The Closure of Care Homes for Older People in Wales: Prevalence, Process and Impact

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Project background

- Care home closures
  - Increasing media coverage & campaigning
  - Emotive topic
  - Impact upon health & mortality
- Policy (Escalating Concerns guidance. WAG, 2009)
  - Assists stat. bodies in fulfilling responsibilities
  - Does not offer information on good practice & additional responsibilities
  - Examine process of closure & relocation
Aims of the project

- Identify the rates of closure within specified time period
- Examine the process surrounding closures
- Explore experiences of older people, their relatives, providers and staff
- Examine process where closure was avoided
Phase 1: Prevalence and causes of care home closure

- Analysis of Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) data regarding:
  - Number of types of homes closed & residents relocated
  - Reasons for closure
- Telephone interviews with:
  - CSSIW Inspectors
  - Owners/ managers of homes closed within last year
  - Commissioners of care home providers
Phases 2 & 3

• Phase 2: The process of care home closure
  – Acquire local authority protocols for care home closures to;
  – Compare to WAG guidelines
  – Identify common views of best practice

• Phase 3: Consequences & outcomes for stakeholders
  – Case studies of care homes (public & private)
  – During process of closure
  – Under threat of closure
Findings

• Prevalence of closures
  – A mixed picture emerged

• Reasons for closures
  – Most private homes ceased to operate for financial reasons/ Most local authority care homes were closing due to service reconfiguration
Findings

• Impact of closures (and threat of closures)
  – Extended closure timescales can be as distressing as sudden closure and relocation
  – Existing guidance could usefully be supplemented with principles for good practice (Role of carers/providers; Advocacy and support)
  – Older people paying for their own care were being overcharged for care by providers
Recommendations

• Information relating to prevalence and reasons for (or threat of) closure need to be more robustly gathered and synthesised

• The care home sector requires financial regulation to protect self-funders from being overcharged

• Disclosure plans for older residents
Recommendations

• Consultation on proposed closures plans should not exceed 8 weeks - Lengthy closure plans can be as distressing as sudden closures

• Independent advocacy services should be offered to all residents in care homes under threat or in the process of closure
Thank you for listening

• For further details visit:
  • Centre for Innovative Ageing website
    • [www.swan.ac.uk/humanandhealthsciences/departments/centreforinnovativeageing](http://www.swan.ac.uk/humanandhealthsciences/departments/centreforinnovativeageing)