



Public Health  
England

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# Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

**Prevention and control of COVID-19 in home care/care homes settings**

**19<sup>th</sup> November 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 Canada, further evidence of the importance of social distancing measures in nursing homes; and use of anonymised mobile phone data to monitor the impact of public policy interventions to limit movement of care staff between long-term care homes; from the USA, lessons for primary care in managing older people at home during the COVID-19 pandemic; and benefits of changes to advanced care planning for nursing homes residents. From the UK, use of genomics and epidemiology to understand transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in care homes; a national cohort study of excess mortality from COVID-19 in English care homes; and further evidence of the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of key workers.

Finally, summaries of recently published reports, guidance and statistics, including the impact of COVID-19 on deaths among people with learning disabilities and on the disruption to the health and social care of older people in England.



**Peer-Reviewed Articles**

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
05.11.2020	High prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in care homes affected by COVID-19: Prospective cohort study, England	EClinicalMedicine / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In six London care homes experiencing a large outbreak of COVID-19, 95–100% of staff and surviving residents who had initially tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR RNA on nasal swab had detectable SARS-CoV-2 antibodies five weeks later.</li> <li>• Overall, more than two-thirds of residents and staff members had detectable antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 irrespective of their nasal swab results or symptom status. Neutralising antibodies were present in 89% of seropositive individuals and were not associated with age, sex, initial nasal swab positivity, presence of symptoms or resident/staff status.</li> </ul>
09.11.2020	Association Between Nursing Home Crowding and COVID-19 Infection and Mortality in Ontario, Canada	JAMA Internal Medicine / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In this cohort study that included more than 78 000 residents of 618 nursing homes in Ontario, Canada, COVID-19 mortality in homes with low crowding was less than half (578 of 46 028 residents [1.3%]) than that of homes with high crowding (874 of 32 579 residents [2.7%]).</li> <li>• Shared bedrooms and bathrooms in nursing homes are associated with larger and deadlier COVID-19 outbreaks.</li> </ul>
11.11.2020	Intergroup ‘Skype’ Quiz Sessions in Care Homes to Reduce Loneliness and Social Isolation in Older People	Geriatrics / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Twenty-two residents across three British care homes engaged with each other using ‘Skype quiz’ sessions with the support of staff once a month over an eight-month trial.</li> <li>• Analysis of the field notes revealed five themes of: residents with dementia remember faces not technology, inter and intra connectedness, re-gaining sense of self and purpose, situational loneliness overcome, and organisational issues create barriers to long-term implementation.</li> </ul>
11.11.2020	The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Long-Term Care Facilities Worldwide: An Overview on International Issues	BioMed Research International / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scope of this paper was to present the latest data regarding the COVID-19 spread in care homes worldwide, identifying causes and possible solutions that would limit the outbreaks in this overlooked category of population.</li> <li>• Authors conclude that establishing national databases that would register all nursing home residents and their health status would be of great help in the future not only for managing the ongoing pandemic but also for assessing the level of care that is needed in this setting.</li> </ul>

12.11.2020	"At home, with care": Lessons from New York City Home-based Primary Care practices managing COVID-19	Journal of the American Geriatrics Society / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYC-area HBPC providers adapted care delivery and operations rapidly during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Keeping older, medically complex patients safe in their homes required considerable flexibility, transparency, teamwork and partnerships with outside providers.</li> <li>• HBPC providers may apply these lessons and consider resources needed to prepare for future challenges.</li> </ul>
12.11.2020	Nothing much has changed: COVID-19 nursing home cases and deaths follow fall surges	Journal of the American Geriatrics Society / Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The objective in this study was to examine whether the most recent (September/October) surge in community spread was associated with a surge in nursing home cases and deaths.</li> <li>• Nursing home staff and resident cases revealed a clear surge across the six US states since early September, with weekly staff cases more than tripling to 930 in the week ending October 25 and weekly resident more than quadrupling to 716. By October, resident deaths also increased, with the four weeks in October showing the highest four consecutive weeks since reporting began.</li> </ul>
12.11.2020	Time to Stop the Tragedy in Spanish Nursing Homes during the COVID-19 Pandemic	Journal of the American Geriatrics Society / Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article outline the effect of COVID-19 on Spanish nursing homes.</li> <li>• Authors conclude that the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the weaknesses of the current NH care model, with regulatory failures leading to lack of delimitation of responsibilities, funding shortfalls, a market-oriented model, and heterogeneous support from the healthcare system.</li> </ul>
12.11.2020	Unmet clinical needs for COVID-19 tests in UK health and social care settings	PLOS ONE / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This study sought to identify and prioritize unmet clinical needs for COVID-19 tests across different settings within the UK health and social care sector via an online survey of health and social care professionals and policymakers. Four hundred and forty-seven responses were received between 22nd May and 15th June 2020.</li> <li>• Hospitals and care homes were recognized as the settings with the greatest unmet clinical need for COVID-19 diagnostics, despite reporting more access to laboratory molecular testing than other settings. Care home staff expressed an urgency for screening at the front door to protect high-risk residents and limit transmission.</li> </ul>
13.11.2020	Developing a clinical screening tool for identifying COVID-19 infection in older people dwelling in residential aged care services	Australasian Journal on Aging / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A qualitative study was conducted using a multi-modal approach involving examination of existing literature and national guidelines for COVID-19 clinical screening, formulation of a discussion document with peer review and feasibility testing of a prototype screening tool.</li> <li>• The qualitative analysis identified the important clinical elements to include were a lower threshold for temperature, occurrence of a recent fall and change in functional status. The new elements also had to be</li> </ul>

			<p>simple and feasible to implement. Overall feedback was positive with all participants recommending the use of the new tool.</p>
13.11.2020	<p>Pattern of SARS-CoV-2 infection among dependant elderly residents living in long-term care facilities in Marseille, France, March–June 2020</p>	<p>International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents / Article</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data from 1691 elderly residents and 1000 members of staff were retrospectively collected through interviewing the medical teams in 24 LTCFs and using the hospitals' electronic health recording systems.</li> <li>• SARS-CoV-2 detection among residents (226, 13.4%) was significantly higher than among staff members (87, 8.7%). Of the 226 infected residents, 37 (16.4%) were detected on a case-by-case basis due to their COVID-19 symptoms and 189 (83.6%) were detected through mass screening. Most (77.0%) had possible COVID-19 symptoms, including respiratory symptoms and signs (44.5%) and fever (46.5%); 23.0% were asymptomatic.</li> <li>• The high proportion of asymptomatic COVID-19 patients and independent factors for mortality suggest that early diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 patients in LTCFs may be effective in saving lives.</li> </ul>
16.11.2020	<p>A Survey for Examining the Effects of COVID-19 and Infection Control Measures in Older Persons With Mild Cognitive Impairment and Dementia and Their Caregivers</p>	<p>Frontiers in Psychiatry / Article</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authors develop two versions (i.e., patients and informants/caregivers) of a survey designed to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic during the first Italian lockdown period (11 March –4 May 2020) on Memory Clinic outpatients with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) or dementia, and their caregivers.</li> <li>• Authors believe that this instrument will be useful as a tool to collect information and help clinicians to promptly respond to changes in patients' cognitive, psychiatric, and somatic health needs, and to help for future planning in possible subsequent quarantine periods.</li> </ul>
18.11.2020	<p>Changes in Advance Care Planning for Nursing Home residents during the COVID-19 pandemic</p>	<p>Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Article</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthcare practitioners conducted ACP conversations proactively with residents or their surrogate decision makers at 15 nursing homes in a metropolitan area of the Southwestern United States between April 1, 2020-May 30, 2020.</li> <li>• Prior to the most recent ACP discussion, 361 residents were full code status and the rest were Out of Hospital Do Not Resuscitate (DNR). Of the individuals with Out of Hospital DNR, 188 residents also chose DNH. After the ACP conversation, 88 residents opted to change from full code status to Out of Hospital DNR.</li> <li>• Proactive ACP conversations during COVID-19 increased DNH from less than a quarter to almost half among the nursing home residents.</li> </ul>

## Preprints

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
11.11.2020	Genomic epidemiology of COVID-19 in care homes in the East of England	MedRxiv / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authors report on 6,600 COVID-19 cases from the East of England, 1,167 of which were identified as residents from 337 care homes. Older age and being a care home resident were associated with increased mortality. By integrating genomic and temporal data we defined 409 viral clusters within the 292 homes, indicating two different patterns - outbreaks among care home residents and independent introductions with limited onward transmission.</li> <li>• Approximately 70% of residents in the genomic analysis were admitted to hospital during the study period, providing extensive opportunities for transmission between care homes and hospitals.</li> </ul>
13.11.2020	Care homes, their communities, and resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic: interim findings from a qualitative study	MedRxiv / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ten managers of registered care homes in the East Midlands of England were interviewed by videoconference or phone about their experiences of the crisis from a structured organisational perspective.</li> <li>• This study identified how interdependency between care home organisations, the surrounding community, and key statutory and non-statutory organisations beyond their locality, shaped decision making and care delivery during the pandemic.</li> </ul>
13.11.2020	Excess mortality for care home residents during the first 23 weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic in England: a national cohort study	MedRxiv / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 7th August 2020 there were 29,542 (95%CI: 25,176 to 33,908) excess deaths in all care homes. Excess deaths represented 6.5% (95%CI: 5.5% to 7.4%) of all care home beds, higher in nursing (8.4%) than residential (4.6%) homes. 64.7% (95%CI: 56.4% to 76.0%) of the excess deaths were confirmed/suspected COVID-19. Almost all excess deaths were recorded in the quarter (27.4%) of homes with any COVID-19 fatalities.</li> <li>• The odds of experiencing COVID-19 attributable deaths were higher in homes providing nursing services; to older people and/or with dementia; among larger (vs. small) homes; belonging to a large provider/brand.</li> </ul>
13.11.2020	Mental Health of Keyworkers in the UK during the COVID-19 Pandemic: a Cross-sectional Analysis of a Community Cohort	MedRxiv / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authors report on the early mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on keyworkers in the UK, as assessed during the first six weeks of nationwide social distancing measures being introduced.</li> <li>• Keyworkers reported significantly higher depression, anxiety, and stress than pre-pandemic population norms. Compared to non-keyworkers, keyworkers were more likely to worry about COVID-19 and perceived</li> </ul>

			they were at higher risk from the virus. This was particularly evident for health and social care keyworkers.
18.11.2020	Impact of a public policy restricting staff mobility between long-term care homes in Ontario, Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic	MedRxiv / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anonymized mobile device location data was used to approximate connectivity between all 623 long-term care homes in Ontario during the 7 weeks before (March 1 - April 21) and after (April 22 - June 13) a public policy restricting staff from working at multiple homes.</li> <li>• Mobility between long-term care homes in Ontario fell sharply after an emergency order by the Ontario government limiting long-term care staff to a single home, though some mobility persisted. Reducing this residual mobility should be a focus of efforts to reduce risk within the long-term care sector during the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> </ul>
18.11.2020	Obesity, old age and frailty are the true risk factors for COVID-19 mortality and not chronic disease or ethnicity	MedRxiv / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After multivariate analysis, male sex, age (per year), morbid obesity, and nursing home residence were independently associated with COVID-19 mortality with no statistically significant association found with chronic diseases or ethnicity.</li> <li>• The nursing home population were less likely to have conventional risk factors including obesity and Type II Diabetes than age matched hospitalized patients. Authors hypothesized that frailty per se is likely to be the driving factor for mortality in COVID-19 nursing home resident patients beyond obesity, diabetes and their associated comorbidities</li> </ul>

## Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
06.11.2020	COVID-19 and disruptions to the health and social care of older people in England	Institute for Fiscal Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This report uses newly available survey data to examine how health and social care has been disrupted among the older population in England in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides evidence of how widespread the disruptions to the use of hospitals, GPs and community and social care services were, and access to prescription medication, from February 2020 to May 2020.</li> </ul>
11.11.2020	How has Covid-19 impacted on care and support at home in Scotland?	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An online survey was carried out to receive views from people who provide, or receive, care and support at home.</li> <li>• There were 700 responses to the survey, including 415 responses from family members of those receiving care at home and unpaid carers and 93 responses from individuals receiving care at home.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A significant theme within the report is around the reduction of care as a result of the pandemic, and suggests many families felt they were 'left to get on with it' and that neighbours had to 'step in' to provide care and support.</li> </ul>
12.11.2020	COVID 19 deaths of people identified as having learning disabilities: summary	Public Health England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID-19 accounted for 54% of deaths of adults with learning disabilities in residential care in the review period, slightly less than for people with learning disabilities generally, but still much more than in the general population.</li> <li>• The rate of COVID-19 deaths for adults with learning disabilities in residential care was higher than the rates of COVID-19 deaths of adults with learning disabilities generally, estimated from LeDeR. It was 2.3 times the rate calculated from actual LeDeR notifications and 1.5 times the estimated rate adjusting for under-notification. This difference is likely in part to reflect the greater age and disability in people in residential care.</li> </ul>
13.11.2020	Designated settings scheme: letters to directors of adult social services	Department of Health and Social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The letters set out arrangements for the designated settings scheme for people discharged to a care home with a positive COVID-19 test.</li> <li>• Also includes an instruction for local authorities to commence identifying and notifying CQC of sufficient local designated accommodation and to work with CQC to assure their compliance with the infection prevention control (IPC) protocol</li> </ul>
13.11.2020	Proposal to regulate to stop movement of staff between care settings	Department of Health and Social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The policy objectives of this consultation are to consult the adult social care sector on the proposal to stop staff movement.</li> <li>• DSCH is proposing to make regulations that create a requirement on residential and nursing care home providers in England to restrict the movement of staff providing personal care or nursing care in their services.</li> </ul>
17.11.2020	Rapid Learning Review of Domiciliary Care in Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Department of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This report reviews the experience of domiciliary care during the pandemic to date and makes recommendations for the way forward.</li> <li>• Service user feedback talked about the kindness, care and continuity that their domiciliary care staff have provided.</li> <li>• Staff struggled with areas such as PPE, training and testing.</li> <li>• The review indicated a need to improve on the support provided for domiciliary care staff. Staff also sometimes felt overlooked and that domiciliary care didn't get the recognition it deserved.</li> </ul>
18.11.2020	COVID-19 Insight: Issue 5	Care Quality Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This month's report focuses on care homes. Key findings from a survey to understand the experience of inpatients who were discharged from</li> </ul>



			hospital from April to May 2020, when the first wave of the pandemic was at its height are presented.
18.11.2020	How care homes managed infection prevention and control during the coronavirus pandemic 2020	Care Quality Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This report sets out what was found when the CQC looked at IPC across 440 care home inspections in August and at the beginning of September 2020.</li> <li>• Through the practice and examples in this report, care home providers, managers and staff have, by and large, responded well to the need to make IPC an even bigger priority.</li> <li>• Effective use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and having up-to-date policies in place were the two areas with the most gaps in assurance.</li> </ul>

## Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 11.11.2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19): looking after people who lack mental capacity	Department of Health and Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for health and social care staff who are caring for, or treating, a person who lacks the relevant mental capacity.</li> <li>• Update reflects the latest guidance and advice for professional visits during the national lockdown, which began on 5 November 2020.</li> </ul>
Updated 18.11.2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19): reducing risk in adult social care	Department of Health and Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A framework for how adult social care employers should assess and reduce risk to their workforce during the coronavirus pandemic.</li> <li>• Update includes new clinical advice and removal of easy read and translated versions pending up-to-date documents being created.</li> </ul>
Updated 18.11.2020	COVID-19: Managing the COVID-19 pandemic in care homes for older people	British Geriatrics Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This guidance has been developed to help care home staff and NHS staff who work with them to support residents through the pandemic.</li> </ul>

## Evidence Summaries

Publication Date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
10.11.2020	<a href="#">The effect of the covid-19 outbreak on people affected by dementia</a>	House of Commons Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence summary outlining evidence demonstrating the effect of Covid-19 on people with dementia.</li> <li>Relevant topics outlined include statistics, health policy, NHS response to the pandemic, shielding, and access to care and support for dementia sufferers.</li> </ul>

## Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
17.11.2020	<a href="#">Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England</a>	Office for National Statistics and Care Quality Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly provisional counts of deaths in care homes caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) by local authority.</li> </ul>
18.11.2020	<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.</li> </ul>

## Editorials and News

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
12.11.2020	<a href="#">Who is caring for the oral health of dependent institutionalised elderly during the COVID-19 pandemic?</a>	Gerodontology / Editorial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The COVID-19 pandemic has, within a rather short period, amplified and intensified the oral health challenges in care homes.</li> <li>Evidence suggests improved oral hygiene and frequent professional oral care can reduce the progression or occurrence of respiratory tract diseases in dependent older patients.</li> <li>There is now an urgent need to re-establish oral health promotion programmes and appropriate delivery of oral healthcare services for dependent older people.</li> </ul>

<p>14.11.2020</p>	<p>Pilot for family members to get regular testing for safer care home visits</p>	<p>Department of Health and Social Care / Press Release</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Named family and friends may soon be able to regularly visit loved ones in care homes as a new testing pilot is launched.</li> <li>• Care homes across Hampshire, Cornwall and Devon will pioneer the new system which will see a designated visitor given access to tests.</li> <li>• Around 20 care homes will be included in the trial before a wider roll-out in December.</li> </ul>
<p>19.11.2020</p>	<p>Expanded study tests immune response of care home staff and residents</p>	<p>Department of Health and Social Care / Press Release</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of the major research study led by University College London (UCL), 14,000 care home residents and staff will be tested quarterly for their immune response to COVID-19. The number of care homes taking part will increase from 100 to 340, testing approximately 4,500 residents and 9,500 staff.</li> </ul>