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4,000 FEARED DEAD IN OUR CARE HOMES

Shocking virus death toll hugely under-reported, warn experts

A 'HIDDEN epidemic' of coronavirus in care homes may have cost 4,000 lives, experts warned last night.

They believe deaths are being hugely under-reported because of a lack of testing.

GPs are also sometimes reluc-

By **Tom Kelly, Sophie Borland** and **Susie Coen**

tant to write Covid-19 on death certificates and figures from care homes are not included in the official daily toll.

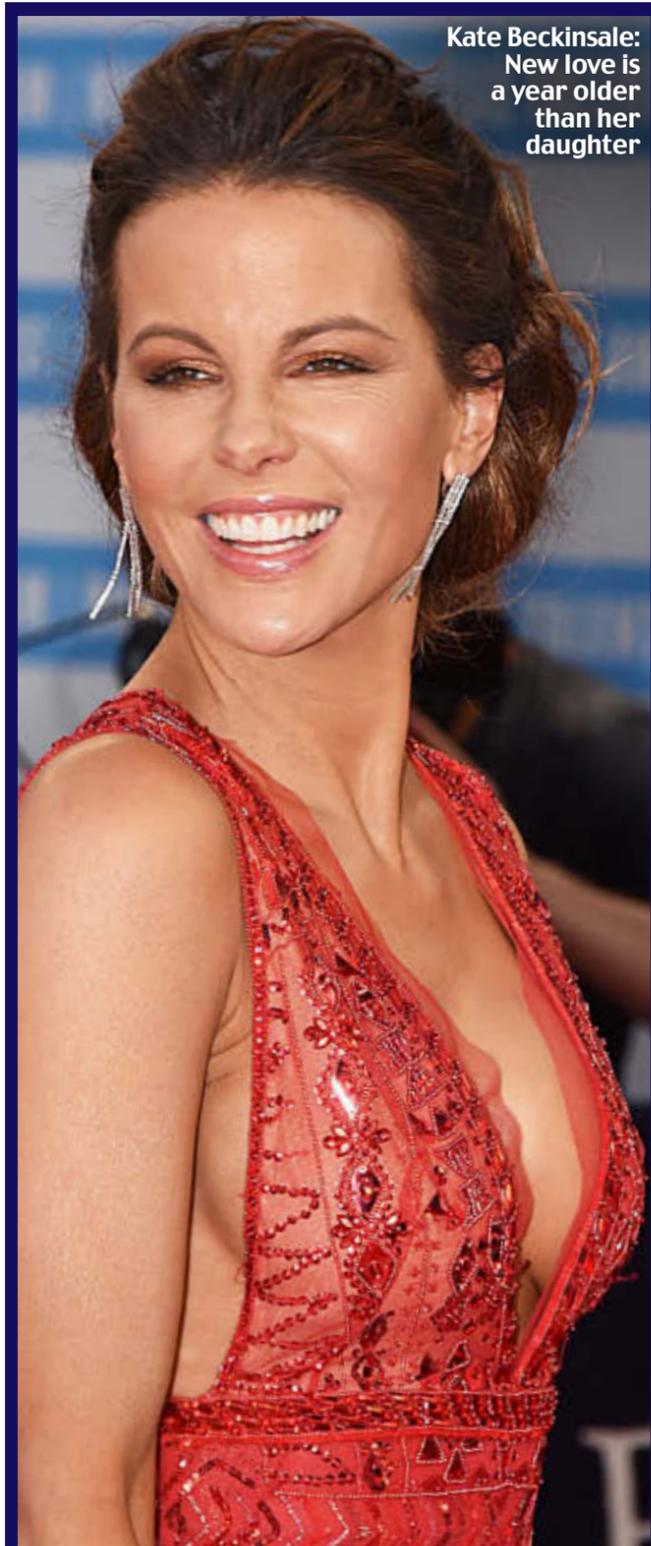
The latest report from the Office for National Statistics says the virus killed 237 care home residents in England and Wales in

the two weeks up to April 3. But industry figures say the true count is much higher - potentially 4,000 since the outbreak started.

Campaigners and MPs warned yesterday of an 'unfolding horror' that could end up with tens of thousands of forgotten victims.

Ministers face urgent calls to get a grip and the Mail is demanding

Turn to Page 2



Kate Beckinsale:
New love is
a year older
than her
daughter

Kate, 46, dates
FOURTH toyboy
...who's just 22!

SEE PAGE THREE

CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Trump cuts off cash for World Health chiefs

Could rants cost him the White House? SEE PAGE 16

Mail Foreign Service

DONALD Trump last night halted US payments to the World Health Organisation as he accused it of 'covering up' the spread of coronavirus.

He said the WHO had failed in its 'basic duty' of alerting other countries about the virus's emergence out of China and said 'political correctness was placed above saving lives'.

In a lengthy condemnation of the organisation, he made the staggering claim the WHO's handling of the virus has resulted in a '20-fold' increase in global cases.

He said US funding would be stopped amid a review of the WHO's handling of the virus.

The US contributes half a billion dollars annually, [£396million] compared to £30million provided by China.

Speaking during a Press conference on the lawns of the White House, he accused the WHO of 'severely mismanaging and covering up the spread of coronavirus'. His attack came after several claims by Trump that the WHO's response has been 'China-

centric'. 'With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic we have deep concerns whether America's generosity has been put to the best use possible. The reality is that the WHO failed to adequately obtain, vet and share information in a timely and transparent fashion,' Mr Trump said.

WHO to work with countries to ensure that accurate information about international health threats is shared in a timely manner.

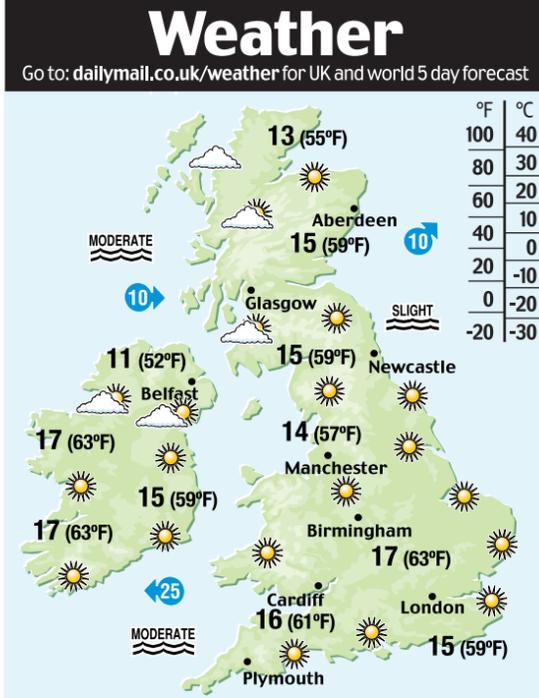
'The WHO failed in this basic duty and must be held accountable.'

Mr Trump added: 'Many countries said they were going to listen to the WHO and they

have problems now the likes of which they cannot believe. 'So much death has been caused by their mistakes,' he added.

The US is one of the nations hardest-hit by the virus, recording 611,156 cases and 25,924 deaths.

Last night's comments came a day after President Trump launched a savage attack on the media, argued with reporters, and played a campaign-style video praising his handling of the pandemic in the White House briefing room.



Summary: Mostly sunny

UK TODAY: A chilly start for most with fog patches in Northern Ireland. Then it will be mostly dry and sunny. However there will be patchy rain in parts of northwest Scotland. Gentle variable winds. Max 18c.

Today's weather

	9am	12noon	3pm	6pm	9pm
London	8c	14c	17c	17c	12c
Plymouth	9c	12c	14c	12c	10c
Cardiff	7c	12c	15c	15c	12c
B'ham	7c	12c	16c	16c	12c
M'chester	7c	13c	16c	16c	12c
Newcastle	7c	13c	15c	15c	11c
Glasgow	7c	11c	12c	12c	10c
Aberdeen	7c	12c	15c	15c	11c
Belfast	7c	11c	14c	14c	10c

5 day forecast

	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
London	21c	18c	14c	17c	16c
Plymouth	16c	14c	12c	13c	13c
Cardiff	20c	18c	14c	15c	15c
B'ham	20c	17c	13c	14c	14c
M'chester	20c	16c	11c	14c	14c
Newcastle	14c	10c	9c	10c	12c
Glasgow	17c	15c	13c	14c	13c
Aberdeen	10c	8c	9c	9c	10c
Belfast	15c	14c	11c	13c	13c

Yesterday

City	Sun (hrs)	Rain (ins)	Temp (min)	Temp (max)
Aberdeen	4.7	0.00	-1	15
Aberporth	13.1	0.00	1	9
Belfast	11.8	0.00	-2	15
Birmingham	11.3	0.00	0	14
Bournemouth	12.8	0.00	0	12
Bristol	10.8	0.00	2	13
Cardiff	12.9	0.00	1	12
Durham	10.5	0.00	-2	16

Information supplied by Meteogroup

Moon and Sun

MOON rises: 3.34am, sets: 11.37am
 Sun rises London: 6.04am, sets: 7.58pm
 Manchester rises: 6.08am, sets: 8.10pm
 HIGH TIDE London Bridge: 8.17pm
 Liverpool: 6.04pm

Extremes (24 hrs to 7pm y'day)

Warmest: Helen's Bay, Co Down, 17c (63f). Coldest: Redesdale, Northumberland, -7c (19f). Wettest: Baltasound, Shetland, 0.12ins. Sunniest: Aberporth, Ceredigion, 13.1hrs.

Europe forecast

City	today	c	f	tomorrow	c	f
Amsterdam	sun	13	55	sun	17	63
Brussels	sun	16	61	sun	22	72
Frankfurt	sun	17	63	sun	23	73
Geneva	sun	19	66	sun	22	72
Lisbon	showers	17	63	showers	17	63
Madrid	thunder	16	61	showers	19	66
Paris	sun	19	66	sun	24	75
Rome	sun	17	63	sun	19	66

Around the world yesterday

City	weather	c	f	City	weather	c	f	City	weather	c	f
Algiers	Cloudy	18	64	Florence	Fair	18	64	New Delhi	Cloudy	35	95
Amsterdam	Cloudy	8	46	Geneva	Sunny	12	54	New York	Rain	14	57
Athens	Sunny	22	72	Gibraltar	Sunny	18	64	Nice	Sunny	17	63
Auckland	Fair	17	63	Guernsey	Sunny	10	50	Oslo	Cloudy	7	45
Bahrain	Sunny	30	86	Helsinki	Showers	3	37	Palma	Cloudy	18	64
Barcelona	Sunny	17	63	Hong Kong	Sunny	22	72	Paris	Sunny	10	50
Basra	Sunny	29	84	Innsbruck	Fair	9	48	Perth	Fair	25	77
Beijing	Sunny	23	73	Istanbul	Fair	17	63	Prague	Cloudy	6	43
Beirut	Fair	20	68	Jersey	Sunny	9	48	Rhodes	Sunny	22	72
Belfast	Sunny	11	52	Larnaca	Sunny	23	73	Riga	Sleet	4	39
Belgrade	Rain	5	41	Las Palmas	Fair	22	72	Rome	Rain	14	57
Berlin	Fair	9	48	London	Sunny	10	50	Singapore	Cloudy	32	90
Blairritz	Sunny	18	64	Los Angeles	Cloudy	18	64	Stockholm	Cloudy	7	45
Brussels	Cloudy	8	46	Luxor	Sunny	27	81	Strasbourg	Sunny	10	50
Bucharest	Cloudy	20	68	Madrid	Showers	15	59	Sydney	Sunny	25	77
Budapest	Fair	9	48	Malaga	Fair	20	68	Tangier	Fair	19	66
Chagen	Cloudy	8	46	Malta	Sunny	21	70	Tel Aviv	Sunny	23	73
Cairo	Fair	23	73	Melbourne	Fair	22	72	Tenerife	Fair	24	75
Cape Town	Sunny	21	70	Mexico City	Sunny	25	77	Toronto	Rain	14	57
Casablanca	Fair	22	72	Miami	Cloudy	32	90	Tunis	Sunny	24	75
Corfu	Cloudy	18	64	Manila	Sunny	24	75	Vancouver	Sunny	11	52
Cyprus	Sunny	23	73	Montreal	Rain	14	57	Venice	Fair	18	64
Dubai	Sunny	31	88	Moscow	Cloudy	7	45	Vienna	Showers	7	45
Dublin	Sunny	12	54	Mumbai	Sunny	35	95	Warsaw	Cloudy	6	43
Dubrovnik	Showers	12	54	Nairobi	Cloudy	25	77	Wellington	Fair	13	55
Faro	Fair	19	66								

Continued from Page One

virus tests for all staff and residents with symptoms, more protection gear and a Cabinet minister to deal with the crisis.

As it emerged that just 500 care home staff have been tested so far;

■ The industry regulator was accused of going missing before finally saying it would start to count deaths;

■ Chancellor Rishi Sunak denied that care home victims had been forgotten;

■ Two care home operators said they had already seen more than 500 deaths;

■ Officially-registered deaths in a single week reached the highest level on record.

■ Another 778 fatalities in hospitals took the UK total past 12,000;

■ The Office for Budget Responsibility predicted a 35 per cent fall in GDP with two million thrown out of work;

■ Doubts grew over the prospect of hitting the 100,000-a-day testing target as numbers fell;

■ The Nightingale hospital in London was virtually empty over Easter;

■ Some 20 suspected arson attacks were made against 5G phone masts;

■ Prosecutors were told to consider the impact on the justice system when deciding whether to charge a suspect;

■ Experts warned many children could miss out on their MMR jab due to a reluctance to go to GP surgeries;

■ Drugs giants GSK and Sanofi teamed up on a vaccine to roll out in mid-2021;

■ Sir Simon Stevens, chief executive of NHS England, was reported to be the latest top figure to have had coronavirus.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock last night pledged action on testing and is also expected to outline a plan to address the crisis in social care.

Ministers are coming under pressure to include care home deaths in the daily figures. Mr Sunak and public health officials faced a string of questions over the issue at a press briefing last night.

Organisations including the Alzheimer's Society and Care England, which represents social care organisations, believe the care home death toll is being hugely under-played by a lack of tests.

David Spiegelhalter, a Cambridge University professor, highlighted emergency laws that enable doctors to certify deaths

True death toll could be 12,000

THERE are no official figures on the number of care home deaths so far, but some estimates put the toll as high as 12,000.

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine says evidence from France, Belgium, Spain, Italy and Ireland suggests between 42 per cent and 57 per cent of all Covid-19 deaths happen in care homes.

There have been 12,000 deaths officially in the UK so far, according to Government figures which only cover hospitals. It could mean there have

been another 12,000 in care homes. The Office for National Statistics puts the number at only 217 but its figures are 11 days out of date at a time when the death rate has risen dramatically.

Care England, which represents independent care providers, and Work and Pensions Secretary Therese Coffey both estimate the toll to be at least 1,000. The Mail's own audit has found 951 deaths, but many care homes have declined to give figures.

The Alzheimer's Society estimates there have been 2,500 deaths.

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without being present and risking infection. Sir David said this meant they were less inclined to record the virus as the cause of death.

Mike Padgham, of the Independent Care Group, which represents care homes and home care providers, said he believed the virus could already have claimed the lives of at least 4,000 residents.

He based the figure on estimates that suggest the toll is equal to about a third of deaths in hospitals as well as on care home deaths from other countries.

'These people are in a very vulnerable group, they may have underlying conditions and they're in close proximity so it's being spread quicker,' he said. 'We don't think the Government are doing enough and now they've been caught out. They didn't fix the roof on social care when the sun was shining and now it's too late.'

The Alzheimer's Society estimates

there have been at least 2,500 deaths from care homes based on the latest ONS data from yesterday. But these figures are 11 days behind. The charity's Sally Copley said: 'It strikes us that these deaths from coronavirus are the iceberg, and the hospital figures just the tip.'

'The evidence from Europe shows more than 40 per cent of all deaths relating to coronavirus occur in care homes.'

The Mail has compiled a figure of at least 951 care home deaths from officially confirmed fatalities by care home operators and local authorities or local media reports. Martin Green of Care England said up to three quarters of care homes 'had some element' of coronavirus.

Labour MP Peter Kyle MP said: 'We need a dedicated minister of Cabinet level who will bang their fist on the table and shout from the rafters about the horrors unfolding in our care system.'

Families yesterday lambasted the care home watchdog for soaring coronavirus deaths among residents.

The Care Quality Commission ceased routine inspections on March 16, citing 'unprecedented pressure on the health and care system'.

Jayne Connery, director of Care Campaign for the Vulnerable, said: 'With no external scrutiny, vulnerable care home residents have no means of speaking out or seeking help and families are not able to visit to keep a watchful eye.'

'The CQC said it 'will visit if we think there is a risk of harm or abuse'. But a spokesman did not specify exactly what 'harm' meant.

■ Latest coronavirus video news, views and expert advice at mailplus.co.uk/coronavirus

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