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Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

Prevention and control of COVID-19 in home care/care homes settings
1st October 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.

This week's digest includes: from the UK, a survey of COVID-19 related social support closures and their effects on older people, people with dementia, and carers; a rapid review of different national guidelines on infection prevention and control of COVID-19 in older adults living in long-term care facilities; a study of asymptomatic carriage rates and case-fatality of SARS-CoV-2 infection in residents and staff in Irish nursing homes; a Dutch study of the perspectives of relatives of nursing home residents on the nursing home visiting restrictions; and a review of the views of older people on the COVID-19 pandemic as they were expressed in letters to major UK national newspapers. Finally, a summary of recent published reports, guidance and statistics, including a report from the Institute of Employment Studies on the potential impact of COVID-19 government policy on the adult social care workforce and updates on a number of policies from across the devolved administrations.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
18.09.2020	Preventing COVID-19 Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Facilities Through Preemptive Testing of Residents and Staff Members — Fulton County, Georgia, March–May 2020	Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTCFs in which testing was conducted after a confirmed case of COVID-19 were found to have significantly higher proportions of infected residents and staff members at initial testing and after 4 weeks of follow-up compared with those testing as a preventive measure. • The majority of LTCFs testing as a preventive measure identified an infection, although initial prevalence was significantly lower and fewer cases occurred during follow-up. • Proactive testing of LTCF residents and staff members might prevent large COVID-19 outbreaks in LTCFs through early identification and timely infection prevention and control response.
18.09.2020	A UK survey of COVID-19 related social support closures and their effects on older people, people with dementia, and carers	International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The survey captured demographic and postcode data, social support service usage before and after COVID-19 public health measures, current quality of life, depression, and anxiety. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to explore the relationship between social support service variations and anxiety and well-being. • Five hundred and sixty-nine participants completed a UK-wide online and telephone survey between April and May 2020, (61 people with dementia, 285 unpaid carers, and 223 older adults). • The mean hours of weekly social support service usage and the number of people having accessed various services was significantly reduced post COVID-19. • Higher variations in social support service hours significantly predicted increased levels of anxiety in people with dementia and older adults, and lower levels of mental well-being in unpaid carers and older adults. • Being unable to access social support services due to COVID contributed to worse quality of life and anxiety in those affected by dementia and older adults across the UK.
24.09.2020	Older People in the Context of COVID-19: A European Perspective	Journal of Gerontological Social Work / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In many areas, COVID-19 has either exacerbated already existing or created new inequalities in relation to specific parts of the population. Older individuals are one group in society that has been widely

			<p>impacted, while social isolation/shielding measures have placed them in higher risk of loneliness, isolation, financial deprivation and mental health challenges, to name a few.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commentary reflects on such inequalities across four European nations (UK, Republic of Ireland, Finland, Spain) and draws attention to the critical role of Gerontological Social Work (GSW), while emphasizing the ways in which social work can intervene. • Identifies common concerns for the rights of older people that span across all four nations, and identifies significant roles for GSW practitioners at the individual, community and policy levels.
25.09.2020	Preventing the transmission of COVID-19 and other coronaviruses in older adults aged 60 years and above living in long-term care: a rapid review	Systematic Reviews / Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective was to examine the current guidelines for infection prevention and control (IPAC) of COVID-19 or other coronaviruses in adults 60 years or older living in long-term care facilities (LTCF). • Nine clinical practice guidelines (CPGs) were included. The most common recommendation in the CPGs was establishing surveillance and monitoring systems followed by mandating the use of PPE; physically distancing or cohorting residents; environmental cleaning and disinfection; promoting hand and respiratory hygiene among residents, staff, and visitors; and providing sick leave compensation for staff. • Current evidence suggests robust surveillance and monitoring along with support for IPAC initiatives are key to preventing the spread of COVID-19 in LTCF. However, there are significant gaps in the current recommendations especially with regard to the movement of staff between LTCF and their role as possible transmission vectors.
28.09.2020	Asymptomatic carriage rates and case-fatality of SARS-CoV-2 infection in residents and staff in Irish nursing homes	Age and Ageing / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forty-five nursing homes were surveyed, requesting details on occupancy, size, COVID-19 outbreak, outbreak timing, total symptomatic/asymptomatic cases, and outcomes for residents from 29/02/2020–22/05/2020. • Surveys were returned from 62.2% (28/45) of NHs (2043 residents, 2,303 beds). Three-quarters (21/28) had COVID-19 outbreaks (1741 residents, 1972 beds). • Median time from first COVID-19 case in Ireland to first case in these NHs was 27.0 days.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident incidence was 43.9% (764/1741): 40.8% (710/1741) laboratory-confirmed, with 27.2% (193/710) asymptomatic, and 3.1% (54/1741) clinically-suspected. Resident case-fatality was 27.6% (211/764) for combined laboratory-confirmed/clinically-suspected COVID-19. • Similar proportions of residents in NHs with “early-stage” (<28 days) versus “later-stage” outbreaks developed COVID-19. • Lower proportions of residents in “early” outbreak NHs had recovered compared to those with “late” outbreaks (37.4% vs 61.7%; $\chi^2 = 56.9$, $P < 0.001$). • Of 395 NH staff across twelve sites with confirmed COVID-19, 24.7% (99/398) were asymptomatic. • There was a significant correlation between the proportion of staff with symptomatic COVID-19 and resident numbers with confirmed/suspected COVID-19 (Spearman’s rho = 0.81, $P < 0.001$). • This study demonstrates the significant impact of COVID-19 on the NH sector. Systematic point-prevalence testing is necessary to reduce risk of transmission from asymptomatic carriers and manage outbreaks.
<p>28.09.2020</p>	<p>Older Adults Post-Incarceration: Restructuring Long-Term Services and Supports in the Time of COVID-19</p>	<p>Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Article</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled nursing facilities, nursing homes, assisted living, adult foster homes, and informal care from family and friends compose LTSS for older adults, but their utilization suffers from access and payment complexities, especially for older adults post-incarceration. A combination of public-private partnerships, utilization of health professional trainees, and unique approaches to informal caregiver support, including direct compensation to caregivers, could help older adults re-entering our communities following prison. • Long-standing gaps in US LTSS are revealed by the coronavirus pandemic. Older adults entering our communities from prison are particularly vulnerable and need unique solutions to aging care as they face stigma and access challenges not typically encountered by the general population.
<p>29.09.2020</p>	<p>Evaluating perspectives of relatives of nursing home residents on the nursing home visiting restrictions during the</p>	<p>Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Article</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study aimed to capture perspectives from the relatives of nursing home residents on nursing home visiting restrictions via an online survey. • Satisfaction of communication access to nursing home residents was highest when respondents had the possibility to communicate with

	<p>COVID-19 crisis: a Dutch cross-sectional survey study</p>		<p>nursing home residents by nurses informing them via telephone, contact behind glass, and contact outside maintaining physical distance. Satisfaction rates increased when respondents had multiple opportunities to stay in contact with residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents were concerned that residents had increased loneliness (76%), sadness (66%), and decreased quality of life (62%) while study respondents reported personal sadness (73%) and fear (26%). • There was no consensus amongst respondents if adverse effects of the visiting restrictions outweighed the protective effect for nursing home residents. Respondents expressed the need for increased information, communication options, and better safety protocols.
<p>29.09.2020</p>	<p>Diagnostic Sensitivity of Nasopharyngeal RT-PCR in a Long-Term Care Home Outbreak</p>	<p>Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Research Letter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sought to better define the true sensitivity of nasopharyngeal testing against a broad clinical definition in a long-term care home setting. • 113 patients were included, all of whom underwent at least 1 nasopharyngeal swab for COVID-19. • Ninety-seven (85.8%) of 113 residents had confirmed COVID-19 infection; 19 patients required hospitalization and 21 died (21.6% case-fatality). There were 5 additional non-COVID-19 deaths during the study period. In those with confirmed SARS-CoV-2, 68.0% (66/97) had fever, 52.6% (51/97) had cough, 7.2% (7/97) had sore throat or rhinorrhea, 9.3% (9/97) had dyspnea or hypoxia, and 15.5% (15/97) remained asymptomatic throughout the study period. • Between March 20 and April 13, symptomatic residents were tested, and then after April 14 a combination of symptomatic testing and asymptomatic screening was conducted. • To calculate sensitivity, those who remained asymptomatic and also had negative SARS-CoV-2 testing (7 residents) were excluded, as they were felt to represent true negatives, leaving 106 residents included. Of the 97 positive residents, 96 were positive on the first test with a resulting sensitivity of 90.6% (96/106) - a relatively high sensitivity, suggesting RT-PCR for SARS-CoV-2 by nasopharyngeal swab has a high sensitivity in this cohort of older long-term care home residents.

Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Sept 2020	Potential Impact of COVID-19 Government Policy on the Adult Social Care Workforce	Institute for Employment Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of report was to identify how government COVID-19 related policy may have impacted upon the adult social care workforce in England. The project had a focus on Test and Trace, and the ways in which policy changes may have enabled and incentivised the necessary behaviours of care workers. The working hypothesis has been that care workers' behaviours are likely to be driven by a combination of commitment to those they care for, risks to themselves and their families from COVID-19 and impacts on incomes. Government policy changes were identified based on the assumed likelihood to impact on these factors.
23.09.2020	Written Statement: Update on care home visiting	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the publication of the guidance on 28 August to enable indoor visiting to resume, there has been a general increase in coronavirus cases across Wales and some sharp and sudden rises in some parts of Wales. This has resulted in community transmission, and local restrictions being introduced in several local authority areas in South Wales. • Local authorities have made the decision to temporarily suspend visiting to care homes in all but the most compassionate of cases to protect residents from the risk of infection and illness. • Gives support to the need for these decisions to be made locally and that opportunities for visiting continue to be sustained in areas where it remains safe to do so.
24.09.2020	Caged and Forgotten – older people's letters to the editor about COVID-19: ARK research update	Access Research Knowledge (ARK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on views as they were expressed in letters to major UK national newspapers such as the Guardian, the Telegraph and the Times as well as tabloids such as Mail Online and The Express, and Sunday papers such as the Sunday Times. • Highlights 3 key points: older people are not all the same, and a policy that treats them as such is bound to fail; the pandemic lays bare the absence of older people's voices from emergency

			<p>situations; what happens in social care settings has huge implications for other healthcare sectors. Comments that under-funding and ignoring social care has profound implications for the broader health of a nation.</p>
24.09.2020	<p>Delivering care at home and housing support services during the COVID-19 pandemic Care Inspectorate inquiry into decision making and partnership working</p>	<p>Care Inspectorate Scotland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report draws together the views of health and social care partnerships and service providers in Scotland about their experience of care at home and housing support services during the first phase of this pandemic. • It sets out the findings of a Care Inspectorate’s inquiry which investigated how these services were prioritised to help ensure service delivery continuity; what were the known impacts on people who experience care; how the risks to service delivery were mitigated; how effective were the partnership working arrangements; and what were the recovery plans for services. The inquiry found that the most robust responses to the challenges and uncertainties of the pandemic involved an integrated approach and included: targeting resources to meet gaps and pressures as they occurred and reviewing and refining approaches as new information came to light; maintaining a focus on how staff remained confident, safe and secure by addressing the challenges of PPE, guidance and testing; responding quickly with additional financial support and guarantees to ensure services remained viable and that the commitment was not undermined by unpredictable reductions in income and additional costs; investing in staff terms and conditions to reduce disincentives to testing and self-isolating when required; and working together across health and social care, service providers and the community.
28.09.2020	<p>Care Home Visiting in Wales: Position Statement</p>	<p>Older People’s Commissioner for Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raises concerns about the impact of suspending care home visits on older people’s health, well-being and quality of life. • On August 28, the Welsh Government published updated guidance on enabling safe care home visiting. Since the guidance was published more homes have been opening their doors to visitors and enabling older people and their loved ones to be reunited.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner calls for renewed action to enable visits to continue with appropriate measures to ensure the safety of residents and staff. By taking a more individualised approach, and assessing the risk for people and places on a case-by-case basis, there could be opportunities to enable visits where it has been assessed that potential risks to residents and staff could be managed through measures such as the use of PPE, social distancing and hygiene measures, and holding visits in outdoor spaces.
30.09.2020	Care Home actions relating to COVID: FOI release	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details on all advice provided and published each day relating to care home actions relating to Covid including each article added and removed and the dates that changes happened. Lists a timeline of the various publications and revisions.

Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 17.09.2020	COVID-19 - Information and guidance for care home settings	Health Protection Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides advice about COVID-19 for those working in residential care home settings. A control measure tool for the control of incidents and outbreaks in Social or Community Care & Residential Settings, specific for COVID-19, is also available here.
Updated 21.09.2020	Interim Public Health, Infection Prevention & Control Guidelines on: Admissions, Transfers to and Discharges from Long Term Residential Care Facilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic	Health Protection Surveillance Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes guidance on: The role of COVID-19 testing in assisting with decision-making regarding transfers to congregated settings; Procedure for testing of patients pre-transfer/admission to a LTRCF; Patient placement requirements as part of transfer protocols; Transfer of patients post COVID-19 recovery; Admission of patients with no diagnosis or clinical suspicion of COVID-19 from acute hospital to LTRCF;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission of patients from community / home settings; • Residents who become symptomatic during admission; • Cessation of new admissions to a facility during LTRCF COVID-19 Outbreak.
Updated 23.09.2020	COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Health and Social Care Workers who visit homes to deliver healthcare	Health Protection Surveillance Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This document is intended for all those health and social care workers who visit homes and provide healthcare and personal care in the home of the client such as Public Health Nurses and Homecare Support Assistants. This guidance is also relevant to those who plan for and manage the delivery of these services.
Updated 25.09.2020	COVID-19: Regional Principles for Visiting in Care Settings in Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Department of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting arrangements have been further limited as a result of the Northern Ireland Executive’s decision to invoke limited additional restrictions across the entire region with effect from 22 September 2020.
Updated 28.09.2020	COVID-19: how to work safely in care homes	Public Health England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guidance includes: • PPE recommendations for care home staff; • frequently asked questions on the use of PPE in care homes; • examples which help to identify the correct use of PPE when undertaking activities that require physical contact or activities which do not require physical contact but are carried out in close proximity to residents; • guides to putting on and taking off PPE for care homes.
Updated 28.09.2020	COVID-19: management of staff and exposed patients and residents in health and social care settings	Public Health England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This guidance provides advice on the management of staff and patients or residents in health and social care settings according to exposures, symptoms and test results. It includes: • staff with symptoms of COVID-19; • staff return to work criteria; • patient exposures in hospital; • resident exposures in care settings.
Updated 29.09.2020	COVID-19: how to work safely in domiciliary care in England	Public Health England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This resource is primarily for care workers and providers delivering care in the following settings: visiting homecare; extra care housing; live-in homecare.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provides guidance on the use of PPE during sustained COVID-19 transmission in the UK, and explains how PPE guidance applies to the homecare (domiciliary care) setting. • Includes guides for putting on and taking off PPE.
Updated 01.10.2020	COVID-19 Guidance on visitations to Long Term Residential Care Facilities	Health Protection Surveillance Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated to reflect the Five Level Framework –Table of Public Health Restrictive Measures which was introduced on 11 September.

Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 25.09.2020	COVID-19: Care Homes in England – Update	Centre for Evidence Based Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights recent changes in the number of outbreaks in care homes.
29.09.2020	Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England	Office for National Statistics & Care Quality Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisional counts of deaths in care homes caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) by local authority up to week ending 25 September.
29.09.2020	Notifications of deaths of residents related to COVID-19 in adult care homes: 1 March to 25 September 2020	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
30.09.2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19): adult care homes - additional data	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly data on COVID-19 in adult care homes in Scotland up to 27 September, including: • 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; • Deaths reported to Care Inspectorate - the number of deaths reported by adult care homes, including COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related deaths.

Editorials and News

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
28.09.2020	Commissioner calls for renewed action to enable safe visits to care homes in Wales	Older People's Commissioner for Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Older People's Commissioner for Wales has raised concerns about the impact of suspending care home visits on older people's health, well-being and quality of life, and has called for renewed action to enable visits to continue with appropriate measures to ensure the safety of residents and staff.