



# Investigation into unsafe situations



Centre for Domestic  
Violence, Child Abuse  
and Elder Abuse  
Contact us for advice and  
sharing your concerns



Someone is genuinely concerned about you, your partner or your children's. This may be someone from your social network such as a family member, a friend, a neighbour, or a professional such as your family doctor, the police or a teacher. Their concerns could involve (possible) physical or mental violence, abuse or neglect, and lead them to contact Veilig Thuis Utrecht and to report a concern. A social worker from Veilig Thuis will investigate your living and/or parenting situation. This social worker is aware that this investigation could be considered invasive and will work with you to find ways of limiting the inconvenience where possible.

## **The report about a possible unsafe situation**

Veilig Thuis has the legal obligation to discuss the concerns with you and to investigate and address the concerns. The person who notified Veilig Thuis of your situation will often inform you of this themselves. If they do not, and if they are a professional, Veilig Thuis can usually give you their name. If a member of the public makes a notification and does not want their name disclosed, they may remain anonymous.

## **The investigation**

The investigation is intended to clarify exactly what is going on. The social worker will gather information and talk with you, your partner and children. They will also talk to people close to you, such as your family doctor or someone from your children's school and, with your permission, people from your social network. The social worker needs to understand all the concerns and take your own wishes into concern as well. Based on this information, the social worker can disprove or confirm the (lack of) safety in the situation. In an emergency situation, the social worker will take immediate action, working with you as much as possible.



## Initial conversation

The social worker will make an appointment with you at your home to discuss the reported concerns. During this conversation, they will explain the notifier's concerns.

They will ask many questions to establish a clear picture of the situation. The information you provide is important to properly assess safety in your home. Together, you will discuss what is needed to address the concerns.

## Conversation with children

When children are involved the social worker will always want to talk with them (separately). However, when the children are four or younger it will be sufficient for the case worker to just see them in person. The time and place will be discussed with you before it happens.

## Conversations with others

During the investigation, the social worker will also talk to professionals involved in your life. This can be the family doctor, community police officer, teacher or home care organisation. With your permission, the social worker may also speak to people in your social circle such as family members, friends, neighbours or informal carers. This conversation will focus on what is going well and what their concerns are. You will be informed of the outcome of these conversations.


## Results and conclusion

Once all the information has been gathered, the social worker will consult with colleagues to weigh up the information and come to a conclusion. The conclusion also indicates whether domestic violence, child abuse or elder abuse is taking place and if so, in what form. There are three possibilities:

1. The suspected unsafe situation has been proven to be not true. The social worker will close the case.
2. The suspected unsafe situation has been confirmed. The social worker sets conditions for the living and/or parenting situation and asks you to contribute to make a plan to ensure that the situation becomes and remains safe. The social worker will transfer your case to a social worker or other specialist (see Assign, transfer and monitoring).
3. The suspected unsafe situation is neither confirmed or proven to be not true. If there is reason to do so and concerns remain, the social worker can draw up conditions and give advice on how to tackle the problems.

The social worker will document the result of the investigation in a report. You will receive a copy, to which you may respond. This will conclude the investigation.

The Veilig Thuis social worker informs the notifier about the result of the consultation. What kind of feedback Veilig Thuis can provide depends on your relationship with the notifier (professional, social network). The social worker will also discuss the feedback with you.



## The plan

If the investigation shows that there are concerns about safety, the social worker will set conditions for a safe living and/or parenting situation. Conditions are agreements made with you to ensure that the home situation becomes and remains safe. For example, a condition could be that the children grow up in a safe environment in which any form of violence such as hitting, kicking or shouting is excluded. A safe place is created where quarrels can be discussed calmly with family members and people from your social circle.

You make a plan on how you will meet the conditions. You can ask people close to you or care providers who are already involved to help you to make a plan.

This plan contains clear agreements on how you want to achieve the conditions and your own goals with regard to a safe living and/or parenting situation. The assumption is that you are the best person to come up with suitable solutions to the problem. The social worker can also refer you to your local team or a SAVE-team to make a plan.

If the investigation shows that the situation is unsafe for you, your partner or children, you will start the plan immediately (at the same time as the investigation).

## Assign, transfer and monitoring

After establishing the conditions, Veilig Thuis can assign and transfer your case to a case worker from your hometown local team. After that, Veilig Thuis will check in regularly to assess if your home is still safe and will remain safe. This is called monitoring.

Monitoring generally continues for about twelve to eighteen months. Veilig Thuis consults with the social worker or local team about how and with whom the monitoring takes place.



## Case file

Veilig Thuis Utrecht keeps the case file. If concerns arise again in the future, Veilig Thuis can use the information in the file. Veilig Thuis has a legal obligation to keep the personal data from you or your child's file for at least 20 years. This period is extended until the youngest child reaches the age of 18. Once the retention period has expired, Veilig Thuis will destroy the file. If the suspected unsafe situation and/or abuse has been proven to be not true, you may submit a request for the file to be destroyed.

## Veilig Thuis's mandate

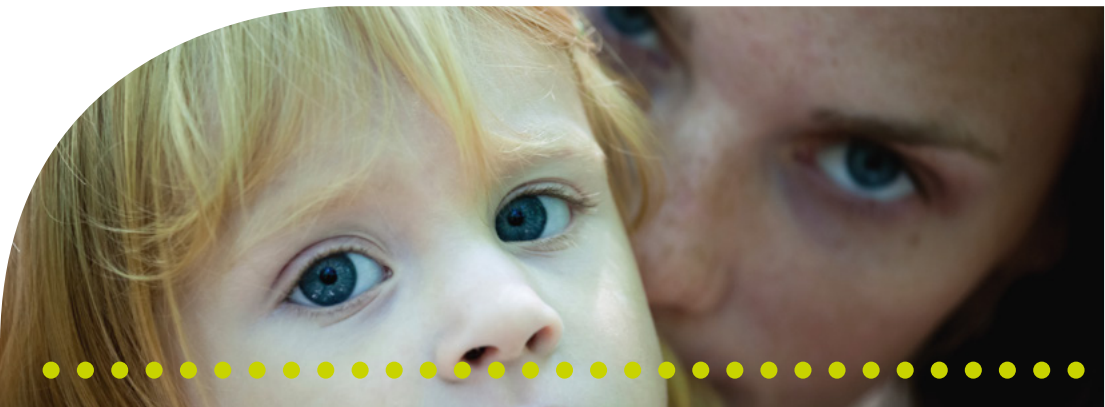
If you are unwilling to talk to the Veilig Thuis social worker, Veilig Thuis has the legal authority to exchange information with professionals involved with you, even without your permission. In that case, Veilig Thuis will start an investigation, which will result in a report. The conclusion of the report will indicate whether domestic violence, child abuse or elder abuse is taking place. In exceptional cases, information may also be shared with your social network.

## Referral Index

The social worker will always make an entry in the Referral Index for young people under 23. This entry contains your child or children's name, date of birth, address and citizen service number (BSN). The Referral Index does not contain any other information about you or your family members. It is a tool to quickly connect the various care providers who will be already assisting you with this.

## Not satisfied?

If you have questions or are dissatisfied with the approach taken by Veilig Thuis or its personnel, you can read about the complaints procedure at [www.veiligthuisutrecht.nl](http://www.veiligthuisutrecht.nl). The Youth Care Advice and Complaints Office (AKJ), confidential youth care counsellors, can help you submit a complaint.



# Veilig Thuis Utrecht

Veilig Thuis is the centre for domestic violence, child abuse and elder abuse and the regional centre for domestic human trafficking. Everyone can call or email Veilig Thuis. You can ask questions and share or report your concerns. Our staff will listen attentively, summarise the situation and offer advice. If you wish, you can also remain anonymous. Professionals can also turn to Veilig Thuis for advice or to share or report concerns.

If you are experiencing or witnessing domestic violence or neglect, there is always something you can do about it. Whether it concerns yourself or someone else; whether you have suspicions or know for sure that there is a problem; sharing your concerns is an important first step, no matter how big or small they may be. Call Veilig Thuis.

Veilig Thuis offers advice and support, accepts notifications, assign the case to a specialist or conducts its own investigation and imposes conditions in unsafe home situations. Veilig Thuis will take immediate action in a crisis situation.

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