



Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Kelly Davies on 029 2044 5055 / 07974 105089

Too many older people living in care homes in Wales have an unacceptable quality of life says Commissioner

Too many older people living in care homes in Wales have an unacceptable quality of life, according to a report published today by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales.

The Report – 'A Place to Call Home?' – has been published following the Commissioner's Review into the quality of life and care of older people living in care homes in Wales, the biggest Review of its kind ever undertaken.

The Review found that too many older people living in care homes, who are often among the most vulnerable in society, are no longer able to do the things that matter to them, lose meaningful choice and control over their lives, have their emotional needs neglected and do not have their basic rights upheld.

Review evidence also shows that the care delivered in many care homes in Wales often fails to meet the needs of an individual, focusing instead on a one-size-fits-all approach, something that can have a significant impact on the quality of life of older people living in residential and nursing care.

Older People's Commissioner for Wales, Sarah Rochira, said:

“My Care Home Review has been the biggest Review of its kind ever undertaken in Wales and has the voices of older people and their families at its heart.

“While my Review found excellent examples of truly person-centred care, enabling and empowering care that delivers the very best outcomes for older people, there are significant variations across Wales that result in too many older people living in care homes having an unacceptable quality of life.

“My Review report therefore sets out for all of the bodies subject to my Review requirements for action to deliver the change required within our care homes and ensure that quality of life sits at the heart of the delivery of residential and nursing care across Wales.”

The Review looked at a number of factors that can impact upon the quality of life of older people living in care homes, such as social participation, the care home environment, access to healthcare services, diet, staff capacity and training, and service commissioning, regulation and inspection.

To gather evidence for the Review, the Commissioner and her team of Social Care Rapporteurs, experts from health, social care and third sector backgrounds, undertook unannounced visits to 100 care homes across Wales to observe the day-to-day realities of life in a care home and to hear directly from older people about their quality of life and care, and their experiences of living in residential and nursing care.

In addition to this, the Commissioner collected over 2,000 questionnaire responses from care home residents and their families and also took extensive written and oral evidence from a wide range of public bodies, care providers and experts in care delivery.

The Review was undertaken using the Commissioner's statutory powers, which means that the bodies subject to the Review are required to produce detailed plans within three months, identifying how they will deliver the action required by the Commissioner. Following this, the Commissioner will begin a programme of follow-up work to monitor the implementation of these action plans and ensure that the change required is delivered for older people living in care homes.

The Commissioner added:

“The findings of my Review make for hard reading, but in failing to acknowledge the changes required, we undermine the good care there is and prevent ourselves from delivering the very best of care for all older people.

“It is essential that my requirements for action are delivered to ensure that quality of life sits at the heart of our care home system, at every level from commissioning to frontline care delivery.

“I understand that this will be no easy task given current financial constraints, but my Review makes very clear the impact of failing to get it right upon the people living in care homes and the price that is paid when failures occur, which, for too many, is simply too high.”

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For all media enquiries, please contact Kelly Davies on 029 2044 5055 / 07974 105089 or email kelly.davies@olderpeoplewales.com

Notes to Editors:

Further information about the Commissioner’s Residential Care Review, including full terms of reference, is available from

http://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/Reviews/Residential_Care_Review.aspx