



# UK Health Security Agency

## Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

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

21<sup>st</sup> January 2022

#### 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 UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Covid-19 evidence digest (including Covid-19 evidence digests produced by Public Health England prior to October 2021), 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 UKHSA [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.

The digest this week includes; from USA, evidence of the effect of old age on the fever response in nursing home residents with SARS-CoV-2; further evidence from California of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on long-term care facilities; impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on care provision and carers; the value of salivary IgG in tracking sero-prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 in nursing homes and in differentiating between natural infection and vaccine induced immunity; from Canada, further evidence of the benefit of booster vaccination in protecting nursing home and assisted living residents from SARS-COV-2; from China, a cross-sectional survey of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on nursing homes; from Germany, evidence of decreased impact of SARS-CoV-2 in hospital and long-term care settings during the third wave of the pandemic.

From the UK, reflections of the views of carers on the need for residential respite care following the pandemic; an analysis and commentary on the initial phase of the uptake of COVID-19 vaccination by care home workers; further evidence of the impact of COVID-19 vaccination in reducing the frequency and duration

of outbreaks in care homes; evidence of the disproportionate impact of SARS-CoV-2 on mortality in care residents during the first wave of the pandemic; and a call for evidence based principles to inform the development of a minimum data set for care homes for older people.

Finally, summaries of other recently published COVID-19 pandemic reports, guidance and statistics.

## Peer-Reviewed Articles

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
12.01.2022	<a href="#">Is it worth it? Carers' views and expectations of residential respite for people living with dementia during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic</a>	Geriatric Psychiatry / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care homes in England closed to visitors, with very few offering opportunities for a short-stay. We investigated impact of Covid-19 on views and expectations of carers of people living with dementia about residential respite.</li> <li>• Three themes were identified in transcripts, relating to impact of Covid-19 on views and expectations of respite: (1) Carers described regularly negotiating risks and stresses of Covid, weighing up how to prevent infection and changing family arrangements to facilitate caring; (2) Carers were balancing different needs, prioritising needs of their relatives while bearing the impact of cumulative caregiving responsibilities. (3) Uncertainty about future residential respite continued, in terms of availability, ongoing restrictions and trustworthy information sources.</li> <li>• Covid-19 may have heightened some of caregiving stressors and there may be an increased need for a break. Views of care homes developed during the pandemic suggest that individual confidence to use respite may need to be rebuilt.</li> </ul>
13.01.2022	<a href="#">An analysis of Public Health England's vaccination data for care home workers immediately preceding a 'Roadmap out of COVID-19 Lockdown'</a>	BJGP Open / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledging the vulnerability of older adult care home residents to COVID-19, the Scientific Advisory Group (SAGE) recommended an 80% vaccine uptake in older adult care home workers. While the rationale behind the 80% remains largely unreported, it was felt to be a critical factor in achieving the aims of the vaccination programme, namely: to open up society; to prevent healthcare from becoming overwhelmed; and to reduce severe illness.</li> <li>• In view of the broad media coverage concerning the vulnerability of care home residents and the negative impact that COVID-19 has had on care homes, we anticipated that vaccine uptake would have been high, in excess of the SAGE target in regions where the infection rate was highest. None of the regions, however, met the SAGE care home vaccination target of 80%.</li> </ul>

13.01.2022	The effect of age on fever response among nursing home residents with SARS-COV-2 infection	Aging Clinical and Experimental Research / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 15,000 veterans in 135 VA nursing homes were systematically tested for SARS-CoV-2 and had daily temperatures assessed from March to August, 2020. Lower baseline temperatures, and in SARS-CoV-2+ , lower maximum temperatures were observed with advancing age.</li> <li>This trend in lower baseline temperatures with age may be attributed to diminished thermoregulatory responses and less thermogenic brown fat seen as part of the normal aging process [1,2,3]. The trend in lower maximum temperatures during SARS-Cov-2 infection may be due to decreased production and transport of pyrogens with aging, as has been speculated to explain diminished fever responses in other infections</li> </ul>
14.01.2022	COVID-19 Across the Landscape of Long-Term Care in Alameda County: Heterogeneity and Disparities	Gerontology and Geriatric medicine / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Throughout the pandemic, public health and long-term care professionals in our urban California county have linked local and state COVID-19 data and performed observational exploratory analyses of the impacts among our diverse long-term care facilities (LTCFs). Case counts from LTCFs through March 2021 included 4309 (65%) in skilled nursing facilities (SNFs), 1667 (25%) in residential care facilities for the elderly (RCFEs), and 273 (4%) in continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs).</li> <li>For all COVID-19 deaths in our jurisdiction, both LTCF and community, 82% of decedents were age 65 or over. Taking a comprehensive, population-based approach across our heterogenous LTCF landscape, we found socioeconomic disparities within COVID-19 cases and deaths of residents and staff.</li> </ul>
14.01.2022	SARS-CoV-2 outbreaks in hospitals and long-term care facilities in Germany: a national observational study	Lancet Regional Health - Europe / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 21 September 2021, there were 4,147,387 SARS-CoV-2 notified cases since March 2020. About 20% of these cases were reported as being related to an outbreak, with 1% of the cases in hospitals and 4% in LTCFs.</li> <li>In the first and second pandemic waves, we observed strong associations in both facility types between SARS-CoV-2 outbreak cases and total number of notified SARS-CoV-2 cases. However, during the third pandemic wave we observed a decline in outbreak cases in both</li> </ul>

			<p>facility types and only a weak association between outbreak cases and all cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The vaccination campaign and non-pharmaceutical interventions have been able to protect vulnerable risk groups in hospitals and LTCFs.</li> </ul>
15.01.2022	<p><a href="#">Antibody Responses to Third-Dose mRNA Vaccines in Nursing Home and Assisted Living Residents</a></p>	<p>Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In this serial cross-sectional analysis, we examined SARS-CoV-2 neutralizing antibody titers after both second and third vaccination in nursing home residents, and after third vaccination in assisted living (also known as retirement home) residents from Ontario, Canada.</li> <li>For the equivalent 12-77 days post vaccine period, residents post third dose had substantially higher neutralization titers for both the wild-type and beta variant (<math>P &lt; .001</math>). For beta variant neutralization, 20.8% (11) of post-second dose residents were below the level of detection compared to none of the post-third dose residents (<math>P &lt; .001</math>).</li> <li>Our data strongly support third-dose vaccine recommendations, and equivalent policies for nursing homes and assisted living settings. Consistent with nonfrail populations, our findings suggest that residents mount a robust humoral response to a third mRNA vaccination, with greater neutralization capacity compared to a second-dose series.</li> </ul>
15.01.2022	<p><a href="#">The Challenges Faced by Nursing Homes During the Early COVID-19 Outbreak</a></p>	<p>Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health / Study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using a cross-sectional design, a self-reported questionnaire was completed by representatives from a convenience sample of 31 nursing homes. All nursing homes caring for 9441 residents in 14 Chinese provinces (Beijing, Hebei, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Anhui, Tianjin, Fujian, Sichuan, Hunan, Guangxi, Guizhou, Yunnan, and Heilongjiang) participated in the survey.</li> <li>The present study shows that the shortages of medical care and higher operating costs are common challenges among the Chinese nursing homes in our sample.</li> <li>Most nursing homes in our sample provided psychological support to residents to prevent or reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation during the COVID-19 outbreak.</li> <li>Our study also found that shortages of epidemic prevention supplies were commonplace. Shortages of personal protective equipment will directly affect the prevention and containment of COVID-19.</li> </ul>

15.01.2022	The Changing Tides of Caregiving During the COVID-19 Pandemic: How Decreasing and Increasing Care Provision Relates to Caregiver Well-Being	The Journals of Gerontology: Series B / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This study uses the 2020 National Health and Aging Trends Study Family Members and Friends COVID-19 questionnaire to explore changes in the amount of care provision during COVID-19 and associations with stress process outcomes of caregiving.</li> <li>• Caregivers were 60.7 years old on average, 69.3% female and 18.6% were non-white. While most caregivers reported no change, 30.5% reported an increase and 11.5% reported a decrease in the amount of pandemic care provided.</li> <li>• Those who changed their care provision during the pandemic predominantly did so to protect their care recipient from COVID-19 exposure. Increasing one's care provision was strongly associated with worse mental health and well-being.</li> </ul>
17.01.2022	Evaluating Immunity to SARS-CoV-2 in Nursing Home Residents using Saliva IgG	Journal of the American Geriatric Society / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We performed salivary IgG sampling of all residents and staff who agreed to testing in a 150-bed skilled nursing facility during three seroprevalence surveys between October 2020 and February 2021. The facility had SARS-CoV-2 outbreaks in May 2020 and November 2020, when 45 of 138 and 37 of 125 residents were infected, respectively; they offered two Federal vaccine clinics in January 2021.</li> <li>• Positive SARS-COV-2 IgG in saliva was concordant with prior infection (Anti N, S, RBD) and vaccination (Anti S, RBD) and remained above positivity threshold for up to 9 months from infection.</li> </ul>
01.02.2022	Investigating the association between COVID-19 vaccination and care home outbreak frequency and duration	Public Health / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This ecological study aimed to investigate the association between the introduction of the vaccination programme and the frequency and duration of COVID-19 outbreaks in Northern Ireland (NI) using routinely available national data.</li> <li>• Care home outbreaks reduced by two-thirds compared to expected following the introduction of the vaccination programme, from a projected 1625 COVID-19 outbreaks (95% prediction interval 1553–1694) between 7 December 2020 and 28 October 2021 to an observed 501.</li> </ul>
01.03.2022	Mortality among Care Home Residents in England during the first and second waves of	Lancet Regional Health - Europe / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On behalf of NHS England we used OpenSAFELY-TPP to calculate monthly age-standardised risks of death due to all causes and COVID-19 among adults aged <math>\geq 65</math> years between 1/2/2019 and 31/03/2021.</li> </ul>

	the COVID-19 pandemic: an observational study of 4.3 million adults over the age of 65		<p>Care home residents were identified using linkage to Care and Quality Commission data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on the mortality of care home residents in England compared to older residents of private homes, but only in the first wave. This may be explained by a degree of acquired immunity, improved protective measures or changes in the underlying frailty of the populations.</li> </ul>
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## Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
14.01.2022	Developing a minimum data set for older adult care homes in the UK: exploring the concept and defining early core principles	Burton, Jennifer; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reforms to social-care in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in the UK and internationally, place data at the heart of proposed innovations, but the principles of what constitutes core, or minimum, data to support care home residents are not well-established, and data often privileges resident health over day-to-day care priorities and quality of life.</li> <li>• This Personal View argues for evidence-based principles to base the development of a UK minimum data set (MDS) for care homes.</li> <li>• Co-produced work involving care home staff and older people working with stakeholders is required to define and agree the format, content, structure and operationalisation.</li> <li>• Implementation decisions will determine the success of an MDS, impacting aspects including data quality, completeness, and useability.</li> <li>• Care home staff who collect the data need to benefit from the MDS and see value in their contribution and residents must derive benefit from data collection and synthesis.</li> </ul>

## Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
13.01.2022	<a href="#">Visiting arrangements in care homes</a>	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets out how care homes can support families and visitors to visit residents.</li> </ul>
Updated 14.01.2022	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): minimising the risk over winter and updated protective measures for Omicron variant</a>	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary of updated guidance sent, in letters, to the adult care home sector highlighting measures that should be taken to minimise the risk of COVID-19, including the Omicron variant.</li> </ul>
14.01.2022	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): treatment options - guidance for care homes</a>	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This letter provides information, for awareness, on new treatment options, for selected groups of people with coronavirus who are thought to be at greater risk.</li> <li>To be most effective, these treatments need to be administered as soon as practically possible after receiving a positive PCR test and symptom onset.</li> </ul>
Updated 17.01.2022	<a href="#">COVID-19: management of staff and exposed patients and residents in health and social care settings</a>	UKHSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance on the management of staff, patients and residents who have been exposed to COVID-19.</li> </ul>

## Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
13.01.2022	<a href="#">Adult social care in England, monthly statistics: January 2022</a>	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experimental statistics on a range of topics including infection control measures, coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccinations and testing for COVID-19 in adult social care settings.</li> </ul>

<b>18.01.2022</b>	Care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, provisional	ONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provisional counts of the number of care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, by region, including deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19), in the latest weeks for which data are available.</li> </ul>
<b>18.01.2022</b>	Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England	ONS / CQC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provisional counts of deaths in care homes caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) by local authority. Published by the Office for National Statistics and Care Quality Commission.</li> </ul>
<b>19.01.2022</b>	Coronavirus (COVID-19): adult care homes - additional data	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly data on COVID-19 in adult care homes in Scotland.</li> </ul>