



Reason for bringing to the Department of Health and Social Care

This report is a direct commission, see the 'Motivation' section below.

Conclusions

Any person infected with COVID-19 going into a care home could introduce infection into the care home. Hospital discharge to care homes connects 2 high contact environments, where contact rates with carers in the course of care are high, and potential consequences of COVID-19 in vulnerable populations severe.

Overall, we interpret the identified studies as showing that at least some care home outbreaks were caused or partly caused or intensified by discharges from hospital.

However, based on the very much larger associations between care home size (a proxy for all footfall) and outbreaks, hospital discharge does not appear to have been the dominant way in which COVID-19 entered care homes.

Hospital discharge of people to care homes without testing early in the pandemic is highly likely to have caused some outbreaks or been one of the often multiple introductions of infection to care homes which experienced an outbreak. However, it is highly unlikely to have been the dominant driver of all care home outbreaks in wave 1.

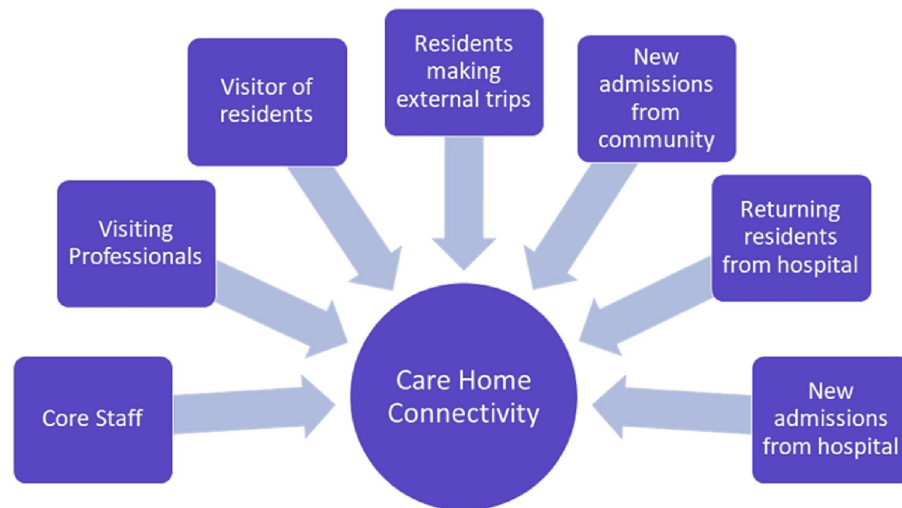
Proposed next steps

See the 'Recommendations for further and future action' section below.

the period examined)

- residents themselves visiting settings outside the home (as above this should be minimal after 23 March 2020)
- existing or new residents discharged from hospital to the care home
- new residents admitted direct from the community (occupancy rates reduced during pandemic and so new admissions may not have contributed greatly)

Figure 1: schematic showing the potential routes of ingress of COVID-19 into care home settings



Evaluating all these routes contemporaneous to the period of discharge is not possible due to testing capacity at the time and variation in policy around visiting and staff. Data on the number of visitors could be extracted from log books but this is likely a huge effort to digitise and there is no routine system for systematically collecting electronic