

Message

---

**From:** Marion Reynolds [redacted] **PD**  
**Sent:** 23/01/2024 17:41:50  
**To:** Conal McGarrity [redacted] **I&S**  
**Subject:** Fwd: Enquiry : Elderly residents in Care Homes

Copy correspondence to Eddie Lynch. M

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Marion Reynolds <[redacted] **PD**>  
**Date:** 10 August 2021 at 21:43:25 BST  
**Subject:** **Re: Enquiry : Elderly residents in Care Homes**

Dear Mr Lynch

I acknowledge your response to my comments following your interview with Stephen Nolan. It is regrettable that you do not respond to the points I raised.

I specifically noted that I was not in favour of mandating vaccines for care staff. Yet you spend considerable time addressing this matter. My more salient point about residents being denied contact with vaccinated relatives when they have ongoing contact with unvaccinated staff and the need to find ways to resolve this anomaly is ignored by you in your response.

Similarly, I raised the issue of no agency collecting data on the number of vaccinated staff hence the potential for the CMO's estimate to potentially vilify care home staff. Again there is no response to how the CMO arrived at the 75% figure for vaccinated staff. Nor any indication that you will pursue this matter with the CMO.

I am aware that the vast majority of care home residents are vaccinated and are not becoming seriously ill during the spike in outbreaks in homes. Yet the policy continues to deprive people, in the last chapter of their lives, with family and friends contact. This policy has been a cruelty inflicted upon the residents of care homes since the commencement of the pandemic with a short period of respite for some. In removing from the residents the things in life which makes it worth living I think society has shown disregard for their emotional, psychological and spiritual well being. As the Commissioner I feel you are under an obligation to consider ways for older peoples' quality of life needs to be better balanced against length of days and physical safety. Currently, that balance is sadly lacking from Departmental level down to service delivery points.

The policy to normalise visits to care homes announced in May 2021, envisaged 4 stages each of 4 weeks to move towards normalised visiting. At no time did the PHA accept that a move to Stage 2 could occur in June 2021 when the figures were much better than they are now. Caution paid for at the expense of the quality of life of residents is, in my opinion, unacceptable.

The operation of the Care Partnership Scheme also results in a number of restrictions placed on family members not in keeping with the policy. These shortcomings and restrictions have frequently been raised with PHA, RQIA and the Department.

I appreciate that you as Commissioner look for briefing from PHA. When, however, have you visited homes and talked to residents or met with groups representative of residents?

I should be grateful for a response addressing the issues I raised initially and have now reiterated.

Yours sincerely

Marion Reynolds

Sent from my iPad

On 10 Aug 2021, at 12:42, information <info@copni.org> wrote:

Dear Ms Reynolds,  
I enclose a letter from The Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland in response to your enquiry.  
Kind regards.

**Name Redacted**

**Office Manager**  
**Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland**  
Equality House  
7-9 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast  
BT2 7DP

t **I&S**  
w: [www.copni.org](http://www.copni.org)

Hours of work are Monday & Tuesday 9.00am – 5.00pm, Wednesday 9.00 – 12.30pm.

Sign up to receive our newsletter [here](#)  
Follow [ScamwiseNI](#) and [COPNI](#) on Facebook



The information contained in or attached to this message is intended for the addressee only. If you are not the intended recipient, any use, storage, disclosure or copying of this information is unauthorised and prohibited. This information may be confidential or subject to legal privilege. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender immediately.

Any views expressed in this email are those of the individual sender and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland (COPNI) unless that is clearly stated. Nothing in this email amounts to a contractual or

legal commitment on the part of COPNI. The information contained in the email may be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that outgoing communications do not contain malicious software and/or code. The COPNI cannot accept liability for any adverse impact this message and/or attachments has on the recipient's IT system.

---

**From:** copni=thewebbureau.com@mailgun2.twbmailgun.com <copni=thewebbureau.com@mailgun2.twbmailgun.com>  
**On Behalf Of** copni@thewebbureau.com  
**Sent:** 05 August 2021 09:59  
**To:** information <info@copni.org>  
**Subject:** Enquiry : Elderly residents in Care Homes

**Name:** PD  
**Phone:** I&S  
**Email:** I&S  
**Subject:** Elderly residents in Care Homes

**Enquiry:** I listened this morning to Mr Lynch on the Nolan show and was disappointed at how poorly he represented the interest of the elderly. The Commission's briefing by the Department prior to his appearance was clearly more evident than his role as championing the best interests of the elderly. Currently we have had a 25 time increase in Outbreaks in Care Home since the 1 July 2021. This means that elderly people in these homes are now denied access to their families and friends. The fact that vaccinated relatives are denied access to their loved ones while unvaccinated staff have no restrictions upon them is an inequity which needs addressed urgently. No questions were also asked about how long care homes are remaining in lockdown and what mechanisms exist to expedite the return to family visits and to end the outbreaks. The estimate on the level of vaccinated staff provided by Dr McBride, CMO, is just that, an estimate, as the Department, NISRA nor the PHA do not collect figures on the number of staff employed in care homes. Without this figure how is the estimate of 75% vaccinated arrived at? How accurate is the estimate? Are we vilifying staff on flawed data? I am not a supporter of mandating vaccination but when vaccinated relatives are denied access to their loved ones I think the Commissioner has to press for them to have ongoing access to their loved ones during outbreaks especially when unvaccinated staff continue to have access to them. Society is opening up for most of us except those in care homes who continue to experience controls and discriminatory inhuman treatment with COPNI and the NIHRC acting more as communication wings of DoH than advocates for these the most vulnerable in our society.

Sent from : <https://www.copni.org/contact-us>

<Letter of response re care home outbreaks Marion Reynolds 10.08.21.docx>