



UK Health Security Agency

Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

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

3rd December 2021

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.

This week's digest includes; from USA, call for reform following the impact of COVID-19 on long-term care and support services; and challenges and helpful solutions associated with caring for relatives living with dementia during the pandemic; from Chile, challenges and lessons from the COVID-19 response in long-term care facilities; from Australia, insights and strategies to improve outcomes in long-term care facilities in future pandemics; from the Long-term care COVID Network, an international scan of care home visiting policies in countries with high vaccination rates; from the International Long-term Care Policy Network, evidence of the impact of quarantine restrictions on people living in aged care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic; and an assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on dementia care in the UK accompanied by an international systematic review.

From the UK, reflections and recommendations from an exploration of the views of family members and staff on the impact of COVID-19 on care provision and visits in care homes; qualitative evidence of the impact of vaccination and testing on care home visits; evidence of waning COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness in

healthcare workers and the need for boosters to maintain protection; and reflections on the likely impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the care home sector this winter without urgent action.

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

We now have a search facility for the Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest. This can be achieved by using Endnote Software and accessing the monthly backups of the Research Digest. This will give access to the content of all previous weekly Digests and allow simple searches e.g. on authors, abstracts (where these are captured) and titles. Please note that this is not a substitute for a proper literature search. If you would like to access this facility please contact arthur.pearce@phe.gov.uk.

An ongoing series of UKHSA rapid reviews on a range of COVID-19 related research questions can be also found at <https://ukhsalibrary.koha-ptfs.co.uk/covid19rapidreviews/>. A wider range of UKHSA information resources on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may be found at <https://ukhsalibrary.koha-ptfs.co.uk/coronavirusinformation/>.

*Also a heads up, next week **on the 6th and 7th December 2021**, the International Long-term Care Policy Network is holding a two-day workshop to mark the launch of the **LTCcovid International Living Report on COVID-19 and Long-Term Care** and will be an opportunity to reflect on what has been learnt so far about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and implications for policies to strengthen LTC systems (See [International workshop on COVID-19 and Long-Term Care systems: What have we learnt and what policies do we need to strengthen LTC systems? – Resources to support community and institutional Long-Term Care responses to COVID-19 \(ltccovid.org\)](#)).*

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
21.11.2021	Taking the 'care' out of care homes: The moral dilemma of institutional long-term care provision during COVID-19	Health & Social Care in the Community / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim of this study was to explore the impact of COVID-19 on care provision and visits in care homes from staff and family members' perspectives. • Five themes were generated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Care home reputation and financial implications; ○ Lack of care; ○ Communication or lack thereof; ○ Visiting rights/changes based on residents' needs; ○ Deterioration of residents • Lack of communication between care homes and family members, but also government and care homes, led to family carers feeling excluded and concerned about the well-being of their relative. • Improved communication and clear guidance for care homes and the public are required to negate the potentially damaging effects of COVID-19 restrictions upon residents, their families and the carers who support them.
25.11.2021	Are we allowed to visit now? Concerns and issues surrounding vaccination and infection risks in UK care homes during COVID-19	Age and Aging / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With scant scientific evidence to date, the aim of this longitudinal qualitative study was to explore the impact of both (vaccination and testing) on the conduct and experiences of care home visits. • family carers of care home residents with dementia and care home staff from across the UK took part in baseline (October/November 2020) and follow-up interviews (March 2021). • across 62 baseline and follow-up interviews with family carers (n = 26; 11) and care home staff (n = 16; 9), five core themes were developed: delayed and inconsistent offers of face-to-face visits; procedures and facilitation of visits; variable uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine; misinformation, education and free choice; frustration and anger among family carers.

<p>28.11.21</p>	<p>Time for a Change: The COVID-19 Nursing Home Disaster and the Urgency of LTSS Reform</p>	<p>Journal of Health and Human Services Administration / Study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The horrific death rate of nursing home residents due to COVID-19 has exposed the nation’s long-standing failure to effectively manage public policies toward long-term services and supports (LTSS). • Government agencies’ dereliction in the enforcement of quality standards in nursing homes has been most visible. But equally important are provider payment policies that discriminate against people with low incomes, dependence on under-paid direct care workers or unpaid family caregivers, and—most broadly—underfinancing of LTSS that leaves people of all ages at risk of impoverishment and inadequate care. These risks will only grow as the population ages. • The Biden Administration and the Congress have an opportunity to capitalize on heightened public awareness with significant policy and management reforms. • In the short term, that means not only the exercise of federal oversight authority to assure quality but also the enhancement of federal funding (through Medicaid) made contingent on adequate wages and support for direct care workers and auditable delivery of quality care—whether delivered in the nursing home or in the community. • Over the longer term, enactment of a national program of social insurance is essential to address the LTSS risks and uncertainties facing people of all ages and assuring that, regardless of the state they live in, people receive the care they need.
<p>29.11.2021</p>	<p>Improving Long-Term Care Facilities’ Crisis Response: Lessons From the COVID-19 in Chile</p>	<p>Journal of Long Term Care / Study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objective of this study is to Identify the challenges and lessons from the COVID-19 response in LTCF with respect to the support received, the implementation of infection control measures, workforce challenges experienced and the measures adopted to promote residents’ wellbeing. • Irrespective of their location, size or management, managers highlight common challenges during the crisis. They include limited personal protective equipment (PPE) availability, staff shortages, low quality of replacement staff, reduced staff mental health, and the difficulty to understand and implement protocols. • Managers share a common demand for a more coordinated response from public institutions. Managers recognize that the pandemic and the

			measures implemented to mitigate it negatively affected staff morale and residents' wellbeing.
--	--	--	--

Preprints

Publication Date	Title / URL	Preprint Source	Digest
29.11.2021	Caring for a Relative with Dementia in Long-Term Care During COVID-19	OSF Preprints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative study to identify the challenges associated with caring for a relative with dementia in LTC during the pandemic, as well as resources, strategies, and practices caregivers found helpful in coping with COVID-19. • In addition to concerns about COVID-19 infection, participants reported key challenges such as the difficulty of maintaining contact with relatives because of visiting restrictions, lack of information about relatives' health and well-being, worries about overburdened LTC staff, impossibility of returning relatives home from the LTC facility, and fears about relatives dying alone • Informing caregivers regularly about individual residents' needs and status is crucial. Supports for bereaved caregivers should address complicated grief and feelings of loss.
01.12.2021	Effectiveness and durability of protection against future SARS-CoV-2 infection conferred by COVID-19 vaccination and previous infection; findings from the UK SIREN prospective cohort study of healthcare workers March 2020 to September 2021	MedRxiv	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study assessed vaccine effectiveness (VE) (up to 10-months after first dose) and infection-acquired immunity by comparing time to PCR-confirmed infection in vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals using a Cox regression-model, adjusted by prior SARS-CoV-2 infection status, vaccine-manufacturer/dosing-interval, demographics and workplace exposures • Protection from infection-acquired immunity showed evidence of waning in unvaccinated follow-up but remained consistently over 90% in those who received two doses of vaccine, even in those infected over 15-months ago. • Authors conclude two doses of BNT162b2 vaccination induce high short-term protection to SARS-CoV-2 infection, which wanes

			<p>significantly after six months. Infection-acquired immunity boosted with vaccination remains high over a year after infection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boosters will be essential to maintain protection in vaccinees who have not had primary infection to reduce infection and transmission in this population
--	--	--	---

Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
25.11.2021	Care home visitor policies: a global scan of the latest strategies in countries with high vaccination rates	Low, Lee-Fay; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This scan has been carried out by members of LTCcovid network, a global platform that shares learning on COVID policy and practice responses in long-term care systems. It includes detailed case studies from six countries: Australia, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Norway and the Netherlands
29.11.2021	Hard Lessons: Long-term care homes as hot spots in Australia	Ibrahim, Joseph E.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book Chapter in <i>Outsmarting the Next Pandemic: What Covid-19 Can Teach Us</i>, ISBN 9781003215769 Dr. Ibrahim shares insights gained during 30 years of aged care experience and research in Australia, into the underlying reasons for the devastating impact of COVID-19 on long-term care homes. In recognizing the disproportionate number of deaths in many of these facilities, compared to the rest of the population, he discusses fundamental failures at a number of levels. Dr. Ibrahim also discusses strategies for significant improvement in the future and in the event of a further pandemic

Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
------------------	-------------	-----------	--------

29.11.2021	New SARS CoV-2 Omicron Variant (B.1.1.529): interim guidance on required actions for all Clinicians, Hospitals and Public Health	HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of the emergency of the Omicron Variant of Concern of COVID-19, in Ireland, the Government is taking precautionary action against this new COVID-19 variant, which includes the following specific measures applicable to Residential Care Facilities: Persons in charge at all long-term residential care settings should ask staff and visitors about any history of overseas travel from or transition through a Listed Country. If they have had any overseas travel since 26th November, these staff and visitors cannot be admitted to the residential care setting until they have completed 10 days home quarantine (self-isolation) and have two “not detected” SARS-CoV-2 test results taken at Day 2 and Day 8 following arrival. HCWs or visitors who <u>arrived into Ireland since the 1st November who had travelled from or transited through a Listed County in the 14 days prior to entry</u> to Ireland cannot be admitted to the residential care setting. They will need to home quarantine (self-isolate) until the result of a “not detected” test is available and at least 10 days have elapsed post-arrival without symptoms.
Updated 30.11.2021	COVID-19: management of staff and exposed patients and residents in health and social care settings	UKHSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance on the management of staff, patients and residents who have been exposed to COVID-19.

Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
01.12.2021	Care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, provisional	ONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

01.12.2021	Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England	ONS / CQC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
01.12.2021	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.

Editorials and News

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
25.11.2021	The impact of quarantine restrictions on people living in aged care facilities during the COVID19 pandemic	Robinson, Jackie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Astract for the 6th and 7th December 2021 International workshop on COVID-19 and Long-Term Care systems: What have we learnt and what policies do we need to strengthen LTC systems? The aim of this mixed methods study was to explore the impact of quarantine on functional, emotional and cognitive wellbeing in residents of aged care facilities during the COVID19 pandemic. With a focus on indicators of well-being, phase 1 consisted of an analysis of data from interRAI assessments made prior to and after a period of quarantine.
30.11.2021	COVID-19 and dementia care in the community: from UK evidence to systematically reviewing the evidence base	Giebel, Clarissa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Astract for the 6th and 7th December 2021 International workshop on COVID-19 and Long-Term Care systems: What have we learnt and what policies do we need to strengthen LTC systems? The pandemic has affected access to care severely, and in this talk I will be sharing a selection of our UK-wide findings on the impacts of the pandemic on dementia care, and discuss our ongoing comprehensive systematic review into the topic area after 18 months of emerging evidence.
01.12.2021	Through a glass darkly: the unseen crisis in home care	Oung, Camille	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While pressures on the NHS continue to dominate headlines, a quiet crisis has been unfolding in the home care sector. Camille Oung describes how the system is likely to reach breaking point this winter, unless urgent action is taken.

