

IPC Bulletin for Care Homes

Issue No. 69 - October 2026



Produced by an NHS Community Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team based in North Yorkshire for distribution to subscribers.

Are you prepared for the winter season?

The winter season results in an increased pressure across health and social care settings with more respiratory illnesses, such as flu and COVID-19, and an increase in Norovirus outbreaks. These can affect both residents and staff which result in staff shortages at a time when workload is high. The following steps can help you and your staff be better prepared to manage outbreaks of infection within your care setting.

1. Encourage uptake of vaccinations

Vaccination provides protection against catching or spreading infections.



Residents: All care home residents are eligible for the COVID-19, flu and RSV vaccinations. Residents aged 65 or over are eligible for the pneumococcal vaccine.

Staff: All care home staff are eligible for the flu vaccination. Staff are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine if they have a weakened immune system as outlined in the [COVID-19 Green Book chapter](#). If any staff are pregnant they are eligible for the RSV vaccine.

[What is RSV and who is eligible for the vaccine? – UKHSA](#)

[Your guide to who's eligible for the autumn 2026 flu vaccine – UKHSA](#)

[Who's eligible for the 2026 COVID-19 vaccine 'Autumn Booster' – UKHSA](#)

2. Is your care home prepared?

- ✓ IPC audits undertaken with actions completed.
[Carehome audit - Infection Prevention Control](#)
- ✓ Check your IPC Policies and Outbreak Management documents are up-to-date and staff are aware of what to do in the event of an outbreak of infection.
- ✓ Ensure staff's IPC training is up to date. Plan some refresher training on hand hygiene, the importance of being 'Bare below the elbow' and how to put on

and remove PPE safely.

- ✓ Ensure you have ample supply of gloves, aprons, face-masks and eye protection. Check their expiry dates!
- ✓ Check your supply of handrub and chlorine based cleaning solutions are suitable and in date.
- ✓ Ensure you are disposing of waste into the correct bins.



3. Protect your residents

- ✓ Encourage residents to wash their hands especially before mealtimes.
- ✓ Prepare a list of residents eligible for COVID-19 treatments.

4. Refresh your notice boards

- ✓ Display hand hygiene ([Your 5 moments for hand hygiene for Care Homes Poster - Infection Prevention Control](#)) and respiratory and cough hygiene posters, ([Catch it, Bin it, Kill it'](#) and [Respiratory and cough hygiene](#))
- ✓ Provide information for family and friends on safer visiting during outbreaks, '[Supporting safer visiting in care homes during outbreaks of infection](#)'
- ✓ Display signage '[Stop the spread of infection](#)' advising visitors with infections not to enter
- ✓ Promote your latest hand hygiene and IPC audit scores

International Infection Prevention Week (IIPW) - 19th—25th October



- This year IIPW celebrates the journey — from the plague doctors of the 1600s to the infection prevention and control of tomorrow.
- **Past. Present. Protected.** Three words that honour the history, the progress and the promise of infection prevention.
- Activities are available for the week on infectionpreventionandyou.org

Who to contact if you suspect an outbreak:

Report suspected outbreaks to your local Community Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) or UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Team.

Write the contact number here:

IPC training event for Care Homes and Domiciliary Care:

15th March, 2027 www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/events/

Visit our website to find lots of IPC resources, many of which are free to download. Call us on 01423 557340

www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk

