



British Embassy
The Hague



Wilton Park

Concept

Learning key lessons on COVID: a UK/Netherlands discussion on health | WP2029V

Virtual meeting: Tuesday 22 February 2022 (1200-1600 UK / 1300-1700 Netherlands)

In association with the British Embassy in The Hague

Summary

COVID-19 has posed a range of short and long-term impacts to health systems in countries around the world. This Wilton Park event seeks to bring together key stakeholders from the UK and the Netherlands to build on the strength of ongoing bilateral relations to forge a key partnership for cooperation on COVID-19 response, with particular emphasis on shared learning in the health space. Both countries are committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the concept of Building Back Better, the strategy aimed at reducing the risk to the people of nations and communities in the wake of future disasters and shocks: nowhere more needed than in the international response to the aftermaths of COVID-19.

The event will consist of a 3-hour virtual session, focussing on three key elements, and forms the first part of a series of two sessions under the umbrella heading 'UK-Netherlands: Building Back Better', the other session focussing on Education as its key subject.

Context and key policy issues

While Covid-19 is a global pandemic, no one country or region is alike and there are limitations to the applicability of experiences from one country to another. But the Netherlands and the UK have similar problems, good science and education links and the opportunities to work closely together on progressing an impactful response. Important engagement between the two countries already exists: one example is the International Joint Comparators Unit (ICJU), established in April 2020 to maximise UK learning from others. A joint FCDO/Cabinet Office team, the unit uses international data, including from the FCDO's overseas network, to provide timely, relevant and objective analysis of different countries' responses to the crisis. The Netherlands is a key contributor to the unit.

The actual COVID19-pandemic has shown that multilateral and international cooperation is more needed than ever. In 2015 the UK and Dutch governments committed to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, also known as the 'Global Goals'), aimed at improving peace, prosperity, access to healthcare and education and tackle climate change worldwide. Each country signed up to a deadline of 2030 to achieve the SDGs. This year the UN forum on sustainable development (the HLPF) has prioritised the following theme: 'Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development'. The crisis has magnified existing inequalities within healthcare, with individuals from vulnerable backgrounds suffering disproportionate effects of COVID-19.

Social isolation and loneliness have impacted on wellbeing for many, with increased concerns about the combination of greater stress and reduced access to services for vulnerable children and their families increasing the risk of both family violence and abuse and mental ill health.

The pandemic has both disrupted and changed the delivery of health and social care services, with significant drops in A&E use and the health care needs of people with long-term conditions being significantly impacted. Long-term conditions have worsened for many people over the course of lockdown and there are particular concerns about the impact of delayed cancer diagnoses and the knock-on effects as health services are resumed.

At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly enhanced the drive for healthcare providers to make better use of digital technology, with a clear strategic focus on integrating digital technology and tools further and more widely throughout the health and care system.

The three key areas of focus for discussion will be: the impact of Covid on regular care, future planning for pandemics including (health infrastructure) vaccines and variants (how to plan in 2022).

In partnership with the British Embassy in The Hague, Wilton Park will convene relevant actors in a secure environment to share lessons and best practices with the aim of enhancing bilateral cooperation on post-COVID response in the health sector.

Goal and objectives

This dialogue seeks to build co-operation between relevant government and non-government stakeholders in the UK and the Netherlands.

It aims at the following specific objectives:

- To raise awareness of the ongoing post-COVID threat posed to the health sectors
- To facilitate the exchange of best practice around pursuing partnership opportunities while managing associated risk
- To identify and discuss emergent threats and opportunities and define effective approaches to cross-sector collaboration
- To strengthen the links and engagement between the relevant UK and Netherlands government and non-government stakeholders
- To support the development and dissemination of shared support, advice and guidance

Meeting outcomes will be captured in a report summarising the discussions, conclusions, policy recommendations and actions, which, as well as being shared with participants, will also be more widely circulated to interested parties and posted on the Wilton Park website.

Who should participate

- UK and Netherlands government representatives including from the departments of Health
- Health experts from NGOs and academia

Monitoring and evaluation

Wilton Park's Monitoring and Evaluation process includes follow-up with all participants, speakers and partners on planned actions. An electronic questionnaire will be completed by all participants during the meeting and a further survey conducted 3-6 months afterwards.

Format

Discussion in all Wilton Park sessions (both in-person and virtual or a mixture of the two) is 'off the record' and no individual speaker or participant should be quoted (nor their identity or institutional affiliation revealed) without that individual's express permission. The protocol also applies to all uses of digital and social media, both before, during and after the event. The participatory format of the meeting, encompassing roundtable discussion during plenary sessions plus time spent in smaller breakout groups, will help generate fresh insights and analysis. It will be held on the basis of non-attributable discussion in a neutral environment designed to encourage an open and constructive exchange.

Security status will be determined in advance of any event.

About Wilton Park

Wilton Park, an executive agency of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is a global forum for strategic discussion organising over 60 events a year in the UK and overseas, bringing together leading representatives from the worlds of politics, business, academia, diplomacy, civil society and media. We focus on issues of international security, prosperity and justice. Our meetings provide a neutral environment for round-table discussion encouraging innovation in global thinking. Discussions are non-attributable to encourage frank exchanges and open and lively debate.

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