

Covid Crisis Special Report 7
Locked Down To Scrutiny But Open To Covid

By Eileen Chubb©

Since our last helpline data, we have received the following new cases,

Residential Care Home Staff **15**

Nursing Home Staff **9**

Care Agency Staff **3**

The Covid Crisis Helpline Calls For each care setting

Residential **136**

Nursing **59**

Care Agencies **33**

We continue to provide ongoing support to existing cases. Whilst we were only receiving calls from care staff since the start of the crisis, we have now started to receive calls from bereaved family members.

Family Members who have lost someone in a care home from Covid. **21**

This report will highlight the issue of discharging Covid 19 patients from hospital into care homes. The following numbers are from helpline data.

Number of cases that involved **confirmed** cases of Covid 19 patients being admitted to a care home resulting in others being infected. (Please Note I have omitted the data on any subsequent deaths as this would identify homes and therefore Whistleblowers)

Confirmed Cases

Residential Care homes **79** from **136**

Nursing Care Homes **11** from **59**

The concerns from residential care staff continue to be significantly higher due to concerns about staff's ability to provide the care needed in a residential care setting (Non Nursing). This evidence is an indication of the harm caused by the Government policy on Covid 19 hospital discharge into care homes. A policy that made no allowance for the reality of the care home environment or staff without any PPE or medical training.

Many Nursing homes struggled to provide basic medical care but in residential care homes the impact is devastating with many care staff traumatised by both the suffering they witnessed but equally by their complete inability to ease that suffering. The impact on staff mental health is considerable with staff reporting, depression, flashbacks and disturbed sleep.

Those living in care homes are the most vulnerable and therefore should have been shielded the most, the reality was they were not shielded at all but instead deliberately put at high risk of infection by an official policy. This must not be forgotten.

This report concludes with the evidence from those who lost family members, their grief will last a lifetime.

"I remember the last day I saw my mum, we hugged each other really tight, I keep seeing her face that last time, I wish I could go back in time and take her out of there, she would still be alive"

"I would ring the home to speak to mum and they would take ages to answer the phone and when I got to speak to someone, they always sounded so tired. I don't know what was going in there, but they were really struggling to cope"

“You think they are in a place of safety, but she would have been safer in hospital, at least my mum would have been able to breathe, would have been comfortable”

“There was never enough staff in the home at the best of times, but since lockdown every time I rang there were agency staff and they did not even know which room my mum was in”

“The lady who rung me to tell me my mam had gone was crying her heart out, I still think I will pop into see mam and then remember I can never see her again, it hurts like hell”

“The staff held the phone near her, let me speak to my mum at the end, I could hear her trying to breathe, I told her I loved her so much, that she was the best mum in the world, I hope she heard me, I love her so much”

“ I cant believe my mum has gone, this is the worst pain I have ever felt, my mum was elderly but she had a lot of time left, she was always so full of life, she filled my world, now she has gone and all I can think of is why?, why like this?, suffering so much”

“We were married xxx years, he was such a lovely man and we have never been apart for a day since the day we were married, he was my heart and soul mate, every day I saw him until the lockdown. I knew he was safe so that made it bearable not being able to see him. Only he wasn't safe, it happened so fast, one minute he was fine and then he got sick and died. Covid killed him and it killed me too”

“One of the staff rang me, they said someone with Covid was being admitted from hospital, they were really scared, I promised I would not say they told me, I rang the home and they said who told me this? They sounded really angry and said there was nothing

to worry about, as the person being admitted will be tested as soon as they get here. It spread round the whole home; My dad is dead he should not be dead”