

## **Summary of priorities for future research in and with care homes based on the National ARC care home event March 2023**

The following synthesises the ideas presented in the talks, the small group discussions, and feedback on what “good” would look like for research with and for care homes. The summary is not comprehensive but has the potential to inform thinking on future research in and with care homes.

The topic areas/ questions fall into four overlapping areas.

- Development of methods and metrics that build on existing evidence on what matters to residents, their representatives, and staff to inform how intervention effectiveness is defined.
- Studies that place the care homes within systems of health and social care and measure how these different relationships have an impact on access to care, staff and resident outcomes, resource use.
- Studies that can account for heterogeneity of the sector and its workforce and can test how different initiatives are effective (or not) in sustaining quality improvement and the recruitment and retention of staff.
- Studies on specific aspects of care delivery that reflect how key features associated with being in a care home (e.g., different organisation models, living with dementia, a communal setting, and funding) affects care delivery and outcomes and what is (not) sustainable.

### **Development of methods and metrics that build on existing evidence on what matters to residents, their representatives, and staff to inform how intervention effectiveness is defined.**

- Evaluation of different approaches to co-design and collaborative working to introduce change. How do these different initiatives involving or led by care home staff and residents impact on the organisation of care and resident outcomes?
- To understand how relationships affects different aspects of care provision: development of metrics to:
  - measure the quality of working relationships and communication within care homes and between external stakeholders and care home management and staff.
  - operationalise and measure staff resilience.
  - to measure the quality of relationship-centred care within care home settings.
- Piloting of a national practice led PPIE service to maximise participation that can inform research and practice development in care homes and other long term care settings.

### **Studies that place the care homes within systems of health and social care and measure how these different relationships have an impact on access to care, staff and resident outcomes, resource use.**

- Impact of remote working and rapid digitalisation across the sector on staff workload and what is (and is not) prioritised/reported about residents.
- Comparison of how different models of care within care homes (homelike environments, grouping by residents' needs, involvement of residents in decision making) affect older people and staff outcomes.
- Impact of cross disciplinary/cross organisational working and learning on resident and staff outcomes to address recognised challenges e.g., people living with dementia and other long term conditions, nutrition, and hydration.
- Comparative case studies of ICSs development of, and models of, data sharing (in relation to Minimum Operating Data Sets) and how this informs decision making, access to services and resource allocation to care homes.
- How does digitalisation, access to shared data and feedback on key measures affect care home working at organisational and individual levels of care?
- Health care benefits and cost effectiveness of partnership working between housing, health, and social care to address the lack of supply and quality of older people's housing.
- Changed working practices and the quality of working relationships, residents' access to care, quality of life and reduction in adverse events, with specific reference to post pandemic changes.
- Can partners who are working with and for care homes, e.g Local Authorities, local NHS organisations and Provider organisations ( including home care providers) agree cross organisational interventions to inform how they work in and with care homes use common measures of effectiveness?
- How does the increasing use of shared data and a social care record and a range of metrics around residents' care, inform decision making, referrals, care plans, identification of groups at risk and commissioning services? What is the Impact of different funding and allocation of resources on resident and staff outcomes (value of international comparisons)
- How is shared assessment, recognition and management of acute deterioration by care home staff and visiting professionals managed alongside residents who experience exacerbations who are also in the last year(s) of life but recover ?
- Care home staff focused interventions that address how residents are prescribed medication. Specifically, what staff need to be able to discuss medication efficacy and enable deprescribing within the care homes in consultation with residents, their representatives and visiting NHS clinicians.

**Studies that can account for heterogeneity of the sector and its workforce and can test how different initiatives are effective (or not) in sustaining quality improvement and the recruitment and retention of staff.**

- How does quality of life change over time and do the different measures capture this (e.g. standardised measures or interventions that support development of personal outcomes)
- Do interventions designed to facilitate development of the workforce enable changes in the delivery of care and engagement with quality improvement?
- Do care homes active in research achieve improved resident outcomes when compared to equivalent settings with limited exposure to research?
- What is the role of the care home manager in facilitating staff learning and development?

- How do the prior caring experiences and or cultural backgrounds of care home staff inform practice and opportunities to engage with education and training (EDI) ?
- How do social care markets affect staff recruitment and retention?
- Does specialist dementia education and training (and other topic driven interventions) lead to improved outcomes?
- What are the impacts of racism, inequalities on the care home workforce?
- What are the social and cultural competencies that care home staff need to provide care?
- What are the opportunities for secondary data analysis of workforce data to understand how different staff configurations/backgrounds affects recruitment and retention over time?
- What kind of emotional support do staff require when working with residents at different points of transition (admission, change in functional abilities and end of life) in a care home, including how they work with family and friends?
- How is quality of life understood, reported, and discussed by staff and does that affect what is prioritised for residents' care?
- How does the introduction of technology and robots augment the staff experience of providing care, and are there unintended consequences for the workforce?
- How do care home staff not involved in direct care influence the culture and care of a care home?

**Studies on specific aspects of care delivery that reflect how key features associated with being in a care home (e.g., different organisational models, living with dementia, a communal setting, and funding) affects care delivery and outcomes and what is (is not) sustainable.**

- How intergenerational working can support older people with dementia to achieve improved outcomes and quality of life.
- How living with dementia and other long term conditions affects overall care for residents with different configurations of need.
- Impact of concerns about safeguarding and risk reduction on resident priorities, residents' choices, mobility, and quality of life.
- How different technologies demonstrated to improve the care and experience of people living with dementia can be incorporated into the culture and practice of care homes, and what sustains their use?
- Can social network analysis demonstrate how death and dying are experienced across a care home and how that affects resident and staff outcomes and future learning?
- How care home staff delivery of an intervention achieves improved end of life outcomes using measures that reflect social care related outcomes.
- Do different configurations of staff, family and visiting clinicians achieve different care related outcomes (e.g., end of life and palliative care) over time in care home settings?
- What are the costs of providing specialist services in care home settings?
- Comparison studies with care homes and types of provision for older people to capture:
  - What older people from diverse communities, want, what they are prepared to pay (and how) and potential impact on cost savings for NHS?

- The impact of different models of housing for older people on health care benefits and cost effectiveness for NHS
- Development and evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of information, advice, and advocacy services for older people's housing
- Health care benefits and cost effectiveness of technology and Smart Housing interventions for older people

## Conclusion

This summary reflects a cross cutting concern that *how* the research is done, and effectiveness measured reflects what matters to social care. This applies to research undertaken to address a broad range of problems, challenges, and conditions for people living in long term care. There is growth of care home intervention research particularly around quality of life. However, the heterogeneity, particularly in outcome measurement creates challenges for learning from and making recommendations for practice and policy<sup>1</sup>.

Research that is sensitive to the care home context, working with residents, family and friends and staff are more likely to measure what matters most and in the most efficient and least burdensome way. The discussions at the care home event emphasised this need for a collaborative approach with key stakeholders to underpin how research questions are framed and studies designed.

1. Kelly S, Cowan A, Akdur G, et al. Outcome measures from international older adult care home intervention research: a scoping review. *Age Ageing*. 2023;52(5):afad069. doi:10.1093/ageing/afad069