

CSSIW Statement to Operation Jasmine Review

Introduction

Everyone who works for the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is passionate about caring for people. We are determined to drive up improvement in the care sector and we will take action when we have evidence that people have suffered poor care or abuse. Social care services are used by many people throughout Wales and many of us have relatives who receive care. It is our job in CSSIW to make sure that all social care services are focused on the needs of the people they serve and that providers and staff understand how the services need to improve to enhance the well-being, safety and dignity of the people being supported and cared for.

I am very sorry and concerned about the people who suffered harm and distress, and for their families who are trying to seek an understanding of how this occurred. The cases we know about and which form the basis of Operation Jasmine are shocking.

We have welcomed the opportunity to meet and speak with the families to explain what action the regulator, our predecessor organisation, the Care Standards Inspectorate Wales (CSIW), was taking at the time, especially as much was not within the public view because of the ongoing police prosecution. We felt privileged to hear their stories from relatives at first hand and we have taken away lessons that we will apply to our current work.

Families and relatives, and the public are asking how such poor, degrading and harmful care could have been allowed to happen.

We have undertaken a detailed and thorough review of all the records we have been able to trace. Many of the staff involved have left the inspectorate and none of the senior managers who worked in CSIW and CSSIW at that time now work for CSSIW today. The records we have been able to access, both in relation to individual services, operational policy and practice are extensive. They are a mixture of paper and electronic files, and are not all complete. However, we believe we have been able to bring together a detailed and accurate picture of the events which occurred between 2002 and 2009.

We have also spoken to some staff who worked for CSIW during this period and, in preparing for the review, we have undertaken in-depth reviews of the six services identified: Mountleigh Bryngwyn Care Home, Newbridge; Brithdir Care Home, Bargoed; The Beeches Care Home, Blaenavon; Belmont Residential Home, Caerphilly; Grosvenor Nursing Care Home, Abertillery and Bank House Care Home, Ebbw Vale. We also reflected on Holly House which was linked to other homes under consideration.

CSSIW statement included in evidence submitted to Flynn Review

This is a complex story. The risk of poor, ongoing care had to be weighed against the impact of immediate action, and civil and criminal procedures by the care regulator had to be balanced against the desire to hold those accountable through criminal investigation by the police.

However, what is clear is that inspectors and managers were vigilant. There was a great deal of inspection and preliminary enforcement activity within the high risk homes and careful consideration was given to legal action at every stage. A number of the homes were also closed within a relatively short period.

Social work health agencies and the inspectorate worked very hard to avert the crisis and negative impacts which sudden care home closures can bring. Action was taken to protect the most vulnerable people and considerable support was provided by the local authorities and health boards to mitigate against the risks to them. However, we recognise that some people living in some of the homes still suffered serious harm while all this was happening.

Inspectors and their managers were extremely active, especially in relation to the Dr Das and Puretruce homes. Despite all the challenges, CSIW cancelled a number of care services owned by Dr Das within a four year period. In 2002 Dr Das, through his various companies, ran 25 care services and by 2006 there was just one, Valley Manor care home, which was a well run service led by an effective registered manager. CSSIW also successfully prosecuted the owners of Belmont care home.

I joined CSSIW after these events had taken place, but some of my earliest memories as Chief Inspector was the distress of colleagues who had been involved with some of these services. This made me determined to learn the lessons from Operation Jasmine and spearhead a programme of Modernisation, putting people at the heart of our work and our inspections.

CSSIW is a very different organisation today and the lessons learnt from Operation Jasmine have helped influence that transformation.

While nothing can take away the experiences undergone by the families, we will continue to apply those lessons in our own work and in partnership with providers, local authorities and health boards. We want to protect the frail and vulnerable people living in care homes in Wales today and make sure that their experiences are positive and very different from the past.

Imelda Richardson

Chief Inspector, Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

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