



Department
of Health

From David Mowat MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Community Health and Care

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Our ref: 1055494

Mrs Louise Hunt
Senior Coroner
HM Coroner for Birmingham & Solihull
Coroner's Court
50 Newton Street
Birmingham
B4 6NE



11th January 2017

Dear Mrs Hunt,

Thank you for your letter of 13th October 2016, following the inquest into the death of Mr Robert Davidson. I was sorry to hear of his death and wish to extend my condolences to his family.

The Department of Health acknowledges that improving the capability of the care workforce through continued skills development is a vital investment in the future, and helps other people to recognise social care as a skilled career option. The characteristics of the workforce, including opportunities for learning and development, have a direct relationship with the quality of the care that services users receive.

In April 2015, the Government introduced the Care Certificate (as recommended by Camilla Cavendish in her July 2013 review), which is helping to ensure that support workers and their employers can deliver a consistently high quality standard of safe, effective and compassionate care. It includes 15 standards and outcomes that health and social care workers – in hospitals, care homes and people's own homes – should know and be able to deliver in their daily work. Regarded as 'best practice' for the induction of new health and care assistants, it is also offering existing staff an opportunity to refresh or improve their knowledge.

The Care Certificate standards include: Awareness of mental health, dementia and learning disability; Basic life support; and Health and safety.

While not mandatory, all new healthcare assistants and social care support workers are expected to attain the Care Certificate. It is a benchmark by which service providers can demonstrate they meet Care Quality Commission 'staffing' and 'fit and proper persons employed' requirements, and evidence of its use may be actively sought by inspectors.

The Department is providing significant levels of funding to support training and development for the care workforce. In 2016/17, DH will invest £12m through the Workforce Development Fund which provides support to employers on modules and qualifications for their workers in adult services in the private and voluntary sectors.

The Department is also continuing to work closely with our delivery partner, Skills for Care, a partner in the sector skills council for social care, to improve the level of skills of the adult social care workforce.

Skills for Care has developed a comprehensive suite of standards and qualifications to help workers develop the skills and knowledge they need to support people who use services, including specialist pathways in dementia, diabetes, managing challenging behaviour and learning disabilities.

As a government we take the safety of patients and quality of care very seriously. Many measures have already been introduced to ensure providers improve standards - including how the Care Quality Commission (CQC) assesses providers against the new fundamental standards of safety and quality which care should never fail. CQC has made unannounced inspections in November 2016 of both Aran Court Care Centre and Jubilee Gardens Care Home.

I am informed by CQC that its initial findings indicate that staff now have a better understanding of what action to take in an emergency. However its assessment of the findings following both inspections is still underway and, once completed, full inspection reports will be published.

I hope this response is helpful and I am grateful to you for bringing the circumstances of Mr Davidson's death to my attention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Mowat". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath it.

DAVID MOWAT