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Dear Minister,

### **Dignified Care Hospital Review and notification of end of Review**

I would like to thank you for responding on time to my request for further information in relation to Recommendations 7 (staffing levels tool), 10 (patient experience) and 11 (sharing best practice) of my Review 'Dignified Care? The experiences of older people in hospital in Wales'.

My team and I have assessed the third and final response thoroughly. We have had help from a panel of advisors whose names are listed on our website.

### **Recommendation 7**

The Welsh Government's third response to Recommendation 7 (staffing levels) persuades me that action is being taken to comply with my recommendation. I am pleased to see that the Terms of Reference for the Wales Professional Nurse Staffing Group now state that the new tool being created must reflect current and forecast levels of need in relation to the care of older people. This is important since, as the Welsh Government notes, older people use all NHS services except those for maternity and children and, as such, make up the most significant proportion of the patient population cared for within NHS Wales. I look

forward to being kept informed about the development of the tool and am pleased that a first draft will be available in November of this year. I hope that this tool, combined with the new Nursing Dashboard that is being developed and the e-rostering tool will help hospitals to better determine appropriate staffing levels and how staff should be deployed.

### **Recommendation 10**

The third response provided to Recommendation 10 (patient experience) causes me some concern. I note the Welsh Government's stated commitment to hearing the older person's voice in as many ways as possible in order to inform policy and give reassurance to older people that their views and concerns are being addressed. I am pleased that the Welsh Government recognises that gathering patient views is not the primary function of the Fundamentals of Care audit tool. As you know, I believe that the tool has limitations in capturing qualitative data relating to patients' experiences. I am, therefore, encouraged that a decision was made on 10 October 2011 to review the audit tool in order to make it more effective in collecting evidence about patients' experiences. I would appreciate a written update on the progress of that work by the end of January 2012.

I am not convinced that the National Household Survey will be an effective way of recording patient experience and would need more information to be convinced that it would make a difference, for example, what questions would be asked and how would frail older people be represented where they lack capacity?

It is vital that there is a clear and consistent mechanism that captures older people's hospital experiences and reports them at a national level. Making NHS Wales Fundamentals of Care audit reports available on the Welsh Government website may help and I hope that Health Boards and the Trust will be *strongly* encouraged to make the results of their patient experience surveys public. Availability of Healthcare Inspectorate Wales inspection reports can also be beneficial but I remain disappointed that the Welsh Government does not believe it would be practical for it to collate survey results and paint a clear picture of what is happening in relation to older people and dignity across all hospitals in Wales. It would be extremely useful to do this in order to, for example, identify the top five

challenges faced by all hospitals across Wales and also to identify what is done well, and where.

There is a danger that the multiplicity of approaches does not address the need for clarity and consistency. A key objective should be to measure changes in dignified care in the nation as a whole so that progress can be assessed over time - otherwise it will be difficult to say whether anything has really improved for older people. The reporting, collation and evaluation of older people's hospital experiences is at the heart of such assessment.

On balance, I have decided to accept the Welsh Government's response to Recommendation 10 because it demonstrates that steps are being taken in the right direction. However, I will be monitoring the implementation of the Welsh Government's response to Recommendation 10 closely and, if necessary, will review this particular area of learning from patient experience at a later date.

### **Recommendation 11**

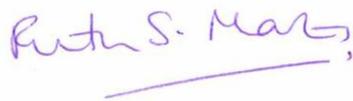
I am satisfied with the Welsh Government's response to Recommendation 11 (sharing good practice). It is rewarding to know that the implementation of my recommendations has been made a Tier 1 priority by the Welsh Government and that Health Boards and the Trust will be held to account by the Government for implementing the actions they have promised to take. This sends a strong message to older people in Wales that their voice has been heard and that change will happen.

Giving such high priority to Recommendation 11, as one of the twelve recommendations that will be monitored, should help drive forward the evaluation and adoption of good practice across Wales, with an emphasis on securing positive, demonstrable changes in the care of older people. Once the respective functions of the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare and the Delivery Support Unit are determined I would be keen to meet with the people who will lead the work on sharing best practice in relation to older people and dignity and respect. Please would you also let me know who in Public Health Wales will lead on work to support NHS bodies in sharing good practice.

Since the third response of the Welsh Government has satisfied my request for information and persuades me that there is serious intent to comply with all of my recommendations, the official Review as it relates to the Welsh Government has now ended. My team and I will be active in working to ensure that my recommendations and the Welsh Government's commitments become practical realities which benefit older people in Wales. We hope to meet with you in the spring of 2012 to discuss the progress that has been made.

If you have any questions about this letter that you would like to discuss, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Ruth Marks  
**Older People's Commissioner for Wales**