

# COVID-19 and Long-Term Care systems: What have we learnt and what policies do we need to strengthen LTC systems?

## Overview of country experiences: Poland

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# Impact of the pandemic on the LTC system

- Absolute numbers of deaths among the elderly in LTC facilities low, due to most people with LTC needs being cared for by families/informal carers
- Lack of access to community and residential care, as well as medical care
- The split between healthcare and social sector & the decentralization of authority in the latter had a negative impact on responding to pandemic quickly and comprehensively
- Providers of residential care faced financial shortages (e.g. increased PPE costs, but also food costs): addressed partly by government but also charities and private donations
- The pandemic had a strong impact on the long-term care, it highlighted the underdevelopment of the LTC sector, and drawing public attention to the problems of assuring care to people with LTC needs

# Lessons learnt

- Pandemic highlighted ongoing problems within LTC sector and some new challenges:
  - Lack of pandemic preparedness (e.g. no protocols or guidance on how to manage pandemic in care settings, lack of PPE, lack of regulations regarding isolating infected individuals etc.)
  - Shortfalls in LTC funding
  - Workforce: shortages, lack of training, low wages (e.g. in 2016 there were 0.5 LTC workers per 100 older people/EU-27 average was 3.8)
  - Shortfalls in governance: including poor coordination between health and social care, poor regulation and quality control particularly of private providers

# Key reforms needed

- Increase funding and access to LTC services, particularly community care
- Support to informal carers (to combine employment with care, psychological support, training)
- Investment in workforce, through an increase in wages, improvement of working conditions and increasing the prestige of care work; training (e.g. prevention, technology)
- Improvement of the coordination of care between health and social care sectors, including data coordination
- Closer monitoring and quality management in LTC institutions, particularly in the private sector (better data on e.g. Covid in facilities).

**Thank you!**

**Any comments/questions?**

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