



16th July 2023

FOA Healthwatch Sheffield

Re:- #SpeakUp: Sheffcare Report

[#SpeakUp: Sheffcare Report, Healthwatch](#)

Thank you for your #SpeakUp report on the ongoing impact of Covid-19 in Care Homes.

The information contained in the report will be directly fed into our commissioning programme for residential care. More can be found about this in our Committee report: [Transforming Care Homes for the citizens of Sheffield](#), and we are grateful to our colleagues in Healthwatch for their membership on the Oversight Group for this work, as well as their support in the Voice workstream and Citizens Involvement Programme.

We will continue to place the direct feedback and voice of residents and their families and networks at the centre of our commissioning arrangements.

I was pleased to hear the positive feedback in the report, noting that most people experienced positive relationships with staff in Care Homes and felt that their Home had responded to the pandemic well.

The importance of good communication is often mentioned in feedback for services, and it is no surprise that this also featured in your conversations.

One of our key priorities in “Living the life you want to live” is supporting people to be part of, and contribute to their communities. This is reflected in our developing service specification for Care Homes, and it is useful to hear about the different experience’s residents have had with the use of technology enabled care (TEC) to keep contact with the people who are important to them.

It is clear that there is still a high level of variability in the use of TEC and digital infrastructure across Homes in Sheffield, and we will support providers in both our commissioning of Care Homes, and through our Adult Social Care TEC and Digital developments. This will very much build on the recent work we have undertaken with Healthwatch with regards to the transformation of TEC services in Sheffield.

We are currently working with the Department of Health and Social Care to access funding for CQC registered care providers from the [Adult Social Care Digital Transformation Fund - Digital Social Care](#) with the aim ensuring that people in receipt of care can benefit from a Digital Care Record.

The impact of lockdown was incredibly difficult for residents and their families – with a lasting negative impact on emotional wellbeing and mental health and physical health and mobility – these were often exacerbated for those people with dementia.

The report notes a key finding about the impact for people who moved into a Care Home during the pandemic. We talk about our expectations of Care Homes when people move in, in our new specification and we will make this a key area for shared learning and best practice in our ongoing partnership approach with Care Homes in the City.

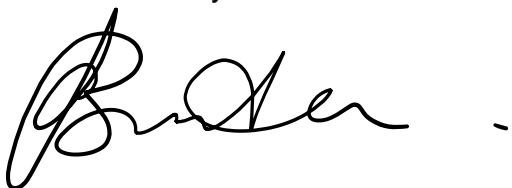
It is also very useful to hear about the ongoing impact on activities, with some people feeling that fewer people are engaging in activities and socialising, perhaps being used to being in their rooms. Again, in our new specification, we set out our expectations on personalised care and the importance of residents being able to pursue their interests and develop new ones. Your report helps us to understand the current experiences for residents and Care Homes, and how we might work together to rebuild the community and social provision in Homes.

A specific recommendation for policy makers that “blanket rules are not always appropriate, and the needs and preferences of different homes and residents should be considered while setting guidance” will be used to ensure that we are working collaboratively with Care Homes, and our ICB and Public Health Colleagues to put people - and outcomes - at the heart of our collective decision making.

Our contracts team has circulated the report and recommendations to Care Homes in Sheffield and we will embed the recommendations into our ongoing support and quality assurance of Care Homes in the City. This will be alongside our existing action plan in response to the Healthwatch Report “What matters to us: Older people's experiences of living in a care home”.

Thank you for your work in this area and for highlighting the voice of people living in care homes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Buntun', followed by a small dash.

Catherine Buntun
Assistant Director for Commissioning and Partnerships
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