



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From Caroline Dinenage MP
Minister of State for Care

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Your Ref: [REDACTED]

28 AUG 2019

Bill Wiggin MP

By email to: b.wiggin@parliament.uk

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your correspondence of 16 July to Matt Hancock on behalf of your constituent Mr Chris Bury of [REDACTED], Hereford [REDACTED] about monitoring in care homes.

I appreciate Mr Bury's concerns.

The Government is committed to preventing and reducing the risk of harm to people in vulnerable situations. It wants to see a focused and effective safeguarding system, where harm or risk of harm is identified, acted upon effectively and ultimately prevented.

The Department has made it clear, in statutory guidance to support implementation of the Care Act, that it expects local authorities to ensure that the services they commission are safe, effective and of high quality. It also expects those providing the service, local authorities and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to take swift action where anyone alleges poor care, neglect or abuse.

The Department will consider any schemes that have the potential to help reduce pressures on the NHS and improve people's lives.

As technology develops and becomes more accessible, the use of any form of surveillance, such as closed-circuit television, in care settings will inevitably be discussed.

These are homes to some of the most vulnerable in society and ensuring residents' privacy, consent and dignity are upheld in their care is critical in the implementation of any such approaches.

The CQC has published information for the public and providers on this topic that sets out the main issues around consent, dignity and privacy that must be taken into account by anyone already using or considering using surveillance.

The Department recognises that carers provide vital support to the family and friends they support. Their enormous contribution not only makes an invaluable difference to the people they support, it is an integral part of our health and social care system and it deserves to be better recognised.

In 2018, the Government published *Carers Action Plan 2018-2020 – supporting carers today*, which sets out a two-year programme of targeted work to support unpaid carers. It puts a focus on practical actions to support carers and highlights work that is already underway or planned within Government. The Plan can be found at www.gov.uk by searching for 'Carers Action Plan' in the 'Health and social care' topics. On 23 July, we published a progress report that highlights the progress that has been made toward increasing support for carers through the Plan.

This cross-Government Plan is an essential step towards realising our commitment to valuing, recognising and supporting unpaid carers to provide care in a way that protects their own health and wellbeing, employment and life chances.

Carers will also benefit from greater recognition and support from the *NHS Long Term Plan*, which was published on 7 January. It will improve how the NHS identifies unpaid carers, and strengthen support for them to address their individual health needs.

As the Prime Minister said on the steps of Downing Street, the Government will set out its plans to fix the crisis in social care once and for all, to give every older person the dignity and security that they deserve.

Future reforms of the social care system will include a focus on how society supports and recognises carers to ensure that they are properly aided to provide care in a way that supports their own health and wellbeing. We will set out our proposals in full as soon as possible.

I hope this reply is helpful.



CAROLINE DINENAGE

Signed by the Private Secretary to avoid delay during Parliamentary recess