



Mr Paul Orders
Chief Executive
Cardiff County Council
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
Cardiff Bay
CF10 4UW

Cambrian Buildings
Mount Stuart Square
Cardiff CF10 5FL

Adeiladau Cambrian
Sqwâr Mount Stuart
Caerdydd CF10 5FL

10 August 2015

Dear Mr Orders

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

I am 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 have funded basic British Sign Language training for care home staff (Requirement for Action 2.2).

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 are still three areas which require 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 my intention to undertake a follow up review in 18 months' time at which stage I will be looking for tangible evidence that the outcomes I expect to see have been consistently delivered across the care homes in your area. 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

Cardiff County Council

The Local Authority recognises that overall, I was disappointed with their initial response, and has provided further information in response to the Requirements for Action as a result. I welcome that the Local Authority has stated that it is working towards more joint collaborative approaches with the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Requirement for Action 1.6

Final Conclusion - Partial

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.

There are a number of positive actions outlined within the response that should support older people to secure their rights and have their concerns addressed in some circumstances.

For example, I welcome that independent advocacy is offered when a home is under 'Escalating Concerns', and that Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy is referenced in relation to this. Furthermore, I welcome that the Local Authority commits to sharing issues raised with all partners, and demonstrates an understanding of the positive outcomes that access to advocacy can have for older people, both 'in terms of having issues addressed but also in terms of gaining confidence in being able to respond to matters in their own right'. It is also good to see that the

Local Authority is committed to reviewing their current arrangement in light of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

However, although the Local Authority response states that its advocacy service responds to over 400 issues in one year, without knowing in which situations this support was provided, it is not possible to know if the individuals received advocacy in all of the circumstances noted within the Requirement for Action. Therefore, the information provided by the Local Authority does not provide me with full assurances that independent advocacy will be provided to older people when they are at risk of, or experiencing, physical, emotional, financial or sexual abuse – or when an older person needs support to help them leave hospital. Without independent advocacy in all of the situations outlined within the Requirement for Action older people are at risk of not having their voices heard, or concerns addressed in situations when they are potentially vulnerable.

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.

There are a number of positive actions that the Local Authority is undertaking that have the potential to support older people to maximise their independence and quality of life following a period of ill health.

For example, the response states that there is a multi-disciplinary approach from the Local Authority and Health Board at an operational level, and commits to working closer with the Health Board, including GPs and district nurses to support people in care homes. I welcome that the Local Authority has funded basic British Sign Language training for care home staff and communication support to enable care home staff to better support older people with a sensory impairment. Furthermore, the Local Authority is working with the Health Board to provide a joint training

programme for all Community Resource Team Staff to improve awareness and ownership of reablement, and with Social Services Improvement Agency to provide dementia reablement training.

The Local Authority has identified an individual to lead on this work, and the Community Resource Team training has a clear implementation date. The clarity of this approach should enable quality and impact of this training to be closely monitored by the Local Authority. However as this work progresses, I would expect to see a greater level of demonstrable awareness of the reality of access that older people have to the specialist and multi-disciplinary services and the impact that this has.

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.

For example, it is good to see that the Local Authority explicitly recognises the importance of dementia training in achieving high standards of care, and states that it works with providers to ensure that access to training opportunities is maximised. The response states that an annual training needs analysis is undertaken to identify the training needs for their staff, and that basic dementia training is a standard course on the training programme.

I welcome in particular the Local Authority's joint work with the Health Board and neighbouring Local Authority to develop the 'Cardiff and Vale Three Year Dementia Plan' which will develop a dementia training programme and spread appropriate training across care homes. It is also good to see that the Local Authority has commissioned training for care home managers, and that a dementia care training course has been designed to meet the needs of all appropriate staff. However, it does not provide further information on who the Local Authority considers to be appropriate staff, nor is there an explicit commitment that basic dementia training will be provided to all staff as part of their induction.

Despite the demonstrable commitment to improvement in this area, and a statement that contract monitoring visits are used to ensure that appropriate induction is in place, there is no information provided on the reality of access and uptake of such courses.

The response states that a tool has been developed to capture the links between staff competency and service quality. However, there is no information provided on how supervision and performance assessments directly with both staff and care home managers are used to understand and assess their skills and competencies.

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.

There are a number of positive actions contained within the response from the Local Authority that have the potential to ensure that older people are supported to have meaningful social contact and are less likely to become lonely and isolated.

For example, the response describes the introduction of technology to enable older people to communicate with friends and relatives who do not

live locally, and the Local Authority is developing a 'Daytime Opportunities Strategy for Older People' which will include the use of volunteers, community and faith based schemes. Furthermore, I welcome that that the Local Authority recognises that they need to do more to identify culturally sensitive and faith based support that is available to older people in care home settings, and that it will include access to faith based support and the retention of friendships within case management and review processes.

However, I must note that these are commitments that are still under development, and I would expect the Strategy, once fully developed, to include access to befriending opportunities as described within the Requirement for Action – and also for a deeper understanding of the impact and benefits of befriending to be demonstrated by the Local Authority. Additionally, I would expect an evaluation of impact of the introduction of technology to be undertaken by the Local Authority in due course.

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 – Partial

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 response to this Requirement for Action from the Local Authority provides some information on how the Local Authority gains information on the quality of life of older people in care homes. For example, the Local Authority will receive feedback from the advocacy service, and the Local Authority conducted a survey in 2014 which resulted in some improvement action being taken and that the Local Authority plans to replicate shortly.

While any attempt to listen to the experiences of older people is to be welcomed, I am concerned that these are only structured and formal methods of gaining feedback and would only provide a limited insight into the quality of life of older people. This means that there is a risk that issues are not addressed before they become significant, impactful and difficult to remedy.

Furthermore, the initial response from the Local Authority does state that it will work in partnership with the CSSIW and the Health Board to develop and implement informal and systematic ways to ensure a better understanding of the quality of life of older people in care homes, and that

it will use annual reporting. However, there is no further information or plan provided regarding how the Local Authority will make this happen. Therefore, in combination with my concerns in relation the formal approach that the Local Authority currently takes, I cannot be fully assured that commissioners, providers and inspectors will capture older people's views to develop a thorough understanding of their quality of life in a way that can drive continuous improvement.

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.

I welcome that the Local Authority demonstrates a clear commitment to publish an Annual Quality Statement in the manner outlined within the Requirement for Action. It is good to see that the Local Authority has outlined the sources that will be used to gather information for inclusion within the AQS, which includes older people themselves and their families. Furthermore, I welcome that the Local Authority demonstrates an understanding of the reasons behind such a publication – to ensure that

older people, families and the general public have access to comprehensive and accessible information with which to make informed decisions about care home provision.