



Reach

A newsletter for the family and friends of those living in residential care centres in Ireland



ISSUE 1: 2016

NATIONAL RELATIVES' PANEL

HIQA identified 5,864 corrective improvements at residential centres for older people

In 2014, the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) carried out 758 inspections of 549 nursing homes, 58% of which were unannounced and 42% announced.

Mary Dunnion, HIQA's Director of Regulation, said: "We inspected 93% of nursing homes and published 707 inspection reports. The results show that in 4,371 cases regulations and standards were met, while there were 3,436 non-compliances. We asked providers to take 5,864 corrective actions to address non-compliances."

Inspection findings during 2014 signal that centres need to further develop their expertise in risk management, and must make the transition from complying with regulations and standards to providing a truly individualised service for each specific resident. Some residents still live in large and outdated open-plan wards, with little privacy and dignity.

There was a sharp increase in the level of concerns brought to HIQA about nursing homes in 2014. HIQA received 609 items of unsolicited information relating to 303 centres, of which just over half (55%) came from concerned relatives of residents. This is a 71% increase on the year before. In 2014, HIQA inspected 92% of centres which had been the subject of unsolicited information.

During 2014, HIQA continued to focus on end-of-life care and food and nutrition. Good practice in both areas was found in most centres inspected, and at least 84% of centres were found to be fully or substantially compliant during the inspections.

However, data analysed showed 470 corrective actions were issued by the Authority in this regard.



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Advice from a relative on selecting a nursing home

by Annette Condon

Getting started

It is hard to accept that a loved one needs nursing home care. You are likely to feel guilty that you can no longer care for them. Focus your energy on finding the best centre possible and remaining actively involved in their care, with regular visits. When I was faced with this challenge, I did not know the right questions to ask. The list below is not exhaustive but is based on my experiences plus that of other friends and relatives.

Initial research

You will probably start with a short list of the facilities closest to your home. Ask your general practitioner (GP) and friends who are familiar and who have or had relatives living there. Go to the HIQA website — <http://www.hiqa.ie/social-care/find-a-centre/nursing-homes> — and read the reports on the nursing homes in question. Check how the home has addressed any areas where HIQA has sought improvement. This will all provide valuable background information.

Visit the home

To set up a tour of a nursing home, call the facility and ask to speak to someone in admissions. You should have no problem scheduling a meeting within the week. Bring a trusted friend. As you travel there, think about the length of the journey. Many people stress proximity when choosing a nursing home for the simple reason that a shorter car journey or easy public transport links will facilitate more frequent visits. Take your time — this is not a job to be rushed.



Location, location, location

Think about the specific location of the building — is it located in a town or a more rural setting? Location affects the residents' access to green space, their general quality of life, and their safety. If the facility is located on a busy street, it may not be a safe place for someone who has dementia or Alzheimer's.

On the other hand, an urban location may provide more visual stimulation and facilitate visits from neighbours and the broader community. What is the garden like? Is there a wheelchair accessible area outside to sit or walk?

Staff interaction

Note the way people are interacting around you. Observe if your tour guide says "hello" by name to residents. If a resident is calling out for assistance or holding out a hand, note how your tour guide or the other staff members handle it. No nursing home staff member, regardless of who they are, should ignore a resident. The staff should not be yelling at residents who are hard of hearing, but rather enunciating in a slightly louder tone. Do staff members knock before entering residents' rooms?

Do you see staff helping a resident walk and stay mobile or is everyone confined to bed or wheelchairs? Is it easy for the residents to get around? Are there handrails lining the hallways?

Homely rooms

Another thing to notice is the effort made to make the common spaces homely. Plants, paintings, lamps (in place of overhead lighting) all help.

Look for comfy chairs that will encourage residents to use the space. Some homes wallpaper the bedrooms or put up different borders to personalise the space. Some even give each room its own colour scheme and encourage residents to bring personal belongings, even pictures and furniture from home. These little touches make the difference between a hospital room and a bedroom. Do the bedrooms have adjustable electric beds? Are the sinks and location of mirrors at the right height for people in wheelchairs? Can a resident sit close to the window? Is there a pleasant view?

Hygiene

The smell of a nursing home is only an issue if you detect one, which you should not. Notice if the staff use hand gel. Is there a focus on hygiene and hand-washing? Is there an emphasis placed on the oral hygiene of residents?

Questions to ask

Does your relative have dementia or any special needs? Is the facility designed to cater? Do they have a special focus on dementia? If so, ask them to provide details.

Ask to see a sample care plan. Are special diets available for people with diabetes and swallowing problems? Does the facility allow the resident to continue access to their own GP? Can you remain involved in your relative's care, for example, will you be advised if a GP is to be called or if your relative is prescribed any new medications, including laxatives or sleeping tablets?

Is there a family council or an advocate in place (a champion who will speak on behalf of residents)? What is the staffing level during the day and at night? Is there flexibility about when to get up and go to bed? Will your loved one be free to have people visit at any time, as they would do if they were living at home? Can you loved one bring a pet or are pets allowed to visit?

Continued on next page

Services available

Are any sources of entertainment other than television available (for example, puzzles or a current daily newspaper)? Is there a daily activities board – if so, check that the activities actually take place? Does the home host community activities, for example, visits from local school? Are you encouraged to bring your loved one out regularly?

Does a physiotherapist visit regularly? Is there a hair dressing service? How often do religious services take place? The availability of cable, satellite TV or Wi-Fi access may be important for sports enthusiasts or for residents keen to stay in touch with family abroad.



Is there an option to have a personal phone? What is the situation with laundry? Does the centre handle clothes labelling in a sensitive way? How is washing done?

Focus on autonomy

If your relative is independent, ask about how their autonomy will be supported. Some homes have ways for residents to take part in the running of the facility. Others have small kitchens or snack areas that are open all day so that residents can have more control over their food and fluid intake. Some allow the residents to garden and care for small farm animals, like chickens.



Some facilities have their own newsletter written by residents, or a resident-run convenient shop. Intergenerational programmes allow residents to have contact with children. All of these are ways to give residents a sense of purpose and autonomy and to enhance their quality of life. Nobody wants to feel that they live in an institution.

The residents

Observe the residents. Note the effort that was put into their appearance – do they look neat and coordinated or are they wearing mismatched clothes? Is their hair combed? Are their nails clean? Sit and chat with the residents. Ask them how long they have been residing there, what the food is like, is there a good range of activities, and if they are happy living there.

Be sure to ask for a copy of the contract to understand what is included in the monthly charge versus extras.

Ultimately, the burning question is would you stay in the home yourself? Say if you broke a leg, would you be happy to be placed there for recuperation? What is good enough for your loved one should be good enough for you. Older people want to continue to live good lives. Above all else, visit regularly at different times, stay involved and observe. If you have questions, ask. Good nursing homes are open to constructive feedback.



Ombudsman now able to investigate complaints about private nursing homes

As of June 2015, the Ombudsman, Peter Tyndall, has been able to investigate complaints about private nursing homes. Before bringing a complaint to the Ombudsman, the person affected must have tried to resolve their complaints with the nursing home in the first instance. The move will end the grey area which meant up to 22,500 people living in long-term care could not make complaints to the independent office.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Office of the Ombudsman

Lo-call: 1890 223030

Fax: +353-1-639 5674

Email:

ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie

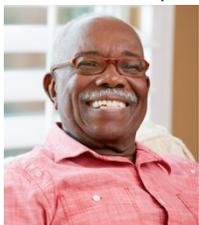
Older person's nursing champion from Meath named Wales nurse of the year

by Joe Boyle

Veronica Jarman's achievements as a champion for excellence in the care of older people in her adopted country were recognised in the dual honour bestowed on her during 2015: "The Older People's Commission for Wales Award" and "Wales Nurse of the Year Award 2014."

Veronica is a native of Trim, County Meath, where her proud parents, Tom and Mary Carolan reside. She is a day hospital sister at Llanidloes Hospital, Powys Teaching Health Board, in mid Wales.

Her awards are in recognition of her pioneering work in the development of community-based services for older people, using the day-hospital as the hub around which a range of specialist nursing and social care services, therapies and supports are provided in a local, friendly and non-clinical atmosphere. The innovative approach, championed by Veronica, brings the services to the patient and enables and empowers patients to achieve their full potential.



Among the key features of Veronica's plan are the links to the primary care health team, ensuring that there is a coordinated approach to the management of frailty, chronic conditions and the effects of social isolation.

Among her many citations, Veronica has been described as an inspirational innovator who is a true champion and advocate of older people's care. Her major achievements include helping patients to understand more about their own health conditions. "This means that patients can take more control over their lives," says Veronica. By responding rapidly to their needs, hospital admissions can be prevented and more patients discharged earlier.

Veronica speaks passionately about her commitment to the care of older people and has seized the opportunities her awards provided to further that cause. "We need to see older people for who they are and all that they have achieved in their lives," she says.

"Older people have so much knowledge and experience to share and I am very honoured to work with them every day. They gave us this world and they deserve the very best, including excellent care and compassion."

Speaking to *Reach* recently, Veronica reflected on some of the opportunities that came her way during 2015, where she had been able to highlight the importance of the wellbeing of older people. These included attending at the House of Commons in Westminster,

speaking at high-profile events such as a nurse leader conference in Cardiff and meeting the Older People's Commissioner for Wales.

Veronica has also had the honour of becoming an associate member of the Powys Teaching Health Board as an older person's champion, enabling her to influence strategically.



We extend our hearty congratulations to Veronica!

The letters page

My wish list for a nursing home

Dear Editor

Congratulations on your newsletter. As a senior citizen — with an eye to my own future needs — I try to keep myself informed about nursing home matters.



HIQA website not user-friendly

The HIQA website is a wonderful source of information but I must admit that it overwhelms me and I don't find it user-friendly for my generation. Can the nursing home residents and relatives behind REACH help to make it more accessible to us?

Poor public image

It disappoints me that, in spite of developments in nursing home standards and the huge investment of taxpayer money through the Fair Deal that nursing homes still have such a poor public image. In one of my favourite TV programmes, it was declared by the presenters that a drab, neglected guest house in need of a serious face-lift, reminded them of a nursing home!

My personal experience as visitor, relative and friend to nursing home residents, is mixed. I have found that caring standards can vary considerably but, good, bad or indifferent, the penny hasn't dropped yet that the nursing home is not a hospital. It is home. So, nursing homes please treat your clients as residents instead of patients!

Nursing home residents have lived independent lives, so why are we expected to toe the line once we take up residence in a nursing home?

My wish list for my "home-from-home"

Let my new home be organised with me in mind, and not simply for the convenience of staff and management.

Is there any good reason why I cannot continue to be seen by my own doctor and medicated by my pharmacist of choice?

Matrons and managers, reassure your staff that it is right to spend time with me, to answer my questions and my calls for attention, to respond to my needs promptly, to hold my hand and put a comforting arm around my shoulder when I am distressed.

Do not ever mark my clothes with my room number. I am not a convict. I am me. I have a name. I want to use my own towels, my own clothes, my own comb and hairbrush.

Spare me the humiliation of sitting for the entire day in an institutional line-up in a day room, unsuited to individual expression or normal social contact.

Help prevent the embarrassment of trying to hold my cuppa in trembling hands without the support of a table.

Give a little thought to fitting-out the home in a way that will encourage independent living. Can I not make a cup of tea for my visitors while I am able?

Provide a safe place outdoors where I can sit or walk. I have seen residents in some nursing homes having nowhere but the car park in which to take a stroll. That is not good enough.

Remember, I am not coming to the nursing home to die, contrary to the view expressed to me by a nursing home matron a couple of years ago. No. I am coming to live with you and I expect you to help me to be the healthiest and fittest that I can be for as long as possible. Encourage me to continue to do the things that I am able to do for myself — even when it takes me a bit longer to dress myself in the morning, please let me get on with it. Encourage me to live independently.

Visit and ask questions

I would like to urge friends and family of nursing home residents to visit regularly and communicate regularly with nursing home staff. In my experience, people are reluctant to ask questions, afraid that they will be branded troublemakers or that their relative will suffer as a result. Is the scheme whereby there is a trained advocate attached to a nursing home compulsory? Maybe it would be a good thing if relatives of the nursing home residents got to meet these advocates. Yours faithfully
(Name with Editor)

HIQA replies to this letter

Thanks so much for your feedback on www.hiqa.ie. As it happens, we are working on a number of projects aimed at making both our website and inspection reports more accessible to everyone. We want to ensure all visitors to our website are able to find what they need easily.

Letters welcome

We welcome letters from readers. Please submit to maydogdu@hiqa.ie. Other contact details listed on page 8.

Art for people with dementia

Inspired by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, the Azure programme is working to make art galleries around Ireland dementia-friendly.

The idea is that people with Alzheimer's or dementia will engage with art, aided by facilitators. Art can be experienced in the here and now and does not require memory recall.

Initiated by the Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, other galleries rolling out the programme include the West Cork Art Centre, Galway Arts Centre, the National Gallery, the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin and the Luan Gallery, Athlone.



Picture: MoMA

Each conversation, in front of an art work, lasts for between 10 and 15 minutes. This usually triggers a range of reactions and, with the help of a facilitator, opinions, ideas and perhaps personal connections are shared. The facilitator builds a conversation around three, four or five art works that are connected by a theme.

Azure is supported by the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland and Age and Opportunity.



According to research by New York University, participative arts help people with the disease. It found that those with dementia and their carers reported greater self-confidence and elevated mood as a result of their exposure to art.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Ciaran McKinney, 01 8057709

www.ageandopportunity.ie/what-we-do/arts-culture/azure



The Reach newsletter is produced by relative volunteers – Joe Boyle, Dublin; Annette Condon, Tipperary; Maryrose Gough, Dublin and Siobhan Hurley, Galway – who serve on the National Relatives' Panel.

We represent the voice of older people in residential care and you, their families. All members of the panel currently have or have had loved ones in nursing home care.

Relatives working on your behalf

We recognise the many good practices in place but have also witnessed many areas for improvement.

The Relatives' Panel operates under the auspices of the Safety and Quality Improvement Directorate, part of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).

HIQA is responsible for the establishment of quality standards and the regular inspection nationwide of both private and public residential care centres (otherwise known as "nursing homes").

New volunteers to the panel are always welcome and can apply by contacting maydogdu@hiqa.ie.

We need your support

We are relatives — just like you. Our mission is to work with HIQA and the providers of residential care centres around Ireland to drive excellence in standards of care for older people.

Share your ideas and questions or write a letter

Do you have ideas for inclusion in this newsletter? Do you have questions? Would you like to submit a short article? If so, we would love to hear from you.



Spread the word

If you know friends, neighbours or acquaintances with relatives in residential care centres, please tell them about this newsletter. Help us spread the word!

Get in touch

Email us at maydogdu@hiqa.ie, marking the subject of your email: **Reach – Relative Newsletter Contribution.**

Send us a note at:

The National Relatives' Panel,
c/o Margaret Aйдogdu,
HIQA,
Safety and Quality Improvement
Directorate,
George's Court, George's Lane,
Smithfield, Dublin 7.

Join our mailing list

If you are interested in receiving this newsletter by email or would like to receive back copies, please subscribe by sending your name and email address to the following email, maydogdu@hiqa.ie, marking the subject: **Subscribe to Reach.**

Did you know?

There is a new HIQA guide to communicating in plain English.



The importance of communicating in plain English

Poor communication between members of a healthcare team and a social care team can result in information being misunderstood or critical information not being provided at points of transfer of care, such as from a nursing home to a hospital.

Two guides

HIQA, in conjunction with the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), has developed two guides to help health and social care providers communicate effectively in plain English with all those using their services. It has also released a [short educational video](#) which explains the concept of plain English in practice.

Supporting high-quality service

Marie Kehoe-O'Sullivan, Director of Safety and Quality Improvement at HIQA, said: "Different people and communities all have different communication needs. This guidance will help health and social care service providers communicate more clearly with residents and their families and friends. It is possible to improve your service by taking account of the literacy and numeracy needs of your service user. In turn, this leads to high-quality and safe service."

Aiding understanding

According to NALA, one in six people in Ireland has a literacy difficulty, finding reading and understanding everyday texts difficult. A further one in four has a numeracy difficulty, including problems with simple addition and subtraction, and the calculation of averages.

Marie continued: "Plain English is a style of presenting information that helps someone to understand it the first time they read or hear it. It is a more effective way of writing and speaking."

Supporting informed decision-making

"Removing long and complicated information and jargon in favour of clear and concise information enables residents to fully understand and access health and social care services. Effective communication allows service users to make informed decisions, access their entitlements and meet their legal duties."

Learn more

These documents can be found on the HIQA website. There is one document for [children's services](#) and another for [adult services](#). Alternatively, if you would like a hard copy of either, please contact Marie at mkehoe@hiqa.ie.

What would you like to see covered in future "Did you know?" features?

We welcome your ideas. They can be submitted to maydogdu@hiqa.ie.

Learn more

HIQA Annual Overview Report:¹

<http://www.hiqa.ie/press-release/2015-07-03-analysis-hiqa-regulation-nursing-homes-published>

Link to various versions of the draft older person standards:

<http://www.hiqa.ie/publications/draft-national-standards-residential-care-settings-older-people-ireland-2014>

Future Dementia Care in Ireland:²

http://www.dementia.ie/images/uploads/site-images/future_dementia_care_in_ireland.pdf

Face to a Name Campaign:

[Facebook.com/facetoaname](https://www.facebook.com/facetoaname)

This is Me Toolkit:

http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=1604

Useful links

Age Action Ireland	01 4756989	www.ageaction.ie
Alzheimer Society	1800 341341	www.alzheimer.ie
Diabetes Federation	1850 90909	www.diabetes.ie
DSIDC	01 4162035	www.dementia.ie
HSE information on residential care centres	01 4162035	www.myhomefromhome.ie
HSE Infoline	1850 24 1850	www.hse.ie/elderabuse
HIQA	01 8147400	www.hiqa.ie
HIQA Concerns Helpline	021 240 9646 or via email to concerns@hiqa.ie .	www.hiqa.ie/standards/social/older-people
Ombudmsan	1890 22303 or via email to ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie	www.ombudsman.gov.ie
Third Age	046 9557766	www.thirdageireland.ie
Age and Opportunity	01 805 7709 or via email to info@ageandopportunity.ie	www.ageandopportunity.ie/
Irish Centre for Social Gerontology		www.icsg.ie
National Centre for the Protection of Older People		www.ncop.ie
Parkinson's Association	1800 359359	www.parkinsons.ie
Western Alzheimers Society	094 9364900	www.westernalzheimer.ie

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