



Older People's Rights in Care Homes

Workplan 2022 – 2024

Introduction

In April 2021, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales convened a roundtable on the rights of older people living in care homes. The aim of the roundtable was to provide an opportunity to discuss and examine the challenges faced by older people living in care homes (and their families and friends) and the extent to which residents' rights are being upheld. The intended outcome of these discussions was to identify the practical changes required in the short term and identify any longer-term change needed to support and extend the rights of older people living in care homes.

The roundtable brought together organisations from across the UK, including:

- Age Cymru
- Age UK
- Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru
- Care Forum Wales
- Care Inspectorate Wales
- Commissioner for Older People Northern Ireland
- Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales
- Relatives & Residents Association
- Scottish Care
- Social Care Wales
- National Care Forum

Subsequent meetings were held to discuss the action that was needed and to coproduce a workplan for progressing this work. Whilst the Older People's Commissioner for Wales continues to facilitate these meetings, the programme of work remains jointly owned by all organisations involved.

Programme of Work

To create the change needed, several projects have been identified related to the following outcomes:

- Increasing security of tenure for care home residents

- Care home residents are able to enjoy good quality of life
- Care home residents are treated with dignity and respect, and their rights upheld at all times
- Care home residents and their families understand their rights, including how to enforce them
- Human Rights are embedded as a fundamental part of good quality care
- Older people living in care homes have a voice in decisions that affect their lives
- Poor practice is highlighted and prevented from reoccurring
- Lessons are learned about the extent to which the rights of older people living in care homes were upheld and residents were adequately protected by Government(s)

In order to achieve these outcomes, action will be taken which includes:

- Increasing residents' security of tenure by developing a rights-based Contract and through strengthening legal protections;
- Creating new Guidance on visiting in care homes which is based on the legal framework of Human Rights;
- Working with service and workforce regulators to embed Human Rights in inspection frameworks and within social care practice;
- Changing Public Health approaches to infection control procedures so that care homes are no longer treated as clinical settings;
- Increasing care home residents' and their families' awareness of their rights and they can make complaints;
- Increasing care home residents' access to independent advocacy, in particular for those residents without family or friends;
- Developing a strategic approach to using complaints data to improve practice.

Next Steps

Meetings will be held early in 2022 to progress each of the identified areas of work, with the main network of organisations continuing to meet on a quarterly basis to monitor progress against the workplan.

Whilst many of the areas identified in the workplan are common across the UK, there will be others where a specific approach is needed in each individual nation. Work will, therefore, be undertaken on a UK-wide basis where possible, with lead in each nation should different actions be required to create change across the UK.

Some of the work identified will require action from a number of bodies to achieve the intended outcome. As such, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales is keen to engage with organisations who want to contribute towards creating the change that is needed to ensure the rights of older people living in care homes is upheld.