

Director of Social Services:

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Ref:

13 November 2006

Mr Joe Blake
Social Services Inspectorate
DHSSPS
Castle Buildings
Stormont estate
Belfast BT4 3SR

Dear Mr Blake

**INSPECTION OF SOCIAL CARE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR
OLDER PEOPLE**

I refer to your request for additional information of 1 November 2006, seeking further detail on the actions taken in relation to the following recommendations:

- the EHSSB should specifically target carers of older people to ensure that their voice is heard across its established fora; and
- the EHSSB should monitor the times, locations and possible support needs of carers to ensure that participation in consultation does not put additional pressure on them.

In relation to the first recommendation, our initial response, the Board noted that this role had largely been undertaken by the six Local Health and Social Care Groups within its area.

Since the LHSCGs ceased to function as committees of the Board, their functions have reverted to the relevant Strategic Planning Groups within the Board.

As you will be aware, the new structures and modus operandi for the Regional Authority and Local Commissioning Groups are still at the

planning stages. The Board will continue to work to influence the design of these structures in relation to the appropriate engagement of the carers of older people, in line with the recommendations contained in your report. The support of the Social Services Inspectorate in so doing would be most welcome.

In the meantime, Board officers will ensure that the additional support needs of carers of older people are taken into account when planning consultation meetings, as noted in the second recommendation.

The EHSSB co-hosted a Board-wide workshop with Down Lisburn Trust on 27 June 2006. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- present the findings of the SSI Report;
- share learning from the Report; and
- describe and share best practice.

Delegates were invited from the Board, Community Trusts, Carers NI and Belfast Carers Centre.

The workshop was a useful opportunity to share learning and experience in relation to this area of work. No specific points for further action were identified at the workshop.

It is anticipated that the publication of the overview report on this inspection will contain general recommendations for both provider and commissioning organisations. Implementation of regional recommendations will be monitored through agreed performance management processes.

I trust that this addresses the issues raised.

Yours sincerely

DR M PAULA J KILBANE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

