27 October 2023

Dear Claire and family

Letter of apology

As one of the joint commissioners responsible for Benjamin ('Ben') Pullar's placement at Veilstone care home, run by Atlas Project Limited, between May 2010 – October 2011, and as part of the settlement of his civil claim for mistreatment and abuse at Veilstone, and breaches of his rights under Articles 3 and 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights ('ECHR'), and the claim under Article 8 ECHR for his mother, Claire Garrod-Pullar, Devon County Council make the following apology to Ben and his family:

1. We recognise and accept that Ben was subjected to a regime of abuse and harm at Veilstone. This should never have happened and we offer a full and frank apology to Ben and his family.

2. We recognise that Ben's contact with his family was inappropriately denied and controlled by Veilstone staff, breaching Ben's rights under Article 8 ECHR and the Article 8 rights of his mother Claire Garrod-Pullar.

3. We acknowledge and recognise that serious harm was caused to Ben, including psychiatric damage, as a result of the abuse he suffered at Veilstone. The abuse had significant consequences for Ben, Claire, and Ben's family.

4. The safeguarding and welfare of learning disabled and autistic adults like Ben is of upmost importance, and their rights must be respected. In our ongoing role as commissioners, we are committed to learning lessons as a result of the abuse that occurred at Veilstone.

5. We acknowledge and accept the conclusions of the Devon Safeguarding Adult Board Review into Atlas Care Homes dated September 2019. In particular, families must be listened to in respect of care of their relatives, and families' concerns must be taken seriously. This did not happen in Ben's case.

6. We are grateful to Ben's family for their participation in the various legal processes and reviews that have arisen following the abuse and mistreatment of residents, including Ben, at Veilstone.

Signed
Maria Price, Director of Legal and Democratic Services