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Background

Adult care homes pose unique challenges for conducting clinical trials. As a result, and despite having high healthcare needs, this underserved population is often not included in clinical trials. Practical guidelines to support research infrastructure and delivery in social care settings are urgently needed to support researchers in conducting clinical trials effectively and efficiently in this setting.

Building on challenges experienced in setting up the PROTECT-CH trial (NIHR133443), we aim to identify the barriers and facilitators to performing research in adult care homes and develop guidance for future researchers.

Methods

Completed

1. Survey of key stakeholders (care home managers, staff, residents, and family members) to investigate the barriers and facilitators to designing and delivering research in adult care homes.
2. Survey responses collated and used to guide semi-structured interviews focusing on exploring key barriers and facilitators to research in a care home environment.

Planned

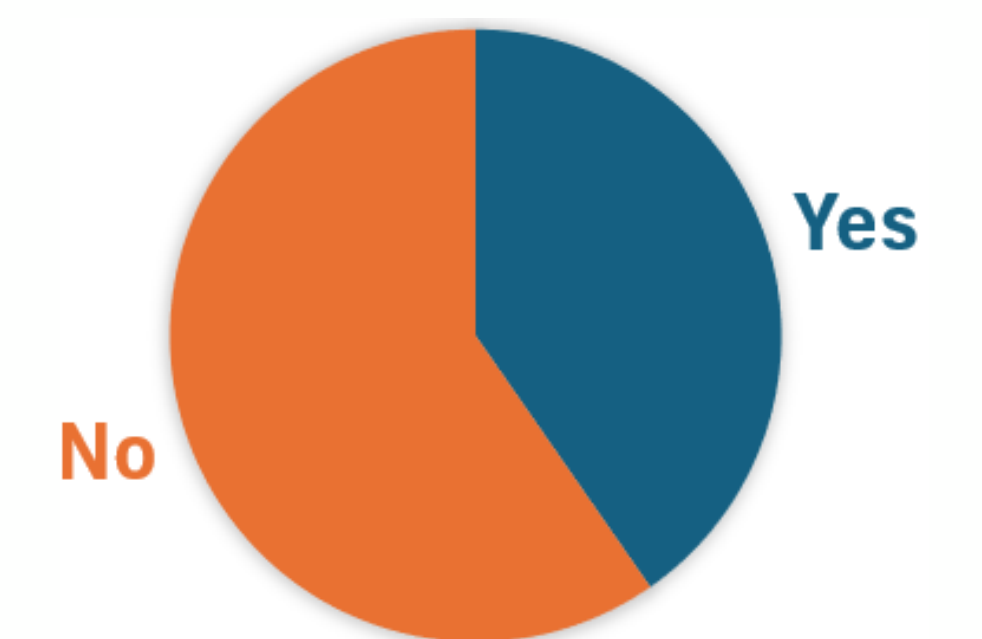
1. Invite key stakeholders to participate in a consensus process to draw together the themes that have been identified and where possible the solutions to barriers to research in this setting.
2. Development and dissemination of guidelines for future researchers aimed at sharing best practices. Video resources will also be created for researchers, care home staff and families/residents.

Results

Figure 1. Survey respondent demographics

	Total (n=62)
Care home managers/owners	21 (34%)
Care home staff	12 (19%)
Care home residents	4 (6%)
Family members	8 (13%)
Researchers	4 (6%)
Other	13 (21%)

(a) Stakeholder details

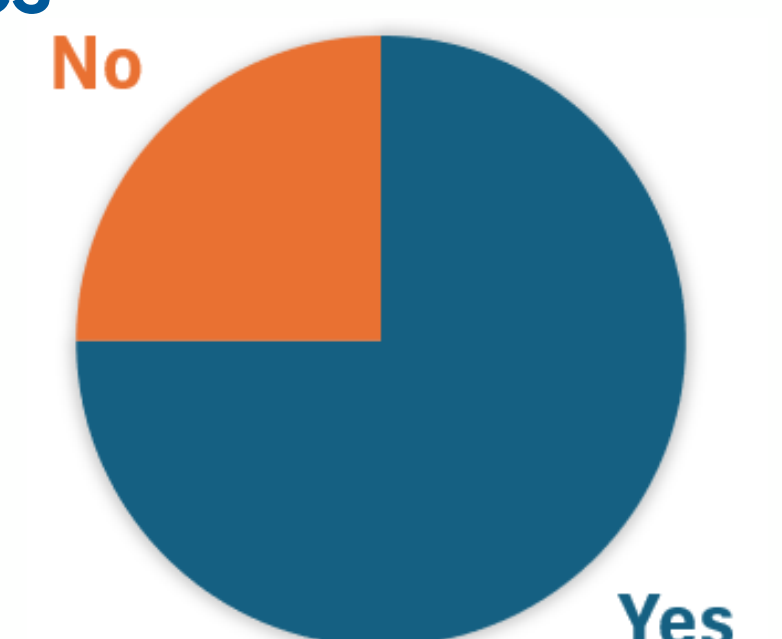


(b) prior involvement in research

Figure 2. Interview participant demographics

	Total (n=8)
Care home managers/owners	2 (25%)
Care home staff	2 (25%)
Family members	2 (25%)
Researchers	2 (25%)

(a) Stakeholder details



(b) prior involvement in research

Figure 3. Key barriers, facilitators and possible solutions identified

Barriers

- Difficulties recruiting
- Time consuming
- Governance issues
- Lack of opportunity
- What research is appropriate?

Facilitators

- Payment for care homes
- Financial incentives for staff/residents
- Importance of inclusion
- Importance of training
- Buy in from team

Potential solutions

- Developing good relationships
- Fitting with care home routines
- Recognising value of care home staff
- Collaborations with other research organisations
- Developing ideas from staff/residents/families

Discussion

A broad range of stakeholders responded to the survey and participated in interviews, including those both with and without prior research experience. We have been able to identify key barriers and facilitators to delivering research in adult care homes, and have begun to explore potential solutions.

Through consensus decision making, we plan to build on the information gathered from the survey and interviews to further explore potential solutions to the delivery of research in the care home sector and to support the development of resources for key stakeholders. To address critical research questions in this sector, it is essential to develop a robust research infrastructure. A well-established infrastructure promotes collaboration among care providers, researchers, and policymakers, enabling the generation of evidence-based insights that can directly inform care practices and improve resident outcomes. Without such a structure, the sector risks fragmented research efforts, limited resources, and missed opportunities for advancing the health of this underserved population.

