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THE DELIVERY OF WELFARE TO UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE IN THE NETHERLANDS

Report at the Request of the British Department of Education and Employment

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September 2000
IN BRIEF

Since the beginning of the 1990s, after having restructured the system of benefits, the administration of social security has been among the top subjects on the agenda of the Dutch social policy debate.

In recent years the traditional role of social partners in the execution of unemployment insurance has been diminished. There have been several major, quite complicated organisational changes in the field. The main lines are:

- The administration of insurance benefits (premiums, assessments, payments) will be centralised in a fully public service, while the labour market re-integration of beneficiaries will be fully privatised. Private companies (privatised parts of labour offices, private job centres, new companies established for the occasion) will sell ‘integration of clients’ to the benefit administrators.
- On the policy and client level integration and benefits, i.e. ‘work and income’, will be combined: a national Council for Work and Income will be installed for combined policy development, and clients’ access to the public benefit system and the private re-integration system will be combined in newly established regional ‘one-stop’ Centres for Work and Income (CWI’s).

Unemployment assistance is traditionally administered by municipal social services. This will remain in future, be it that social services have to co-operate with CWI’s (intake of new clients through the CWI’s), and ‘integration of clients’ is (partly) bought from private companies.

The traditional public regional labour offices will be split up; one part (intake, advise, administration of unemployed people) will form the core of the public CWI’s, the other part (job brokerage, re-integration) will be privatised and will have to compete with other private ‘integration companies’.

THE REPORT

Since the Dutch social security system and its administration differs strongly form the UK, it was rather hard to answer the questions posed by the Department directly and separately. Therefore, the information requested is presented in a more suitable format. At the end the questions will be answered briefly, with reference to the text. The structure of the report is:

Section 1
A brief description of the Dutch unemployment assistance and unemployment insurance schemes.

Section 2
A brief history of the reform of the benefit delivery system, and of the role of the regional labour offices (Public Employment Services).

Section 3
Conclusions and answers to questions.
Section 1
UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Citizens with no or insufficient income qualify for social assistance ABW (Algemene Bijstandswet). This benefit is means-tested, beneficiaries have to look actively for jobs (exempted are only single parents with at least one child under 5 years of age).

Workers who become unemployed qualify for unemployment insurance WW (Werkloosheidswet). Level and duration of the benefit depend strongly on previous work record. Beneficiaries have the obligation to look for a job actively.

Table 1 provides detailed information on both benefits, with respect to: coverage, access, level, duration, obligations and sanctions.

In recent years especially unemployment insurance has changed. Most important is that in the 1980s and 1990s the work-relatedness of eligibility and entitlement criteria has increased significantly. Mainly through linking them (more strongly) to a person’s work record.

Regarding benefit eligibility the 1987 reform of the WW scheme implied a higher threshold: from 130 days work record in the year previous to unemployment, to 26 weeks. The prolonged benefit after the half year of standard benefit became dependent on a further requirement of having worked at least 3 years in the previous 5 years. After expiration of the prolonged benefit a follow-up benefit was paid for a period depending on age. In 1995 eligibility criteria for the standard benefit were tightened again. Now one has to have been working 26 weeks in the previous 39 in stead of 52 weeks, and 4 years in stead of 3 years in the last 5 year period. Most significant is, however, that both conditions are now combined, which implies that nowadays it is rather difficult to be entitled to even the standard benefit. It is estimated that only about 45% to 50% of the present workers would meet the combination of criteria. Those who only meet the criterion of 26 weeks out of 39 are entitled only to short-term benefit of 70% of the minimum wage. Those unemployed who do not meet any of the criteria have to rely on means-tested social assistance.

Regarding benefit level it is worth mentioning that traditionally the WW insurance benefit is fully wage related, but in 1987, however, benefits for long-term unemployed, who expired their rights to the standard and prolonged benefit, were converted into flat rate payments of 70% of the minimum wage. In 1995 the flat rate was introduced further for those who expired their standard benefit only.

Regarding duration, the maximum period of WW-benefit has extended from 2,5 year (for those under 60 years of age), to maximally 7,5 years. However, the work history requirements for entitlement to prolonged or follow-up benefit, i.e. the benefits following after standard benefit has expired, have been tightened strongly. So, for those unemployed with extended work records duration has increased, for those with smaller work records it has become more difficult to get (wage related) benefit for more than half a year.

On average being unemployed now means lower benefits, for shorter periods.

In the case of social assistance little has changed in recent years.
TABLE 1 Details of Dutch unemployment assistance and unemployment insurance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of scheme</th>
<th>Unemployment Assistance</th>
<th>Unemployment Insurance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algemene Bijstandswet (Abw)</td>
<td>Werkloosheidswet (WW)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(General Social Assistance Act)</td>
<td>(Unemployment Benefits Act)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage</td>
<td>Legal residents of The Netherlands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wage earners with an employee-employer relationship; civil servants not included</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Access

Insufficient means of subsistence (household is claim unit)

School leavers under 23 years of age are not entitled to benefit (are offered subsidised job)

**General:**
- involuntarily unemployed
- for at least 5 hours a week, or at least half of normal working hours
- with loss of wage
- available for the labour market

**Work history:**
- Short-term (flat-rate) benefit: 26 weeks in past 39 weeks
- Standard benefit (longer-term, wage related) + Follow-up benefit (flat-rate): 26 weeks in past 39 weeks AND 4 years (with at least 52 working days per year) in past 5 years

Years cared for children below 6 count fully under the 4-out-of-5 rule, years cared for children between 6 and 12 count for half

B. Level

Means-tested: up to the level of the social minimum (100% of minimum wage for couples, 70% of min. wage for single parents, 50% of min. wage for singles: single parents and singles are entitled to a 20% supplement if they can prove not to co-habitate)

- standard: 70% of previous wage if access to longer-term benefit (see A.)
- follow-up: 70% of minimum wage after expiration of wage related benefit
- short-term: 70% of minimum wage

Maximum benefit of nlg 306,- per day

If the insurance benefit, together with any other household means, is below the social minimum a supplement is granted under the Supplementary Benefits Act (TW)

C. Duration

As long as household means are below social minimum

- standard: 0,5 to 5 years: 0,5 year per 5 years work history
- follow-up: 2 years (3,5 for those of 57,5 years of age upon becoming unemployed)
- short-term: 0,5 year

D. Obligations

- registration as jobseeker at the labour office
- co-operation in ‘employability’ assessment and improvement (training and schooling)
- actively trying to find work
- to refrain from activities that hinder labour market participation

‘Suitability of work’ is defined in detail and depends on: duration of unemployment; type and level of job; wage; travel distance; and a person’s unemployment risk (age, work experience, educational level).
- less than 0,5 year unemployed: job at level of highest education, of previous skill, of previous wage: max. 2 hours travel distance
- more than 0,5 year unemployed: decrease of 1 level in education (3 levels) (and skills and wage) for every half year of unemployment: after 1,5 year all work is suitable: max. 3 hours travel distance
- temporary jobs have to be accepted at all times
- school leavers (secondary and tertiary): all work is suitable irrespective of duration of unemployment
- school leavers under 23 years of age get a subsidised job after one year
- during participation in a training or schooling program offered jobs can be refused

Exempted from work-obligations are:
1. those who cannot work for medical or social reasons (at the discretion of the city council)
2. single parents with at least one child under the
| **E. Sanctions** | If not satisfying the obligations the municipal social service is obliged to sanction by cutting benefits temporarily, according to the following national guidelines (% cut on benefit, for one month, two month after repetition):
- not registering as jobseeker at the labour office: 5%
- not accepting ‘suitable work’: 100%
- no co-operation in ‘employability’ assessment and improvement (training and schooling): 20%
- not actively trying to find work: 10%
- not refraining from activities that hinder labour market participation: 20%
Whether or not an unemployed is violating obligations is partly objectively measurable (e.g. registration at labour office), partly subject to discretion (e.g. actively trying to find work) (Social services have become more stringent on sanctioning)

If people are unemployed due to their own fault, no benefit is awarded.
If beneficiaries do not satisfy the obligations the administration is obliged to sanction by cutting benefits temporarily, according to the following national guidelines (% cut on benefit, for one month, two month after repetition):
- not registering as jobseeker at the labour office: 5%
- not accepting ‘suitable work’ or cupably unemployed: 100%
- no co-operation in ‘employability’ assessment and improvement (training and schooling): 20%
- not actively trying to find work: 10%
- not refraining from activities that hinder labour market participation: 20%
Whether or not an unemployed is violating obligations is partly objectively measurable (e.g. registration at labour office), partly subject to discretion (e.g. actively trying to find work)

| **F. Work-related rights** | One-off bonus of max. nlg 2100,- for those finding work or completing a training or schooling programme. (At the discretion of the city council)

Earnings-disregard of part-time wage to a maximum of nlg 3240 a year, for a maximum of 1 year. (At the discretion of the city council)

Earnings dis-regard:
- 100% disregard of earnings from work for more than 5 hours a week: the unemployment benefit is withdrawn for the equivalent numbers of hours worked
- 70% disregard of earnings from work less than 5 hours a week, with no withdrawn of benefit |
Section 2
DELIVERY OF BENEFITS and RE-INTEGRATION

Traditionally the delivery of unemployment assistance and unemployment insurance are separated. Assistance is administered by the municipal social services, insurance benefits by semi-public social security agencies (Uitvoeringsinstelling: Uvi: established in 1995). Re-integration (training, advice, job-brokerage etc.) is delivered by semi-public regional labour offices. However, for social assistance beneficiaries there are a number of special re-integration schemes, that are administered by the municipal social services.

This present state of affairs is the result of previous restructuring, and it will be changed again in the very near future.

In this section we will briefly describe the institutional developments with regard to municipal social services, labour offices and social security agencies. It will be made clear how all three are more closely interconnected in the near future, and how there will be a new division of public and private tasks.

2.1 Municipal social services (unemployment assistance, special re-integration schemes)

Municipal social services administer social assistance, special assistance (‘bijzondere bijstand’)and special re-integration schemes for their clients. The latter include the Youth Work Guarantee Scheme (JWG: young school-leavers are not entitled to benefit, they have to be offered a (non-profit-sector) job instead) and the so-called Melkert-jobs (subsidised temporary jobs in the non-profit-sector). Special assistance are ‘Social Fund’-like one-off payments or loans for people with extra-ordinary costs (e.g. high diet costs, a new pair of glasses).

New clients come to the local social service, have an intake interview, are given information and a claim form, and return a few days later with the filled out form. Benefits are calculated and paid by the social service from the day of intake. Benefit decisions are taken in teams of social workers. Registered clients have to deliver a review form every month in person. No further benefit is paid if the form does not return. The review checks on changes in circumstances and on job search behaviour. After intake a client’s ‘distance to the labour market’ is measured. Depending on this distant certain types of re-integration schemes are possible. For each client an individual re-integration plan is defined. There are several possibilities: entering one of the specialised schemes for social assistance beneficiaries, using the various services of the regional labour office (including training and schooling), entering any of a number of re-integration schemes in the profit-sector, engage in certain types of voluntary work.

Since the introduction of the assistance scheme in 1965 there were no major changes in the way it is delivered.

2.2 Regional labour offices (re-integration)

Job brokerage and job search guidance is traditionally done by public labour offices, which also act as the main gate keeper for training and schooling. Next to this, the labour offices register unemployed people nationally. Registration at a labour office is a necessary requirement for entitlement to any unemployment benefit or re-integration scheme. According to central government in the late 1980s labour offices were mostly creaming off the ‘best’ unemployed and failed in helping long-term unemployed. Since the beginning of the 1990s it tried to improve effectiveness. Social partners were given a say and responsibility in the labour offices’ boards in 1991, based on the idea that this would commit them more strongly to a just and effective matching of demand and supply. The results of this were disappointing, leading to forcing labour offices in 1996 to pay more attention to problematic

1 Semi-public: state controlled and largely state financed, non-profit organisations, with representatives from social partners in their governing boards; typical of Dutch corporatism.
categories of unemployed. From then on they are expected as well to co-operate with other players in the rather complex field. The main other players are municipal social services, responsible for the re-integration and activation of social assistance clients (most of whom are long-term unemployed). And social security agencies (uvi’s), which used only to collect social insurance contributions and pay benefits, but were assigned a responsibility for the activation and re-integration of their clients in the early 1990s. These three actors are expected to co-operate in the newly developed ‘one-stop’ Centres for Work and Income (CWI’s). The labour offices will be split up in a public part, which will form the core of the CWI’s, and a private part, which will act as a for-profit ‘re-integration company’. The CWI’s will assess unemployed people’s entitlement to benefits (assistance or insurance), as well as their ‘distance to the labour market’, which latter leads to individualised re-integration plans. The implementation of such plans is ‘bought’ from the private ‘re-integration companies’. The special re-integration schemes for social assistance clients will remain at the municipal social services.

2.3 Social security agencies (unemployment insurance, re-integration)

Changes in the delivery of social insurance schemes during the nineties mainly concern the worker’s insurances\(^2\), and were induced by the large number of disability claimants and the new emphasis on the activation of unemployed people. In this section we will describe and comment the relevant developments in the 1990s as well as the changes that government recently prepared. However, we start with a short outline of the social security organisation of the worker’s insurances since 1952. In that way the changes in the nineties can be understood better, as the 1952-structure did hold until the nineties.

**History**

Since 1952 industrial insurance boards (bedrijfsverenigingen) administered the worker’s insurances WW, WAO and ZW. Representatives of employers and employees from the various branches of industry governed the boards for their branche. They were allowed to administer the execution of the insurances by themselves or to delegate it to the Common Administration Office (Gemeenschappelijk Administratiekantoor, GAK). The boards were united in the Federation of Insurance Boards (Federatie van Bedrijfsverenigingen, FBV). The FBV was also governed by employers and employees. One of the Federation’s main activities was to co-ordinate the execution of the worker’s insurances. The Social Insurance Council (Sociale Verzekeringsraad, Svr) supervised the activities of the Federation and the boards. The council was governed by employers, employees and independent members. However, the first two groups had the majority. On top of it all was the Minister of Social affairs and Employment, who, by the way, most seldom used his power to give directives to the social security administration.

In 1993 a research commission of the parliament (headed by Buurmeijer) concluded that the way the industrial insurance boards, that is the employers and employees, administered the workers disability-insurance (WAO), had contributed to a much too large number of beneficiaries. Furthermore, the commission concluded that the supervision of the Svr had failed. Partly, as it was said, because in the hierarchy of the institutions the employers and employees supervised and controlled themselves.

In the debate on the commission’s findings and recommendations the parliament agreed to realise:

- an independent structure of supervision;
- a delivery of the worker’s insurances by region instead of by branches of industry;
- regional co-operation between benefit and employment services, including municipal social services and regional labour offices (the idea of a ‘one-stop’ front-office).

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\(^2\) These include unemployment insurance WW, disability insurance (WAO), sickness benefit (ZW). The latter is fully privatised recently, i.e. replaced by the legal duty for employers to pay at least 70% of the wage of sick employees (most employers have re-insured this risk on the private insurance market). The so-called ‘people’s insurance’, i.e. national insurances for old age pensions, survivors pension and child benefit, are administered separately by the semi-public Social Insurance Board (SVB).
Rather soon after the debate the wishes of parliament were translated in new legislation. In 1995 parliament accepted a new act on the Organisation of Social Insurances (Organisatie Sociale Verzekeringen OSV 1995). Two years later this act was replaced by the OSV 1997. At present the OSV 2001 is in preparation. This act ought to regulate and structure the execution of the worker’s insurances for the next century. It should also complete the privatisation of the execution of the worker’s insurances. However, recently government has introduced surprisingly new views. Here the main characteristics of the three acts will be discussed, as well as the new views.

**OSV 1995**

In the OSV 1995 the Svr is transformed into the Social Security Supervisory Board (College toezicht sociale verzekeringen, Ctsv). The Ctsv-management exists of three independent members. Their main task is to supervise the legitimacy and efficacy of the social security administration and to correct the administration if necessary. Other tasks fulfilled by the former Svr, such as co-ordination, regulation and advise were transferred to the new but temporary institute of co-ordination and tuning (Tijdelijk instituut voor coördinatie en afstemming, Tica). The Tica-management is formed by an equal number of employers and employees and an independent chairman, who is appointed by the government. In fact, Tica replaces the Federation of Industrial Boards FBV.

The industrial boards, still under control of employers and employees, are from now on forbidden to administer the workers insurances by themselves. The boards are separated from their administrations, which are reorganised into so called ‘social security agencies’ (uitvoeringsinstellingen, uvi’s). The boards remain responsible for the execution of the insurances. However, personal ties between the management of the boards and the uvi’s are not allowed. Furthermore, the boards are obliged to cooperate with the labour offices. The chairman of Tica has to simulate a regional execution of the insurances and the job services.

Historically, the social insurance boards and their administrations had public and private tasks. The first concerned the worker’s insurances, the latter concerned, for example, occupational supplementary benefits and pension schemes. However, the new social security agencies are not allowed to execute private tasks. Thus, the insurance boards would lose their private activities, as they did not have an administration body at their disposal. As a reaction holdings were constructed and divided in two main divisions A and B. The A-division contains the uvi’s and executes the public duties. The B-division administers the insurance board’s private tasks, which tasks are extended, for example, with private insurances, information- and employment-finding services. The co-operation between the A- and B-division is strictly regulated by government. An absolute separation between the (personal) data and the financial means of the private and public division is one of the main conditions. In this way it must be secured that public money cannot be used for private purposes.

The uvi’s experience the separation as an obstacle for offering full service packages and as a cause of more administration costs and inefficiency. Besides the tendency to construct holdings, there is a trend towards mergers of holdings and alliances of holdings with private (insurance) companies. Nowadays there are only five holdings, each holding contains one social security agency or uvi.

**OSV 1997**

Two years later, in the OSV 1997, the industrial boards were abolished. This means an important next step of diminishing the influence social partners have in social security. The public tasks of the insurance boards are taken over by the National Institute for Social Insurance (Lisv, the follow up of Tica). The Lisv-management is formed by employers, employees, independent members and an independent chairman. The Lisv is assigned the task of administering workers insurances schemes through contracts with the social security agencies, the uvi’s. So called sector-councils (councils with employers and employees from a branche of industry) advise the Lisv on that subject and look after the interests of the branches of industries which they represent.
The Lisv is charged with the co-ordination of the administrative tasks. This co-ordination is notably important as far as the medico-ergonomic assessment of incapacity for work is concerned. Among other things, the Lisv is also responsible for the improvement of the co-operation between the agencies and other actors in the field, such as social services in the municipalities and the job centres.

For such co-operation Centres for Work and Income (Centra voor Werk en Inkomen, CWI) are established. In 1999 about fifty Centres are operational as first experiments. In the nearby future more than 200 Centres must come into function throughout the country (in recent views of government this is brought back to about only 60).

OSV 2001

On the road to the next Organisation act, the OSV 2001, the Dutch government intended to privatise the uvi’s completely. It aims at lowering the administration costs and at more competition between the agencies, for example in the field of re-integration. However, the decisions about disability and unemployment claims will remain in the public domain. Especially those decisions that contain strong discretion, such as culpable unemployment, imposing fines and tracking fraud. These tasks will be executed on a regional level (where private uvi’s must co-operate with public administrations). Thus, public tasks will be removed from the A-division in the holdings and a separation between the public and private division will not be necessary anymore. In this way the uvi’s would become private social security agents which only execute those public tasks that contain no discretion. For example, paying out benefits, verifying daily wages, loss of working hours and the obligation of insurance. Important is that this new type of uvi’s would be responsible for the re-integration of disabled and unemployed persons. They could do that by themselves or contract out to private organisations. As an incentive the government will offer the uvi’s a bonus for a successful reintegration.

It also will be made less difficult for new uvi’s to enter the market by lowering the existing thresholds. However, the newcomers need permission of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Furthermore, large companies (100 employees or more) or branches of industries will be allowed to contract an agency to administer the workers insurances for their employees.

Government expects that these changes will stimulate the competition between agencies and increase the re-integration of unemployed and disabled persons. However, these changes will not take place before the year 2002.

The recent ideas of government

Government issued a new plan in January 2000, with says that the 5 remaining uvi’s will be centralised into one public, national Administrative Body for Workers Insurances (Uitvoeringsorgaan Werknemersverzekeringen UWV). Social partners are completely left out at this level of practice. This also counts now for the CWI’s. However, social partners object strongly to the latter.

In the plan government explains that in the earlier ideas for the OSV 2001 complex (bureaucratic and competency) relations between public and private agencies and tasks would arise, and that still there would be the problem of using public money and information for private purposes by the uvi’s. Centralising the uvi’s in one public body is the ultimate solution for this problem.

Re-integration will be realised through the CWI’s, who will buy ‘integration services’ from private companies.

The future structure of the administration of Dutch unemployment insurance and re-integration will, according to the latest plans, be as follows.

Council for Work and Income RWI
The Council for Work and Income (Raad voor Werk en Inkomen RWI) analyses developments in the field of social security, labour market and re-integration, and advises the Ministry of Social Affairs on adequate policies each year. It develops criteria for the distribution of re-integration budgets, assesses new re-integration projects, and pays out re-integration subsidies. The Council will be composed of representatives of social partners and municipalities, and will have an independent chair.

**Administrative Body for Workers Insurances UWV**
The Administrative Body for Workers Insurances (Uitvoeringsorgaan Werknemersverzekeringen UWV) executes the workers insurances. It collects premiums, assesses claims and pays out benefits. It is responsible also for the re-integration of unemployed people. On demand of social partners UWV is allowed to do the administration of supplemental, occupational schemes. The UWV is a public body, with a management team and a governing board of independent experts.

**Municipalities**
Municipal social services administer social assistance, and the re-integration of their clients.

**National Institute for Work and Income LIWI**
The National Institute for Work and Income (Nationaal Instituut voor Werk en Inkomen LIWI) governs and controls the regional Centres for Work and Income (CWI’s). It advises the Ministry of Social Affairs on the administrative aspects of new policies. Like the UWV the LIWI is a public body, with a management team and a governing board of independent experts.

**Centers of Work and Income (CWI)**
The Centres of Work and Income (Centra voor Werk en Inkomen CWI) will be the first entry to the benefit and re-integration systems and schemes for all unemployed workers, social assistance claimants and other unemployed people. The CWI assesses claims for benefit and measures ‘distance to the labour market’. Clients with a very short distance (i.e. who have no particular deficiencies, and have good chances on the labour market), will be ‘re-integrated’ by the CWI. For all others individual re-integration plans will be set up, and clients will be ‘handed over’ to the UWV (in case of unemployed entitled to unemployment insurance) or the municipal social service (those entitled to unemployment assistance) for payment of benefit and implementation of the re-integration plan. The latter will for the largest part be ‘bought’ by UWV and social services from private re-integration companies.

It will be promoted that social services, UWV, and private companies will have personnel available in the CWI office. The CWI takes over certain functions of the regional labour offices, mainly those regarding advice and support for unemployed people. The actual brokerage activities of the labour offices will be privatised.

**Regional Platforms**
The establishment of Regional Platforms will be promoted, in which municipalities, re-integration companies, the CWI, the UWV and social partners can meet and discuss relevant topics, co-ordinate activities and joined projects, increase accessibility of job markets etc.

**Policing**
The Social Security Supervisory Board (College toezicht sociale verzekeringen, Ctsv) will police the adequacy and effectiveness of the delivery of insurance schemes by LIWI, CWI’s and UWV. Social assistance is policed by the Ministry of Social affairs. The latest proposal of government is to abolish Ctsv and to transfer its task to the Ministry.
CONCLUSIONS AND ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS POSED

Conclusions

1. The delivery of Dutch unemployment benefits has become more centralised. The role of social partners is diminished.

2. At the administrative level the system of benefits is made fully public, the system of re-integration fully private.

3. The systems of benefits and re-integration services are integrated at the policy and client level.

4. At the client level ‘one-stop’ Centres for Work and Income are established.

5. At the policy level a Council for Work and Income will be installed.

6. The municipal social service will remain to have a central task in the administration of social assistance benefits and the re-integration of its clients. It will be connected to the CWI’s, who will do the intake of clients, and set up individual re-integration plans.

7. The re-integration of unemployed people is one of the booming businesses in the Netherlands. The LIWI sells re-integration contracts through public auctions.

Questions

1. How is welfare delivered?
Separate systems for unemployment insurance and unemployment assistance: see above

2. How do individuals access the system and how do stay on?
Access at present through municipal social services in case of unemployment assistance, through social security agencies (uvi's) in case of unemployment insurance. In future, all through Centres for Work and Income.
For staying on: see table 1 on duration, obligations and sanctions.

3. What is the role of the Public Employment Service in the delivery of benefit?
Regional labour offices have no role in the delivery of benefits, except that unemployed people have to register at one of the offices.
Their main task is to re-integrate unemployed people. Labour offices will be split up in a public part (into CWI), and a private part: see above.

4. Which other public organisations are involved?
Municipal social services, social security agencies (uvi’s), CWI: see above.

5. To what extent do ‘one-stop-shops’ exist for welfare claimants?
The CWI’s will function as one-stop-shops for all unemployed people.

6. Does the PES have a benefit policing role?
No, but with respect to benefit entitlement registration as unemployed at the regional labour office is required.

7. What is the role of private or voluntary organisations in the delivery of benefits?
None with regard to benefits. The implementation of re-integration plans set up by CWI’s is done by private re-integration companies.
8. Are there any studies which give an indication as to the performance of PES compared with other organisations?
There exist reports that are critical on the role of regional labour offices and the former industrial boards.

9. How are those private or voluntary organisations dealt with if they do not perform adequately?
Private re-integration companies will get no contracts any more if they perform badly. Government hopes that the quality and effectiveness of re-integration is guaranteed by market forces.

10. Potential for learning?
For UK-experts the Netherlands is a nice case for learning about:
- the role of social partners and municipalities in social security and its delivery
- the privatisation and marketisation of re-integration
- one-stop agencies for the delivery of benefits and services