



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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More elderly people living alone

There are 1.5 million people over 70 in the Netherlands, of whom a third are living alone. Usually after the loss of their partner. According to the latest household forecast by Statistics Netherlands their number is expected to increase by more than 40% in the next 20 years, from the current 571 thousand to 819 thousand in 2020,

Old age homes for the very old

The large majority of the older population lives on their own. Half of the people over 70 still live with a partner. One in three lives alone. Less than 10% live in an old age or nursing home. Many people are only admitted to a home when they are very old. Only 3% of people in their seventies live in an old age or nursing home. Among people in their eighties the percentage is higher, but the people living in homes are a minority (17%). It is only when people reach their nineties that half of them live in a home.

More older people still have their partner

In the next twenty years the number of older people living on their own is expected to increase. One major reason is that more people will grow very old with their partner. Some 47% of the people over seventy still have their partner. It is expected to be 53% in 2020. The average life expectancy will increase, especially among men.

The current life expectancy of women is 5 years higher than for men. Because the life expectancy of men is expected to increase more than the life expectancy of women the difference will get smaller and partners will stay together longer. Couples are often capable of living on their own longer (that is, to a higher age) than single people can.

Fewer elderly people in homes

The number of single persons over 70 is expected to increase by a quarter of a million in the next 20 years: from 571 thousand in 2001 to 819 thousand in 2020. The main cause is the "greying" of the population. The number of people over 70 is expected to increase from 1.5 million now to 2.2 million in 2020. Another cause for the increase in the number of elderly single people living on their own is that a smaller percentage will be admitted to old age and nursing homes. Between 1995 and 2000 the population over 70 increased by nearly 7%, but the num-

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ber of people over 70 receiving care in institutions fell by 10%. Dutch government policy advocates that people should live on their own for as long as possible. The policy aim is that people only get institutionalised when they can no longer live in their own environment even with the help of organised home care.

Statistics Netherlands expects a drop in the percentage of older people admitted into care facilities. While the population over 70 will increase by 50% in the next 20 years, the number of people admitted to a home is expected to fall by 20%. Care in the home environment will increasingly replace institutionalised care. Moreover, there will be a development in forms in between living totally on ones own and living in a home: for instance living semi-independently in an apartment complex geared to providing care on demand.

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Population over 70

	Total	including living alone	With partner	in home
	x 1 000			
2001				
70-79	1013	343	591	32
80-89	447	210	133	77
over 90	71	27	5	33
total	1531	571	720	139
2020				
70-79	1507	466	945	29
80-89	612	292	229	54
over 90	114	61	15	27
total	2233	819	1189	110

Source: Statistics Netherlands