

## **Anglian Water Care Homes project; Third party supporting statements**

*"We now have the clearest evidence that water is a health drink of real power, a basic requirement for life. Yet the standards relating to care homes for older people still don't even require drinking water to be freely available, and in many environments, residents and staff still suffer from a lack of facilities. Water UK believes that everyone, whatever their wealth, whatever their status, should have access to fresh drinking water and the health information to allow them to choose good hydration. Anglian Water has worked with their local community care providers and public health specialists to understand the issues involved, and to support them in providing their older people with healthy choices. As a result, older people in care will be able to benefit from one of the simplest and most effective supports of good health – high quality drinking water."*

### **Pamela Taylor, Chief Executive Water UK**

*"It is crucial that Care providers ensure that older people are protected from water related malnutrition and dehydration throughout their day, and I welcome the excellent initiative of Anglian Water and their public health partners, to help local care homes achieve this. We believe it is important to understand the profound effect that poor hydration can have on older people. Water is absolutely critical to their life, dignity and well-being, and, in our view, alternatives such as tea, coffee etc simply do not adequately address these needs. As such an important part of a wholesome diet, a lack of access to fresh, clean drinking water is simply neglect and we need to view it as such. There is simply no need for it to happen. The Drinking Water Inspectorate has advised that tap water is of the highest quality, and it is the most cost effective option available (fifty glasses for a penny!) Consequently we believe it should now be an integral part of care plans, so that those providing food and drink for older people in residential care are ensuring that water is freely available throughout the whole day. We therefore commend Anglian Water, who are directly helping to protect the health of the vulnerable older people in their community, and who are supporting care providers to ensure that residents who have difficulty in drinking can be assured of a good fluid intake.'*

### **Gary FitzGerald, Chief Executive, Action on Elder Abuse**

*There is now evidence that drinking water can make a valuable contribution to better health, particularly for older people. Lack of water can result in tiredness and headaches, and more serious problems such as dizziness and confusion, which may lead to falls. It is the responsibility of all care providers to make sure that evidence based, good practice is brought into everyday care. Water should be provided and offered to people to drink, regularly throughout the day. As much attention should be given to drinking sufficient water, as is given to eating sufficient food. Drinks such as tea and coffee, are known to dehydrate people and tap water in the UK is of a high quality, it is calorie free and can make a huge difference to well being and health in older age.*

**Ginny Storey**  
**Head of Quality and Health Policy**  
**CSCI**

*Proper hydration has so many benefits for older people both in terms of their physical wellbeing and also their energy levels. We urge every care provider to ensure that there is an adequate supply of fresh drinking water for all their residents and staff and that the benefits of drinking water are enshrined in the care plans and practices of any residential care facility.*

**Martin Green, Chief Executive, English Community Care Association**

*Proper hydration is important for everyone and, as a pilot study in Suffolk has shown, it can be especially helpful to older people.*

*For a variety of reasons, older people are at greater risk of falling than younger people and a fall for an older person is much more likely to result in injury, especially fracture. The effects of such injuries have serious implications for an older person's ability to remain living independently as well as having significant cost implications for Health and Social Services. Preventing falls can improve people's quality of life and yield savings for public services.*

*The pilot study here in Suffolk showed that easy access to drinking water and consumption of about a dozen glasses of water per day yielded beneficial effects for two-thirds of the participants. These beneficial effects included a general feeling of well-being, better quality sleep, having more energy and, crucially, improved balance. Proper hydration also reduces the risk of urinary tract infection and pressure sores, thereby reducing older people's dependence on staff in care settings. Furthermore, the study showed that people were not actually having to make more than one or two additional trips to the lavatory each day.*

*So, something as simple as drinking enough water can yield tremendous benefits for older people and those who care for them. These benefits need to be made available as widely as possible and the Suffolk Countywide Falls Prevention Action Group is therefore keen to endorse this project.*

**Stephen Dean, Chairman, Suffolk Countywide Falls Prevention Action Group.**

*As a major UK charity with 120 care homes and housing schemes for older people, MHA has always believed that hydration is key to the health and well-being of those who use our services. We are committed to ensuring correct hydration by ensuring water, fruit juice and squash is available throughout the day and is an integral part of our nutritional plans.*

*We are delighted to be working in partnership with Anglia water and the other stakeholders in this project which has given us the opportunity to assess the direct benefits associated with correct hydration. The results to date have already produced some significant improvements in the wellbeing of residents in one of our care homes and we are very keen to roll the programme to all our services.*

**George Sampson, Head of Hospitality, MHA Care Group.**

**Robert Silbermann, Chief Executive of the Royal Institute of Public Health (RIPH)**

We have been running our 1-day course "Eating for Health in Care Homes" for 20 years. We recently updated our manual that accompanies this course to include the importance of hydration. It has been clear to us for some time that proper hydration, and in particular, a plentiful supply of fresh tap water, is of the utmost importance for older people. We have been an enthusiastic supporter of Anglian Water's research in this area, and are not surprised by the results to date.

It is clear that there are cultural issues to address, as so many people are used to their cup of tea or coffee or flavoured juice. While these drinks provide good hydration, we would really like to see greater usage and encouragement of cheap, high quality and stimulant-free water.

If the findings are widely implemented we believe we would see measurable improvements in the health of our older citizens and a reduction in falls, helping to reduce pressure on the NHS as well over the longer term.

As a founder member of the Water for Health Alliance the National Association of Catering is delighted to be able to endorse and support the work that Anglian Water is undertaking as it furthers the work of the Alliance and takes forward Water UK's Hydration Best Practice Toolkit for Care Homes. Any work that promotes and develops a understanding of the benefits of better hydration is to be applauded.

Research has shown that older people are at greater risk of dehydration - often becoming so without knowing and about 30% are dehydrated on admission to hospital. There are so many ways of promoting the drinking of tap water - homes must ensure that fluids are readily and physically available, that they are presented attractively and that a variety of options are provided. It is a proactive way, at little cost, of reducing constipation, confusion, falls, urinary tract infections, the need for medication, and improves sleeping and blood pressure. Implementation of better hydration as part of good nutritional care and nutritional screening, produces positive outcomes for residents and staff alike, with any expense associated with implementation being offset by the lower cost of maintaining healthier people. We look forward to working with the project and introducing the Charter to our members.

**Supporting Statement from Sue Ullmann Chair National Association of Care Catering**