



# Good Practice in Setting up a Resident Councils

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# Advocacy in Action

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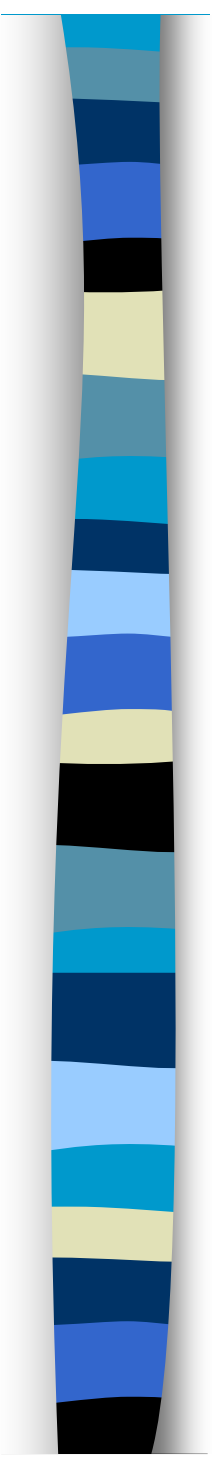
# Rationale for setting up an Advocacy Service

- Draft National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People 2007
- National Report on Elder Abuse “**Protecting Our Future**” 2002 recommended that - *“Access to advocacy services should be facilitated for older people in long term residential care.”*
- **Implementing Equality for Older People, 2002** highlighted the need for a rights-based approach

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“The Department of Social and Family Affairs should facilitate access to an Advocacy Service for older people in long-term residential care so as to enable them to protect their financial and/or property assets and to have their opinions heard and their wishes respected when making decisions and transactions”

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# Overall Aim of Resident Councils

To empower the residents to speak  
up for themselves and others in  
monitoring matters that affect their  
lives

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# Benefits of a Residents Council

- Gives people an active role in their lives in a residential home
- Offers a forum where real issues can be highlighted and satisfactory solutions can be explored
- Improves the overall atmosphere of the home
- An appreciation from staff having residents share in the planning and responsibility of organising activities and events
- Allows for greater recognition of diversity amongst residents

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# Development of Residents Councils

- ❖ The resident councils focus on issues affecting all residents rather than on personal issues
- ❖ It is a forum for the residents and the residents ONLY
- ❖ Information sessions are held for ALL staff and relatives to give them an opportunity to learn about the project
- ❖ Ongoing planning meetings are held with staff

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# How do the residents councils work?

- Consent
- Confidentiality
- Majority rules on any decisions taken with no single view dominating
- No names are attached to the actions taken
- The independence of the facilitator explained
- Meetings consist of reviewing the minutes and updating the Council on matters arising
- Group discussion
- Agree actions for next meeting

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Hard at work!

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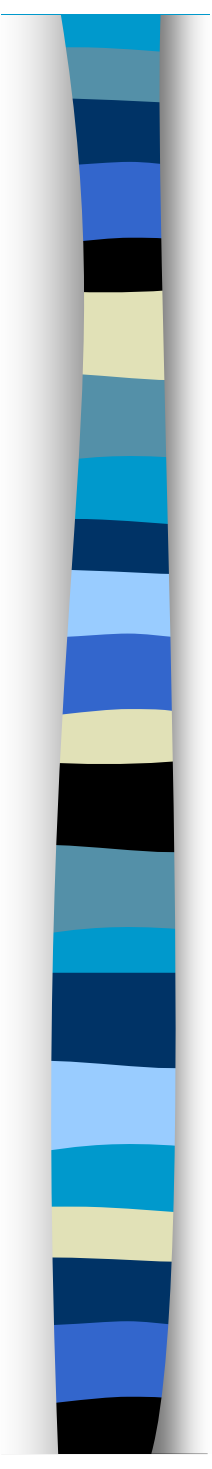
# Outcomes

- More activities and outings
- Regular consultations have taken place with different management and staff
- Security alarms
- Checklist for cleaners in the toilets
- Residents watch out for each other
- Request more information regarding their care
- Residents are kept informed of the different initiatives taking place
- Living environment improved e.g. rooms painted and hand rails installed

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“There’s nothing good  
that can’t be better”

*-Kathleen O’Brien  
(Resident) April 07*

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# What makes Residents Councils work?

- ✓ Residents enjoyment of the meetings
- ✓ Continual commitment from residents and staff to make the meetings happen
- ✓ Staff and management agreeing to the requested changes
- ✓ Informing staff and residents that the meeting is taking place
- ✓ Regular meetings build familiarity
- ✓ Visible outcomes and changes

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# REMEMBER!

This is a new learning process for all involved therefore, there can be no “experts” just people learning from each others experiences

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# Challenges Faced

- Encouraging more residents to get involved
- Creating a suitable environment for the meetings to take place in
- Including people with dementia in residents councils
- Problems that arise for management in addressing the issues and concerns raised
- Working with very different group dynamics

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# Future Priorities

- Expanding the scope of the current residents councils
- Encouraging the residents to take more ownership of the councils
- Ensuring that the aims of the Resident Councils tie in with the National Standards
- Involving relatives in the advocacy service
- Continually meeting with staff to professionally develop the advocacy service
- Including people with dementia in the resident councils

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# Recommendations for Future Advocacy Projects

- Independent of service providers
- Mandatory in all residential care settings
- Advocacy must be a two sided coin – it must engage the provider and the service-user to be effective
- A time commitment and an understanding is needed from staff and residents
- Training for staff
- Support and supervision for the advocate

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# Advocacy Is Not Magic.....

It needs the back-up of a  
culture which is person  
centred

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