

ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON VEGETARIANISM AND VEGANISM



C/O Vegetarian for Life
83 Ducie Street
Manchester
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FAO: Ian Trenholm CEO
Care Quality Commission
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA

25 January 2022

Dear Mr Trenholm,

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

We are writing regarding the recent publication of an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Inquiry Report, [*Respect for religious and philosophical beliefs while eating in care*](#). This document was authored by the charity Vegetarian for Life and published in November 2021 by the APPG on Vegetarianism and Veganism.

The report, referencing various case studies, raised a series of concerns about how individuals' values and beliefs are failing to be respected while eating in care. Case studies were brought to light where lifelong vegans and vegetarians were given fish or meat, going against their fundamental beliefs and values. It is estimated that more than 10% of the UK population may have dietary restrictions owing to religious or philosophical beliefs.

Dietary choices, such as veganism or vegetarianism, can be a fundamental aspect of someone's cultural or religious identity. People have a basic human right to be able to practice their beliefs. Naturally, to ensure that people have dignity in care, their beliefs and values must be fully respected.

In the report, four recommendations were made, suggesting how to better protect the rights of those receiving care in relation to philosophical and religious beliefs around food and diet. Of the four recommendations, two were particularly relevant to the work of the CQC.

- Recommendation 2: This recommended altering the wording of CQC guidance to care providers. It was suggested to alter the terminology used in the Key Lines of Enquiry, specifically CQC E3.1, to include reference to 'philosophical' beliefs.

While this is only a small change in wording, this amendment would better encompass the scope of the protections afforded to those receiving care. These changes would ensure that the guidance would better reflect the more diverse

foundations that underpin a person's belief system. This would also better reflect recent interpretations of the Equality Act 2010, that have recognised non-religious belief systems as constituting protected characteristics, such as ethical veganism.

- Recommendation 4: This recommended 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. This would remind caterers to both check the dietary needs of those in care, and to ensure they had a reference point when preparing food.

Additionally, the report recommended mandatory qualifications. While we recognise the staffing issues facing the sector at the moment, we appreciate that this is not the preferred time for such a change. However, we do note that regulation 18 of the *Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014* currently requires staff to be 'suitably qualified' to perform their work. As such, we are interested to understand how the CQC currently regulates the workforce to ensure that it is 'suitably qualified' and whether this includes reviewing care staff training on cultural and dietary needs.

We also note that in May 2020, the CQC released guidance to care providers on how to support the religious and cultural beliefs of those receiving care. Considering the publication of the aforementioned guidance, have any changes been made to care inspections to assess how well care establishments support dietary needs arising from philosophical or religious beliefs? Further, has the CQC considered conducting any reviews of menus and diets in care establishments, to review how specific diets are catered for across the sector?

I would welcome your thoughts on the above and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, alongside representatives from Vegetarian for Life, to discuss all of the above.

Yours sincerely

Officers of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Vegetarianism and Veganism

Christina Rees MP, Chair
Henry Smith MP, Vice-Chair
Kerry McCarthy MP, Vice-Chair
Darren Jones MP, Vice-Chair