SIGNIFICANT APE

MANAGEMENTSUMMARY

CONCISE PROCESEVALUATION FOR FOUR COMPONENTS OF THE WET UITBREIDING SLACHTOFFERRECHTEN



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Summary and conclusions

Background and Rationale

At the request of the WODC, we, Significant APE, conducted a process evaluation of four components of the Wet Uitbreiding Slachtofferrechten (WUS):

a. The written obligation for the police to provide justification when not issuing a copy of the police report (effective from 1 July 2022);
b. The right to be informed about information rights (effective from 1 July 2022);
c. The standardisation of the timing for exercising the right to speak in court (effective from 1 July 2022);
d. The request for translation of documents during the enforcement phase (effective from 1 January 2023).

The main research question of the evaluation was: *To what extent are the four components in the WUS being implemented as intended? What improvements in implementation are possible?*

Methods

For the process evaluation, we applied various research methods step by step. The following activities were part of the evaluation:

a. A document study of the parliamentary file related to the WUS and the documentation regarding the implementation of the four components;
b. Six interviews with different partners involved in the implementation:
    i. Two policy officers at the Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid (2 interviews);
    ii. A legal policy advisor at the CJIB;
    iii. A legal policy advisor at Slachtofferhulp Nederland;
    iv. A national policy officer and a national public prosecutor at the Openbaar Ministerie;
    v. A national programme manager at the Nederlandse Politie;
c. A discussion with several police specialists in sexual offences about the justification obligation;
d. Seven interviews with victim lawyers (4) and judges (3) about the standardisation of the timing of the right to speak during the hearing;
e. A survey among legal service providers at Slachtofferhulp Nederland;
f. A data request from the Bureau Managementinformatie of the Politie (BMI).

The research activities took place between July and November 2025.

Findings

The process evaluation shows that the four components have been well implemented and are being executed. Compared to the other components of the WUS, these four components are relatively minor and required few adjustments. In the paragraphs below, we describe for each component what the objectives are, how the implementation proceeded, and how the execution is currently going. A complete answer to the research questions can be found in Appendix B of the report.

The written obligation for the police to provide justification when not issuing a copy of the police report

The aim of this component is to improve the information position of victims by clearly informing them when and why they do not receive a copy of the police report. Moreover, the component changes the standard procedure from 'not providing a copy, unless…' to 'providing a copy, unless…'. As a result, victims should receive a copy more often than before the component was introduced. The component mainly impacts police teams dealing with sexual offences, human trafficking, and domestic violence cases. In these cases, it is common that no copy of the report is provided.

The implementation by the police largely went according to plan. Key actions included conducting a quick scan to identify operational consequences, adjusting the confirmation of report form (FOBEVAAN), changing instructions, and broad internal communication. The form is user-friendly and fits practice, so completing it takes little time. The system supports the process, although an automatic link that could simplify the work is missing. Currently, investigating officers must actively open the form themselves after deciding not to provide a copy.

There are no major bottlenecks, but there are some points of attention. Structural monitoring is lacking, making it difficult to determine compliance. In addition, it is noted that attention to the component has decreased and there is a need for more clarity regarding decision criteria. The intended change in mindset among investigating officers—from 'not providing, unless' to 'providing, unless'—has, according to our interviewees, not yet been fully achieved.

Although the justification obligation has not been structurally monitored since its introduction, it was possible to request registration data from the police. Based on these data, it can be stated that, on average, a FOBEVAAN was completed in 37% of reports between 1 January 2022 and 1 October 2025. Looking at the annual numbers, the number of completed FOBEVAANs has slightly decreased since 2024. However, this does not mean that in cases where no FOBEVAAN was completed, the report was actually provided. It therefore cannot be stated with certainty that reports are now provided more often, or that the intended change in mindset among investigating officers has been achieved. However, the percentage change in the total number of completed FOBEVAANs compared to the total number of reports is relatively small, raising the question whether the intended effect of the written justification obligation has been achieved in practice. This underlines the importance of structural monitoring and continued encouragement of the intended mindset among investigating officers.

The right to be informed about information rights

The extension of information rights is a relatively minor change, but an important one. By including additional information rights in the statement of rights, victims are better informed about their rights and can actually make use of them. This contributes to a stronger information position and thus further strengthens the legal position of victims, as intended by the WUS. To implement the components, the Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid had to make a few adjustments to the document 'Verklaring van Rechten voor Slachtoffers van Strafbare Feiten'.[1] This has been accomplished.

The standardisation of the timing for exercising the right to speak in court

This component is intended to provide victims with clarity about the moment during the hearing at which the right to speak can be exercised. Implementation required that courts were informed about the fixed moment for the right to speak so that they could apply this during hearings. In addition, victim coordinators

[1] This can be translated to: Statement of Rights for Victims of Criminal Offences.

at the Openbaar Ministerie (hereafter OM) and staff at Slachtofferhulp Nederland (hereafter SHN) needed to be informed so that they could properly inform victims. For this purpose, the organisations adjusted their work instructions.

The involved partners are executing the component well. The right to speak always takes place before the public prosecutor's closing statement. However, courts and judges handle the exact timing differently: either after discussing the personal circumstances or between the factual hearing and the discussion of personal circumstances. As a result, victims do not always know exactly when the right to speak will take place before the hearing. Some sources of information (such as the OM website) do provide a fixed moment.

The request for translation of documents during the enforcement phase

This component is intended to strengthen the information position of victims, including during the enforcement phase and for victims who do not speak Dutch. The two organisations that send documents during the enforcement phase (CJIB and the OM) were able to use their existing processes for translating other documents for the translation of documents in the enforcement phase. For professionals involved in implementation, little changed. However, the organisations did have to establish an objection procedure for cases where the CJIB or the OM refuses to translate a document and a victim objects to this. In practice, refusals to translate are very rare. Moreover, during the enforcement phase, it is often already clear that the victim speaks another language, and the documents are sent in that language from the outset.

Conclusions

In the paragraphs below, we describe the conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation. For two of the four components, we have a recommendation; for the other two, we do not.

The written obligation for the police to provide justification when not issuing a copy of the police report

The written justification obligation contributes to transparent and careful decision-making and strengthens the position of victims, as intended by the WUS. The implementation by the police largely went according to plan and the necessary conditions are in place, but structural monitoring is lacking and attention to the component appears to have decreased. Registration data show that, on average, a FOBEVAAN was completed in 37% of reports, with a slight decline since 2024. This does not provide a complete picture of compliance, but suggests that the intended mindset shift to 'provide, unless' has not yet been fully achieved. Points of attention are establishing monitoring, improving system integration, and clarifying decision criteria. These improvements can help further strengthen the contribution of the justification obligation to a uniform and transparent protection of victims' rights.

We recommend monitoring whether the justification obligation leads to more frequent provision of the police report copy. In addition, we advise bringing the component to the attention of the relevant teams once again. Finally, implementing an automatic system link and clarifying the decision criteria can further strengthen the application of the justification obligation.

The right to be informed about information rights

The right to be informed about information rights has been achieved through the amendment of the statement of rights. This change was implemented smoothly, the component has been put into effect, and it does not present any further issues. We have no recommendations for this component.

The standardisation of the timing for exercising the right to speak in court

We conclude that the implementation and execution of the standardisation of the timing for exercising the right to speak have proceeded well and continue to do so. The various involved organisations have taken the necessary steps, and those involved are generally aware of when the right to speak should take place. Moreover, interviewees indicate that even before the introduction of the component, the right to speak almost always occurred at this point. The right to speak takes place before the public prosecutor's closing statement, as stipulated in the legislative amendment. However, due to differences between judges and courts regarding the exact timing, it is still not always clear to victims when exactly they may speak prior to the hearing. The website of the OM, however, does provide a fixed moment in its information about a hearing, but this may not always be accurate in practice.

We recommend updating the information on the OM's website to make it clear to victims that the exact timing of the right to speak may vary and that it does not always take place after the discussion of personal circumstances.

The request for translation of documents during the enforcement phase

The implementation and execution of the right to translation of documents during the enforcement phase went relatively smoothly. Because the OM and CJIB were already translating documents, the same work processes could be used. An objection procedure has also been established, although refusals to translate are very rare in practice. The transfer of tasks between the OM and CJIB (and any delays in this process) has had very limited impact on the implementation of the legislative amendment. We have no recommendations for this component.