

By email only: [norfolk@coroner.norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:norfolk@coroner.norfolk.gov.uk)

Johanna Thompson  
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The Coroner's Office  
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20<sup>th</sup> April 2016

Dear Ms Thompson

**Re: Regulation 28: Response to Report to Prevent Future Deaths**

We refer to your Report to Prevent Future Deaths dated 29<sup>th</sup> March 2016 following the inquest into the death of Mrs Pamela Thurston.

Please accept this letter as our response to your Report ("Response") which notes the action Caring Homes Healthcare Group Limited ("Group") has taken, and intends to take, in respect of the concerns you raised in your Report.

On 8<sup>th</sup> April 2016 Frank Cummins, Clinical Director, sent a Memorandum to the Home Managers of all the Care Homes in the Group, along with copies to the Group's Regional Managers and Head of Operations. The Memorandum relates to ensuring meals are given in a timely manner and your concerns were explained.

The Memorandum notes that whilst service users are to be given as much choice as possible in relation to when their meals are to be served, caution should be taken if a service user has not eaten for a significant period of time due to them missing core meals or snacks which may make them more prone to eating quickly which could put them at an increased risk of choking. It is noted that any risk is increased where a resident has a significant cognitive or swallowing deficit.

Staff have been asked to:

1. Pay particular attention to completing appropriate choking risk assessments for service users and ensure that all staff, including kitchen staff, are fully aware of any service users who may have a compromised swallowing reflex
2. Ensure any service user who may be showing the symptoms of a compromised swallowing reflex are referred to SALT in a timely manner and that the actions SALT prescribe are implemented and that all staff are aware of the recommendations (should staff experience any difficulty in gaining timely advice from the local SALT teams, Mr Cummins should be contacted who will correspond with the SALT Team to try and expedite the matter)

3. Ensure that snacks are available for service users between core meals and that such snacks are encouraged where a period of over eight hours has passed since a service user last ate
4. Ensure an appropriate risk assessment is undertaken and a referral made to SALT where a service user has been known to hoard foodstuffs in their mouth
5. Ensure a tick list is in the kitchen area which documents the time a service user is served a core meal in the Home. Where it is noticed that a significant period of time has passed between meals for a service user (eight hours or over), or where a service user has missed a meal, direct observations of the service user should be maintained whilst the service user is eating their meal or snack. The person in charge must designate a member of staff to undertake the observation and this should be documented in the service users notes
6. Where a service user has compromised nutritional intake, a record of foods served, the time and the amount taken should be maintained as is usual procedure.

The Home Managers have been asked to discuss the Memorandum with their staff team via team meetings or other appropriate method, such as a shift handover.

The Group's Regional Managers have line management responsibility for a number of Homes within the Group. The Regional Managers have been asked to discuss the matters with the Home Managers on their next monthly visit and will also sample staff knowledge.

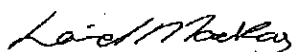
As part of our clinical governance the Regional Managers undertake a monthly visit to each Home they are responsible for and complete a Senior Manager Monthly Report (SMMR). The SMMR covers a range of matters in order to determine if the Home is complying with the required standards and the Group's policies and procedures. The SMMR was amended on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016 following discussion at the Group's Clinical Risk Committee to include a requirement for Regional Managers to monitor Homes' adherence to the Memorandum moving forward. The first SMMR to include the amended area will be undertaken during May 2016.

The Group's Heads of Operations line-manage the Regional Managers and review the monthly audits to ensure that the Regional Managers are undertaking the required checks.

The knowledge and implementation of the Memorandum will be monitored throughout the management structure of the Group, as noted above, and should any further action be necessary then the Group will put into place the required steps.

Thank you for your Report and we trust that the above addresses your concerns adequately.

Yours sincerely



**Managing Director**