Care home provider invites debate on camera use

HC-One consulted staff, residents and relatives on an opt-in scheme that could act as a safeguarding tool

By Lisa Berry

SIX OUT of ten staff working for one of the UK’s largest care home providers have said they would welcome the installation of visible cameras in its homes to help safeguard residents.

HC-One, which runs 220 homes in the UK, consulted more than 12,000 staff, residents and relatives to gauge their views on an opt-in, visible camera scheme.

In its consultation report, it said such a scheme would be ‘one potential safeguarding tool and should never be used as a replacement for traditional, proven safeguarding measures’.

Of 7,330 staff who responded, 63% supported the idea, compared with 87% of relatives and 47% of residents.

The consultation came after one of HC-One’s homes, Oban House in Croydon, south London, featured in a BBC Panorama documentary in May. Secret cameras installed by a relative of 98-year-old resident Yvonne Grant revealed that staff ignored more than 300 of her desperate cries for help to use the toilet in the space of an hour.

HC-One apologised unreservedly for the failings in the care of Ms Grant, who died in 2012. Two staff members were convicted of common assault.

Respondents to the consultation also raised concerns about implementation of a camera scheme, including privacy for residents, where in homes cameras would be used, who would have access to the footage and how securely it would be stored.

HC-One’s chair Chai Patel said: ‘The results are vitally important in initiating an industry-wide debate on the matter. The potential implementation of an opt-in, visible camera scheme is a serious issue and one for the whole sector to debate.’

The organisation is now inviting charities, trade bodies, professional organisations, regulators and other interested parties to provide it with their feedback and thoughts on how the issues raised in the report can be addressed.

Written responses should be submitted by December 31 to CameraConsultation@HC-One.co.uk

Support sought for petition on safer staffing levels in Wales

RCN WALES is urging the public to sign an e-petition supporting draft legislation on safe staffing. The petition calls for support for the Safe Nursing Staffing Levels (Wales) Bill, drawn up by Welsh Liberal Democrat leader Kirsty Williams.

The petition has been set up by retired RCN member Richard Jones, who said: ‘This legislation is an opportunity to set the tone for the future of the Welsh NHS.’

He added that signing the petition will make it known to Welsh assembly members that the bill has public backing.

RCN Wales director Tina Donnelly said: ‘It is important the public engage on this topic. Patients should no longer suffer because of insufficient staffing numbers on wards.’

The petition closes on December 1 and the bill is due to be presented to the Welsh assembly health and social care committee in the same month.

Go to tinyurl.com/q5dcrx7

Retirees focus on calendar to raise funds for charity

MEMBERS OF the photography group at Middleton Hall Retirement Village in County Durham have used their skills to create a calendar to help raise funds for the organisation’s chosen charity, the Alzheimer’s Society.

Images chosen range from castles to close ups of wildlife, including an owl and a squirrel peeking from behind a feeding tray.

Audra Hunt who set up the group (pictured) said: ‘The residents have been working on their composition this year and you can see that they haven’t just taken shots, they’ve thought about them beforehand. The images are personal to each photographer.’

The calendars, priced £7, are available by contacting +44 (0)1325 332207.

Find out more
To read the consultation report go to www.hc-one.co.uk/resources/camera-consultation