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10 August 2015

Dear Mr Thomas

### **Care Home Review: Analysis of your final response**

I am writing to thank you for providing a final response to my Requirements for Action, which I have now had an opportunity to analyse.

In analysing the response received, I was looking for assurance through the information provided and action in hand or planned that my Requirements for Action will be implemented and the intended outcomes will be delivered for older people.

Your response clearly demonstrates a commitment to delivering the change required that I outlined in my Care Home Review and clearly details action you have in place or will take to deliver the intended outcomes.

I am particularly pleased that your organisation has used the constructive feedback that I provided earlier in the year to improve your response. It is good to see that your organisation is working with the neighbouring Local Authority and Health Board within some Requirements for Action.

Your organisation has proposed the proactive development of new services or processes which have the potential to progress as best practice. For example, you fund a Discharge Liaison Service which

provides independent support and advice to individuals and their families to enable them to plan their discharge from hospital (Requirement for Action 1.6).

I am therefore satisfied that your organisation is already complying with the majority of my Requirements of Action or is committed to taking the action necessary to deliver the required change. However, I must note that there is still one area which requires further work to assure me that the required change and improvement will be delivered for older people. I would also expect to see the development of clear review and evaluation procedures to provide assurance at a senior level in your organisation that the required outcomes will be delivered.

Please find attached a detailed analysis of the additional information you have provided in response to my request.

As you are aware, I am obliged by the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act 2006 to keep a register of responses to my Requirements for Action and therefore all of the responses from the bodies subject to my Review will be published on my website together with the analysis of each response.

As I have already advised, I will be publishing an overall commentary on whether I consider that the change I expect to see on behalf of older people will be delivered across Wales and I intend to make a formal public statement in respect of this and action intended by individual bodies subject to the review. These statements will be made on 11 August.

It is not my intention to seek detailed updates on all of the action you have in hand, because of the level of assurance and commitment you have shown in securing these outcomes. It is therefore my intention to undertake a follow up review in 18 months' time at which stage I will be looking for tangible evidence that these outcomes have been consistently delivered across the care homes in your area (your action has been completed). I will, at a later stage, provide you with information on the scope and approach that I will adopt.

However, there are a number areas for which I will require interim updates and assurance and I will write separately to you in respect of what these are and how I will require this to be provided.

I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that older people living in care homes in Wales have the best possible quality of life and receive the highest standards of care.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Rochira". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

**Sarah Rochira**  
**Older People's Commissioner for Wales**

## Vale of Glamorgan Council

I welcome that the Local Authority has, and is working towards more joint collaborative approaches with the Cardiff County Council.

### Requirement for Action 1.6

#### Final Conclusion - Acceptable

1.6 Older people are offered independent advocacy in the following circumstances:

- when an older person is at risk of, or experiencing, physical, emotional, financial or sexual abuse.
- when a care home is closing or an older person is moving because their care needs have changed.
- when an older person needs support to help them leave hospital.

For those with fluctuating capacity or communication difficulties, this should be non-instructed advocacy.

When a care home is in escalating concerns, residents must have access to non-instructed advocacy.

The Local Authority's response to this Requirement for Action was previously determined to be acceptable. Therefore, no further analysis has been undertaken.

### Requirement for Action 2.2

#### Final Conclusion - Acceptable

2.2 Older people in care homes have access to specialist services and, where appropriate, multidisciplinary care that is designed to support rehabilitation after a period of ill health.

The Local Authority's response to this Requirement for Action was previously determined to be acceptable. Therefore, no further analysis has been undertaken.

## **Requirement for Action 3.2**

### **Final Conclusion - Partial**

3.2 All care home employees undertake basic dementia training as part of their induction and all care staff and care home managers undertake further dementia training on an on-going basis as part of their skills and competency development, with this a specific element of supervision and performance assessment.

The Local Authority's response to this Requirement for Action demonstrates an understanding of the importance of dementia training and includes actions and commitments that have the potential to ensure that staff working in care homes understand the physical and emotional needs of older people living with dementia.

It is good to see that dementia training is available as part of its standard training programme and that the Local Authority undertakes a survey of training requirements annually. However, I welcome in particular the Local Authority's joint work with the Health Board and neighbouring Local Authority to develop a dementia training programme to support the implementation of the 'Cardiff and Vale Three Year Dementia Plan'. The response also states that it, and Cardiff County Council will employ a specialist member of staff to deliver bespoke dementia training to all staff and information is provided on the modules that will be included and the methods of delivery.

However, despite the demonstrable commitment to improvement in this area, there is no explicit commitment that basic dementia training will be provided to all staff as part of their induction.

I am pleased that additional capacity is being made available within the Contracting Team to support care homes to improve their processes of supporting staff and supervising quality of care. This should ensure that

dementia training is on-going and areas of improvement in staff skills are identified at an early stage. I must note however, that I fully expect the process of supervision and performance assessment referenced in the Local Authority's response to also include care home managers as well as staff and this is not made explicit within the response.

### **Requirement for Action 3.3**

#### **Final Conclusion – Acceptable**

3.3 Active steps should be taken to encourage the use of befriending schemes within care homes, including intergenerational projects, and support residents to retain existing friendships. This must include ensuring continued access to faith based support and to specific cultural communities.

The response to this Requirement for Action from the Local Authority demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that older people have access to meaningful social contact which includes access to faith based support and the retention of friendships. The response states that this is achieved through ongoing case management and review processes that ensure care plans are individualised, and also the use of innovative approaches to befriending by some care homes.

For example the response describes the positive impact of attending a tea dance that was arranged by the 50+ Forum, and some care homes have invested in wi-fi connections and tablets to enable older people to maintain contact with family and friends who may be far away. While I recognise that this may not be suitable for all older people in care homes, there are many who, with appropriate support, could benefit from this social interaction.

I welcome that the response states that future work of the Care Home Forum is to review the current befriending programmes, to evaluate the benefits for residents and to share best practice. In order to ensure that all older people in care homes across the whole area can access befriending should they wish, the Local Authority must have a good understanding of what is currently offered and whether this is successful at supporting

meaningful social contact and reducing the risks of loneliness and isolation. Although not specifically referenced in the response, I would expect that the planned review of befriending services includes access to intergenerational projects, faith based support and specific cultural communities as part of its considerations.

## **Requirement for Action 5.6**

### **Final Conclusion – Acceptable**

5.6 A National Improvement Service is established to improve care homes where Local Authorities, Health Boards and CSSIW have identified significant and/or on-going risk factors concerning the quality of life or care provided to residents and/or potential breaches of their human rights.

The national improvement team should utilise the skills of experienced Care Home Managers, as well as other practitioners, to provide intensive and transformational support to drive up the standards of quality of life and care for residents as well as to prevent and mitigate future safeguarding risks.

This service should also develop a range of resources and training materials to assist care homes that wish to improve in self-development and on-going improvement.

The Local Authority's response to this Requirement for Action was previously determined to be acceptable. Therefore, no further analysis has been undertaken.

## **Requirement for Action 6.2**

### **Final Conclusion – Acceptable**

6.2 Care home providers, commissioners and CSSIW should develop informal and systematic ways in which to ensure they better understand

the quality of life of older people, through listening to them directly (outside of formal complaints) and ensuring issues they raise are acted upon.

Annual reporting should be undertaken of how on-going feedback from older people has been used to drive continuous improvement (see action 6.10).

The Local Authority's response to this Requirement for Action provides information on the actions that it takes to listen to older people directly in order to understand their experiences and improve services.

For example, the Local Authority describes how its commissioned advocacy services represent individual and collective resident concerns, and that the Local Authority consults routinely with residents of care homes that they manage. However, I believe that these representations or consultations are most likely to be in response to a crisis or a specific event. Therefore, while what is learnt from them may be incredibly valuable and contribute to the continuous improvement of care home quality – they do not necessarily constitute informal listening that takes place outside of formal methods, such as complaints.

That being said, one outcome from a formal consultation exercise is that staff now eat meals and take tea breaks with the residents, which as the response states, has had a positive impact on their level of engagement. This change in itself has the potential to increase the ability of staff to listen directly to the experiences of older people and their day to day quality of life. I would expect staff to be supported in these situations by the Local Authority to raise issues of concern or lessons learnt so that older people's views are captured and shared on a regular basis. Without doing so, opportunities to make small changes that can make a significant difference to quality of life and care are missed. These could then become significant, impactful and costly to remedy.

The response from the Local Authority does not specifically reference annual reporting of how on-going feedback from older people has been used to drive continuous improvement. However, it does state that 'as part of the ongoing quality assurance work with providers, during

2015/2016 the Care Home Forum will share information gathered thorough all care homes to understand the issues being raised by care home residents, monitor the action taken to address them and share best practice'. Therefore with the Requirement for Action in mind, I would expect that sharing of such information would be in the form of an annual report.

## **Requirement for Action 6.7**

### **Final Conclusion – Acceptable**

6.7 Annual Quality Statements are published by the Director of Social Services in respect of the quality of life and care of older people living in commissioned and Local Authority run care homes. This should include:

- the availability of Independent Advocacy in care homes
- quality of life and care of older people, including specific reference to older people living with dementia and/or sensory loss
- how the human rights of older people are upheld in care homes across the Local Authority
- the views of older people, advocates and lay assessors about the quality of life and care provided in care homes
- geographic location of care homes

Further details of reporting requirements should be included as part of the Regulation and Inspection Bill.

The Local Authority's response to this Requirement for Action was previously determined to be acceptable. Therefore, no further analysis has been undertaken.