Dear Colleague

DIGNITY IN CARE PROGRAMME FOR WALES

Following consultation earlier this year, I am today announcing a new Dignity and Respect in Care Programme for Wales. This is to consult you about how that Programme is taken forward over the next 3 years at a national and local level.

This new initiative aims to have a care system where there is zero tolerance of abuse of and disrespect for older people. It will be taken forward as a key component of the National Service Framework for Older People and particularly the Standards on Person Centred Care and Age Discrimination.

I enclose a copy of my announcement together with a consultation paper that sets out proposals for taking forward this programme on a partnership basis across health and social care and on a staged basis. Your comments will play an important part in shaping this work, which will have a direct impact on users and patients' experience of care. I would be grateful if you could respond by 21 December 2007 to the contact point set out in the paper.

Gwenda Thomas AC/AM
DIGNITY IN CARE PROGRAMME FOR WALES
Introduction

1. Dignity is an essential element of quality of life and hence acknowledging a person's dignity contributes to their sense of good health, wellbeing and independence, and a key component of high quality care. Dignity is one of the 5 United Nations Principles for Older People. Dignity consists of many overlapping aspects, involving respect, privacy, autonomy and self-worth. Promoting Dignity in Care, therefore, means providing care, in any setting, which supports and promotes, rather than undermines, a person's self-respect. Indignity is easier to pinpoint than dignity, applying to situations where a person is emotionally or physically abused, stigmatised, humiliated, neglected, or treated more as an object than a person.

Examples from older people when they have felt their dignity was not respected include:

- feeling neglected or ignored whilst receiving care
- being made to feel worthless or a nuisance
- feeling their privacy was not being respected e.g. toileting in view of others or being disturbed by staff wandering in to their room/cubicle
- being forced to use a commode or incontinence pads rather than being provided with a wheelchair and supported to use the bathroom
- a disrespectful attitude from staff or being addressed in ways they find disrespectful, e.g., by first names
- being provided with bibs intended for babies rather than a napkin whilst being helped to eat
- having to eat with their fingers rather than being helped to eat with a knife and fork
- having no staff support for eating and/or food being taken away before meal completed
- generally being rushed and not listened to.

Dignity and respect should of course be to the normal expectation for everyone irrespective of age. The reasons for focusing initially on older people are that the large majority (60%+) of patients and social services clients are over 60 and that there is already a well-defined policy relating to their care, as outlined below.

Background and Context

2. Dignity is a key principle underpinning the both the Strategy for Older People and the National Service Framework for Older People in Wales. Dignity – as one of the UN Principles - is also an issue that in law (Section 25 of the 2006 Act) the Commissioner for Older People in Wales (when appointed) must have regard to in undertaking her/his role

3. A finding from inspection and review in the last 3 years (including in studies undertaken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection and Audit Commission) across the United Kingdom and an issue that has received a great deal of media attention recently, has been that older people are still not
always afforded the level of dignity and respect they are due when receiving health and social care services. A major Department of Health campaign on Dignity in Care was launched last year, aiming to stimulate a national debate around dignity in care and create a care system where there is zero tolerance of abuse of and disrespect for older people.

4. In Wales in January 2007, the then Deputy Minister John Griffiths AM launched a National Debate on Dignity in Care and called for positive and practical ideas on how we could follow the example of England and improve dignity for older people in care in Wales. Comments were received in response to this consultation from a wide range of stakeholders including older people.

**Current Framework**

5. There are already quality standards covering Dignity in Care, including National Minimum Standards for Care Homes and Domiciliary Care regulated by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW), the Welsh Assembly Government’s *Fundamentals of Care* publication and various Codes of Practice, which clearly set out the standards of care expected. Dignity is also a cross-cutting theme of the NSF for Older People, and an underpinning principle of its Person Centred Care Standard 2. An on-line *Practice Guide on Dignity in Care* by the Social Care Institute for Excellence has recently been published. The British Geriatrics Society has a Campaign ‘*Behind Closed Doors*’ supported by educational materials, promoting privacy and dignity for people when using the toilet. *Healthcare Standards in Wales*, published in May 2005, set out a common framework of healthcare standards to support the NHS in providing effective, timely and high quality services across all healthcare settings. Standard 8 in particular focuses on the need to treat patients, their relatives and carers with dignity and respect.

6. In the NHS not only LHBs but also Trusts have both a leadership and a performance and delivery responsibility to ensure that hospital and primary care services respect patients’ dignity. Local government has a similar duty to its clients. Commissioning and contract monitoring by both the NHS and local government and on a joint basis have an important to play in this respect in ensuring better standards. Health Inspectorate Wales has the responsibility for assessing the quality, safety and effectiveness of health care in Wales through using the Healthcare Standards for Wales which, under Standard 8, requires that all NHS staff treat patients, their relatives and carers with dignity and respect. CSSIW undertake a similar role for social care. Through its role as workforce regulator, the Care Council for Wales can also address dignity in social care, especially through training and staff development frameworks. From the professional perspective, the British Medical Association and Royal College of Nursing have highlighted concerns around this issue. The central role of providers in improving care services of high quality - including respect for patients’ dignity - has been emphasised by bodies such as Care Forum Wales, Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged Wales.
PROGRAMME OF ACTION

7. It is clear that the existing framework of statutory standards, good practice documents, and formal responsibilities have already done much to put in place what is needed to support effective delivery of care including upholding the principle of Dignity. Despite that, the evidence is that the experience of service users does not always match the stated aspirations and that further action is needed if reality is to match these aspirations.

8. A Programme of Action on Dignity has therefore been determined by the Assembly Government to take effect from 1 October 2007. This will need to be fully integrated with implementation of all the key health and social care strategies and policies and be taken forward over a 3-year timeframe. The main features of the Programme that is to be taken forward are:

Awareness Raising

The programme is being launched on 1 October - International Day of Older People – and this will be followed by a series of Regional Events to raise awareness and understanding of the key issues relating to Dignity and the existing standards and support material available. Copies of a Dignity Training Workbook produced through the EC Study on Dignity co-ordinated by Cardiff University will be made available at the events. Co-ordinated through NHS Trust Nurse Directors, the aim will be for an Action Plan on Dignity and Respect to be drafted for local consultation in every Health and Social Care Partnership Area.

Partnership Working

It is proposed the Assembly Government will take forward action in 2008-9, engaging with statutory, voluntary, independent, academic research and professional sectors through a National Co-ordinating Group. Older people and their representatives will be firmly involved. Follow up with Local Government Older People Champions and NSF for Older People Leaders will also be needed on a similar partnership basis. As a result a baseline will be put in place to measure progress and spur improvement. Work would be completed as a basis for Training and Development programmes to be adapted to encompass Dignity issues explicitly. Announced development of service practice and production of revised statutory Guidance on Commissioning and Unified Assessment would also provide a focus for action.

Inspection and Review

As part of the Joint Fundamental Review of the NSF for Older People in 2009-2010, HIW, CSSIW and WAO will undertake joint thematic reviews on Dignity and report best practice and areas for attention, particularly in respect of leadership and front line action.
Service Development

NLIAH and SSIA will be asked to develop Action Plans for their respective sectors in 2008 and 2009 to support this work, to develop Communities of Practice able to eliminate practices and attitudes that undermine Dignity and ensure that day to day delivery is as required. This will need to be built into existing work plans rather than starting a separate stream of activity. It will also need to link to action on Local Health Board engagement, greater public and patient involvement at Board level and work on monitoring patient experience of care.

Integration at the Strategic Level

At national level the work of the Inspectorates and Development Agencies, and action to support implementation of the Designed for Life and Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities strategies will encompass this new emphasis on Dignity. And local agencies, in responding to these initiatives, and in developing and implementing their Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategies will also do so. In particular commitments to draft National Standards for Social Care and Joint Health and Social Care Standards will take account of the Dignity issues - albeit at a high level.

Implementation

9. In order to ensure that the Programme of Action on Dignity is integrated with other initiatives, it will be progressed as part of the NSF for Older People led in the Assembly Government by the Seconded Project Manager but with professional input and advice from the Nursing Division, Public Health and Health Professions Department, HIW and CSSIW. Similarly at local level a co-ordinated approach will be required through the NSF Older People local planning and implementation arrangements. It is proposed that progress will be monitored locally through the NSF Self Assessment Audit Tool and nationally by the NSF Implementation Board that includes a wide range of stakeholder interests. This agenda must be driven from a local and ward/care home level and therefore agreement of a Local Action Plan on Dignity and Respect will be an important first step.
Conclusion

10. This paper has established the basis for the Welsh Assembly Government to take concerted action in respect of Dignity in Care through a programme of action to be implemented on a partnership basis. The programme will commence with awareness-raising events and material but, beyond that, we would welcome comments from all stakeholders on how the programme is further progressed and the plans set out here. Comments are therefore invited by 21 December 2007 to:

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