

British Society of Gerontology
Care Homes Research Special Interest Group
Annual General Report
2021-2022



Introduction

The BSG Care Homes Research Special Interest Group (SIG) evolved from ideas shared between delegates at the BSG Conference in Liverpool in 2019. Under the leadership of an enthusiastic committee, the SIG took shape during the autumn of 2019 and now brings together academics, practitioners and other stakeholders with a common interest in care home research. The SIG aims to strengthen research, policy, and practice in all areas of care homes research, including those related to staff, residents, family members and carers, as well as the home environment, and its links with external organisations.

The SIG aims to:

- provide platforms for discussion and debate;
- facilitate the development of research collaborations and funding proposals;
- increase research capacity;
- promote methodological development around the novel challenges in care homes research; and
- support the dissemination and application of research findings to improve the lives of residents, carers and other stakeholders.

Since our original meeting in 2019, the SIG has grown to over 150 members.

The SIG committee

Include photos and names, role and affiliations

		
Christine Brown Wilson Co-chair	Maria Horne Co-chair	Laura Brown Secretary and Treasurer
		
Mark Jayes Communication Lead	Kathy Curtis Care home Sector Engagement Co-Lead	Chad Witcher Care home Sector Engagement Co-Lead

		
<p>Nuno Santos Lopes, Care home representative co-lead, Director of Care, Nightingale Hammerson</p>	<p>Rosalind Gray, Care home representative co-lead, Head of Therapies, Nightingale Hammerson</p>	

Chairpersons' annual report

On behalf of the Committee, we are delighted to welcome you to the annual general report for the Care Home Special Interest Group (SIG) of the British Society of Gerontology (BSG). This BSG Special Interest Group is an opportunity to bring together like-minded people who wish to improve the care and experience of people residing in care homes through research. We established the executive committee of the SIG and allocated committee roles in September 2019 and received approval from the BSG to form the SIG in December 2019. The SIG was officially launched at the BSG 2020 online conference.

The highlights of this last year have been our seasonal symposia via Zoom which continue to be well attended and a great opportunity for members to meet virtually. We invite SIG members to speak at these symposia along with external speakers. All our meetings have created very productive discussions via the Q&A feature following the speakers. A huge thank you to all our members who have attended these symposia and made them the success they have been.

We are delighted to announce that we have had our 2022 Symposium of the BSG Care Homes Research Special Interest Group abstract for the BSG conference accepted: ***'Developing Connected and Resilient Care Home Communities in Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic'***. Thanks to all our members who submitted abstracts for this. We look forward to welcoming our members to this conference symposium.

We recognise that the last 12 months have remained challenging for all during the Covid-19 restrictions and living with the ongoing COVID pandemic. We wish to thank the committee and our membership for their support during these challenging times.

Christine Brown Wilson and Maria Horne

Co-chairs

Key events from the previous 12 months:

Autumn Symposium 19th October 2021:

Presentation 1: [‘He would want to help if he could’: conducting ethical research with care home residents with impaired capacity to consent](#)

Dr Victoria Shepherd, Research Fellow, Centre for Trials Research, Cardiff University

Victoria is a Research Fellow and nurse based at the Centre for Trials Research where she leads a mixed-methods programme of research exploring the ethical and methodological issues around the inclusion of adults with impaired capacity in research. Her work has included exploring decision-making about research participation on behalf of adults who lack capacity to consent, and the development of a novel decision support intervention for family members acting as consultees and legal representatives. Her current project (CONSULT) will identify the barriers and facilitators to the inclusion of adults with impaired capacity, evaluate the decision support intervention in a range of trials and settings including care homes, and lead to the development of an online resource on capacity and consent in research. She also has a portfolio of care home research, including clinical trials and research priority setting and core outcome sets, and chairs the ENRICH Cymru Advisory Group. Victoria has a particular interest in inclusivity of under-served groups in research and leads the development of the INCLUDE Impaired Capacity to Consent framework to support researchers to design trials that are inclusive of adults with impaired capacity, and is an expert member of an NHS REC.

Presentation 2: [Supporting study set up and the capacity & capability process for care home research in the CRN West Midlands](#)

Lauren Thakrar, Study Support Manager, CRN West Midlands

Sandra Prew, ENRICH National Coordinator and Lead for West Midlands, CRN West Midlands

Lauren has worked with the CRN West Midlands for over 10 years in various roles supporting the set-up of research including non-commercial and commercial research. Her role has covered assisting settings such as care homes, hospices, GP Practices and NHS Trusts to participate in research and supporting organisations new to research in considering local governance arrangements. Lauren is currently working in the Study Support Service team supporting both researchers and NHS and wider Non-NHS health and social care organisations along the research pathway to ensure effective study set-up.

Sandra's role is to lead and coordinate the efforts of the ENRICH Care Home Research facilitators, working with non-NHS organizations such as Care Homes to become research ready and active. She does this by acting as a support, a point of reference, and advisor to those either conducting research, preparing to, or those who want to take part in research. She is passionate about giving equity of access to all, for research; especially in groups where entry might normally be complicated or difficult to access. Sandra has been leading the work here for 6 years now and is coordinating the Nation ENRICH network for the last year joining up areas across England, Scotland, and Wales. Sandra has been a nurse for over 20 years and wants to support others to understand research to improve access to studies across care home settings.

Presentation 3: [Doing research around death and dying with people with learning disabilities: Is it possible? Is it ethical?](#)

Irene Tuffrey-Wijne, Professor of Intellectual Disability & Palliative Care, Kingston & St George's University of London

Professor Irene Tuffrey-Wijne is a nurse by background. She has extensive clinical experience, both with people with learning disabilities and in a palliative care (hospice) setting. She has spent the past two decades researching the needs of people with learning disabilities who reach the end of life, and those who are bereaved. Her research in this area have been pioneering, as she has involved people with learning disabilities as participants, advisors and co-researchers. In this session, Prof Tuffrey-Wijne will talk about both the challenges and the triumphs of doing inclusive research on a sensitive topic.

Winter Symposium 25th Jan 2022:

Presentation 1: [Mistreatment and inequalities of racialised care home staff: Implications on care workers and residents' outcomes](#)

Professor Shereen Hussein, Professor of Health and Social Care Policy, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Shereen is a Professor of Health and Social Care Policy at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK. She is a medical demographer by training and has developed an established multi-disciplinary research portfolio focusing on ageing and care. Shereen's research supports policymakers in the UK and internationally to formulate and implement tailored ageing policies and plans. Shereen has a particular interest in the social care workforce, global ageing, health equity and migration and has recently established the Middle East and North Africa Research on Ageing Healthy Network to mobilise ageing research and practice development in the region (www.menarah.org).

Shereen will be talking about the experience of mistreatment and inequalities among racialised care staff working in care homes with a special focus on the experience during the COVID19 pandemic in the UK. She will draw on findings from several ongoing studies focusing on the impact of COVID19 on the care workforce, particularly those who belong to a minority ethnic group and/or migrants; the implementations of social distancing and infection controls in care homes and its impact on residents and staff and understanding the components of work-related quality of life among care workers. She will present evidence on the experience of care home staff analysed with an inequality lens and discuss observed effects on care workers' and care home residents' wellbeing. She will then discuss potential implications on care policy and practice when planning for the recovery from the effects of the pandemic.

Presentation 2: [Perspectives on the experiences of people with a learning disability and dementia in care homes.](#)

Dr Karen Watchman, Senior Lecturer in Health Sciences Stirling at the University of Stirling

Karen has experience of leading staff and research teams, managing projects and supporting development at Higher Education Institutions and third sector/NGO organisations. Her academic background is in social science, with a practice background in social care where she spent many years as Chief Executive of Down's Syndrome Scotland. Karen is an advocate of collaboration across all disciplines in dementia research with an emphasis on

making research findings accessible. With a focus on post-diagnosis dementia support, learning disability and equality issues, she seeks diverse views of participants less often included in research. Karen has extensive experience of writing for different audiences and editing dementia-related content for publication, both online and in print. Knowledge translation and production of accessible information, such as Jenny's Diary and Supporting Derek ensure dissemination of research findings into practice both nationally and internationally, with Jenny's Diary translated into six languages.

Karen will be looking from different perspectives at the experiences of people with a learning disability and dementia in care homes. First, those of staff who often lack confidence in providing support to this population yet are seeing an increasing number of people moved to a care home especially at end of life. Second, from those of people with a learning disability who took part in a recent photovoice study and reported that friends with dementia 'disappear' after a move to a care home.

Presentation 3: *Supporting care homes to improve their support for LGBT+ older people*

Professor Trish Hafford-Letchfield, Head of School, School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Strathclyde

Trish is Professor of Social Care at the University of Strathclyde. She is a qualified nurse and social worker with over 18 years in statutory social work. Trish's research interests are in the care experiences of older people from marginalised communities. She has over 100 publications and her two most recent books are *Desexualisation in Later Life: The limits of sex and intimacy*, Policy Press with Paul Simpson and Paul Reynolds and *Rethinking Feminist Theories for Social Work Practice* with Christine Cocker with Palgrave.

Trish will be talking about her recent project ***'The Care Home Challenge: supporting care homes to improve their support for LGBT+ older people through community collaboration'***. There have been substantial achievements in legislative and human rights for Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) older people and their visibility in health and social care has equally increased. There are documented concerns about the accessibility, inclusiveness and safety of care services for LGBT+ people, particularly in institutionalised care. This requires systemic change not easy to operationalise. This presentation shares the experiences of this action-research initiative where six care homes belonging to a national care provider, collaborated to assess and develop their services with the support of local LGBT 'Community Advisors' and academic partners. Framed within Rogers' (2003) change management framework and combined with a participatory leadership approach, a programme of intervention was implemented comprising structured activities around seven key areas thought to promote LGBT inclusion. Trish will share the findings of the formal evaluation and the main challenges and opportunities that emerged. This presentation suggests that a programme approach for achieving step change and tangible outcomes can be enhanced with the engagement and participation of the LGBT+ community itself. (Project partners; Paul Willis, Kathy Almack and Paul Simpson)

Care home Sector Engagement report

We have been delighted to recently welcome onto the SIG Committee two new members, Nuno Santos Lopes (Director) and Rosalind Gray (Head of Therapies) both working at Nightingale Hammerson in London (<https://nightingalehammerson.org/>). They provide valuable and first-hand insight into the research challenges and opportunities currently existing within the care home sector. They have an established Network of Care Home Researchers (NoCHR) that was founded to support research in care homes and so have strong alignment with SIG activity. The NoCHR meetings are held at their care homes, and

we had the pleasure of attending the inaugural Care Home Research Forum on the 10th of November 2021. We look forward to increasing our direct engagement with the sector through them and this network.

In other news, Dr Witcher has had preliminary discussions with Ms Maggie Bennett, Island Health Care, Isle of Wight to learn more about the issues related to dementia care on the island. We have invited Maggie to attend a future SIG meeting to discuss opportunities to work together on future research which improves care home staff and resident wellbeing.

Communications report

The SIG has a dedicated webpage on the BSG website:

<https://www.britishgerontology.org/about-bsg/special-interest-groups/care-homes>

This webpage contains updated information about the SIG aims and objectives, committee members and our contact details. We also post information about SIG activities (e.g., our regular symposia) on this page.

The SIG Secretary now distributes a monthly email news bulletin to SIG members. This includes announcements about different opportunities to engage in care homes research and research capacity-building activities.

Current social media activity focuses on use of the SIG Twitter account, managed by Mark Jayes. We use the account to post information about our own events and to advertise research development and participation opportunities. The SIG handle is often tagged by researchers to publicise study recruitment. We now have 560 followers from a range of disciplines and settings, which represents a 35% increase from last year. Our tweets about our symposia over the year have created over 10,000 impressions (this means the total number of times the tweet has been seen). Our twitter handle is: @BSGcarehomes.

Activity development objectives:

- To continue to increase the number of our Twitter followers and engagement with our tweets;
- To develop an efficient way to disseminate SIG outputs (e.g., video recordings of symposia) to members and to provide a forum for discussion and information sharing about care homes research. We envisage this will be via a dedicated SIG blogsite (see more information below) or via posts on the BSG Ageing Bites blog.

Mark Jayes

Communications Lead

SIG Membership

We have continued to increase the membership of our SIG. As of 23rd March 2022, the SIG has 157 members. This represents a 20% increase from last year's membership of 131.

Annual financial statement

In the 2020-2021 financial year, we had a budget of up to £500. As of 23rd March 2022, we have made no claims on this budget. However, we have plans to use some of this budget to pay for a SIG blog to be hosted and set up. This includes:

- Approximately £36 for a basic (ad free) Word press account for one year (with a similar cost to then be paid annually for the lifetime of the blog)
- A one-off payment (amount TBD) for someone to set the blog up (subject to approval from the BSG executive).

Laura Brown

Secretary and Treasurer

Future plans

While we have had success with social media presence via Twitter, we are working on opportunities for members to communicate with other members.

We wish to extend the board to include someone who would like to manage the Blog as a mechanism for members of the SIG to talk about their activities/contributions

We will continue to run our free, online, seasonal symposia. The next one is planned for autumn 2022. Further details to follow over the summer.

The SIG is hosting a symposium at the BSG annual conference, which runs from 6th-8th July 2022 (online). The symposium is entitled '*Developing Connected and Resilient Care Home Communities in Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic*', and features talks from Dr Krystal Warmoth, Dr Olivia Luijnenburg, and Dr Diane Bunn. Many other members of the SIG are also presenting care homes-related work at the conference. Further details about the conference, include a link to register, are available here: <https://www.britishgerontology.org/events-and-courses/bsg-annual-conference>

If you would like to get involved contact the committee via email:

BSGcarehomesSIG@britishgerontology.org

Thank you for all your support.