

7 March 2014

Coroner P Harding
Senior Coroner Mid Kent and Medway
Kent Register Office
The Archbishop's Palace
Palace Gardens, Mill Street



Dear Senior Coroner Harding

I am writing in response to your Prevention of Future Deaths Report following the inquest touching on the death of Mr Keith Barton.

First, I would like to again express my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Mr Barton.

Your report raises four matters of concern, namely:

1. Clarification of recommendations from the Speech and Language Therapist (SALT).
2. Delivery of training in relation to dysphagia awareness.
3. Completion of incident reports.
4. The process for checking residents at risk of choking.

Your report confirms that you were satisfied, at the conclusion of the inquest, that Ashley Gardens had put in place appropriate measures in relation to items 3 and 4 and that no additional action needs to be taken to address these concerns.

I deal with your remaining concerns below:

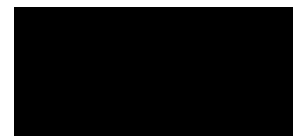
1. **Clarification of recommendations from SALT**

Mr Barton had a diagnosis of Picks disease. As a result of his condition he had a history of pocketing food and not swallowing. Whilst at Ashley Gardens he was assessed as being at risk of choking because of his condition and he was seen by SALT on 23rd August 2012. The written referral received from SALT confirmed that Mr Barton required supervision and monitoring whilst eating. In accordance with usual practice at Ashley Gardens this was interpreted as meaning period checks rather than constant supervision.

The evidence at the inquest was that no member of staff from the home had checked on Mr Barton whilst he was eating breakfast on the morning of 5 February 2013. The SALT therapist gave evidence stating that the written recommendation sent to Ashley Gardens on 16th October 2012 meant constant supervision by someone sitting with Mr Barton or in close proximity. This was not Ashley Gardens' understanding of the recommendation made.

Whilst it is accepted that no clarification was sought from the SALT in relation to the recommendation, I would have expected the wording of the recommendation to be specific and clear if it was their view that constant supervision was required.

LIFE STYLE CARE (2011) PLC
REGENT HOUSE,
THEOBALD STREET, ELSTREE,
BOREHAMWOOD, HERTS. WD6 4RS
TEL: (020) 8327 1330
FAX: (020) 8327 1340
Email: admin@lifestylecare.co.uk
Website: www.lifestylecare.co.uk
Registered No. 7709694





I met with SALT on 17 January 2014 in order to discuss your concerns in respect of the ambiguity of their recommendation in this case. The following action plan has been agreed:

- (a) We will ensure that all SALT recommendations are seen by the senior nurse on duty so that a senior member of staff can determine whether any clarification is required
- (b) SALT will ensure that where supervision is recommended appropriate detail of the expected supervision is given

2. Delivery of training in relation to dysphagia awareness

Ashley Gardens have requested training from SALT however they have confirmed that only 2 members of staff from Ashley Gardens are permitted to attend each training session. Ashley Gardens have offered to host the SALT training however they have been informed that they are still only permitted to have 2 members of staff. Unfortunately the result is that it would take a significant period of time for all members of staff to receive dysphagia awareness training.

I met with SALT on 17 January 2014 in order to discuss your concerns in respect of the delivery of training in relation to dysphagia awareness. I was informed that SALT was in the process of agreeing the content of future dysphagia training for nursing home staff. This was so that they can have the training validated by the Trust to ensure the content and quality is of a high and consistent standard across the whole Trust area.

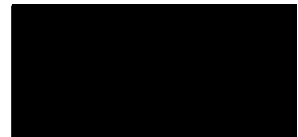
SALT confirmed to me that this process would be completed by the end of February 2014 so that training could start being offered again from March 2014.

As a result of the above I sourced some dysphagia awareness training from a private SALT therapist. She has experience of delivering dysphagia training to difference healthcare professions across nursing homes, day centres and hospitals. Her training is based on literature, published research and her own experience in the sector. She has over 12 years of clinical experience as a speech and language therapist and is now an independent practitioner. She is registered with The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Healthcare and Professions Council.

The sessions she provides run for 60 minutes and cover the following topics:

- The normal swallow;
- What can go wrong;
- Signs and symptoms of dysphagia;
- How difficulties are assessed;
- Treating and compensating for dysphagia

The sessions are interactive with practical exercises and a short video clip. The session can be given to up to 20 people at one time.





I booked a session which was completed on 15th February 2014 for 15 members of staff and another session has been arranged for 17th March 2014 which will be attended by 20 members of staff.

I also booked a Nutrition and Hydration course which was completed by 15 members of staff on 5th March 2014. This was a more generic training covering feeding. I do not intend book any future sessions of this training as it was not as beneficial as the dysphagia training.

I received a response from SALT on 6th March 2014 which confirmed they will now be charging £125 per session and sessions can be booked from the end of March. I was given verbal confirmation from the SALT Manager that this will be a course just run for Ashley Gardens and we can have approximately 10 to 15 members of staff on each session. However, I was informed that this is subject to written confirmation.

Should there prove to be any issues causing delays in the completion of the SALT training I will book more sessions with the above private SALT therapist in order to ensure that the training of staff is completed as quickly as possible.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Home Manager
Ashley Gardens Care Centre

LIFE STYLE CARE (2011) PLC
REGENT HOUSE,
THEOBALD STREET, ELSTREE,
BOREHAMWOOD, HERTS WD6 4RS
TEL: (020) 8327 1330
FAX: (020) 8327 1340
Email: admin@lifestylecare.co.uk
Website: www.lifestylecare.co.uk
Registered No. 7709694

Page 3 of 3

DIRECTORS
R.G. SACHDEV, FCCA, AMBIM
E.E. WAKE, MA, M.PHTL
D.R. PENNEY, FCIPD
J. BASKARAN, FCCA