

Health and Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee

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Title:	Update on local Healthwatch Dignity Champions work on oral health and care homes.
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Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cllr Tim Mitchell
Wards Involved:	All / Specific
Policy Context:	Health and Social Care
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HWCWL Dignity Champions Oral Health Project – initial findings: Our volunteers have been working with local care homes across Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea to gather the experiences of care home residents and their families in regard to the oral health of residents.

With the support of expert briefings from CLCH secondary dental team, Dignity Champions designed an Enter & View programme focused on oral health. Surveys were shared, both electronically and in hard copy with free post return envelopes, through care home managers. Two evening listening sessions were provided for relatives who might wish to share their experience of the management of oral health for their family member.

HWCWL contacted 22 care homes across the bi-borough, receiving 62 responses from 9 care homes.*

Resident	27
Relative / friend	6
Staff	25
Manager	4

The care homes who have responded support residents with different care needs such as learning disability or dementia.

Due to pandemic Dignity Champions were unable to visit the care homes so created a survey that was online, paper copies were sent and the offer to have a zoom/telephone call with dignity champions was made. We were reliant on the cooperation of the care home to ensure that the surveys were distributed and that the posters we sent were displayed. HWCWL would like to thank care homes who responded.

The response was overwhelming via paper copies with the managers being the only ones to respond online.

HWCWL asked residents and relatives/friends questions regarding how dental care was undertaken and if the resident felt they were given adequate support and choice, and if they visited the dentist and saw a dental hygienist.

Relatives /friends were asked about their loved one's dental care and if and how they were involved.

Staff and managers were asked about any dental policy in their place of work, what training was provided, the support given and processes. HWCWL asked what was done well and what was difficult, and what support might help.

Findings so far include:

Residents overall seem happy with the support they get for their oral health and dental care, many reporting no issues with their teeth. This was the same for the relatives/friends who responded. None had seen a dental hygienist. Those who wore dentures felt that they did not need to see a dentist.

Staff seemed to be very aware of how to manage oral health for their residents and offered choice to the residents for example their choice of toothbrush. There was not a great deal of awareness about if the residence had a dental health policy.

A wide range of refreshments were offered to maintain hydration, although some of these (juice/squash/custard) were possibly very sweet which could be detrimental to good oral hygiene.

Staff seemed clear about how to escalate dental health concerns and how these were reported and recorded.

Residents did not offer any suggestions about how their dental health might be improved.

Staff and managers identified difficulties for those who are very unwell/ end of life, suggesting that it would help if an oral professional was able to assess and advise.

This call for an oral professional to visit and assess dental health needs and make recommendations was repeated by other staff, especially as covid has made accessing a dentist far more difficult in recent years.

The need for fast-track access to a dentist was requested.

*Care homes who have responded

Turning Point Hazel House

The Margaret Thatcher

Alan Morkhill House

Princess Louise

Athlone House

Butterworth

Harrow Road

Garside Nursing Home

The Kensington Care Home

If you have any queries about this briefing report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact Olivia Clymer at Healthwatch Central West London.

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Appendix A

Hard copy survey shared with resident and families of local care homes