



Ein cyf/Our ref MB/GT/05329/13

Assembly Members

8 January 2014

Dear Members,

I am writing to give you an update on some of the main issues raised in the Plenary debate on the Older People's Commissioner for Wales Annual Report on 15 October.

Scams on older people

Lindsay Whittle AM raised concerns about elderly people being targeted in scams. Wherever a need is identified and residents are supportive, Local Authorities are able to establish cold caller zones to discourage cold callers from specific residential areas – this is usually a street or cluster of houses.

Our work to date has confirmed more than 38,000 homes in Wales are already covered by existing zones. We are working with Trading Standards Officers and Police representatives to deliver the Programme for Government commitment to extend the coverage of No Cold Calling Zones. The Minister for Local Government and Government Business has allocated funding to support the development of further zones and to raise awareness of doorstep crime issues more generally, as it is important residents are aware of these issues and are encouraged to report them. We are also exploring with Age Cymru how we may be able to support their work to raise awareness of scams.

Abuse and neglect of older people

In response to concerns raised by Lindsay Whittle AM about abuse and neglect of older people, I agreed to share with Assembly Members the advice I received from the Safeguarding Advisory Panel on the development of safeguarding regulations and guidance that will follow the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill.

I will make an announcement about my intentions in this area and the report will also be published on the Welsh Government website.

### Specialist training for care and support workers to deal with health conditions

Janet Finch-Saunders AM asked about what plans are in place to ensure that all support workers receive the necessary training to enable them to give the appropriate one-to-one support to end of life palliative care patients. It is vital that social care workers are appropriately qualified for and supported in the valuable work they do. It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that staff are suitably equipped to complete the work they are tasked with.

Looking at this more broadly, the Care Council for Wales is the workforce development body for social care. It maintains a Qualifications Framework that sets out the recommended and required qualifications for staff to undertake a wide variety of roles. This is backed up by workforce regulation, ensuring that staff are equipped with at least the minimum required qualifications.

The Care Council also contributes to the development of qualifications and training for social care workers. Qualifications have been modernised so that staff can access the training they need. For example, the Qualifications and Credit Framework provides a flexible and selective route to skills development that is based on vocational learning. It includes a wide range of general and specialist units that equip staff to carry out a diverse range of activities, which include caring for people with a range of conditions.

The Care Council has also produced a social care induction framework, a governance framework for health and social care support workers and practice guidance for social care managers, all of which will help to ensure that social care workers are prepared and equipped to carry out their work effectively.

In addition to the work of the Care Council, the Welsh Government provides a £10 million grant to support workforce development across the whole social care sector. This has helped to dramatically raise qualification levels across the workforce. The government is also putting in place new legislation in the form of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill and the Regulation and Inspection of Care and Support Bill that will further reinforce the provision of high quality, citizen focused care.

### Office for National Statistics (ONS) data

Aled Roberts AM raised concern about the removal of three health statistics populations which are helpful in identifying issues within the older population and asked whether the Welsh Government is making representations to the ONS about this.

I can confirm that the Welsh Government's Chief Statistician included the following representation in the Welsh Government's response to the ONS Consultation on Statistical Products 2013:

#### "Annual bulletin on excess winter mortality

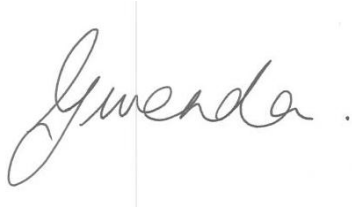
These are important data to understand trends in excess winter mortality and in particular in respect of older people. We make use of these statistics, no alternative source is suggested. Cutting this output would result in the loss of underlying statistics and important country comparisons. We would like to see ONS continue to process this data, although it could perhaps be issued as reference tables rather than a detailed bulletin."

I would like to once again thank all Members for their very constructive contributions in this debate which included public transport, age-friendly and dementia-supportive communities, falls and fractures, the Ageing Well Programme, loneliness and isolation, the Commissioner's review of the quality of residential care, and advocacy services. This demonstrates the wide range of the Commissioner's work on behalf of older people and the

broad cross-party consensus on this important area which is invaluable in taking forward this agenda.

I am confident that working together with the Commissioner we can make Wales a great place to grow old.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gwenda". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of a vertical line that extends downwards from the top of the signature area.

**Gwenda Thomas AC / AM**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Deputy Minister for Social Services