

# NHS told care homes not to resuscitate all residents

By Sarah Knapton

CARE homes were asked by NHS managers and GPs to place blanket "Do not resuscitate" (DNR) orders on all residents at the height of the pandemic to keep hospital beds free, a report shows.

The Queen's Nursing Institute, the world's oldest nursing charity, discovered one in 10 care home staff surveyed was told to change DNR plans without discussion with families, nursing staff or residents themselves.

Half of those who said they had been asked to change DNRs worked in homes for the elderly, and half worked in homes for younger people with learning or cognitive disabilities.

Staff also warned that some hospitals were operating a "no admissions" policy for care home residents - even for non-Covid conditions such as heart attacks - and some said they had strug-

## 1 in 10

The number of care home staff who said they were told to place Do Not Resuscitate orders on all their residents

gled to make appointments with GPs for elderly people.

Prof Alison Leary, the report author, said the findings were "worrying" and called for an inquiry.

Asked about DNRs, an anonymous respondent said: "We were advised to have them in place for all residents. We acted in accordance with medical advice and resident wishes, not as advised by a directive to put in place for all by a Clinical Care Group representative. We challenged this as unethical." Another said DNRs were "put in place without family consent by trust staff, no consultation with staff in the home".

At the start of April, Stephen Powis, NHS England medical director, wrote to NHS staff banning the use of blanket DNR forms after discovering a Port Talbot practice had asked elderly patients to complete them so emergency services would not be called if they contracted Covid-19. A surgery in Somerset was also found to have told autistic adults they should sign DNRs. The learning disability care provider Turning Point said it received an "unprecedented" number of DNRs from GPs.

Prof Leary said: "That 10 per cent of respondents raised an issue is really worrying. These decisions were being made by NHS managers, not clinicians. And this wasn't just happening with elderly people it was those with learning  
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