**The health and well-being of residents of care homes**

**Context**

There are approximately 15,000 care homes (residential or nursing) in England for over 400,000 residents. People take up residence in a care home for a variety of reasons, increasing frailty, declining cognitive function, or incapacity to live independently often associated with older age. Care homes became a major focus of public concern during the covid pandemic with very high rates of infection and subsequent severe isolation of homes and residents; these problems drew attention to wider issues of staffing, funding and the quality of health and care provision. The sector is the focus of major intended reforms of services (Enhanced Health in Care Homes Framework).

**Research context**

The Oxford and Thames Valley NIHR ARC has developed a research focus onsocial care (https://www.arc-oxtv.nihr.ac.uk/our\_work/Improving\_health\_and\_social\_care). One aspect of this programme of research is examining the health and well-being of residents of care homes. A group based in Nuffield Department of Population Health, University of Oxford and Nuffield College, led by Professor Ray Fitzpatrick, is examining a range of interventions that have been proposed to improve the health and well-being of care home residents. One innovation has been evaluated, and two are currently underway, to understand how various innovations contribute to welfare in care homes.

* RESTORE2 is an assessment tool designed to help staff of care homes make accurate assessments of the health of residents, about whom they may have a concern, and obtain the most appropriate professional help. The use of RESTORE2 was evaluated in a mixed methods study using an online survey and interviews.
* Residents of care homes are expected to have a care plan individualised to their circumstances in which they, and potentially family members, are actively involved. This study uses a mix of review and interviews.
* Different options of care are available when a care home resident physically deteriorates, including alternatives that avoid hospitalisation (e.g Hospital at Home or Virtual Wards). It is unknown which actions are taken by care home staff when this happens. Therefore, a mixed methods study using an online survey and interviews is evaluating this process.

**Research project**

The research group are using a mix of quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interview) methods, supported by reviews of the relevant literature, to evaluate the role of RESTORE2, care planning, and use of alternatives to hospitalisations in improving the well-being of care home residents. To date we have mainly focused on eliciting the views and experiences of care home staff and managers. A research student from Brookes will participate in a focused aspect of the group’s work involving some supervised data collection, analysis and write-up, to be discussed between the research group, the Brookes supervisor(s) and potential students.