

Re: APPG Inquiry Report: *Respect for religious and philosophical beliefs while eating in care*

Thank you for your recent communication regarding the publication of an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Inquiry Report, *Respect for religious and philosophical beliefs while eating in care* published by the APPG on Vegetarianism and Veganism.

We recognise the importance of respecting individual's values and beliefs whilst eating in care, including dietary choices such as veganism or vegetarianism. More widely, we fully acknowledge and support people's basic human right to be able to practice their beliefs.

In your letter, you reference two recommendations for our consideration regarding how to better protect the rights of those receiving care in relation to philosophical and religious beliefs around food and diet.

Recommendation 2 suggests altering the terminology used in the Care Inspectorate's Quality Framework for Care Homes for Adults. This recommendation was in reference to the 2020 publication. In February 2022, we published a revised framework for Quality Framework for Care Homes for Adults and Older People. We believe the diverse dietary needs of people is covered under *Quality indicator 1.3: People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support* which talks about diet reflecting people's "cultural and dietary needs and preferences".

Separately, we are working closely with Kim Stringer, Director (Scotland), Vegetarian for Life to develop further guidance to support care services providing care and support for people who are vegetarian or vegan. This joint piece of work will be supported by webinars and other communications to providers. We will ensure the guidance makes clear reference to people's philosophical and religious beliefs.

The second recommendation, **Recommendation 4**, recommends improving the guidance on display in catering areas to ensure that clear, easy to digest, information about specific diets is readily available to caterers at the point of food preparation. We will work with Kim Stringer to develop posters for the sector. Digital copies can be distributed via our provider bulletin to support providers in understanding people's dietary needs.

In addition to these recommendations, you have asked how the Care Inspectorate currently regulates the workforce to ensure that it is suitably qualified and whether this includes reviewing care staff training on cultural and dietary needs. Using our Quality Framework for Care Homes for Adults and Older People, published in 2022, staff competency is assessed under *Quality indicator 3.2: Staff have the right knowledge, competence and development to care for and support people*. This quality indicator is about ensuring people are being cared for by staff who understand, and are sensitive to their needs and wishes. Further to this, under *Quality indicator 3.1: Staff have been recruited well*, there is a responsibility for services to ensure recruitment and induction reflects the needs of people experiencing care.

Finally, you said you would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Care Inspectorate, alongside representatives from Vegetarian for Life, to discuss all of the above. We would of course be happy to meet with you.