

## **JMW Supervisory Board will hold an independent enquiry into the treatment of Jewish war orphans and apologises for distant legalistic approach in the past**

Amsterdam, 16 November, 2021

*The Supervisory Board of Jewish Social Services (JMW) has decided to hold an independent enquiry into JMW's role in the way Jewish war orphans were treated after the War. In part the aim of this enquiry will be to determine whether lessons can be learnt from this for the future. JMW will also actively enter into dialogue with Jewish war orphans. The Supervisory Board has apologised on behalf of JMW for the distant legalistic approach in at least one case with regard to Jewish war orphans in the past.*

The background to this decision is a recent intensive dialogue with Mr Philip Staal, one of the Jewish war orphans concerned. In its interaction with Mr Staal, JMW adopted a distant legalistic approach in the past, such as invoking the statute of limitations, and failed to enter into dialogue with Mr Staal on what he needed. JMW and Philip Staal started a mediation process on 16 July, 2021. The mediation ended on 15 November, but unfortunately without any result.

JMW will continue to pay attention to the position of the war orphans. In the context of this the Supervisory Board will try to obtain greater clarity by means of an additional independent enquiry into whether JMW's approach to war orphans has failed in any other way.

The Supervisory Board is aware of the fact that JMW repeatedly and actively assisted Jewish war orphans in the past in their search for information on their history and the way their assets were dealt with, often to their satisfaction. However, as appears from the dialogue with Mr Staal, this was not always the case. The Supervisory Board regrets that JMW has not always shown careful consideration and empathy and that this issue has not always been dealt with to everyone's satisfaction. Mr Staal and possibly others have therefore not been able to find their well-deserved rest.

The Supervisory Board is of the opinion that in sensitive issues in relation to the War it is not appropriate for an organisation such as JMW to invoke legalistic formalities, such as the statute of limitations. It would have been more suitable for JMW to have shown understanding, empathy, compassion and an open mind. As a result of the approach taken in the past, JMW disregarded and unnecessarily hurt the feelings of those concerned. The Supervisory Board would like to offer its sincere apologies for this, in general, and to the Staal family, in particular.

In addition to this, JMW will enter into dialogue with Jewish war orphans, who wish to do so, in the coming period to receive first-hand information on how JMW can help this group in the best way possible.

In the context of this, where at all possible, JMW will continue to help those involved directly (war orphans and their descendants) to obtain access to information from the archives.

On behalf of JMW, the Supervisory Board,

Micha Glaser  
Chairman

Gideon Schrijver  
Vice-Chairman

Should you wish to speak to one of our social workers in relation to this message, please contact us by email at [spreekuur@joodswelzijn.nl](mailto:spreekuur@joodswelzijn.nl) or by telephone at +31 88 1652 200 and choose option 1 (Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)

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