



CLr Mark Williams
Chair, Health & Adult Social
Care Scrutiny sub-Committee
160 Tooley Street
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Scrutiny Team
Direct dial: 020 7525 0514

January 2012

Dear ...

Southern Cross: Call for Evidence

Southwark Council's Health and Adult Social care scrutiny committee is looking into the recent changes to your care home ownership. We would like to understand how this has affected you. We are writing to tell you about the review and to explain all the different ways you can give your views and how we will use them. We very much hope you can help as hearing about and understanding your experiences will help us improve the way we deliver council and health services in the future.

The review

The scrutiny committee is made up of locally elected councillors and one of its roles is to undertake reviews and then make recommendations to the Cabinet, who run Southwark Council. We are looking at all three of the homes that used to be run by Southern Cross. We would like to understand how the ending of Southern Cross and transfer of the Care Homes to new owners impacted on residents and their families. We would particularly like to understand how the care homes, Council and NHS Southwark communicated with residents and families during the recent changes. We are also looking at a number of other wider questions which are detailed overleaf, and you are welcome to make comment on these too.

How to give evidence

There are a number of ways you can give evidence. There is a short questionnaire enclosed with a free post address to return this directly to the scrutiny team. We will be holding a special meeting in your home on XXXX. I hope you are able to attend. Written evidence can be submitted via email to scrutiny@southwark.gov.uk, or at the address at the top of the page, and should be submitted by 2 March 2012.

Lastly you are invited to give evidence in person at our next meeting. This will be held on Wednesday 14 March at 6:30pm at 160 Tooley Street SE1 2QH. Please book a place on the contact details below. We can arrange transport if you need it, pay for care expenses and help with any access needs.

Scrutiny team, Southwark Council, Communities, law and governance, PO BOX 64529, SE1P 5LX

Switchboard: 020 7525 5000 **Website:** www.southwark.gov.uk

Chief executive: Annie Shepperd

How scrutiny will hold the review and make recommendations.

The committee will consider lots of evidence from different people who use care homes or have a responsibility for running them. For example we will ask Council and NHS Southwark officers to give their views and we will consider evidence from a Central government select committee comprised of MPs. If you give evidence we will make a note of this and then publish it, but we will not use your name unless you want us too. Once we have gathered all the evidence a report will be written. We will then send it to decision makers, such as the Cabinet, who run Southwark Council, and the local health service. We will also send you a copy if you give us your address.

Further information

If you have any queries or access issues, please contact scrutiny project manager Julie Timbrell on 0207 525 0514 or julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully

Clr Mark Williams
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The Southern Cross review

The review is looking into the ending of Southern Cross and the transfer of homes to the new owners.

As well as looking at the impact on residents and families we will also be looking at a number of related issues. The review will be considering the background to the demise of Southern Cross and the role of local and central government. We also be looking at what we can do better next time.

Background

Southern Cross was the largest care home operator in the UK. It was big privately owned business which had grown over the last decade and changed ownership several times. Around 2005 it separated out the care homes operation from the buildings ownership. Southern Cross was badly affected by the financial crisis in 2008, and so were many of the properties owners. The council started using less institutional care. Southern Cross could no longer afford it rents. In 2011 Southern Cross ended because of its financial problems and new owners took charge.

In Southwark the new owners of Southern Cross homes are Four Seasons, who took over Burgess Park care home, and HC-One, who took over Tower Bridge and Camberwell Green.

Broader questions the review will be asking:

- What was the background to the financial collapse of Southern Cross
- Who had responsibility for making sure that the business model was safe enough and what did central and local government do to measure risk.
- How can Southwark Council, Central Government, monitoring bodies, residents & families better understand care home businesses and make safer choices when we choose homes.
- Lastly the review will be considering all the different types of care homes in Southwark and asking if we have enough diversity. We will also be thinking about the type of residential and nursing care given at these homes. The review will be asking if Southwark's care homes meet our needs now, and if they will continue to do so in the future, particularly give our aging population.

Giving you views on the broader questions

You are welcome to contribute your views on any of the above issues. We have some background documents and we will be taking more evidence at the next meeting on and the 14 March. You are invited to attend this meeting. If you have access to a computer and the web you can access paperwork for the Health and Adult Social Care scrutiny committee online, including background papers for this review. Contact scrutiny project manager Julie Timbrell on 0207 525 0514 or julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk for more details.

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