



# THE LTC SECTOR THROUGH THE COVID-19 CRISIS: *PER ASPERA AD ASTRA\*?*

LTCcovid webinar

*\* through hardships to the stars*

Paola Sillitti  
Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs



# Agenda

---

1

Factors of vulnerability of the  
LTC sector

2

Top challenges and policy  
responses in OECD countries

3

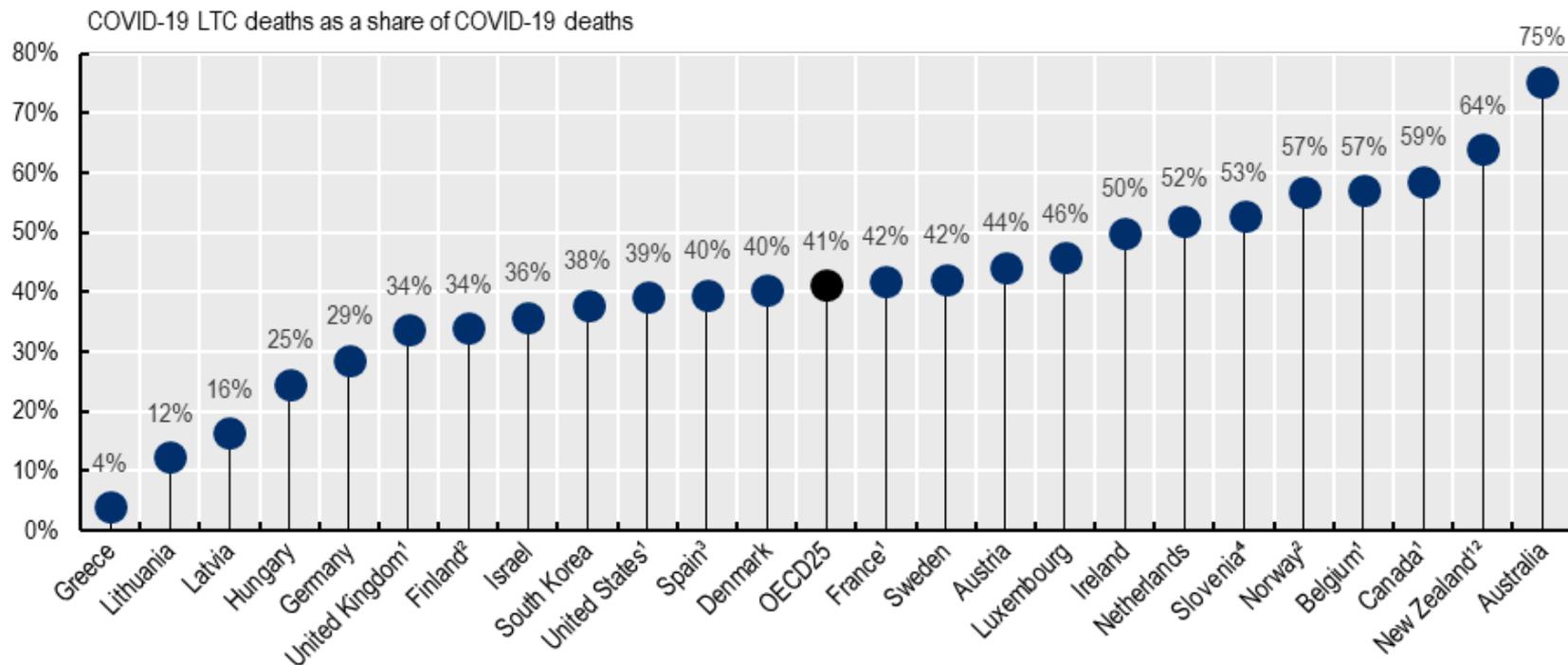
Conclusions



# FACTORS OF VULNERABILITY OF THE LTC SECTOR



# A sizeable share of COVID-19 deaths has been in the long-term care sector



Note: Data on cumulative deaths up to early February 2021. 1. Includes confirmed and suspected deaths. 2. Only includes deaths occurring within LTC facilities. 3. Data come from regional governments using different methodologies, some including suspected deaths. 4. Includes deaths in nursing homes and social LTC facilities.  
Source: (Comas-Herrera et al., 2021), (ECDC, 2021), (OECD Questionnaire on COVID-19 in LTC).

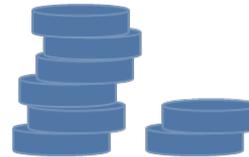


# Pre-existing structural challenges

---



Poor **working conditions**: low tenure, part time employment, low pay



Chronic **underinvestment**, a large number of preventable safety failures occurring in the sector prior to the pandemic



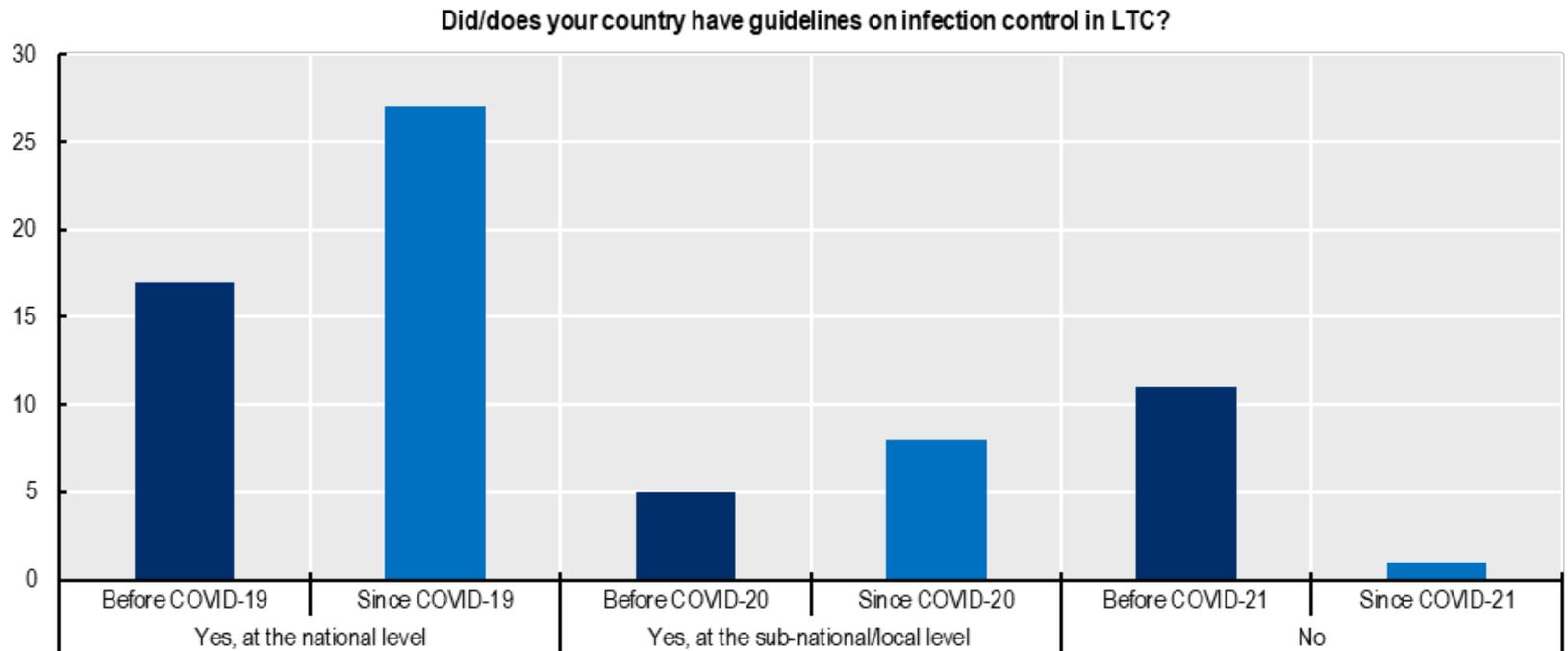
insufficient **quality standards** and monitoring



Insufficient **co-ordination** with the rest of the health system



# Emergency preparedness in long-term care was insufficient

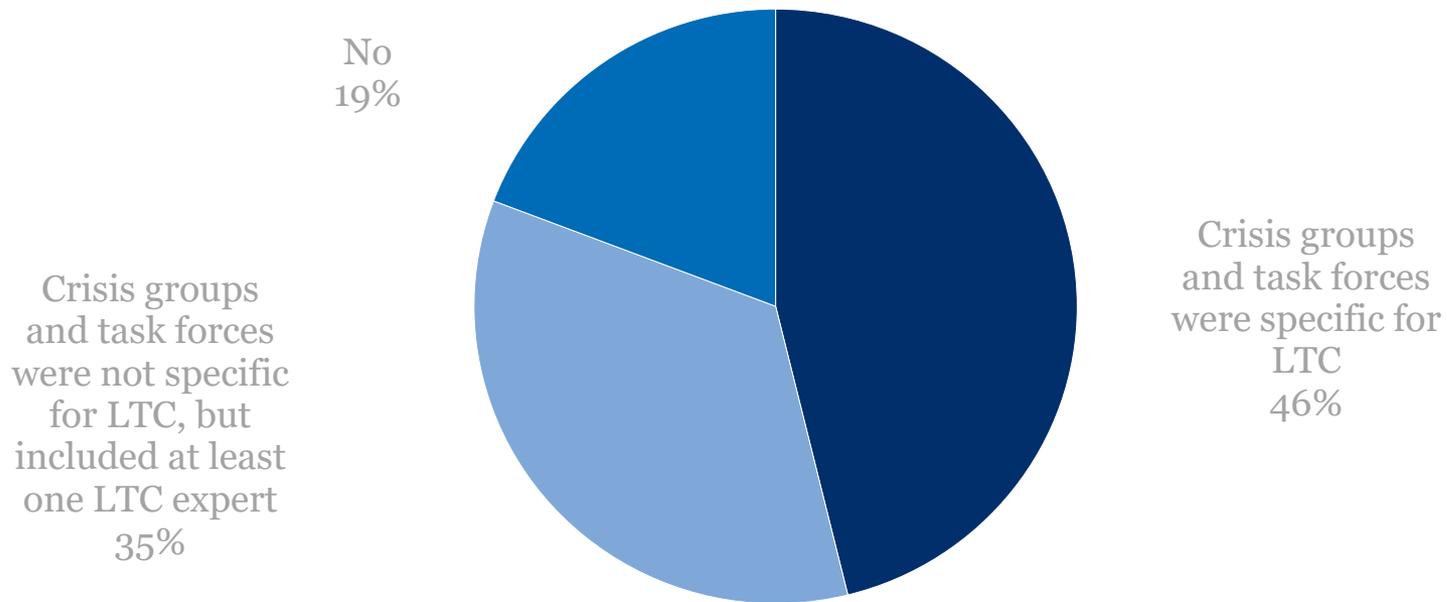


Source: OECD questionnaire on COVID-19 and LTC 2021.



# Task forces were created, but very few are permanent

If task forces were created, did they include at least one LTC expert?



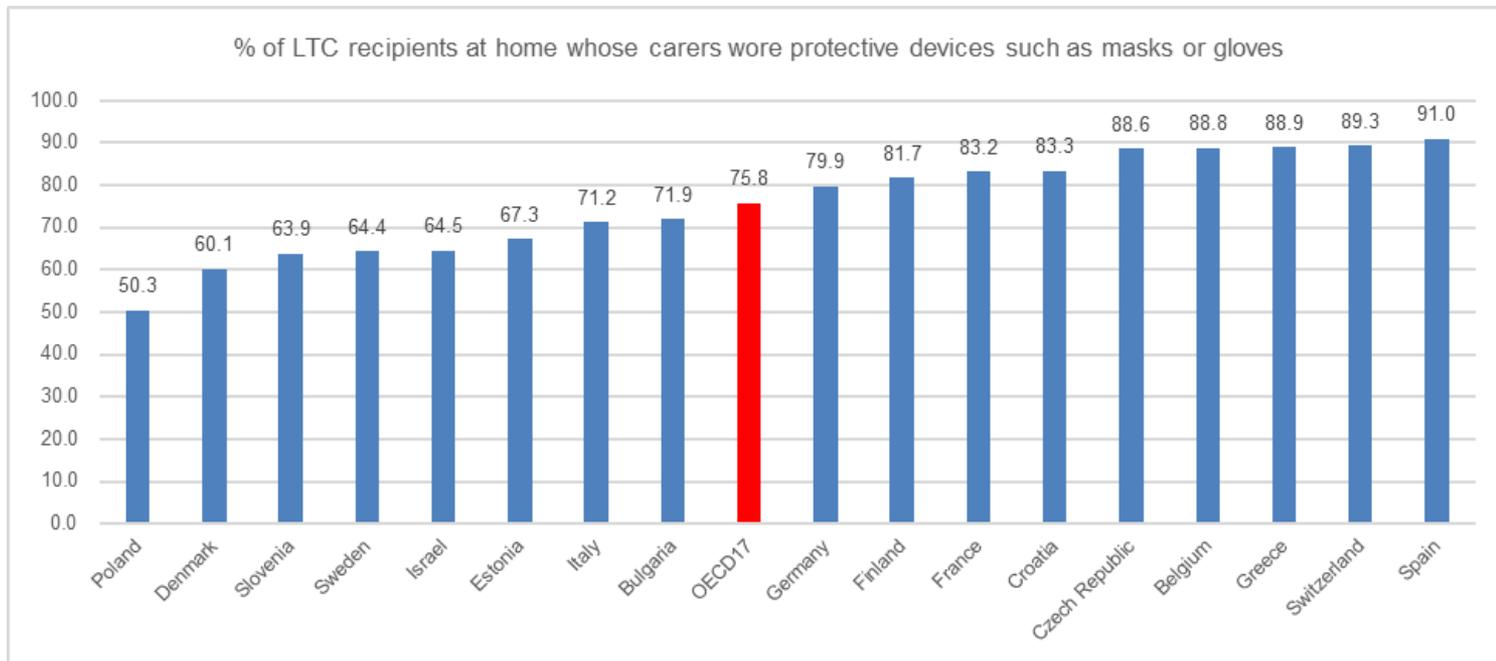


# TOP CHALLENGES AND POLICY RESPONSES IN OECD COUNTRIES



# Lack of PPE and testing capacity

In a ranking from 1 (not an issue) to 5 (extremely challenging), countries defined access to PPE as 3 and access to testing as 4



Note: LTC recipients refer to those aged 65 years old receiving regularly home care who reported ADL or IADL limitations in SHARE wave 7 (2017). Question is “Did the people who cared for you wear protective devices such as masks or gloves?”.

Source: SHARE-COVID-19 wave 8 (data refer to June and August 2020).



# Measures on PPE and testing

---

Guidelines

Stockpiles

Funding

Training

Mobile  
Teams

Funding



## Lack of adequate staffing level

---

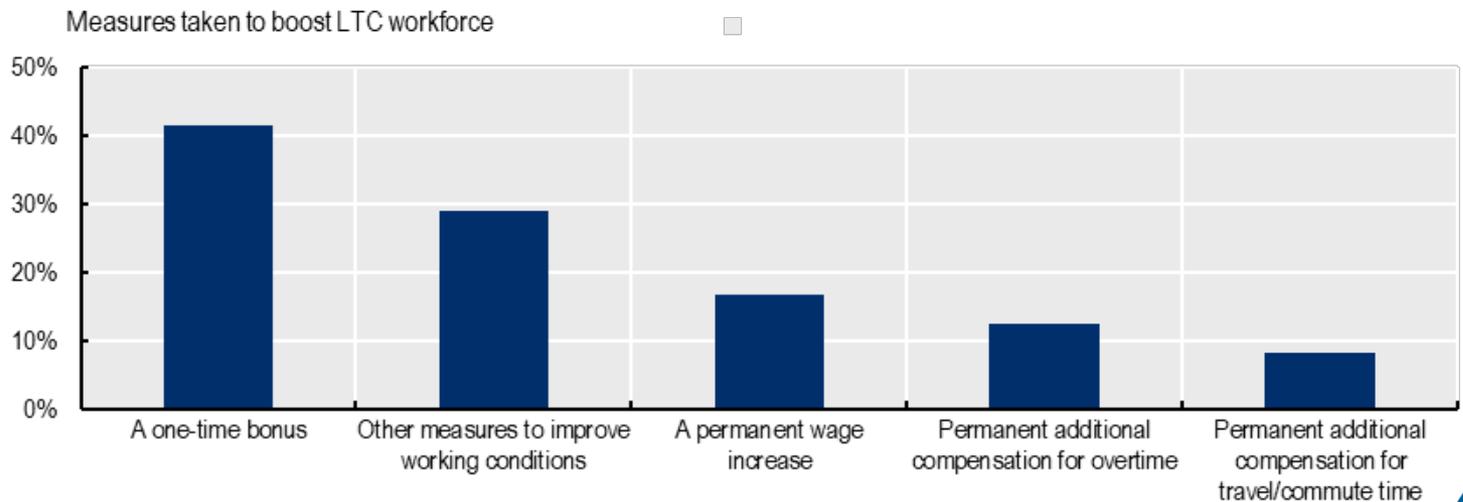
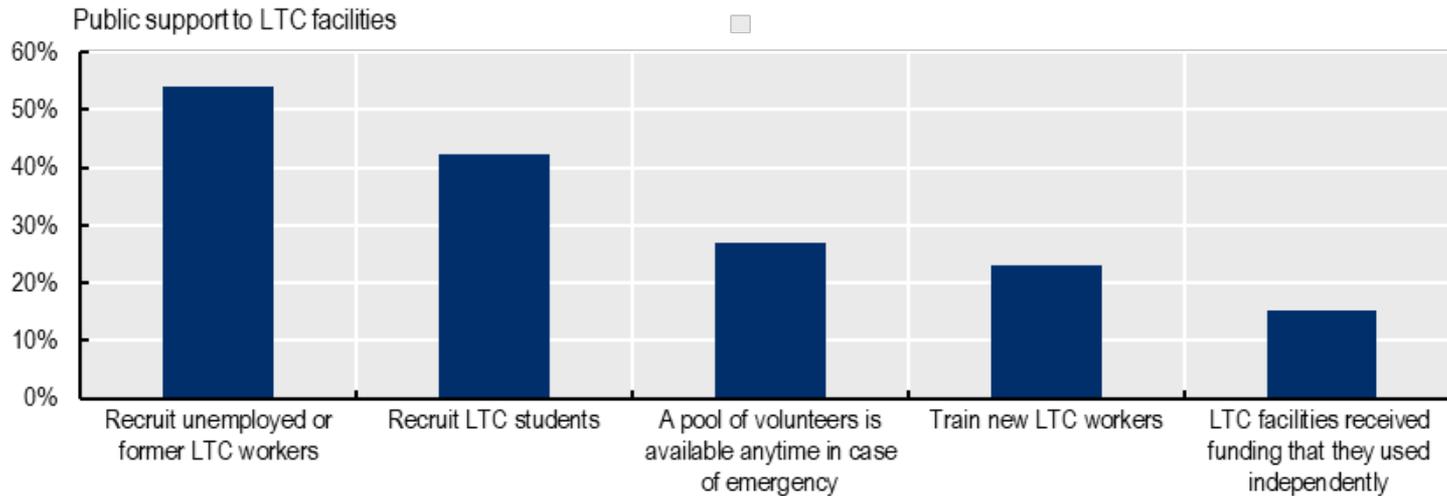
LTC workers were at **higher risk** of being infected compared with other workers.



Facilities with lower numbers of LTC workers were associated with **higher infection rates**



# Measures to address staff shortages



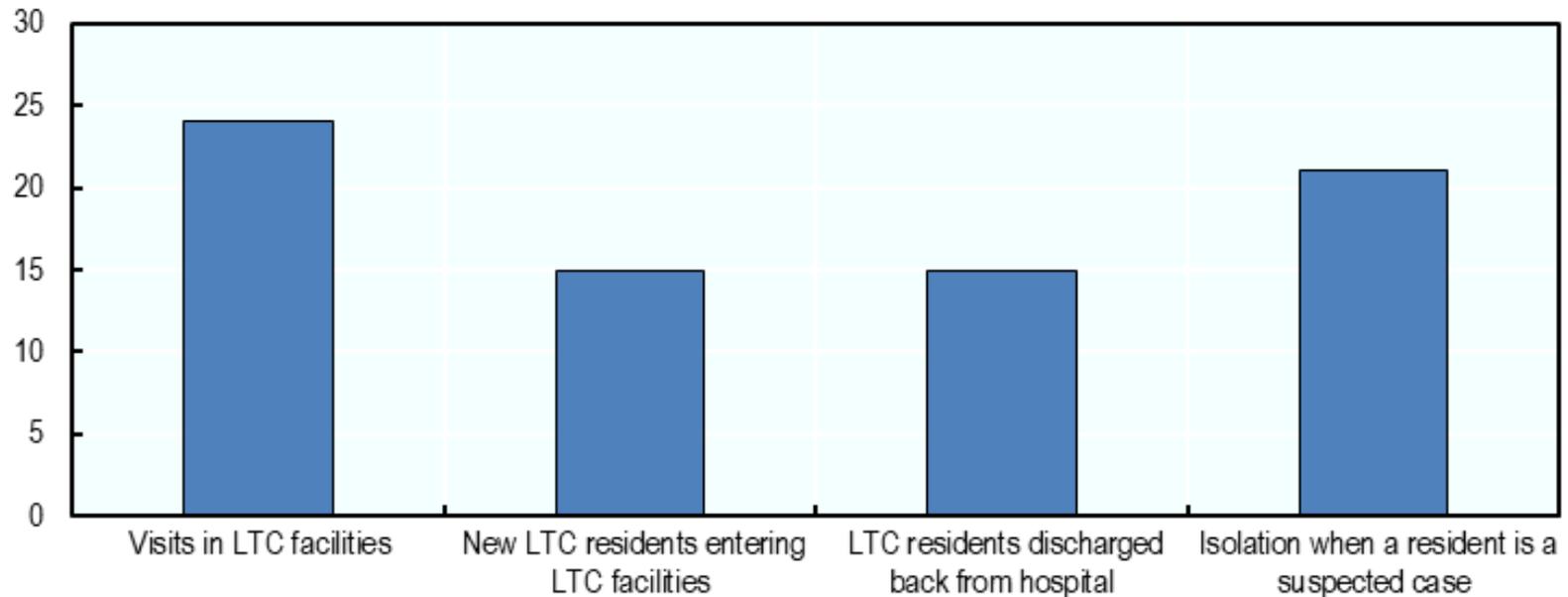
Source: 2021 OECD Questionnaire on COVID-19 and LTC.



# Difficult management of visits restrictions

A number of countries after initially banning visitors except for an emergency or end-of-life reason, were later allowing them but with restrictions on the numbers, frequency or conditions of access.

**Number of countries having recommendations on social visits and isolation**





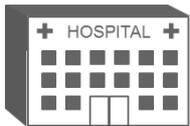
# Care integration has improved, but could be strengthened further

---



## **Coordination with primary care providers**

- Before the pandemic, 10 OECD countries reported having guidelines or legislation on the integration of LTC and primary care
- Since the pandemic, 8 OECD countries have introduced new measures to foster multi-disciplinary teams, with the aim to integrate more primary care in LTC facilities (EE, CA, CO, FI, LV, LU, PT, SI)

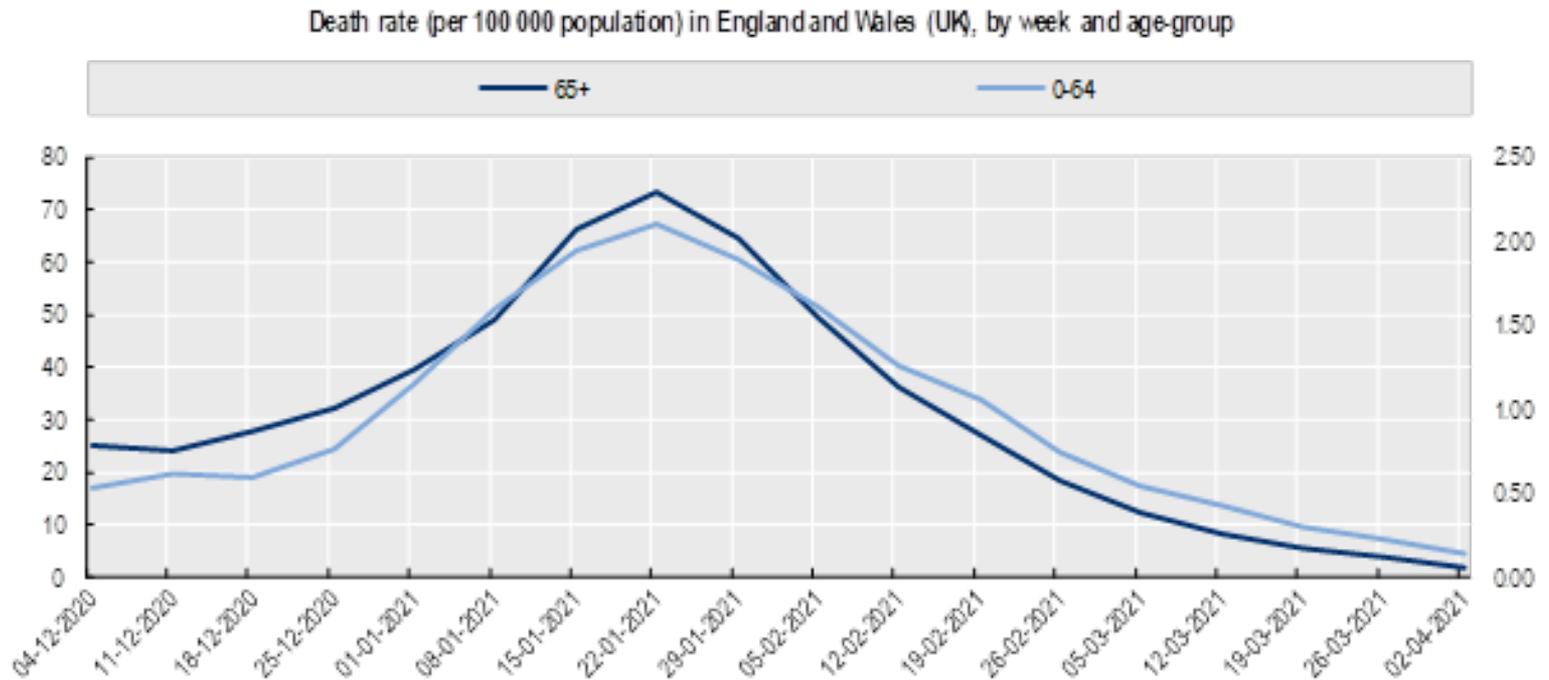


## **Coordination with hospitals**

- Since the pandemic, 7 countries introduced new guidelines on the integration of long-term care and care in hospital (BE, CO, EE, EL, FR, HU, NL)



# Initial findings point to a positive impact of vaccination



Note: UK started the vaccination campaign on December 8 2020 and a third national lockdown on January 6 2021. Death rate for the age group 0-64 is displayed on the secondary axis.

Source: (COVID-19 Ined, 2021)



# CONCLUSIONS



# The COVID-19 crisis as a learning opportunity

---

## DATA

- Ensure standardized, comprehensive and timely data collection and use

## PERFORMANCE

- Monitor the sector's performance, to ensure it is ready for the next crisis

## WORKFORCE

- Address existing workforce issues, improving pay and job quality, staff ratios and skills mismatch

## INFECTION CONTROL

- Introduce better infection control protocols to minimize health-care-associated infections

## HOME CARE

- Home-based options may permit better containment of transmission but require adequate protection (PPE) and job quality for LTC workers



# Staying in touch with the OECD



Email us

[Paola.SILLITTI@oecd.org](mailto:Paola.SILLITTI@oecd.org)  
[Eileen.ROCARD@oecd.org](mailto:Eileen.ROCARD@oecd.org)  
[Ana.LLENANOZAL@oecd.org](mailto:Ana.LLENANOZAL@oecd.org)



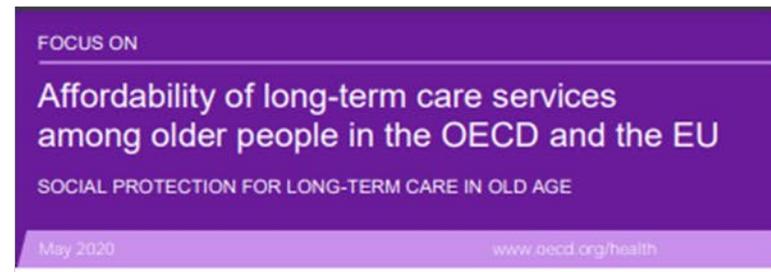
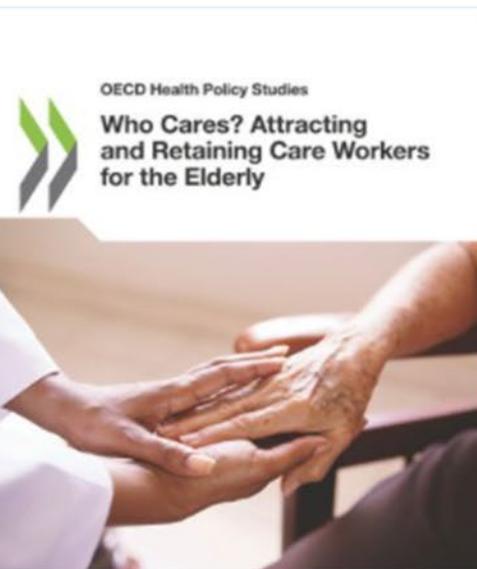
Follow us on Twitter

@OECD\_social



Visit our website

<https://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/long-term-care.htm>



OECD (2021, forthcoming), *Supporting informal carers: Policies to leave no carer behind* (tentative title)