

KVJJ The Hague - the Netherlands

Introduction

The Small-Scale Judicial Youth Facility The Hague (hereafter referred to as "KVJJ The Hague") was established in 2021 and is located in The Hague, in the western part of the Netherlands, along the North Sea coast. It is one of the five small-scale judicial youth facilities in the Netherlands. These facilities are low-security and operate under the jurisdiction of the Custodial Institutions Agency of The Netherlands (DJI). KVJJ The Hague is managed by DJI in collaboration with the Salvation Army.



The KVJJ's operate based on three core principles. First, during their stay, residents are encouraged to retain as many positive elements of their lives as possible. Therefore, they are placed close to their home environment, allowing them to maintain contact with family, friends, and their social network. Secondly, personal responsibility is central: residents are encouraged to actively work on their future. Lastly, cooperation within the care and criminal justice system is essential. Ongoing support is continued or initiated in the region of the KVJJ, with the municipality playing a key role in providing youth care, daytime activities, and the follow-up trajectory.

Scale

KVJJ The Hague is a small-scale facility accommodating eight people.

RESCALED-principles in practice:

- Small-scale
- Differentiated
- Community-integrated

Differentiation

Target group:

KVJJ The Hague is a youth facility for boys between 12 and 23 years old. There are three categories of people who can be placed in KVJJ The Hague. First, it accommodates those who are in pre-trial detention and awaiting their court case and judgment. Second, it can house youths who were already placed in a KVJJ during their pre-trial detention and remain in juvenile detention. Third, it can serve as a transitional step



toward aftercare, either in the final phase of juvenile detention or as part of a judicial measure during their stay in a regular juvenile justice facility.

Additional indicators for placement in KVJJ The Hague include motivation and a sense of personal responsibility. The presence of protective factors such as school or employment is also important.

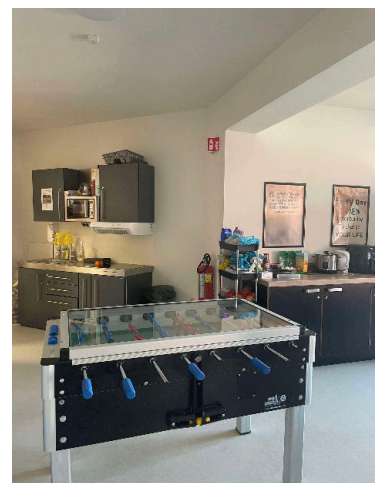
Due to the low-security setting and high level of autonomy, the facility has certain contraindications. For example, people who are at high risk of running away or who have caused social unrest through their offense are not placed in this facility.

After reviewing the contraindication criteria, an integrated assessment is conducted to determine whether the person is suitable for the facility. This assessment focuses on the level of security and care the individual requires.

Forms of security:

The security level of KVJJ The Hague is based on relational security, where the focus is on building and maintaining positive relationships with the residents. The staff, who come exclusively from the Salvation Army rather than from DJI, actively work to provide clarity and perspective to the youths. Close attention is given to the residents' feelings and experiences to ensure appropriate risk assessment and response. Although residents usually stay only for a short time, it is often possible to build a relationship of trust. At KVJJ, the focus is on minimizing rules and instead promoting positive communication about desired behaviors. This approach gives residents the space to feel like children again and to grow within a safe and supportive environment. The diverse team at KVJJ The Hague also contributes to this atmosphere of relational security.

Although relational security forms the foundation, there are also static and procedural security measures in place to ensure a safe environment. There is surveillance via cameras at the entrance and in communal spaces. Windows in the studios have a limited opening range for additional security, while the other windows are free of restrictions. During the day, the residents have limited freedom of movement within the facility and are provided with their own key for their studio. Their freedom of movement both inside and outside KVJJ can be adjusted



depending on the situation, and as a general rule, a room curfew is enforced from 10:00 PM until 7:00 AM. In the kitchen, there is a refrigerator secured with a padlock, and all spaces can be locked when necessary. In addition, a urine test is carried out weekly as part of the inspection policy.

Upon arrival, residents must store personal belongings such as their phones in a locker and are searched, a procedure that is repeated every time they return to the facility. The ban on phones sometimes leads to tensions. The television in the common area may only be turned on after 3:00 PM, and there are restrictions on which programs may be viewed. Within KVJJ The Hague, residents are given three chances; if they repeatedly engage in behavior that crosses established boundaries, they are transferred back to a regular juvenile detention facility.

Through the combination of relational, static, and procedural security, KVJJ The Hague provides both a safe and a people-oriented environment. Here, residents are given the space to work on their futures within a supportive structure.

Activities:

At KVJJ The Hague, residents are given as much control as possible over their personal trajectory and daily schedule. Although they do not plan their own appointments, there is room to learn through trial and error, which enhances their motivation and sense of responsibility. Normalization and the provision of opportunities play a significant role within the facility. This means that each person receives a tailor-made plan focused on continuing the activities they engaged in before their placement. For example, efforts are made to ensure that residents who attend school can continue their education at the same facility. The same applies to work, sports, and healthcare. By placing people close to their own networks, they are able to maintain contact with family and friends.

During the day, residents follow the activities outlined in their personal plans. A unique aspect of KVJJ The Hague is that the residents have the opportunity to cook for themselves. For this, they receive €50 per week, which helps them develop independence and responsibility. On weekends, meals are prepared and eaten together. In the evening, the staff organizes group activities such as playing games, watching television, or using the fitness room. Each resident is entitled to one hour of fresh air per day, and in practice, the group often opts for a supervised football session in the nearby Zuiderpark after dinner.

The team of supervisors is diverse and has a wide range of interests, making it easy for the residents to connect. For instance, one supervisor enjoys cooking and assists the residents with meal preparation, another is skilled with computers and organizes a monthly job application training session, and yet another is athletic and regularly takes the residents to the outdoor fitness area.

Community-integration

Location and architecture:



KVJJ The Hague is located in the Transvaal neighborhood of The Hague. The Hague is the capital of the province of South Holland and, with 565,701 inhabitants¹, the third largest municipality in the Netherlands. The facility is situated in a residential area and is easily accessible by public transportation.

The building was designed with an orthopedagogical approach and has a homely appearance. What makes this KVJJ unique is that each resident here has their own studio with a kitchen and a comfortable sleeping area. The studios are simply furnished with a bed, wardrobe, table with chair, and a kitchen.

The common area features a large graffiti artwork, a foosball table, a punching bag, and a seating area with a television. There is a separate office for the supervisors, where the live camera footage can also be viewed. Additionally, there is a separate room with some loan books, which can also be used for visits. KVJJ The Hague also has a smoking balcony.

Interaction with the community:

KVJJ The Hague maintains active interaction with the neighborhood, which aligns with the principle of continuing the residents' existing daytime activities as much as possible. Residents attend school, work, make use of social services, and participate in leisure activities within the community.

The facility is located in a residential area, and a school was recently opened next door. It remains to be seen how the cooperation will develop. In general, the relationship with the neighborhood is good, although during periods when the KVJJ was fully occupied, there were more questions from local residents. Occasionally, a police car is parked in front of the building, despite requests to avoid this, which raises concerns among neighbors. As a result, KVJJ actively invests in neighborhood engagement. The manager regularly walks through the neighborhood to maintain contact.

¹Den Haag in cijfers. (2024). Demografie. Retrieved January 28th, 2025, from <https://denhaag.incijfers.nl/jive/report?id=bevolking4#:~:text=De%20gemeente%20Den%20Haag%20telde,opzichte%20van%20het%20vorig%20jaar.>

An example of neighborhood involvement was when neighbors were experiencing nuisance. A proposal was made to organize an activity with the residents to improve the relationship. The proposal was initially met with surprise, but was eventually received positively.

KVJJ also builds connections with the neighborhood through everyday actions. For instance, during staff dinners, sandwiches are purchased from local businesses to support them and strengthen ties with the community.

Publicity/ read more

- About KVJJ on the official website of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security:
Small-Scale Judicial Youth Facility. *Future of Judicial Youth* (2023, July 18). Custodial Institutions Agency. Retrieved August 18th, 2023, from <https://www.dji.nl/toekomst-justitiele-jeugd/kleinschalige-voorziening-justitiele-jeugd>
- About KVJJ The Hague on the official website of the Salvation Army Northwest:
Salvation Army. (n.d.). *KVJJ The Hague*. Retrieved January 31st, 2025, from <https://www.legerdesheils.nl/zorg/locatie/kvjj-den-haag>
- Video about KVJJ The Hague shared by the Salvation Army (in dutch):
Salvation Army. (2021, November 5). *KVJJ The Hague: a look inside the walls* [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved January 31st, 2025, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IOWQ8GAB3M>
- Podcast about KVJJ The Hague shared by "Noordwest de podcast" (in dutch):
Noordwest de podcast. (2023, February 13). *A look inside the Small-Scale Judicial Youth Facility in The Hague* [Episode 2]. Spotify. Retrieved January 31st, 2025, from <https://open.spotify.com/episode/5tiBwTK5s1P9CSEV4DezVf?si=7KtDZk-1Q0GPKwkDImXvSg>