

Discharge Policy

24. The Committee remains concerned that the discharge of COVID-19 positive patients to care homes presents an enduring risk, though it is also cognisant of the pressures on hospital beds and the challenges of providing isolation via step-down care, including the additional disruption and distress this could cause.
25. Members discussed the evidence that many homes struggle to isolate individuals, either for reasons of facilities and adequate staff resource or, equally importantly, residents' wellbeing and issues of understanding amongst the significant numbers of residents with cognitive decline.
26. The Committee noted with concern, research suggesting increasing recognition of the danger of discharging people directly from hospital into care homes, without ideally two negative tests within 24 hours, due to the risk of false negative tests, even in the case of those not originally hospitalised for COVID-19.
27. While it is hoped that news of vaccines and rapid-testing will transform the situation, in addition to twice-daily symptom monitoring, the Committee nevertheless makes the following recommendations.

Recommendations

Recommendation 15: The Committee recommends that no-one be discharged from hospital to a care home in which they are a resident, without having tested negative for COVID-19, unless the care home confirms that it has the staffing and facilities to ensure isolation for the required period; and that this is subject to monitoring and review.

Recommendation 16: New residents should not be admitted to a care home unless they have tested negative.