# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Care Home Voices** |
| **DATE** | **July 13, 2020** |
| **BY** | **Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services** |

The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted how we care for some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

I welcome the Older People’s Commissioner’s recent *Care Home Voices* report, which details the experiences of care home staff, residents, their friends and families. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the report – it provides a valuable insight into the impact of coronavirus on some of the least heard members of our communities.

It highlights the hard work and determination of care home staff during the pandemic and willingness to adopt new ways of working. For example, digital technology has helped many people in care homes to stay connected and I hope we can learn from these new experiences as we plan for the future.

Throughout the pandemic, we have worked to balance the rights of people living in care homes with the need to protect them from coronavirus. This has included restricting visiting to care homes, which I know has not been easy – people will be missing seeing their friends and families face to face. We have recently published new guidance to enable safe visiting under the current restrictions. I am grateful to the Older People’s Commissioner and other stakeholders for engaging in this work.

Over recent months, Welsh Government has worked closely with social care partners and care home staff to support vulnerable people living in care homes. We have also carried out an ongoing reflection and review, which will help to inform an action plan ahead of any future increase in coronavirus or winter pressures.

I have also commissioned a focused and independent expert rapid review of the care home operational experience between March and June. It will be completed in September.

Older people living in care homes, their friends and families must be given the opportunity to inform our approach and I will continue to work with the Older People’s Commissioner to make sure their voices are heard and reflected in our policy decisions.

Care homes are as much a part of our communities as schools and workplaces – by listening to the voices of residents, we can plan for a more cohesive and safer future for all.