

# Innovation to enhance health in care homes and evaluation of tools for measuring outcomes of care: rapid evidence synthesis

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## Plain English summary

### Innovation to enhance health in care homes

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## Plain English summary

Health and social care services are facing new and complex demands from a population that is getting older. NHS England selected six places in England (called vanguard sites) to find new ways of working to meet the needs of patients who live in care homes. This report pulls together research evidence on four topics that are important to health in care homes: the use of technology, communication and engagement between care homes and external bodies, workforce, and how any changes in care can be assessed. In each of these four areas, we describe the research evidence that is available without looking at it in detail, and then we present a review that answers a specific question, chosen by people working in the vanguard sites.

In this 12-month project, we mapped information from 761 studies, and looked at 65 studies in depth. Much of the research was from the USA, and a high proportion was of medium or low quality. Some of the key findings were as follows. Research on digital technology in care homes suggests that games that encourage activity may be helpful for physical and mental health. When we looked at how communication could be improved between care homes and the NHS, tools that provide a guide to the necessary information showed some promise. We found 65 measurement tools that had been used in care homes since the year 2000. Only six had been tested for use in UK care homes, and none scored well when we assessed quality. There are many studies on the care home workforce, but we found no strong evidence of a link between staffing levels or roles and resident health and well-being.

This report provides some support for changes that are already under way in the care home vanguard sites, and points to many gaps in research where future work is needed.

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