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Private and confidential

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Dear Mr Travers

Re: Mr Ernest HIGGS (Deceased)
Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths

Thank you for your letter with regards the Regulation 28 Report for Mr Ernest Higgs; I was sorry to read about the circumstances of his death and would like to extend my condolences to his family.

I have reviewed your 'matters of concern' and noted items 1 and 2 are of particular relevance in relation to the delivery of primary care. It should be noted that nursing homes have private contractual arrangements with general practitioners, often known as a 'retainer' and responsibility for contracting and commissioning of primary care is currently held by NHS England.

At NHS Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) we have been concerned with the general quality of care provision within local nursing and residential homes, recent evidence from the Care Quality Commission would reinforce this view with a number of nursing and residential homes being rated as either 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement'.

The key actions we are taking are detailed below:

1. Our Quality Committee have undertaken an in-depth analysis of the issues relating to nursing and residential care home quality, this was supported by the Care Quality Commission, Surrey Care Association, Healthwatch Surrey, Surrey County Council and NHS safeguarding specialists. The outputs of this in-depth analysis will lead to changes in the way we commission and assure quality of services.





2. Our Quality Team are working collaboratively with Surrey County Council and local safeguarding leads to quality assure nursing and residential home providers and support those in difficulty where care concerns arise.
3. We are at the final stages of developing a nursing home Primary Care Standard (PCS), the PCS is a proactive health assessment and intervention by a general practitioner at least twice per year for every nursing home resident. I will also ensure that the requirement to clearly document and evidence instructions by a general practitioner is also included.
4. We are recruiting a specialist dietician who will act as a central resource for local nursing and residential homes, particularly for those residents who require specialist nutrition through enteral or parenteral feeding regimes, as was the case with Mr Higgs.
5. NHS Surrey Downs CCG leads the Continuing Healthcare (CHC) function on behalf of all CCGs in Surrey, as a 'spot' commissioner I have asked the CHC team to raise concerns should they find poor documentation either from the nursing/residential home and/or poorly documented communication between general practitioner and care home staff.
6. I have asked Surrey Care Association to communicate with its members the importance of contemporaneous documentation, care home and sub contracted staff registered with a professional regulator such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council or General Medical Council have a professional obligation to ensure documentation is accurate and contemporaneous.

I hope this letter provides you with assurance that we are taking this Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths seriously and I would be happy to provide further details should you require.

Yours sincerely




Clinical Chair

Cc  Chief Nurse – Surrey Downs CCG
 Head of CHC – Surrey Downs CCG
 Deputy Director of Commissioning – Surrey Downs CCG
 Director of Commissioning - NHS England