

Health and Social Care Select Committee Inquiry into Delivering Core NHS and Care Services during the Pandemic and Beyond.

The British Geriatrics Society (BGS) welcomes this opportunity to input into the first stage of the Health and Social Care Select Committee inquiry. The BGS is the membership association for professionals specialising in the healthcare of older people in the UK. Founded in 1947, we now have over 4,000 members, and we are the only society in the UK offering specialist expertise in the wide range of healthcare needs of older people.

This stage of the inquiry asks stakeholders to contribute initial views, reflections and key questions on three themes – cancer services, maternity services and mental health services including dementia. Our submission focuses on dementia as this is our area of expertise.

Supporting dementia services during the pandemic

- Many memory service staff have been redeployed and clinics have been suspended. During the pandemic, could services be supported in delivering assessments and appointments virtually?
- Is there parity of technology availability in mental health in comparison to acute services?
- What support can be provided to mental health services now to prepare for resuming normal memory assessment activity?
- What has been the effect on people living with dementia and their carers of self-isolation at home?
- How has care for people living with dementia changed with the introduction or strengthening of infection control management within care homes at risk of or experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak?

Discharge and rehabilitation for people with dementia who have had COVID-19

- What is the most successful model for follow-up of people discharged from acute hospitals who had COVID-19 and dementia?
- It appears that delirium may be more prolonged and slower to resolve in patients with COVID-19. What opportunities have been identified for following up people with COVID-19 who experience delirium?
- What plans are there for both physical and cognitive rehabilitation after recovery from COVID-19 for people living with dementia?

Vaccination

- Once a vaccine for COVID-19 has been developed and is available to the public, how will access be prioritised? Given the risk of delirium and the negative consequences associated with this, people with dementia should be considered a particularly high risk group and should be prioritised for vaccination.

The BGS thanks the Health and Social Care Select Committee for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry at this stage. If you would like to discuss our contribution in more detail or wish to invite one of our members to give evidence to the committee, please contact Sally Greenbrook, Policy Manager, at s.greenbrook@bgs.org.uk.