



RQIA STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO MEDIA COVERAGE OF PROSECUTION OF CARE WORKER FOR ASSAULT OF PATIENT AT DRUMRAGH CARE HOME

The following statement can be attributed to an RQIA spokesperson:

“RQIA welcomes the successful prosecution of the person found guilty of the assault and abuse of Mr Seamus Gormley at Drumragh Care Home in July 2015. This conviction sends a clear message that such abuse of the most vulnerable in our community is totally unacceptable and must not be tolerated.

On 19 July 2015, an incident, which had occurred on 16 July 2015, was reported to the management at Drumragh Care Home by a member of its staff. The manager of the home notified the police, HSC trust, the patient’s family and RQIA in line with the regional safeguarding protocol. The staff involved in this abuse were also suspended by the management of the home.

RQIA fully assessed this intelligence to ensure that appropriate arrangements were in place to protect every patient at this service. This incident was subject to a criminal investigation led by PSNI, resulting in a conviction. RQIA does not conduct a separate investigation.

During 2014 and 2015, RQIA was contacted on six occasions by people raising anonymous concerns in relation to Drumragh Care Home. On two occasions the person reporting the concerns identified themselves as a whistleblower, but chose to remain anonymous. In each case, the allegations were followed up thoroughly by RQIA, including: through unannounced inspection, meetings to discuss the concerns with the management of Four Seasons Health Care, and assurances were sought from the service provider on required actions.

As those raising the concerns remained anonymous and did not provide contact details, RQIA was unable to respond, or ring the anonymous whistleblower, detailing the actions we took in each case to address these concerns.

In its report the BBC states that all RQIA’s inspections at Drumragh were announced. This is wholly incorrect. During the period January 2013 until the closure of the home in early December 2015, there were six care inspections at Drumragh, all of which were unannounced, with no advance notification to the home.

RQIA strongly refutes the allegation that RQIA’s inspectors were “pally” with the manager of this service. During this period, four different nurse inspectors conducted these inspections in a fully professional manner. It is wholly unacceptable for the professional manner in which RQIA’s inspectors conduct their work to be misrepresented and inaccurately portrayed in this way.

The safety and wellbeing of every patient in receipt of care in nursing homes across Northern Ireland is of paramount importance to RQIA, and on a daily basis we work to ensure that service providers meet the standards of care expected by legislation and by those in receipt of care.

It is disappointing that BBC, in its reporting of this conviction – which we welcome, chose to make unsubstantiated and incorrect assertions in relation to RQIA’s work.

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