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Purpose of Report

This briefing provides background relating to My Home Life and a new approach for Members visiting residential care homes in Essex. It highlights a positive method of engaging with the residential care sector in keeping with the Council's new way of working

My Home Life (MHL) is a national movement aimed at promoting quality of life for older people living and dying in care homes and for those visiting and working with them, through relationship-centred care and evidence-based best practice

MHL delivers creative and practical approaches to support the care home sector - the Essex Movement mirrors this approach, and works closely with the care sector to improve quality of life for Essex care home residents. Please visit www.myhomelifemovement.org.uk for more information about the national movement and www.myhomelifeessex.org.uk to see what is happening at a local level.

The residential care sector for Older People values the opportunity to meet with County Councillors and have the opportunity to introduce them to residents, relatives, staff and the running of the care home.

To date, Members have been visiting care homes in their localities and, having made their visit, they complete a Members Quality Monitoring proforma. Given the Council's new way of working with the care sector, recording the outcome of Members visits has been revised and simplified.

Members are now invited to record their visits on a simple one page form. This form will be used for reference only and to log which homes have been visited, when and by whom. The form will also indicate any follow-up action taken as a result of the visit.

2.1 New way of working - in practice

Members will be allocated a number of residential care homes to visit; these will include those homes that the authority commissions a service from as well as those who do not have a contract with Essex.

Members will phone the care home introducing themselves and making arrangements to visit.

Following the visit Members will complete a single sided A4 form stating:

- the care home visited
- date of visit
- name of manager / proprietor/ person in charge seen at the time of the visit
- outcome i.e. referral to good practice, provider concerns or safeguarding
- anticipated follow-up visit/s to be made by the Member e.g. invitation to talk with relatives, join in a social event, open a garden fete etc

During their visit Members are encouraged to help care homes share information about good practice within the home – *what is working well, what are they most proud of, what kind of feedback do they get from residents, relatives and care professionals?*

2.2 Following-up action

During their 'walkabout' Members will also be aware of anything within the home that might cause concern. Having completed the basic information form, Members might feel they want to record and convey some specific facts about the care home/s they have visited. This information might relate to any:

- good practice witnessed in the home
- concerns about residents / staff wellbeing
- safeguarding issue/s

There are three simple ways in which this information will be captured and shared with the relevant service

a. Recording good practice

Good practice in residential care homes can be captured and celebrated via the 'My Life My Outcomes' form. This is a simple form that provides the opportunity to showcase a Provider who is doing something well. The completed form is sent to the Quality Improvement Team and information may be shared with other care homes to help them improve their own practices. The form is accessible via the ECC Intranet: <http://intranet/goodpractice>

b. Recording concerns

Concerns in respect of the care homes can be captured via the 'Provider Concerns' form. This is a simple form that gives the opportunity to highlight more general concerns, e.g. lack of diverse activities, lack of stimulation for residents etc. The completed form will be sent to the Service Placement Team who will decide on the appropriate course of action, e.g. referral to the Commercial Team (Contracts) Customer Liaison (Complaints) etc. The form is accessible via the ECC Intranet: <http://intranet/concerns>

c. Safeguarding issue

Any concerns regarding safeguarding should be immediately reported to the Essex Safeguarding Adults Line (ASKSAL) Tel 08452 66 66 63

2.3 Links with Quality Improvement

This supports work undertaken in relation to the quality of services delivered by Essex care home providers which is scrutinized by ECC Commercial Team (contract compliance) Locality & Service Placement Team/s, Safeguarding Essex, partner agencies and most importantly through customer experience and feedback. All care services are registered with the Care Quality Commission www.cqc.org.uk

The Quality Improvement Team also works closely with the care sector, the voluntary sector, health and social care, to share resources, knowledge and good practice. The team acts as a catalyst for innovative ideas, creating links and networks to help Providers of care services deliver the outcomes that service users need and want.

This new positive approach is in response to data gathered by the national My Home Life initiative which suggests residential care home managers often feel isolated and undervalued; they need to have a trusting and supportive relationship with the council, rather than one based on monitoring contracts.

2.4 Information Sharing Event

In order to help Members identify what issues to be aware of when visiting care homes an Information Sharing Event has been organised.

Tom Owen, National Director of the My Home Life programme, will be leading an Information Sharing Event for Members only on 12th January 2012, 2pm – 4pm

The Event will allow Members to hear about the improvements that have been made in Essex care homes and recognize some of the issues they need to be aware of when making their visits.

Members will also have the opportunity to look at the new way of recording any positive or negative outcomes from their visits, and identify any other support they feel they need.