

## Appendix 1

### **LEARNING FOR THE FUTURE – the OPERATION JASMINE REVIEW** **March 2014**

#### **Gathering Information**

During March, Caerphilly's free newspaper, *Newsline* published a request for information concerning the Operation Jasmine Review. Similar requests have been circulated via the Welsh Government's Communications personnel, i.e.

*Criminal cases against a care home owner and manager were put on file last year due to the health of one of the defendants. They were facing charges of abuse alleged to have taken place in a number of south Wales care homes.*

*In December 2013, the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, announced that a review of these events would take place. This has now begun.*

*The independent review is led by Dr Margaret Flynn, and will consider the experiences of those people and their families in residential services in the Caerphilly and Gwent areas which sparked a major police investigation that came to be known as Operation Jasmine. It will outline events and actions and determine lessons for the future. It seeks to reduce neglect and abuse by outlining conclusions relating to practice, policy and legislation. There is recognition that there will be different interpretations of issues, and the review strives to build a clearer picture of circumstances during this period.*

*If you have information which you would like to share with the review team, you can do so anonymously if you wish, please contact Rhian Thompson on 029 2082 6460 or email her on [rhian.thompson@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:rhian.thompson@wales.gsi.gov.uk).*

#### **Meeting Relatives**

During March, meetings with the relatives of people who were placed in care and nursing homes began. These are open-ended and typically last from an hour to two hours. Relatives are shown the Review's Terms of Reference and invited to describe their experience. Notes taken during the meetings are subsequently shared with relatives to ensure that they are factually correct. The relatives are part of a "snowball" sample with people sharing the names of those they believe it is important to contact and meet. Also, they highlighted materials which they think will be helpful, such as the BBC Wales *Week In Week Out* broadcasts of 2005 and 2013.

The relatives of people in some Gwent care and nursing homes describe the experience and suffering of being caught in the slow moving gears of regulation, adult protection, contract monitoring and criminal justice - the results of which did not and still do not feel right. Their sense of more humane and attainable futures for older citizens is a galvanising motivation. Some have compiled files documenting their experience of contact with the homes and retained their relatives' medical records. Some recall very specific and highly emotional experiences which they are not able to forget – such as seeing and smelling their relatives' infected pressure wounds. That the excessive, and apparently lethal, incidence of such harms did not meet the threshold tests of the Crown Prosecution Service in terms of gross negligence, manslaughter and/or wilful neglect has fuelled their sense of injustice. It is a wonder and a tribute to the families that the pursuit of justice retains some resonance.

## Meeting Professionals

Preliminary meetings were held with the Older People's Commissioner for Wales; the Director of Protection, Scrutiny and Human Rights; Gwent Police's Chief Constable; the Corporate Director Social Services, Caerphilly County Borough Council; and the Chief Inspector of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales.

These meetings confirmed the challenges of prosecuting crimes against older people and that:

- the circumstances of frail older people with acute needs, underpinned by complex and chronic conditions, are matters of public interest which demand serious consideration
- nothing stays still – the initiatives, precedents, and individuals change and organisations restructure, which makes follow up complicated
- the different timeframes to which professional bodies work may be out of synch with the urgent concerns of older people's relatives
- the professional credibility of care home and nursing home owners is not, on its own, a reliable indicator of the nature of care and support provided to older people
- placing an older person in a care home or nursing home does not necessarily signal the end of family caregiving and there is merit in actively nurturing such connections

Although poor and neglectful care is not the sole preserve of the homes and localities associated with Operation Jasmine, the material gathered through this Review gives us compelling evidence for different and improved responses to older people and their families.

Margaret Flynn