Cumberland Council

NEWSLETTER

September 2026

Infection Prevention and Control for care homes across Cumberland

Sepsis

What is Sepsis?

Sepsis is a life-threatening medical emergency that occurs when the body's response to an infection triggers widespread inflammation, which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death.

- **It can develop from bacterial, viral, or fungal infections**
- **Sepsis can progress rapidly**, making prompt action essential
- **Early recognition and urgent treatment are critical and can save lives**

Why Sepsis Matters in Care Homes?

Residents are at an increased risk if they:

- Are older or frail
- Have multiple long-term health conditions
- Have a weakened immune system
- Have wounds, pressure ulcers or invasive medical devices



Common Infections that can lead to Sepsis

- Urinary tract infection (UTI)
- Chest infection or pneumonia
- Skin infections or cellulitis
- Infected wounds or pressure ulcers
- Influenza and other viral infections

Signs of infection to look for:

General:

- Fever or low temperature
- Shivering or rigors
- Fast heart rate
- Fast breathing
- New confusion or altered behaviour

Urinary infection:

- Urgency
- Frequency
- Pain passing urine
- Lower abdominal pain

Skin infection:

- Redness
- Swelling
- Warmth
- Discharge from wounds

Gastrointestinal infection:

- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain

Respiratory infection:

- Cough
- Breathlessness
- Increased sputum

SEPSIS SAVVY

Remember: A resident can deteriorate quickly. If concerned, escalate promptly

Think Sepsis if a Resident has an infection and:

- New confusion or reduced responsiveness
- Very fast breathing
- Severe shivering or fever
- Mottled, pale or blue skin
- Not passing urine
- Extreme weakness or collapse
- Signs they are rapidly deteriorating



Escalate immediately to the nurse in charge, senior carer, GP, community nursing team, or emergency services in line with your local procedures.

What Should Staff do?

- Recognise signs of infection early
- Monitor and record observations
- Use NEWS2 where available
- Communicate concerns using SBAR
- Escalate deterioration promptly
- Document actions taken and advice received

Contact emergency services if sepsis is suspected and the resident is seriously unwell

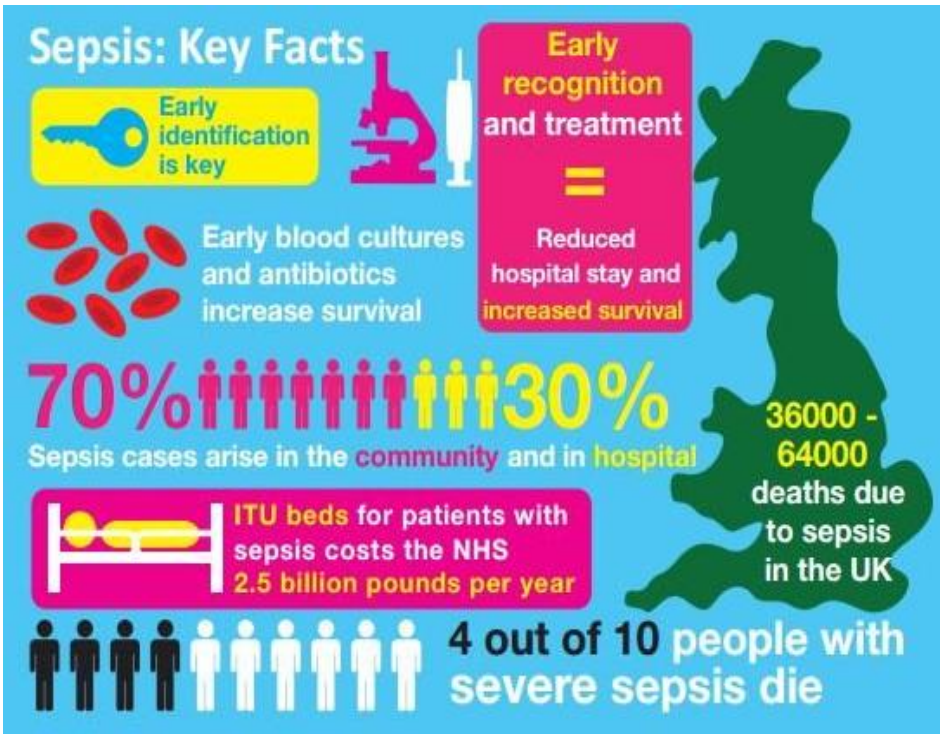
Care Home Tools for Deterioration

Use:

- **RESTORE2** - a physical deterioration and escalation tool for care/nursing homes

Which includes

- **NEWS2** – Recording clinic observations
- **SBAR –** To communicate concern



Key Message: **Sepsis is a medical emergency. Any resident with a suspected infection who is deteriorating, becoming confused, breathing rapidly, or showing signs of severe illness requires urgent assessment and escalation.**

Useful Links:

- Sepsis - NHS
- About sepsis - The UK Sepsis Trust
- RESTORE2™ official :: NHS