

From Susanna White Strategic Director of Health and Community Services	Title Age UK (Formerly Age Concern) Lay Inspectors Briefing
Date 3.4.2012	To Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny meeting

Background to briefing

The Chair of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny has requested that the Strategic Director of Health and Community Services provides clarification on how the reports provided by Lay Inspectors are acted on, and in particular how issues of concern are picked up and acted upon, and specifically how these are addressed with care home management.

Description of lay inspector's scheme.

- The lay inspector's scheme has been running for almost five years, at a cost to the Council of £10,000 p.a.
- The lay Inspectors are older people themselves, with training and co-ordination by Age UK Southwark. Regular liaison meetings are now being held with the Lay Inspectors, Age UK and officers from the Council, to build upon the current arrangements.

How reports from the lay inspectors are acted upon.

- The Lay Inspectors discuss with the Registered Manager on the day of their inspection their initial observations. Often this helps to clarify issues or ensure an immediate response if required.
- If the Lay Inspectors observe any safeguarding concerns, these are reported immediately under the Council's safeguarding procedures.
- For non safeguarding issues, the Lay Inspectors discuss their initial observations with both their peers and staff at Age UK. Following this, the Lay Inspector would then finalise the written report.
- A copy of the final report is then sent concurrently to the Contract Monitoring Manager within the Council and the Registered Manager of the home in question.
- The report is assessed by the Contract Monitoring Team, and where necessary further information /clarifications are sought from the Lay Inspectors.
- Any specific issues identified can be followed up as appropriate by the Council's contract monitoring staff. This can either be through the planned and routine monitoring visits / meetings with the Registered Manager, or if necessary through unplanned visits to the home. Through either approach the Registered Manager of the Home would be asked to respond to the issue identified in the report, and provide details of any remedial action that they are planning to take.

- The Lay Inspectors also provide more general pointers for the Council in relation to the overall user experience and ambience to be found in a particular home. Again these observations, although not necessarily relating to poor performance are addressed with Registered Care Managers by council officers through scheduled contract management meetings and visits.
- Officers from the Council will provide feed back on the response of the Registered Manager /Home Owner to the Lay Inspectors, via Age UK as appropriate
- Similarly the Registered Managers respond directly to the Lay Inspectors report, and any specific issues to have risen within the report.

Building upon the existing arrangements

- Discussions are currently taking place between the Lay Inspectors and the Contract Monitoring Team to strengthen the existing partnership arrangements. The parameters of which is focusing upon :
 - Advance notification by the Lay Inspectors of a planned visit, so that any specific issues can be shared with the Inspector prior to the inspection. It is also useful for the Council to be aware of which homes either have been or are planned to be visited.
 - For the Lay Inspectors to send reports through to the Council as soon as possible after the visit, so actions required by the Contract Monitoring Team can be taken in a more timely manner.
 - Co-ordinate more joint visits as required.

Andy Loxton
Lead Commissioning Manager – Older People