Covid-19 in long-term care **UNTIL MARCH 2021**

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Examination COVID-19 information gathering Europe Henk Nies, Elsbeth Zielman, Monique Bressers, Noëlle Sant Vilans, Centre of Expertise for Long-term Care in the Netherlands

Vilans has mapped out the measures taken by the governments of eight

countries to deal with the coronavirus and its consequences for long-term

care. The aim is to learn from these measures and to draw inspiration from

them. In this third overview we show how Belgium (especially Flanders),

Denmark, Germany (especially North Rhine-Westphalia), France, Norway, the United Kingdom (especially England), Sweden and the Netherlands have operated since November 2020 until March 2021. For the measures taken before this period, we refer to our earlier publications. The current overview differs from its two predecessors. Firstly, we $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right)$ have paid less attention to visitor restrictions, protective equipment, monitoring and the corona apps. In this overview we focus on vaccination strategies, rapid testing and impact on workers' deployment and changes in administration. And secondly, we have set up the timelines beginning with the most recent measures and going backwards. The overview has been commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports in the Netherlands, to whom we provide detailed reports every three weeks. The overview serves as inspiration and helps to gain insight

Testing policy

Highlights

healthcare institutions.

who have agreed to be vaccinated.

being carefully introduced.

regular care can be resumed.

In all countries, PCR tests from the government and tests from private providers are now widely available. Rapid testing is also gaining acceptance in the society. For residents of healthcare institutions, the policy differs in the various countries. Rapid tests are generally considered inadequate for complaints that may indicate corona. In case of a positive result with a rapid test, a PCR test is requested as an additional requirement in several countries. This is also done to determine which virus variant plays a role. Vaccination strategy With the availability of approved vaccines, a vaccination strategy was established in all countries. This was strongly determined based on availability and the logistical conditions to distribute the vaccines and bring them to the target groups in order of priority; and to have them administered by qualified healthcare professionals in accordance with all associated healthcare and privacy requirements.

• In none of the countries do you see a general, national closure of

Rapid tests are increasingly used in institutions, both preventively and

In all countries, the highest priority was given to the most vulnerable

persons: clients in nursing homes and people in disability care facilities.

Currently, vaccinations have been given to those clients in long-term care

The availability of sufficient staff is a major concern in the various phases

In an increasing number of countries, relaxation of the visiting policy is

In many countries, consideration is being given to how, step by step,

Order of vaccination

directly with COVID-19 patients and other medical and healthcare professions. Due to logistical circumstances, this group was often given priority over Timeline highlights on the following themes: Visiting arrangements, Testing policy, Important moments and Vaccination. The timeline runs from November 2020 to March 2021. The timeline can be read both horizontally and vertically. Horizontal shows the developments per month for the eight countries, vertical shows the developments

In all countries, the highest priority was given to the most vulnerable people,

followed by other target groups, such as medical and nursing staff who deal

clients of nursing homes and people in disability care facilities. This was

per country per month.

institutions and vaccination centers (NL, D, B). This applied mainly to vaccines where the logistics of storing and repackaging to smaller units were only possible in hospitals because they had the facilities that required it. How to proceed?

nursing homes and institutions for the disabled. To this end, 'distribution hubs' were organised in hospitals, from where the vaccines were brought to the

new scientific insights.

Vaccination logistics

In the various countries, the impact of the vaccination policy on the number of

infections is noticeable, at least in nursing homes. An easing of visiting policies is being cautiously introduced. In addition, various countries have introduced

more generous visiting options for institutions when there have been no (more) infections. Consideration is being given to how regular care will continue. Several countries are developing scenarios for this. In various countries, there is concern about long-term health problems, as well as the consequences of the mental and physical burden on individuals. It looks as if vaccinations in long-term care will make room once again, for a

the most vulnerable, contrary to the initial order of prioritisation. With the

vaccination strategy. Reasons were limited availability, logistical problems and

The purchase of vaccins is done by the EU, but paid nationally. The distribution

long-term care, who wish to do so, are vaccinated. There are, however, large

differences between countries in the pace at which this has been done. The

most vulnerable people were vaccinated in their immediate surroundings, in

takes place to regions or departments. At present, almost all clients in

exception of the United Kingdom, all countries gradually adapted their

relaxation of policy and a return to a new normal.

IMPORTANT MOMENTS VACCINATION

> BELGIUM DENMARK (Flanders)

NETHERLANDS UNITED KINGDOM (England)

SWEDEN

13th a new visiting policy published.

FRANCE

NORWAY

Recommendations for and adaptation of life in elderly homes were

Updated guidelines for dealing with There is discussion Covind-19 in social over making life (National board of

vaccination compulsory among long-term care workers. DENMARK BELGIUM

health and welfare, Retningslinjer for håndtering af COVID-19 på socialområdet (socialstyrelsen.dk) NETHERLANDS

There is a **new** vaccination calendar

8th Nursing homes residents and smallscale care facilities may again receive two visitors, instead of one, provided they are fully vaccinated

21st

Milestone of 1,000,000

injections achieved.

Supplementary

British variant

NETHERLANDS

guidelines due to

Start vaccination

for healthcare professionals in hospital.

NETHERLANDS

Start vaccinations.

December

Each resident may

designate 3 visitors

Update of guidelines for preventing infections with the new mutant of the virus in longterm care settings.

Planning for first phase vaccination is ready

NETHERLANDS

NETHERLANDS

1. Direct COVID-19

ambulances,

care workers and

2. Care workers in nursing

homes and homes for

disabled as well as

small-scale housing.

Nursing home residents,

disabled and small-scale

residents of homes for

From 6 January, first

the care workers in

direct COVID-19 care are

vaccinated (ambulance,

nursing home residents

and residents of homes

for disabled and their

employees. Source.

NETHERLANDS

The vaccines are purchased

nationwide and distributed

regional centres. Regarding

vaccination, residents are

vaccinated in the institution

and employees vaccinated

in a vaccination center.

Elderly people who are still mobile at home are

vaccinated in regional

vaccination centers.

NETHERLANDS

More information about the

vaccination process can be

found via the dashboard.

NETHERLANDS

There are no numbers how

many antigen rapid tests

are used in longterm care.

When an employee tests

with a antigen test and the

testresult is negative, they

must also test with a PCR

A list of approved antigen

rapid tests by RIVM is

NETHERLANDS

A number of groups must

always be tested using a

• Healthcare workers who

work with vulnerable

• People in quarantine because of close contact

with someone with

• People who live in a care

people.

COVID-19.

NETHERLANDS

A favorable effect (much

fewer infections) can

already be seen due to

vaccinations in nursing

homes. Since 08 March,

homes and small-scale

care facilities are once

again allowed to receive

During one week, this

visitors. An important

can also mean different

condition is that the nursing

home residents are fully

vaccinated against the

coronavirus. It is always

to make their own policy

NETHERLANDS

Deployment of workers other than healthcare professionals

NETHERLANDS

Military deployment in

COVID-19*, status 01

• 160 military medical

UMC Utrecht;

personnel for COVID-19

and IC department at

• Security support for the

vaccination network;

standby to support test

centres and vaccinations

Marechaussee assistance

• Military personnel on

in the Netherlands:

for vaccine storage

* This refers to additional

COVID-19 efforts. Source.

security.

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This report is an overview of just the policies and regulations of seven European countries based on accessible official information sources. This means that this report is not a complete overview. You will find the most important elements of each country's approach in their fight against the spread of COVID-19 in long-term care. There is more to providing good and safe

March, 2021:

DENMARK

deployed.

In particular, additional

cleaning staff have been

At present, there are no

signs that reports of non-

COVID illness are higher

than normal. There is an

indication that people in

residential care centres are

changing jobs more often,

leaving the care sector or

going to hospitals.

BELGIUM

In extreme cases, staff

symptoms who tested

a cohort department.

positively were assigned to

If there is a shortage among

staff, help can be requested

from the hospital with a

partner institution. Other

options include Red Cross

volunteers or community

nursing staff. In extreme

cases, the army can also be deployed for care-related

work as well as support for

meals and relocations.

members without

GERMANY

There is a great shortage of

trained personnel, which is

why the army is also used

meals or conducting rapid

There is a regulation that

fewer trained personnel

need to be deployed to

ensure that there are

sufficient hands at the

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care, especially when you look at the social or psychological impact of COVID-19 in long-term care.

bedside.

to provide support with

tests, for example.

due to the care facility itself

based on the local situation.

two visitors instead of one.

residents of nursing

facility

found here.

from a central point to

hospital), followed by

housing.

UNITED KINGDOM

older adults;

workers:

and over;

age);

and over;

and over:

and over;

and over

1. residents in a care home

2. all those 80 years of age

3. all those 75 years of age

4. all those 70 years of age

and over and clinically

extremely vulnerable

pregnant women and

5. all those 65 years of age

6. adults aged 16 to 65 years

7. all those 60 years of age

8. all those 55 years of age

9. all those 50 years of age

10. rest of the population (to

be determined).

Cleaning personnel – risk

group 1 includes all staff,

staff (e.g., cleaners).

UNITED KINGDOM

Hospital hubs (267); GP-led

sites (1,034); pharmacies

(195); and vaccination

For more details, see

Vaccination is done by both

paid and voluntary roles. In

followed, good supervision

and professional protective

measures are used. For

more details, please see

UNITED KINGDOM

As of 20 March 2021,

27,630,970 people in the UK

have been given their first

dose and 2,228,772 people

have received a 2nd dose. The

UK government aims to offer

a first vaccine dose to about

32 million people in priority

vaccine supply issues have

bumpy.

Data.

continued to make the rollout

The UK government says it is

still on track to have offered

every UK adult a first dose

by 31 July 2021. For further

programme, please see: **England NHS and Coronavirus**

UNITED KINGDOM

such as universities,

workplaces.

symptoms.

More information.

UNITED KINGDOM

• Staff – weekly using PCR

test kits on the same day

each week; twice weekly

weekly PCR test and with

using LFD test kits on

an additional LFD test

3 or 4 days after their

with PCR test kits; as

soon as they join the care home, if they are

develop symptoms.

· Visitors - LFD tests,

before entering

premises.

More information.

UNITED KINGDOM

At the moment, visits in

reflecting the fact the

country is in lockdown.

More information.

England only take place in

exceptional circumstances,

As part as a cautious easing

of the lockdown, from 8

March every LTC resident

will be allowed one regular

indoor visitor, who they will

nominate (tests required

before entry and PPE to

will be able to see more

visitors outdoors in line

with national restrictions

six). More information.

(currently 1, but soon up to

UNITED KINGDOM SWEDEN

Some regions have entered

crisis agreements with the

unions which have led these

staff groups to work tough

hours. These agreements

de-activated as necessary in

order to deal with COVID-care

while still performing essential

services. There will be a need

for recuperation for these

In order to decrease risk of

staff being incentivized the

government removed the so called "qualifying day" (it was one day of no sick-pay if you are off). So the government covered the cost of sick pay from Day 1 in an attempt to deter symptomatic people from coming into work and spreading the coronavirus among colleagues. Also fewer months of membership in unemployment benefit fund were needed for income security and the ceiling of the benefits were raised.

SWEDEN

known.

Not relevant as far as is

have been activated and

Since May 2020, home care

staff absence rates have

generally improved. See

CQC COVID-19 Insight 7

However, there have been

reports that symptomatic

to work, due to both to

care workers have continued

poor contractual conditions

(inadequate sick leave) or because pressured by the management, unable to

cope with reduced staffing

levels. New document.

UNITED KINGDOM

Coping strategies have

included the redeployment

of existing/available staff to

different tasks or to another

sector, such as hospital

and community staff with

appropriate clinical skills moving to care homes.

"There have also been news

stories about staff leaving

their families and moving

to protect the residents."

More information.

into residential care homes

(p.15).

be worn on site). They

SWEDEN

Visits to care homes for

older people are allowed as long as no ban has been

imposed. The visits should

be done in a safe manner

and in accordance with the

home's visiting procedures.

new; immediately if they

regular PCR test.

• Residents - monthly

the same day as the

LFD tests, which give rapid

results, are deployed in a

schools, care homes and

In the UK, two types of

tests are currently in use:

polymerase chain reaction

device (LFD). PCR tests are

offered to people who are

symptomatic, LFD tests

to people who don't report

(PCR); and a rapid test,

using the lateral flow

range of community settings

statistics relating to the rollout

groups 1 to 9 by 15 April. While

both cases, it is required

that training has been

centres (107).

website.

website.

including ancillary staff (e.g.,

cleaners). Unpaid carers are included in group 6. Frontline healthcare staff (priority group 2) also include ancillary

in an at-risk group (see

clinical conditions below);

those under 16 years of

individuals (not including

and over and frontline

for older adults and staff

working in care homes for

SWEDEN

People who have the

COVID-19 will be offered

vaccination first (source).

1. Those living in nursing

homes or receiving

home care, members

of the same household

and staff who work with

increased risk of severe

COVID-19 will be offered

2. Those 65 years old and

3. Others who have an

vaccination as well

as people who have

difficulties following

advice on infection

as individuals with

control measures, such

dementia, or cognitive

or mental functional

in any of the previous

phases will be offered

impairment.

vaccination.

SWEDEN

This is organised regionally.

This differs per region. An

example via the link

SWEDEN

vaccinations.

per region.

SWEDEN

Rapid tests (Antigen tests)

are used in addition to

PCR-tests. They can,

for example, be used

in sensitive settings

such as special housing

maintain regular activities

symptoms of COVID-19 and

are seeking care for some

for older people or to

in out-patient care at

an emergency clinic

for patients who have

other reason.

SWEDEN

In general, the rule

to have a test done.

More information.

applies that in the event of

complaints, you are advised

More information.

National dashboard

Dashboard showing

number of vaccinations

showing the number of

4. Those not included

greatest need for

protection against

8th A new visiting policy was published. Every resident of an institution may receive one visitor with a negative rapid test

UNITED KINGDOM

Government published

a plan for step-by-step

relaxation after the

lockdown.

UNITED KINGDOM

Vaccination delivery

Framework for vaccination centres

published

UNITED KINGDOM

Priority groups for

England begins vaccinations

UNITED KINGDOM

plan.

SWEDEN

Pandemic Law

SWEDEN

27th

The first vaccination in

a nursing home.

There are new prevention rules.

SWEDEN

FRANCE

FRANCE

FRANCE

NORWAY

NORWAY

1. Residents in nursing

2. Age 85 years and over

4. Age 65-74 years AND

of a severe disease

5. Age 55-64 years with

6. Age 45-54 years with

7. Age 18-44 years with

underlying diseases/

Prioritisation of healthcare

personnel in parallel with

vaccines in the municipalities

can be given to select groups

of healthcare personnel in

primary healthcare. These

are vaccinated in parallel

with the various priority

categories of risk groups.

Vaccination is the responsibility

of the municipalities. They are

responsible for local logistics

identifying people in the risk

groups who will be offered a

vaccine. In many places, they

may also contribute to local

In addition: In nursing homes

(residents and health care

personnel) and in hospitals

municipalities will organise

establishing large vaccination

centres. Small municipalities

residents can be vaccinated,

e.g. on school premises. In

can be vaccinated by their

how they will organise the vaccination, but they must follow the priorities of the FHI/

be vaccinated first.

NORWAY

some municipalities patients

general practitioner (GP). The

individual municipality decides

government about who should

Currently, all nursing home

residents and all elderly

persons over the age of 85

have been vaccinated, and we

have started vaccinating the

vaccines in the municipalities

can be given to select groups

of healthcare personnel in

primary healthcare. In Oslo

(March 22, 2021) there is an

increase of Covid- infection,

so the rules are very strict

in this area. There are not

enough vaccines available.

NORWAY

requires.

Rapid tests are used

when the situation

age group, 75-85 years.

Up to 20% of available

also use premises where

mass vaccinations among

(health personnel), the

the population. Large

municipalities are now

and partners with whom they work. GPs are central in

NORWAY

vaccination.

Up to 20% of available

underlying diseases/

conditions

conditions

8. Age 55-64 years

9. Age 45-54 years

the risk groups:

underlying diseases/

people between 18 and 64

years old with a high risk

3. Age 5-84 years

FRANCE

1. Elderly people living in

2. Professionals working

in institutions and

presenting a high

risk (aged over 50,

3. All health workers,

including firefighters and

home responders over

50 years of age and / or

with co-morbidities.

4. People with disabilities

living in institutions

suffering from co-

From 18 January, people

over 75 years old living

at home will also be

vaccinated, as well as

high risk of COVID-19.

FRANCE

found here.

FRANCE

FRANCE

are PCR tests.

Everyone can do a rapid test at

pharmacies or GP's. Rapid test are

free of charge for the patient, so

High Authority for Health (HAS)

for people under the age of 65,

within 4 days from the start of

COVID-19 contamination.

More detailed info:

years:

tests can be used for:

symptoms, and for those with no

On the advice of the), antigenic

1. Symptomatic persons, within

the first 4 days after the onset of

following conditions are met:

• age less than or equal to 65

• absence of co-morbidity,

2. Asymptomatic persons

(excluding "contact cases" or people detected within a cluster)

as part of targeted collective

screening, for example in the

• institutions of higher education;

• airports, especially for travellers

NORWAY

NORWAY

The very oldest are

protected so the need for

longer present. Currently,

family members can meet

nursing home residents,

even the very oldest, and

give them a hug always in

visiting procedures.

accordance with the home's

Care personnel in nursing

homes are vaccinated as

There is an ongoing national

authorities / services should

discussion on whether the

be allowed to demand

contracts if the health

NORWAY

health personnel to work

more than agreed in their

services are overloaded with

much as possible:

During the second wave: 30

to 40% sick leave reports.

FRANCE

<u>Deployment of volunteers</u> to

temporary workers (people

returning to the workforce,

also those on the sidelines

support services. Funding is

also made available for this

Le Plan Bleu: crisis plan

for the nursing home

sector (in hospitals this

Blanc is an emergency

is le Plan Blanc). Le Plan

plan that has existed since

calamities and heat waves, for example. This applies in particular to all healthcare personnel who can be called upon extra in the plan blanc. Since October, there has also been a Plan Bleu. This is the translation of le Plan Blanc to the nursing

2004. Previously used in

home sector.

of the labor market, for

cope with shortages.

A great appeal for

strict measures in LTC is no

coming from areas of active

circulation of the infection; • accommodation facilities for dependent elderly people (Ehpad) for the benefit of staff; • penal establishments, etc.

following places:

More information.

FRANCE

FRANCE

Customised / depending on

the situation in the nursing

The message in case of

complaints is: test!

symptoms, provided that all of the

absence of risk of developing a

severe form of the disease.

expectation of a violent reaction to

however recommends rapid tests

More information can be

found via the dashboard.

Agreements are made per

department. Here, too, is a

sequence for vaccinations.

The information can be

people under over 50 with a

morbidities.

and the staff aged 50

and over and / or those

pathologies).

institutions.

The first 75+ living at home is vaccinated

The first persons have

been vaccinated, a

78-year-old woman

Launch CrisOrga, a crisis management

and a cardiologist.

SWEDEN

There is a **new**

FRANCE

NORWAY

Because the elderly have been vaccinated

restrictions for youth

there are less

and students.

15th

All nursing home

residents and all

vaccinated.

elderly persons over

the age of 85 have been

Scenarios have been

variant prevails / black

published (under

control / British

scenario)

NORWAY

NORWAY

27th

old.

First Norwegian

vaccinated, 67 years

