

“Multicultural Pink” investigation tips

This folder is a publication by the National Expertise Centre for Diversity (LECD) in the Netherlands in collaboration with the National Police Gay Network and its purpose is:

To improve the know-how regarding to gay-related crimes by giving practical tips on investigation methods.

Introduction

When a gay-related crime is committed, a solution must be found through investigation.

It is important to realize that 'coming out of the closet' is still difficult for many people. This means that many men and women keep their homo- or bisexuality secret and practise it anonymously. That demands an investigation team that exercises the appropriate sensitivity and empathy while carrying out its investigations.

When witnesses are being sought they are often put in a vulnerable situation, and this also applies to victims. People often prefer, therefore, to make declarations anonymously. It is important always to respect people's wishes in this regard; it is still possible, thereafter, to generate information that can contribute to the burden of proof or the direction of the investigation.

Obvious things can be missed during an investigation, or simply overlooked, because of unfamiliarity with the gay/lesbian environment. This folder aims to offer a helping hand to fill in those 'blind spots'. Account should be taken here of regionally-specific situations that might not be discussed. However, an attempt will be made to indicate, through references, how the investigation team can strengthen its information position.

What is meant by 'gay-related'?

A criminal act or an incident committed because of the sexual orientation of a citizen and/or where the crime is committed at a place, or in surroundings, where gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (GLBT) people might have witnessed the crime, and who, therefore, could provide valuable information about it.

What crimes?

These could be crimes of violence (physical harm, serious or otherwise, robberies with threats or violence, extortion, murder and manslaughter) and offences such as insulting behavior and discrimination.

Why?

Although any crime committed has its own motivation, we must be careful to find out whether, in gay-related crimes, it was purely because of the sexual orientation of the victim that the crime was committed. The introduction describes which points for attention might apply in general. The practical tips give an overview of possibilities for conducting an investigation.

Police practical tips

- The regional police force has a gay network. If this is the case, contact them. The gay police network can provide general or region-specific information and referrals. The National Expertise Centre for Diversity can contribute expert advice through the senior policy officer for homosexuality. Invite these experts to meetings of the investigating team/inspectors.
- In the case of an investigation team, have a member of the gay network – preferably structural – join the investigating team.
- The Intelligence can “drop by” informants in the gay scene. From a proactive point of view, it is desirable to have a couple of gay informants.
- Check whether there are client panels in district teams, in which gays are represented.

- What district teams or district officers have built up good structural contacts with gay interest groups, or gay hotel/catering, gay saunas and other locations where gay people meet? Inform these officers structurally about the progress of the case and let them know what information is important. Have them get in touch with their contacts immediately. Get any piece of information back to an info-contact investigator.
- Provide an overview of gay meeting places in the region - men contact each other anonymously there. Ask the LECD or the regional gay network for the folder: “Blue at the pink meeting place”.
- Find out about (gay) escort agencies in the region. Make a list of where business boys hang around on the street or on the internet.
- Consult the Police Knowledge Network about publications on homosexuality.
- Contact regional/local gay interest organisations.
- Contact the gay media.
- Make flyers and distribute them in gay hotel/catering locations or other relevant places.
- Remember that there are also many homosexuals who are not on the 'scene', so act towards the neutral media for information, too. These gays might well have picked up information from friends and might make statements to the police.

- Think about gay “objectors” in an investigation team.
- Consider chat sites. (Ask for advice from members of the gay network/LECD on how best to act on these sites. The Police in the UK also make frequent use of the possibility of establishing contacts via chat sites and thus collect a lot of extra information.)
- Create a dating profile on gay chat sites; the busiest ones in Holland are:
 - Gaydar.nl;
 - Gayromeo.nl;
 - Chatboy.nl;
 - Homo.nl.

Make sure that a non-sexually explicit, but attractive, photo is placed on this profile as a sort of “eye catcher”. This profile must be recognizable as being from the police. Contact the owner of the site and explain that your use of it is part of an ongoing investigation. These sites all have regional or local log-in possibilities. The people that visit these sites usually use a nickname, so the information that is generated is anonymous. It might be possible to bring in police Intelligence to contact the person concerned live, using valuable information through the site. Of course, only anonymous information reaching an Intelligence investigator directly can be processed (Think about the rules of the law).

- Search the Internet and Google for information.
- Contact “Crime stoppers”.
- Create a special e-mail address (not referring to the police; after all, you have to think of anonymity – other computer users could also see where someone has sent an e-mail to) for the investigation. This will help to ensure that people can make reports more or less anonymously.
- Contact the provider to find out the identity of people who are clearly aware of the circumstances in which a crime was committed or who appear to know the victim.
- Involve the anti-discrimination contact officer of the police force or the ethnics department in the investigation.
- Be aware that if the crime concerns a victim from abroad, it might be a vendetta. In that case, get information from the specialists.
- Always involve members of the gay police network or the LECD's gay senior policy officer when assessing the investigation.

Of course, it is important to discuss these tips with the prosecutor of the case.

Useful Internet links:

- www.lecd.nl
- www.coc.nl (national association with 23 local divisions)
- www.gay.eu (contact/info site)
- www.gaysite.nl (info site)
- www.chatboy.nl (contact site)
- www.gaydar.nl (contact site)
- www.gayromeo.com (contact site)
- www.homo.nl (contact site)
- www.banenoverzicht.net (homo meeting places)
- www.gk.nl (gay newspaper)
- www.la-vita.nl (info site for lesbians)
- www.allesovergay.nl (info site)
- www.biseksualiteit.startpagina.nl (general info)

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