



Strategy 2020 – 2023

The Relatives & Residents Association



**For better quality of life  
of older people  
needing care**

# Foreword



## Proactive in the pandemic

Most care homes stopped visiting when the Covid crisis appeared.

Our Helpline became a lifeline for many relatives who were desperately concerned about the impact of isolation on residents, compounded by the effects of dementia and frailty.

There seemed little awareness of the effects of being out of touch with family and friends on those at the end of their lives. Some relatives wished to remove their parents or partners from care homes and others told tragic stories of no longer being recognised.

We argued for:

- free PPE and effective and regular testing
- resumed inspection, where there were known concerns about safety, poor leadership and shortages of staff
- better support and expertise to be made available to care homes

Many relatives turned to us in despair and we amplified their voices by using their experiences to alert the media and decision makers. They not only told us of the consequences of seclusion and separation on mental health, but also the distress caused by the withdrawal of stimulus and the cessation of medical and other specialised services like nursing, physiotherapy, chiropody and others.

We gave evidence to Parliament on all this.

Our voice is being heard and we will continue to argue ever more strongly to bring proper support and funding to older people's care.

Judy Downey, Chair of R&RA

# Our vision, mission and values



## Our vision

For better quality of life of older people needing care

## Our mission

The Relatives & Residents Association (R&RA) champions the rights of older people needing care in England. We provide information, advice and support to empower older people and their families/friends, and use their unique perspective to raise awareness and to influence policy and practice.

## Our values

### **Independent**

We are dependable, we are trusted, we are knowledgeable

### **Compassionate**

We listen, we care, we empathise

### **Supportive**

We inform, we advise, we empower

### **Inclusive**

We are open, we are accessible, we give voice

### **Versatile**

We are resourceful, we are adaptable, we are responsive

# Reflecting on our impact



The Relatives & Residents Association's informative helpline, our accessible resources, and effective campaigning and policy work have together been making a noticeable difference for those we are here to help. These are just some of our achievements over the past few years:

## Empowering older people and their families/carers

■ During financially difficult times, when many similar services have been reduced to online-only or signposting, R&RA's Helpline continued to support and empower those in need, through increasingly complex and challenging issues. We have:

- Supported a wife with mental health issues who had been banned from her partner's care home, to move her partner to a new care home where she could visit easily
- Assisted a son with learning disabilities and anxiety through a financial assessment when his mother was moved into a care home
- Helped prevent the eviction of a resident where the relative was unable to pay their contribution
- Supported the sister of a resident to raise concerns about poor care, resulting in a damning report on the home by the regulator

■ Expanded our helpline support by introducing webchat, allowing people to access our service in a way that works for them

**The future of where my wife will be residing is still unclear, but the council and the home are now more co-operative as I can speak with more authority thanks to your advice.**

Helpline caller feedback



## Raising awareness

- Highlighted and publicised the practice of evicting residents whose relatives raise concerns about care via wide media coverage and campaigning – as a result care homes now inform the regulator of notices to evict, which can prompt inspectors to raise it as a line of inquiry
- Regular appearances in national and local media and our presence on social media has expanded our reach

## Influencing practice

- Our 'Keys to Care' resource, when evaluated by the University of Worcester's Association of Dementia Studies, was found to be effective, flexible and practical to use
- Our 'Keys to Care' app scored a very high 71% in an independent review of its clinical assurance, user experience and data privacy, carried out by ORCHA (a leading health app evaluator)
- Our 'Keep Smiling' booklet gave guidance and publicised the need for better mouth and teeth care in care homes – as a result the regulator reported on the issue and added it to their inspection processes

## Influencing policy

- Helped to protect older people's rights by lobbying for changes to the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill, to reduce the role originally given to care home managers in making decisions about depriving people of their liberty
- Informed the Competition and Markets Authority study with evidence of the inadequacies of care home contracts, the report led to action being taken against unreasonable 'administration' charges

**“ A brilliant idea and so well executed.**

**Feedback on Keys to Care, by Sharon Allen, (then) CEO, Skills for Care**

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# People need the Relatives & Residents Association now more than ever

Fundamental challenges lie ahead for older people needing care and the services that support them across England

**20%**

of care homes are rated 'inadequate or requires improvement' by CQC <sup>1</sup>

**49%**

reduction in government funding for local authorities in real-terms from 2010-11 to 2017-18 <sup>4</sup>

**£937**

average weekly cost of a nursing home <sup>6</sup>

**122,000**

vacancies in the adult social care workforce at any one time <sup>2</sup>

**59%**

of care home residents entirely or partially supported by public funds <sup>5</sup>

**£12.5 billion**

needed to restore care to 2010 levels of service <sup>7</sup>

**472,890**

people diagnosed with dementia <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Care Quality Commission, 'The state of health care and adult social care in England 2018/19', 2019

<sup>2</sup> Data for 2018/19, Skills for Care, 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England', 2019

<sup>3</sup> NHS Digital, 'Recorded Dementia Diagnoses, December 2019', 2020

<sup>4</sup> National Audit Office, 'Local government in 2019: a pivotal year', 2019

<sup>5</sup> Competition & Markets Authority, 'Care homes market study: summary of final report', November 2017

<sup>6</sup> Which? 'The rising cost of a care home', January 2020

<sup>7</sup> Health Foundation, 'What should be done to fix the crisis in social care?', 2019

# Our 2020-2023 strategy



Our strategy considers what people are up against and how we mean to bring about change

The change we want to see:

**For older people needing care, and those who support them, to be well informed about their rights and entitlements and empowered to speak up about poor quality care**

**For older people to receive high quality care which respects their rights**

**For older people to receive the care they need from a system which is appropriately funded, staffed and valued**

**For more older people and their families/carers to be supported by a financially sustainable, efficient Relatives & Residents Association**

# For older people needing care, and those who support them, to be well informed about their rights and entitlements and empowered to speak up about poor quality care



Navigating through the care system in England can be a complex journey. Many older people and their families and friends tell us they find the system confusing. They also tell us that it can be overwhelming, especially when difficult and sometimes urgent decisions have to be made.

The Relatives & Residents Association helps older people and their families/carers to understand the care system, their rights and what support they are entitled to. We aim to inform so that people can be actively involved in decisions about their care, and feel empowered to speak up if things go wrong.

**[R&RA's adviser] has made a very confusing matter clearer and given me important advice that will be able to be used moving forward with my Nan's case. Thank goodness for Trevor and R&RA!**

Helpline caller feedback

## To help achieve this we will:

- Provide one-to-one advice to older people, and those who support them, about their rights and entitlements through our helpline
- Allow people to access this support in a way that works for them, digitally or non-digitally, including by telephone
- Provide information to older people, and those who support them, about their rights and entitlements through our website and publications

# For older people to receive high quality care which respects their rights



Older people who need care should have a positive experience and enjoy a good quality of life. Whilst this is the case for most people, standards are not consistent across England and pockets of poor care persist.

The Relatives & Residents Association wants to help improve care standards and ensure older people's rights are respected. We will use a cross-sector approach to help achieve this, working with Government, care homes and providers, the regulator, other organisations, and with older people and those who support them.

**Simple, expertly written good sense in a handy attractive format**

Feedback from a care professional on *Keys to Care*, a practical resource for care workers

## To help achieve this we will:

- Support older people, and their families and friends, to challenge poor care through our casework
- Provide clear information about quality care and the rights of older people through our website and our growing suite of resources
- Work with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to inform their work to improve care, including by highlighting breaches of the standards
- Encourage excellence through our corporate membership scheme
- Raise awareness of quality, rights-respecting care through media work, including social media, campaigning and working in partnership with other organisations

# For older people to receive the care they need from a system which is appropriately funded, staffed and valued



Demand for care services is growing as the population continues to age and the effect of financial cuts to services persists. To ensure safe, high quality care which respects the rights of older people, it is essential that additional resources are invested to build the sustainable care workforce needed for the future. That workforce needs to be sufficient in both numbers and skill mix to ensure older people have a good quality of life.

The Relatives & Residents Association will hold the Government to its commitment to 'reform social care so that the system provides older people with dignity and security'. We want to help ensure that care is valued as highly as the NHS.

## To help achieve this we will:

- Work with Parliamentarians and decision-makers to push for resources and staff levels in care services which meet the needs of older people and are sustainable
- Promote the importance to society of good quality care services and those who deliver them through media work and campaigning
- Raise awareness of the need for improved standards of training and mandatory qualifications for care staff, through media work and campaigning
- Help raise the profile and standing of care for older people through working with policy makers and in partnership with other organisations

**“ I have recently been apprised of concerns by the Relatives & Residents Association about care home residents without mental capacity who, they believe, are at risk of being let down by some of the proposed changes in the Bill.”**

Lord Hunt, Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill, House of Lords, 5 September 2018

# For more older people, and their families and carers, to be supported by a financially sustainable, efficient Relatives & Residents Association



Throughout its history, the Relatives & Residents Association – a small charity – has adapted to change and continues to make its impact on an area which is too often out of sight and out of mind. We are grateful for the invaluable support of our dedicated volunteers and a growing pool of members. As we work to achieve our ambitious aims for older people, we will continue to improve our effectiveness and efficiency as an organisation.

## To achieve this we will:

- Broaden our funding base
- Increase and diversify our reach
- Work more closely with the not-for-profit sector
- Measure and understand the impact of our work
- Raise our profile, including improving our social media presence
- Rebrand the organisation to better reflect our work and ambitions

**The lack of control in caring for our relatives, at times knocks the stuffing out of you. R&RA are a lifeline, very impressive. I will do what I can to support you.**

Helpline caller and new member of R&RA



The Relatives & Residents Association's vision is for better quality of life of older people needing care.

We rely on the generosity of our supporters and members to help us make this a reality.

**The Relatives & Residents Association**

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The Relatives & Residents Association is a registered charity in England (number 1020194) and a company limited by guarantee (number 2813362).