

Coronavirus pandemic in the EU – Fundamental Rights implications

National vaccine deployment

The Netherlands

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Contractor: Art.1, Dutch knowledge centre on
discrimination

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1 National vaccine deployment – planning and overview of priority groups

Specific groups identified in the national vaccine deployment plan ¹	First plan 20-11-2020 Vaccination strategy / Vaccinatiestrategie Policy letter ² : https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/11/20/kamerbrief-over-covid-19-vaccinatiestrategie/kamerbrief-over-covid-19-vaccinatiestrategie.pdf	update 21-12-2020 Vaccination strategy / Vaccinatiestrategie Policy letter ³ : https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/12/21/kamerbrief-over-de-uitwerking-vaccinatiestrategie-covid-19/kamerbrief-over-de-uitwerking-vaccinatiestrategie-covid-19.pdf	update 05-02-2021 Vaccination strategy / Vaccinatiestrategie Policy letter ⁴ : https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/02/05/kamerbrief-over-reactie-advies-inzet-astrazeneca-vaccin-tegen-covid-19/kamerbrief-over-reactie-advies-inzet-astrazeneca-vaccin-tegen-covid-19.pdf
People older than 60 living independently, with and without underlying health problems	YES The first version of the vaccination strategy indicates this group as one of the second groups to be vaccinated (starting with the oldest age groups)	YES This update indicates this group as the second group to be vaccinated (starting with the oldest age groups). Start of the vaccination: 90+ (25/01/2021) 85-89 (29/01/2021)	YES This update indicates the age group 60-64 as a group to be vaccinated (using the AstraZeneca Vaccine) before other older age groups.

¹ Based on: The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2020), Vaccinatiestrategie. Roadmap, 21 December 2020, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/publicaties/2020/12/21/roadmap-vaccinatiestrategie/roadmap-vaccinatiestrategie.pdf>

² The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2020), 'Vaccinatiestrategie COVID-19', Letter to House of Representatives, 20 November 2020, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/11/20/kamerbrief-over-covid-19-vaccinatiestrategie/kamerbrief-over-covid-19-vaccinatiestrategie.pdf>

³ The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2020), 'Kamerbrief over de uitwerking vaccinatiestrategie COVID-19', Letter to House of Representatives, 21 December 2020, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/12/21/kamerbrief-over-de-uitwerking-vaccinatiestrategie-covid-19/kamerbrief-over-de-uitwerking-vaccinatiestrategie-covid-19.pdf>

⁴ The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2021), 'Reactie advies inzet AstraZeneca-vaccin tegen COVID-19', Letter to House of Representatives, 5 February 2021, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/02/05/kamerbrief-over-reactie-advies-inzet-astrazeneca-vaccin-tegen-covid-19/kamerbrief-over-reactie-advies-inzet-astrazeneca-vaccin-tegen-covid-19.pdf>

		80-84 (05/02/2021) 75-79 (05/03-2021) 70-74 (06/04/2021) 65-69 (15/04/2021)	Start of the vaccination: 63-64 (15/02/2021) 61-63 (15/04/2021).
People younger than 60 living independently and with underlying health problems (several categories)	YES The first version of the vaccination strategy indicates this group as one of the second groups to be vaccinated	YES This update of the vaccination strategy indicates this group as the third group to be vaccinated	YES This update indicates two categories of people with underlying health problems to be vaccinated as soon as possible. These categories are people with morbid obesity and people with Down syndrome. Start of the vaccination: 15/02/2021.
People living in nursing homes and people with an intellectual or mental disability living in institutions	YES The first version of the vaccination strategy indicates this group as one of the first groups to be vaccinated.	YES This update indicates this group as one of the second groups to be vaccinated. Start of the vaccination: 18/01/2021.	No change.
Health and care workers working in nursing homes or in institutions for people with an intellectual or mental disability, or in district nursing.	YES The first version of the vaccination strategy indicates this group as one of the first groups to be vaccinated.	YES This update indicates this group as one of the first groups to be vaccinated. Start of the vaccination begins with staff in nursing homes and small-scale residential homes (06/01/2021).	YES Start of the vaccination for following categories: disability care workers (15/02/2021), mental healthcare workers (22/02/2021), workers in district nursing (25/02/2021).
Health and care workers working in direct contact with COVID patients	YES The first version of the vaccination strategy indicates this group as one of the second groups to be vaccinated.	YES This update indicates hospital workers working at COVID-wards and ic units and, ambulance crews as one of the first groups to be vaccinated. Start of the vaccination: 06-01-2021. Start of the vaccination of family doctors and their staff starts: 22-01-2021.	No change.
Other health and care workers (several categories)	YES The first version of the vaccination strategy indicates this group as	YES This update of the vaccination strategy indicates this group as	No change

	one of the last groups to be vaccinated	the fourth group to be vaccinated.	
People younger than 60 living independently and without underlying health problems	YES The first version of the vaccination strategy indicates this group as one of the last groups to be vaccinated.	YES This update of the vaccination strategy indicates this group as the last group to be vaccinated.	No change.
Specific groups identified in the national vaccine deployment plan⁵	Update 23-03-2021 Vaccination strategy / Vaccinatiestrategie Policy letter⁶: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/03/23/kamerbrief-over-stand-van-zaken-covid-19/kamerbrief-over-stand-van-zaken-covid-19.pdf	Update 13-04-2021 Vaccination strategy / Vaccinatiestrategie Policy letter⁷: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/04/13/aanbieding-stand-van-zakenbrief-covid-19/aanbieding-stand-van-zakenbrief-covid-19.pdf	Update 20-04-2021 Vaccination strategy / Vaccinatiestrategie Policy letter⁸: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/04/20/kamerbrief-over-maatregelenbrief-20-april-2021/kamerbrief-over-maatregelenbrief-20-april-2021.pdf
People older than 60 living independently, with and without underlying health problems	No change.	No change.	No change.
People in the age group 18-60 living independently and with underlying health	YES This update indicates several categories of people with underlying		YES

⁵ Based on: The Netherlands, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2020), Vaccinatiestrategie. Roadmap, 21 December 2020, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/publicaties/2020/12/21/roadmap-vaccinatiestrategie/roadmap-vaccinatiestrategie.pdf>

⁶ The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2021), 'Kamerbrief over stand van zaken COVID-19', Letter to House of Representatives, 23 March 2021, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/03/23/kamerbrief-over-stand-van-zaken-covid-19/kamerbrief-over-stand-van-zaken-covid-19.pdf>

⁷ The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2021), 'Stand van zakenbrief covid-19', Letter to House of Representatives, 13 April 2021, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/04/13/aanbieding-stand-van-zakenbrief-covid-19/aanbieding-stand-van-zakenbrief-covid-19.pdf>

⁸ The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2021), 'Maatregelenbrief 20 april 2021', Letter to House of Representatives, 20 April 2020, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/04/20/kamerbrief-over-maatregelenbrief-20-april-2021/kamerbrief-over-maatregelenbrief-20-april-2021.pdf>

problems(several categories)	health problems to be vaccinated as soon as possible. These categories are persons with a haematological malignancy, persons with severe renal failure, persons who have received a transplant (organ, stem cell or bone marrow), persons with a severe congenital immune disorder, people with a neurological disorder that affects their breathing. Start of the vaccination: 24/03/2021.	No change.	This update of the vaccination strategy indicates that the start of the vaccination of people younger than 60 living independently and with underlying health problems will begin in the first week of May 2021.
People living in nursing homes and people with an intellectual or mental disability living in institutions	No change	No change.	No change.
Health and care workers working in nursing homes or in institutions for people with an intellectual or mental disability, district nurses	No change	No change	No change
Health and care workers working in direct contact with COVID patients	No change.	No change.	No change.
Other health and care workers	No change.	No change.	Start of vaccination: first week of May.
People in the age group 18-60 living independently and without underlying health problems	No change.	No change.	The vaccination will start in the first week of May for age group 50-59.
Groups not mentioned in first version of strategy		This update indicates these groups to vaccinated as soon as possible: riot police. staff at Dutch embassies and consulates and their family members; and athletes participating in the next Olympic Games.	No change.

The following categories were not indicated in the vaccination order in the vaccination strategy and its updates: persons belonging to ethnic/national minorities; persons experiencing homelessness; persons with drug addiction dependencies; persons with low literacy levels; persons deprived of their liberty;

persons without residence or with insecure legal status (such as refugees, asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants).

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) determines the vaccination strategy, including the order in which groups are vaccinated. The advice of the Health Council is used as a guidance. The start date for vaccination of the various target groups depends on vaccine availability. The first version (20 November 2020) of the vaccination strategy prioritised people living in nursing homes and people with an intellectual or mental disability living in institutions as the first group to be vaccinated.⁹ The main reason for this is that this group is the most vulnerable to COVID-19. The order of vaccination has changed in the December 2020 update.¹⁰ Health and care workers working in IC units, COVID-wards and ambulances were prioritised along with health and care workers in nursing homes, in institutions for people with an intellectual or mental disability and in district nursing. The main reason for this change is to reduce the pressure on the healthcare system. The vaccination of health and care workers prevents the loss of working hours through to sick leave. The vaccination of the health and care workers started on 6 January 2021. As the second group to be vaccinated, priority is given to people living in nursing homes, to people with an intellectual or mental disability living in institutions and to people in the oldest age groups. The vaccination for these groups started in the second half of January.

Subsequent updates have not fundamentally changed the order of vaccination updates. The 5 February update indicates the age group 60-64 as a group to be vaccinated (using the AstraZeneca Vaccine) ahead of other older age groups because of the age limit (65 and above) that has been set by the government for the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine.¹¹

⁹ The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2020), 'Vaccinatiestrategie COVID-19', Letter to House of Representatives, 20 November 2020, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/11/20/kamerbrief-over-covid-19-vaccinatiestrategie/kamerbrief-over-covid-19-vaccinatiestrategie.pdf>

¹⁰ The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2020), 'Kamerbrief over de uitwerking vaccinatiestrategie COVID-19', Letter to House of Representatives, 21 December 2020, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/12/21/kamerbrief-over-de-uitwerking-vaccinatiestrategie-covid-19/kamerbrief-over-de-uitwerking-vaccinatiestrategie-covid-19.pdf>

¹¹ The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2021), 'Reactie advies inzet AstraZeneca-vaccin tegen COVID-19', Letter to House of Representatives, 5 February 2021, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/02/05kamerbrief-over-actie-advies-inzet-astrazeneca-vaccin-tegen-covid-19/kamerbrief-over-actie-advies-inzet-astrazeneca-vaccin-tegen-covid-19.pdf>

The 5 February update indicates two categories of people with underlying health problems who should be vaccinated as soon as possible: people with morbid obesity and people with Down syndrome.¹² The 23 March update 2021¹³ indicates five categories of people with underlying health problems who should be vaccinated as soon as possible: persons with a haematological malignancy, persons with severe renal failure, persons who have received a transplant (organ, stem cell or bone marrow), persons with a severe congenital immune disorder, people with a neurological disorder condition that affects their breathing.

The 13 April update indicates some new groups (not before indicated in the vaccination strategy) who should be vaccinated as soon as possible: the riot police; the staff at Dutch embassies and consulates and their family members; and athletes participating in the next Olympic Games.¹⁴

In the 13 April update the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport stated that the incompleteness of the vaccination data makes it difficult to monitor the vaccination strategy.¹⁵ Therefore, it is currently not possible to calculate the vaccination coverage for specific groups.

¹² The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2021), 'Reactie advies inzet AstraZeneca-vaccin tegen COVID-19', Letter to House of Representatives, 5 February 2021, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/02/05kamerbrief-over-reactie-advies-inzet-astrazeneca-vaccin-tegen-covid-19/kamerbrief-over-reactie-advies-inzet-astrazeneca-vaccin-tegen-covid-19.pdf>

¹³ The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2021), 'Kamerbrief over stand van zaken COVID-19', Letter to House of Representatives, 23 March 2021, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/03/23/kamerbrief-over-stand-van-zaken-covid-19/kamerbrief-over-stand-van-zaken-covid-19.pdf>

¹⁴ The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2021), 'Stand van zakenbrief covid-19', Letter to House of Representatives, 13 April 2021, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/04/13/aanbieding-stand-van-zakenbrief-covid-19/aanbieding-stand-van-zakenbrief-covid-19.pdf>

¹⁵ The Netherlands, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2021), 'Stand van zakenbrief covid-19', Letter to House of Representatives, 13 April 2021, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/04/13/aanbieding-stand-van-zakenbrief-covid-19/aanbieding-stand-van-zakenbrief-covid-19.pdf>

2 Vaccination rollout – communication, targeted outreach, registration, and administration of vaccinations

For each of the subsequent questions (2.1 and 2.2) please indicate:

Languages: If information in different languages is available. Please list those languages in which information is available (e.g. languages of recognised national or ethnic minorities and immigrant communities; as well as English and other dominant international languages).

Accessibility for persons with disabilities: If information is provided in accessible formats to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities (including easy read, in braille, sign language etc); are physical venues made accessible for persons with disabilities?

2.1 Channels, means and measures to inform about the national vaccination plan

In **the Netherlands** there are, several channels and measures taken by the authorities to inform the public about the vaccination strategy and the actual vaccinations and to encourage people to get vaccinated. These are: press conferences, postal letters, websites, campaigns.

In **the Netherlands**, the national government uses press conferences to inform the general public about the general strategy to fight COVID-19, including lock down measures and the vaccination strategy. Every two or three weeks, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport hold a press conference on changes in the general strategy to fight COVID-19 including the vaccination strategy. These press conferences are broadcasted live on public television and radio. The text of these press conferences is posted on the government website. The latest press conference was held on 20 April 2021.¹⁶ A sign language interpreter is present during these press conferences.

In **the Netherlands** persons aged and older and who live independently receive an invitation for a vaccination by a postal letter either from the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en*

¹⁶ The Netherlands, National Government (Rijksoverheid) (2021), 'Letterlijke tekst persconferentie minister-president Rutte en minister De Jonge (20 april 2021)', available at:

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/mediateksten/2021/04/20/letterlijke-tekst-persconferentie-minister-president-rutte-en-minister-de-jonge-20-april-2021>

Milieu)(age group 65 and above)¹⁷ or by their family doctor (age group 60-64)¹⁸. For the age group 65 and older, the letter informs on how to make an appointment for a vaccination at one of the vaccination centres of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs). The postal letter includes separate annexes: a health statement to be filled in, a short explanation about the vaccination and an explanation on how to register with the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment. For the age group 60-64, the letter informs about when and at what exact location the vaccination will take place. For this age group, the vaccinations are administered by the family doctor. Sometimes family doctors use a special venue (and not their surgery) to vaccinate a significant number of their patients. Enclosed to the letter are a health statement that must be filled in, a short explanation about the vaccination and an explanation on how to register the vaccination.

On 14 December 2020, **the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport** started a public campaign encouraging people to get vaccinated against COVID-19.¹⁹ The campaign consists of radio commercials, television commercials, newspapers advertisements, messages via social media, online advertisements, posters, billboards. The aim of the campaign is that eventually as many people as possible will be vaccinated against COVID-19. An important part of the campaign is the website www.coronavaccinatie.nl, with information on the different vaccines and the order of vaccination. It also provides answers to frequently asked questions. People who may still be unsure about vaccination can find the information they need to make a well-informed choice.

As part of the public campaign encouraging people to get vaccinated against COVID-19, **the Dutch government** has developed a range of materials informing people about the vaccination. One of these is a brochure providing important information about vaccination against COVID-19: how it works, safety, side effects, types of vaccine, why getting vaccinated is important, invitation, order of

¹⁷ The Netherlands, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*) (2021), 'GGD'en: vaccinatie 65+'ers', Web page, available at: <https://www.rivm.nl/covid-19-vaccinatie/professionals/GGD-vaccinatie-65ers>

¹⁸ The Netherlands, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*) (2021), 'Eerste vaccins 60- tot 64-jarigen maandag beschikbaar via huisarts', News release, 12 February 2021, available at: <https://www.rivm.nl/nieuws/eerste-vaccins-60-tot-64-jarigen-maandag-beschikbaar-via-huisarts>

¹⁹ The Netherlands, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2020), 'Start publiekscampagne coronavaccinatie', News release, 14 December 2020, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2020/12/14/start-publiekscampagne-coronavaccinatie>

vaccination, coronavirus rules.²⁰ These brochures are available in the two national languages of the Netherlands: Dutch and Frisian. This brochure is also available in the following languages: English, Arabic, Bulgarian, French, German, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, Turkish and Somali.²¹

In **the Netherlands**, the government has developed special materials intended to be used as a an aid to talking about the vaccination with, for example, people with an intellectual disability or early dementia.²² One of these materials is a vaccination information sheet in easy to understand language in both Dutch and Frisian.²³ This information sheet is also available in English, Arabic, French, German, Polish and Turkish.²⁴ A family member or caregiver can use the pictures on this sheet to explain why the vaccine is important and what to expect. There is additional information on the back of the sheet to help them with this.

²⁰ The Netherlands, National Government (*Rijksoverheid*) (2021), 'Algemene informatie over coronavaccinatie in Nederland (Nederlands, Fries en andere talen)', Web page, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2021/01/22/algemene-informatie-over-coronavaccinatie-in-nederland>

²¹ The Netherlands, National Government (*Rijksoverheid*) (2021), 'Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 in the Netherlands (translations)', Web page, available at: <https://www.government.nl/documents/leaflets/2021/01/19/getting-vaccinated-against-covid-19-in-the-netherlands>

²² The Netherlands, National Government (*Rijksoverheid*) (2021), 'Informatie over de prik tegen corona in begrijpelijke taal', Web page, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-vaccinatie/uitgelicht-vaccinatie/coronavaccinatie-in-begrijpelijke-taal>

²³ The Netherlands, National Government (*Rijksoverheid*) (2021), 'Informatie over de prik tegen corona in begrijpelijke taal', Web page, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-vaccinatie/uitgelicht-vaccinatie/coronavaccinatie-in-begrijpelijke-taal>

²⁴ The Netherlands, National Government (*Rijksoverheid*) (2021), 'Informatie over de prik tegen corona in begrijpelijke taal', Web page, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-vaccinatie/uitgelicht-vaccinatie/coronavaccinatie-in-begrijpelijke-taal>

2.2 What are the (pre-) registration channels for vaccination put in place?

- a) What registration channels for vaccination are in place e.g. websites, apps, hotlines/call centres, letters, via family doctors, etc.?

In **the Netherlands** there are several registration channels for vaccination dependent on the target group. Registration channels are postal letters, call centres and websites.

An overview of which registration channels are used for each target group:

In **the Netherlands**, all persons in the age group 65 and older living independently receive an invitation for vaccination by postal letter in Dutch from the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*).²⁵ After receiving the letter, they can make an appointment for vaccination via the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs). These appointments can be made by calling the national call centre of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs) or by registering via a special website (available in Dutch and English) of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs). After making the appointment, they will be administered a vaccination at one of the vaccination centres of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs). As part of the appointment a specific vaccination centre will be assigned.

In **the Netherlands**, there is a special website, available in Dutch and English, where people of certain age groups can make an appointment for vaccination via the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs). They do not need to wait for a letter from the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*).²⁶

In **the Netherlands**, all persons in the age group 60-64 (with and without underlying health problems) receive an invitation for vaccination by a letter in

²⁵ The Netherlands, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*) (2021), 'GGD'en: vaccinatie 65+'ers', Web page, available at: <https://www.rivm.nl/covid-19-vaccinatie/professionals/GGD-vaccinatie-65ers>

²⁶ The Netherlands, National Government (*Rijksoverheid*) (2021), 'Online een afspraak maken'. Web page, available at: <https://coronatest.nl/ik-wil-me-laten-vaccineren/een-online-afspraak-maken>

Dutch from their family doctor.²⁷ The vaccinations are administered by the family doctor.

In **the Netherlands**, all health and care workers receive an invitation for vaccination by a letter in Dutch from their employer.²⁸ For some categories of health and care workers, the vaccination will be carried at their workplace. These categories are hospital staff and staff of mental healthcare institutions and family doctors. Health and care workers in other categories can make an appointment for vaccination via the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs) after they received the letter. These appointments can be made by making a call to the national call centre of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs) or by registering via a special website of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs). After making the appointment, they will be administered a vaccination at one of the vaccination centres of the Region Public Health Services (GGDs). As part of the appointment a specific vaccination centre will be assigned.

Several categories of persons with specific underlying health problems receive an invitation for vaccination by a letter in Dutch from the hospital.²⁹ These categories are: persons with a haematological malignancy (certain types of blood cancer), persons with severe renal failure, persons who have received a transplant (organ, stem cell or bone marrow), persons with a severe congenital immune disorder. All persons who fall under these categories and have had an outpatient consultation with their medical specialist in the past 18 months will receive the invitation through the hospital. The vaccination of these categories will be administered at the hospital. All persons younger than 60 with underlying health problems but who do not fall under the aforementioned categories receive an invitation for vaccination by a letter from their family doctor.³⁰ After receiving the letter, they

²⁷ The Netherlands, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*) (2021), 'Eerste vaccins 60- tot 64-jarigen maandag beschikbaar via huisarts', News release, 12 February 2021, available at: <https://www.rivm.nl/nieuws/eerste-vaccins-60-tot-64-jarigen-maandag-beschikbaar-via-huisarts>

²⁸ The Netherlands, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2021), 'Volgorde vaccinatie zorgmedewerkers', Web page, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-vaccinatie/volgorde-van-vaccinatie-tegen-het-coronavirus/volgorde-vaccinatie-zorgmedewerkers>

²⁹ The Netherlands, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*) (2021), 'Medische hoog-risicogroepen ontvangen vanaf deze week vaccinatie-uitnodiging', News release, 17 March 2021, available at: <https://www.rivm.nl/nieuws/medische-hoog-risicogroepen-ontvangen-vanaf-deze-week-vaccinatie-uitnodiging>

³⁰ The Netherlands, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*) (2021), 'Mensen met medisch risico tussen 18-60 jaar vanaf begin mei uitgenodigd', News release, 20 April 2021, available at: <https://www.rivm.nl/nieuws/mensen-met-medisch-risico-tussen-18-60-jaar-uitgenodigd>

can make an appointment for vaccination via the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs). These appointments can be made by making a call to the national call centre of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs) or by registering via a special website of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs). After making the appointment they will be administered a vaccination at one of the vaccination centres of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs). As part of the appointment a specific vaccination centre will be assigned.

- b) Are any alternatives to digital access to vaccine registration in place e.g. appropriate support for those who need it (such as the elderly; those without access to the internet); physical locations for registration etc?

In **the Netherlands**, there are alternatives to digital access for people over 60. People over 60 receive an invitation for a vaccination by postal letter from the Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*)³¹ or the family doctor. After receiving this letter, they can register for a vaccination by calling to the family doctor or by calling the national call centre of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs).

All persons who will be vaccinated at one of the vaccination centres of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs) can register for vaccination by calling the national call centre of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs).

People who are vaccinated at the hospital, or by inhouse or by mobile vaccination teams are registered at the physical location.

2.3 How are the vaccinations administered?

- a) Where are the vaccinations administered e.g. vaccination centres, via mobile units, via family doctors, etc.?

In the Netherlands, vaccinations are administered at various locations, depending on the target groups.³² For some target groups more than one location will be used. The locations are:

³¹ The Netherlands, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*) (2021), 'GGD'en: vaccinatie 65+'ers', Web page, available at: <https://www.rivm.nl/covid-19-vaccinatie/professionals/GGD-vaccinatie-65ers>

³² The Netherlands, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2021), 'Volgorde van vaccinatie tegen coronavirus', Web page, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-vaccinatie/volgorde-van-vaccinatie-tegen-het-coronavirus>

- Hospitals (target groups: staff working at hospitals, family doctors, people with underlying health problems)
- Vaccination centres of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs) (target groups: health and care workers not working at hospitals, age group 65 and above, age group 18- 59, people with underlying health problems)
- Family doctors (target groups: age group 60-64, nursing home residents, residents of care homes for people with intellectual disabilities, mental healthcare inpatients, family doctors)
- Inhouse doctors of care institutions (target groups: nursing home residents, residents of institutions for people with intellectual disabilities, residents of mental healthcare institutions)
- Mobile vaccination teams (target group: residents of mental healthcare institutions, people with an underlying health problems)

b) For those being vaccinated - how is information about the actual vaccination process, the vaccine and any potential side effects provided?

In the Netherlands information about the actual vaccination process, the vaccines and any potential side effects is provided in several ways: websites, brochures, hotline.

Websites, in Dutch and English, with information on vaccination, on the available vaccines and on the side effects of vaccines are maintained by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*)³³, the National Government³⁴, the Medicines Evaluation Board (*College ter Beoordeling van Geneesmiddelen*)³⁵, and the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs)³⁶.

³³ The Netherlands, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*) (2021), 'COVID-19-vaccinatie', Web page available at: <https://www.rivm.nl/covid-19-vaccinatie>

³⁴ The Netherlands, National Government (*Rijksoverheid*) (2021), 'Vaccinatie tegen het coronavirus', Web page, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-vaccinatie>

³⁵ The Netherlands, Medicines Evaluation Board (*College ter Beoordeling van Geneesmiddelen*) (2021), 'Coronavaccins', Web page, available at : <https://www.cbg-meb.nl/onderwerpen/medicijninformatie-vaccinaties/coronavaccins>

³⁶ For example: The Netherlands, GGD Rotterdam-Rijnmond (2021), 'Coronavaccinatie'. Web page, available at: <https://www.ggdrotterdamrijnmond.nl/infectieziekten/corona-covid19/vaccin/>

The National Institute for Public Health and the Environment has also a special telephone number for persons with questions about COVID-19 and the vaccination against COVID-19. ³⁷ Questions can be asked in Dutch and English.

In addition to the official information leaflet, the Medicines Evaluation Board (*College ter Beoordeling van Geneesmiddelen*) made patient information leaflets in easy to understand language on the four vaccines (Comirnaty/Pfizer³⁸, AstraZeneca³⁹, Moderna⁴⁰, Janssen⁴¹) that are used in the Netherlands. These leaflets are available in Dutch and English.

- c) Are there any circumstances where fees are applicable for receiving the vaccine – e.g. for third country nationals?

Vaccination against COVID-19 is free.⁴² There are no circumstances in which a fee is applicable.

³⁷ The Netherlands, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*) (2021), 'Contact', Web page available at : <https://www.rivm.nl/contact>

³⁸ The Netherlands, Medicines Evaluation Board (*College ter Beoordeling van Geneesmiddelen*) (2021), *Vaccin in het kort: Vaccin in het kort: Comirnaty*, available at: https://www.cbg-meb.nl/binaries/college-ter-beoordeling-van-geneesmiddelen/documenten/publicaties/2020/12/21/vaccin-in-het-kort-comirnaty/Comirnaty_COVID-19_02.pdf ;

³⁹ The Netherlands, Medicines Evaluation Board (*College ter Beoordeling van Geneesmiddelen*) (2021), *Vaccin in het kort: Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) tegen COVID-19*, available at: https://www.cbg-meb.nl/binaries/college-ter-beoordeling-van-geneesmiddelen/documenten/publicaties/2021/02/08/vihk-astrazeneca-covid-19/Vaxzevria_COVID-19_04.pdf

⁴⁰ The Netherlands, Medicines Evaluation Board (*College ter Beoordeling van Geneesmiddelen*) (2021), *Vaccin in het kort: Moderna vaccin tegen COVID-19*, available at: https://www.cbg-meb.nl/binaries/college-ter-beoordeling-van-geneesmiddelen/documenten/publicaties/2021/01/06/vaccin-in-het-kort-covid19-vaccin-moderna/Moderna_COVID-19_05.pdf

⁴¹ The Netherlands, Medicines Evaluation Board (*College ter Beoordeling van Geneesmiddelen*) (2021), *Vaccin in het kort: Janssen vaccin tegen COVID-19*, available at: <https://www.cbg-meb.nl/onderwerpen/medicijninformatie-vaccinaties/documenten/publicaties/2021/03/23/vihk-janssen-covid-19>

⁴² The Netherlands, National Government (*Rijksoverheid*) (2021), 'Zijn vaccinaties gratis?', Web page, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/vaccinaties/vraag-en-antwoord/zijn-vaccinaties-gratis>

3 Challenges and promising practices

3.1 Challenges

In **the Netherlands**, the accessibility of the vaccination centres of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs) has been criticised. On 5 February 2021 private Broadcaster RTL reported that for some vaccination centres people have to travel 50 kms which can pose problems for the elderly.⁴³ Such distances pose problems for most old people. The same applies for people living in deprived neighbourhoods. On 24 April 2021 Maria van den Muijsenbergh, professor of Health Differences at the Radboud University, told public broadcaster NIS that the vaccination centres of the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs) are difficult to reach for many people living in deprived neighbourhoods.⁴⁴

On 24 April 2021, in **the Netherlands**, a family doctor in Rotterdam and a doctor for internal diseases at the Erasmus Medical Centre in Rotterdam sent an open letter to the minister of Health, Welfare and Sport asking for a clear and understandable information campaign about the vaccination against COVID-19 in deprived neighbourhoods.⁴⁵ The authors of the letter note that a lot of information is now passing by part of the population, especially in deprived neighbourhoods. Their call is supported by a long list of health care providers, professional associations of doctors and nurses, and several hospitals.⁴⁶ The two authors of the letter advocate a large-scale campaign via national but also mainly local media. They also want the government to use community and clubhouses, churches and mosques, asylum seekers' centres and markets to disseminate information. The chaotic introduction of the AstraZeneca vaccine – first halted by the government, then allowed, then halted for the age group 18-60 because of concerns about very rare blood clots, has led to great fears and doubts among people in deprived neighbourhood making it difficult for family doctors to ensure high turnout among

⁴³ RTL (2021), '150.000 ouderen in de knel: te slecht ter been voor vaccinatie', *RTL Nieuws*, 5 February 2021, available at: <https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nieuws/nederland/artikel/5212965/80-plussers-vaccinatie-priklocatie-ggd-mobiel-taxibusje-anbo>

⁴⁴ NOS (2021), 'Artsen: vaccincampagne in kwetsbare wijken, 'veel mensen totaal verkeerd geïnformeerd'', *NOS Nieuws*, 24 April 2021, available at: <https://nos.nl/artikel/2377999-artsen-vaccincampagne-in-kwetsbare-wijken-veel-mensen-totaal-verkeerd-geinformeerd.html>

⁴⁵ NOS (2021), 'Artsen: vaccincampagne in kwetsbare wijken, 'veel mensen totaal verkeerd geïnformeerd'', *NOS Nieuws*, 24 April 2021, available at: <https://nos.nl/artikel/2377999-artsen-vaccincampagne-in-kwetsbare-wijken-veel-mensen-totaal-verkeerd-geinformeerd.html>

⁴⁶ Petities.nl (2021), 'Oproep voor een heldere en toegankelijke informatiecampagne over vaccinaties', Web page, available at: <https://petities.nl/petitions/oproep-voor-een-heldere-en-toegankelijke-informatiecampagne-over-vaccinaties?locale=de>

the age group 60-64.⁴⁷ Currently the AstraZeneca vaccine is the only vaccine made available to this age group. The vaccine is administered by family doctors.

In **the Netherlands**, the Outbreak Management Team (OMT), a body of experts which advises the government on coronavirus strategy, voices concerns about the lack of registration of vaccinations.⁴⁸ The national COVID-19 vaccination Information and Monitoring System or CMIS does not have all the figures and is therefore incomplete. The CMIS is managed by National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu). Currently, only 70 percent of all vaccination data is known to this national central system. The registered data concern figures about the number of persons vaccinated and about the location at which the vaccinations were administered. The data is supplied through the systems of the hospitals, the Regional Public Health Services (GGDs), the health care institutions and the family doctors. Of the registered data about 90 percent are from the GGDs. Therefore the OMT urges the other parties to pass on their vaccination figures. To redress this problem National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu) applies calculating methods to estimate the number of vaccination. In a news release issued on 29 April 2021 the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment stated that the number of estimated vaccinations is nearly 5.2 million (vaccinations administered by Tuesday 27 April).⁴⁹ Due to a programming error, an overestimation occurred in earlier estimates as a result of which 220,000 excess vaccinations were reported by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment on 13 April.

3.2 Promising practices

On 31 March 2021, **the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport** launched a website providing information in simple language on the coronavirus and the

⁴⁷ NOS (2021), 'Artsen: vaccincampagne in kwetsbare wijken, 'veel mensen totaal verkeerd geïnformeerd'', NOS Nieuws, 24 April 2021, available at: <https://nos.nl/artikel/2377999-artsen-vaccincampagne-in-kwetsbare-wijken-veel-mensen-totaal-verkeerd-geinformeerd.html>

⁴⁸ The Netherlands, Outbreak Management Team (OMT) (2021), 'Advies n.a.v. 110de OMT', Letter to Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, 26 April 2021, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/brieven/2021/04/26/advies-nav-110e-omt/advies-nav-110e-omt.pdf>

⁴⁹ The Netherlands, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*) (2021), 'Correctie vaccinatiecijfers: totaal aantal prikken naar beneden bijgesteld', News release, 27 April 2021, available at: <https://www.rivm.nl/nieuws/correctie-vaccinatiecijfers-totaal-aantal-prikken-naar-beneden-bijgesteld>

vaccination against COVID-19.⁵⁰ The website is <https://corona.steffie.nl/nl/> . The website uses the avatar Steffie : an online and well-known method developed for explaining difficult subjects in an understandable way. The website uses the following languages: Dutch, English, Arabic, Bulgarian, Eritrean, Papiamentu, Polish, Romanian, Somali, and Turkish.

⁵⁰ The Netherlands, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (*Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport*) (2021), 'Corona.steffie.nl: het coronavirus eenvoudig uitgelegd', News release, 31 March 2021, page, available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2020/03/31/corona-steffie-nl>