



Public Health  
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# Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

**Prevention and control of COVID-19 in home care/care homes settings**  
**30th July 2020**

## Summary

This weekly digest contains a selection of evidence published in the last 7 days, in relation to the prevention and control of COVID-19 in home care/care home settings. We search a number of Covid-19 review repositories, an existing PHE Covid-19 evidence digest, Ovid Medline and Embase, Social Care Online, medRxiv (pre-print server) and various websites. We select peer reviewed and non-peer reviewed publications (pre-prints), as well as systematic reviews, guidance and evidence summaries.

The digest is produced by PHE [Knowledge and Library Services](#) (KLS), in conjunction with a small editorial team.

We do not accept responsibility for the availability, reliability or content of the items included in this resource and do not necessarily endorse the views expressed within them. Our intent is to highlight early emerging research findings as well as research that has been subject to peer review and wider scrutiny.

**Peer-reviewed**

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
22.07.2020	<p>Risk Factors Associated With Mortality Among Residents With Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Long-term Care Facilities in Ontario, Canada</p>	<p>JAMA Network Open / Original Investigation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In this cohort study of 627 LTC facilities, the incidence rate ratio for COVID-19–related death among LTC residents was 13 times higher than that among community-living adults older than 69 years.</li> <li>• Highlights the need for improved infection control, widespread testing, access to personal protective equipment, and other supports to protect this vulnerable population.</li> </ul>
22.07.2020	<p>For-profit long-term care homes and the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks and resident deaths</p>	<p>Canadian Medical Association Journal / Article</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted a retrospective cohort study of all LTC homes in Ontario, Canada, from March 29 to May 20, 2020.</li> <li>• The analysis included all 623 Ontario LTC homes, comprising 75 676 residents; 360 LTC homes (57.7%) were for profit, 162 (26.0%) were nonprofit, and 101 (16.2%) were municipal homes.</li> <li>• There were 190 (30.5%) outbreaks of COVID-19 in LTC homes, involving 5218 residents and resulting in 1452 deaths, with an overall case fatality rate of 27.8%.</li> <li>• For-profit status was associated with both the extent of an outbreak in an LTC home (adjusted risk ratio [RR] 1.96, 95% CI 1.26-3.05) and the number of resident deaths (adjusted RR 1.78, 95% CI 1.03-3.07), compared with nonprofit homes.</li> </ul>
22.07.2020	<p>COVID-19 and long-term care facilities: Does ownership matter?</p>	<p>Canadian Medical Association Journal / Commentary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research (above) has shown that for-profit ownership of long-term care (LTC) homes has been relevant to patterns of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreaks and deaths in Ontario; this is related to building characteristics and chain status of owners.</li> <li>• For-profit ownership has been related to lower LTC staffing levels in research comparing for-profit and nonprofit facilities.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent research has shown an association between lower nurse staffing levels and worse COVID-19–related outcomes in LTC facilities.</li> <li>Long-term care policy should prioritize funding and mandating sufficient staffing levels based on the available evidence.</li> </ul>
22.07.2020	Thrust into the Spotlight: COVID-19 Focuses Media Attention on Nursing Homes	The Journals of Gerontology: Series B / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This study sheds light on the agenda setting role of the media during the COVID-19 crisis by examining trends in nursing home (NH) coverage in four leading national newspapers-The New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today, and Los Angeles Times.</li> <li>Keyword searches of the Nexis Uni database identified 2,039 NH-related articles published from September 2018 to June 2020. Trends in the frequency of NH coverage and its tone (negative) and prominence (average words, daily article count, opinion piece) were examined.</li> <li>Overall, findings reveal marked growth in the frequency and number of prominent and negative NH articles during the COVID-19 crisis.</li> <li>The increased prominence of coverage has implications for the perceived importance of addressing pre-existing deficits and the devastating consequences of the pandemic for NHs.</li> </ul>
24.07.2020	Changing patterns of mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic: Population-based modelling to understand palliative care implications	Palliative Medicine / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the first 10 weeks of the pandemic in England and Wales, there were 101,614 baseline deaths, 41,105 COVID-19 deaths and 14,520 additional deaths. Deaths in care homes increased by 220%, while home and hospital deaths increased by 77% and 90%, respectively. Hospice deaths fell by 20%. Additional deaths were among older people (86% aged <math>\geq</math> 75 years), and most occurred in care homes (56%) and at home (43%). We estimate that 22% (13%–31%) of COVID-19 deaths occurred among people who might have been in their last year of life in the absence of the pandemic.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a surge in palliative care needs. Health and social care systems must ensure availability of palliative care to support people with severe COVID-19, particularly in care homes.</li> </ul>
24.07.2020	COVID-19 and Nursing Home Residents' Rights	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the core resident's rights is the right to spend time with visitors of their choosing.</li> <li>• The restriction of rights is concerning, even in the face of a global pandemic.</li> <li>• Asks how we can keep residents safe while protecting their right to self-determination and choice</li> <li>• Recommendations for safer reopening are outlined</li> </ul>
24.07.2020	Prognostic value of lung ultrasound in older nursing home residents affected by Covid-19	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lung ultrasound is able to significantly predict mortality in nursing home residents affected by COVID-19, suggesting that this simple tool can be routinely used in this setting instead of more invasive techniques available only in hospital.</li> </ul>
27.07.2020	Expanding frontiers of risk management: care safety in nursing home during COVID-19 pandemic	International Journal for Quality in Health Care / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention and control measures for SARS-CoV-2 infection in nursing homes should be planned before a possible outbreak of COVID-19 occurs.</li> <li>• Each facility should identify a properly trained contact person—also external—for the prevention and control of infections, who can refer to a multidisciplinary support committee and who is in close contact with the local health authorities.</li> </ul>
28.07.2020	Increased risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection in staff working across different care homes: enhanced Covid-19 outbreak investigations in London care homes	Journal of Infection / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% of 250 staff working in 6 care homes with a COVID-19 outbreak were SARS-CoV-2 positive.</li> <li>• SARS-CoV-2 positivity was similar (15-17%) in staff with regular, occasional or no resident contact.</li> <li>• SARS-CoV-2 positivity was 4-fold higher in staff working across different care homes.</li> <li>• Whole genome sequencing identified distinct clusters involving staff only.</li> </ul>

<p>28.07.2020</p>	<p>From "Coffin Dodger" to "Boomer Remover:" Outbreaks of Ageism in Three Countries with Divergent Approaches to Coronavirus Control</p>	<p>Journals of Gerontology Series B / Article</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compares responses to coronavirus control in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, three countries in which public ageism erupted over the social and economic costs of protecting older adults from the disease.</li> <li>• Official policies in the three countries were similar in one respect: nursing home visits would be curtailed because of the high risk of death among residents who contracted the virus.</li> <li>• Claims that official policies to isolate older adults during Covid-19 have accelerated ageism.</li> </ul>
<p>29.07.2020</p>	<p>Characteristics and Quality of US Nursing Homes Reporting Cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)</p>	<p>JAMA Network Open / Research Letter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective was to describe the characteristics and quality of nursing homes with COVID-19 cases in states where public health departments have begun to publicly report their statuses.</li> <li>• Found that rates of deficiencies and complaints, defined as failures to meet or allegations of noncompliance with federal requirements, were higher in nursing homes that reported COVID-19 cases. The largest difference between nursing homes with and without COVID-19 cases was observed in county-level rates of COVID-19, suggesting that when the surrounding population case rate is high, area nursing homes are at a high risk of infections.</li> </ul>
<p>29.07.2020</p>	<p>Readying the NHS and social care for the COVID-19 peak: HC405</p>	<p>House of Commons Public Accounts Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raises particular concerns about the decision to discharge 25,000 patients from hospitals into care homes without making sure all were first tested for COVID-19, a decision that remained in force even after it became clear people could transfer the virus without ever having symptoms, and the Government's failure to provide adequate PPE for the social care sector.</li> <li>• Recommends that adult social care should be given equal support to the NHS and they should be considered as two parts of a single system, adequately funded and with clear accountability arrangements.</li> </ul>

## Preprints (non-peer reviewed)

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
26.07.2020	<a href="#">Comparison of viral levels in individuals with or without symptoms at time of COVID-19 testing among 32,480 residents and staff of nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Massachusetts.</a>	MedRxiv / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between April 9 and June 9, 2020, nasopharyngeal swabs from 32,480 unique individuals comprising staff and residents of the majority of nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Massachusetts were tested.</li> <li>• Of the individuals who tested positive, 70.8% of residents and 92.4% of staff lacked symptoms at the time of testing.</li> <li>• Found strikingly similar distributions of viral load in patients with or without symptoms at the time of testing during the local peak of the epidemic; as the epidemic waned, individuals without symptoms at the time of testing had lower viral loads.</li> <li>• Because the distributions of viral loads in infected individuals irrespective of symptomatology are very similar, existing testing modalities that have been validated for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA in symptomatic patients should perform similarly in individuals without symptoms at the time of testing.</li> </ul>

## Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 21.07.2020	<a href="#">COVID-19 Guidance on visitations to Residential Care Facilities</a>	Health Protection Surveillance Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated visitor guidance due to take effect from 29 July.</li> </ul>
Updated 23.07.2020	<a href="#">Considerations for Retirement Communities and Independent Living Facilities</a>	Centers for Disease Control & Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This document is for administrators of retirement communities and independent living facilities that are not healthcare facilities, and offers considerations for ways in</li> </ul>

			which administrators can help protect residents, workers, visitors, and communities and slow the spread of COVID-19.
24.07.2020	Preventing and managing COVID-19 across long-term care services	WHO / Policy Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This policy brief provides 11 policy objectives and key action points to prevent and manage COVID-19 across long-term care. Its intended audience is policy makers and authorities (national, subnational and local) involved in the COVID-19 pandemic. The brief builds on currently available evidence on the measures taken to prevent, prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic across long-term care services including care providers.</li> </ul>
Updated 27.07.2020	Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund	Department of Health & Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets out the infection control measures that the infection control fund will support, including information on the distribution of funds and reporting requirements.</li> <li>The primary purpose of this fund is to support adult social care providers, including those with whom the local authority does not have a contract, to reduce the rate of COVID-19 transmission in and between care homes and support wider workforce resilience.</li> <li>A small percentage of it may be used to support domiciliary care providers and support wider workforce resilience to deal with COVID-19 infections.</li> </ul>
28.07.2020	Interim Public Health, Infection Prevention & Control Guidelines on: Admissions, Transfers to and Discharges from Residential Care Facilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic	Health Protection Surveillance Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCFs should put in place clear processes that facilitate the return of residents from an acute setting and the admission of new residents, where it is clinically safe to do so, while paying careful attention to standard precautions, and that residents and clients and their significant persons must be informed of the issues and risks of decisions related to their care and that their preferences are taken into account in applying this guidance.</li> </ul>

## Statistical Reports

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 24.07.2020	<a href="#">COVID-19: number of outbreaks in care homes - management information</a>	Public Health England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly number and percentage of care homes reporting a suspected or confirmed outbreak of COVID-19 to PHE by local authorities, regions and PHE centres.</li> </ul>
Updated 28.07.2020	<a href="#">Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England</a>	Office for National Statistics & Care Quality Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provisional counts of deaths in care homes caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) by local authority up to week ending 24 July.</li> </ul>
Updated 28.07.2020	<a href="#">Notifications of deaths of residents related to COVID-19 in adult care homes: 1 March to 24 July 2020</a>	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The data presented here are based on the Notifications of Service User Deaths received by Care Inspectorate Wales from adult care homes which relate to their residents. The location of death may be in the care home, in hospital or another location.</li> </ul>
29.07.2020	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): adult care homes - additional data</a>	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly data on COVID-19 in adult care homes in Scotland, including:</li> <li>Testing for COVID-19 in adult care homes in Scotland split by care homes with confirmed Covid-19 and without confirmed Covid-19, presented by NHS Health Board;</li> <li>Deaths reported to Care Inspectorate - the number of deaths reported by adult care homes, including COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related deaths.</li> </ul>

## Editorials and News

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
24.07.2020	<a href="#">COVID-19-related deaths in long-term care: The moral failure to care and prepare</a>	Nursing Ethics / Editorial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This commentary is a call to draw attention to the current care crisis in LTC facilities. Considers the following points:</li> <li>Devaluation of care work;</li> <li>LTC settings were already struggling with chronic understaffing;</li> <li>Fragility and dependency negatively perceived as a burden;</li> <li>A ban on visitors and isolation of residents.</li> </ul>



<p>29.07.2020</p>	<p>Minister for Mental Health and Older People welcomes the latest visiting guidance for nursing homes</p>	<p>Government of Ireland Department of Health / Press Release</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mary Butler TD, Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People today welcomed the publication of the latest visiting guidance for nursing homes which is due to take effect from 29 July.</li> </ul>
<p>29.07.2020</p>	<p>COVID-19 risk factors vary for nursing home staff, residents</p>	<p>CIDRAP - Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, University of Minnesota / News</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on the study published yesterday in the Journal of Infection which found that staff working at more than one London nursing home during the peak of the UK COVID-19 outbreak had a quadruple risk of infection.</li> <li>• Also comments on the research letter in JAMA Network Open showing that US nursing homes that reported COVID-19 cases also had high numbers of deficiencies and substantiated complaints citing failures to comply with federal infection-control requirements.</li> </ul>