisoners are left out.

#### *PrisonWatch Hosts*

PrisonWatch works furthermore in PI Alphen with prisoners who help other prisoners in their own language to get adjusted into prison life and who provide social support. The PrisonWatch Host receives a simple intake before taking up this voluntary job. Since October one designated member of the PrisonWatch Team visits all sections weekly to coordinate that the Hosts can meet with the prisoners who encounter language difficulties and provide support.

### *PrisonWatch Volunteers*

In 2021 PrisonWatch will start to build the network of Volunteers that can visit their countrymen in prison. Due to the covid 19-virus penitentiary institutions were not allowed to provide access to external visitors. As a result, institutions have become more equipped to allow Skype-contact, which can be beneficial for PrisonWatch too.

### **Funding**

In 2021 PrisonWatch will start to seek funding from different donors, including penitentiary institutions where PrisonWatch will be active, organisations like the Kansfonds and the Dutch Custodial Institutions Agency. Funding is necessary to buy essentials for the different volunteers:

- The PrisonWatch Host receives a package with information about the foundation and the picture dictionary *Picture it in Prison* and a pencil with logo.
- Prison staff receives a similar booklet.
- On each wing there is a larger version (A4-size) of the picture dictionary available.
- PrisonWatch Hosts wear a red 'safety jacket' with the PrisonWatch logo to show that they are on 'duty' and are allowed to be on a different wing.
- The PrisonWatch Team meets six times per year. Drinks and snacks are provided and an annual dinner.
- PrisonWatch Volunteers receive a half-day training session, training material and travel costs. When personal visits remain forbidden in 2021, PrisonWatch might buy several Ipads to facilitate Skype calls.