

## FEEDBACK REPORT: RAPID RESPONSE

### Details of the Organization

|                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Programme                         | Services to Persons with Disabilities |
| Name of Organisation              | Langa Cheshire Home                   |
| Address                           | Erf 2727, Rhodes Street, Langa,7455   |
| File Reference                    | C4223                                 |
| Acting Social Work Policy Manager | Phathiswa Dyabhaza                    |

### Introduction

On 30 September 2022, the Department of Social Development, Services to Persons with Disabilities Programme received an anonymous complaint informing the department that some of the staff of Langa Cheshire Home had not been paid for the month, staff have stopped working and the residents are suffering because of it. DSD staff visited the facility and were made aware of many serious issues and allegations against the manager. The department called a meeting with the board of Langa Cheshire Home on 4 October 2022. The meeting would also address the findings of the monitoring and evaluation which was done, showing the organisation to be at risk and in a crisis.

### Details of the Complaints

Some of the complaints included the following but were not limited to:

- No transparency between staff and management. Other managers (senior staff) and residents are not aware of what is happening in the facility.
- Lack of communication from the manager. The manager does as he pleases and does not listen to the staff. Staff were told by the manager two days before the time that they would not be paid for September 2022 (some will be paid, and some will not).
- Staff complaining that they do not have UIF, yet it is being deducted from their salaries.
- Residents complained that there is not enough food and no meat.
- Management does not inform the board of the issues at the facility.
- The manager's brother, who also works at the facility also does as he pleases
- There is never a quorum for the board meetings, so the meetings do not take place.
- When board meetings are supposed to occur, there is fighting between the manager and Sr Mbeki, which results in the meeting being cancelled.

## Sources of information

- Monitoring and evaluation report June 2022.
- Interviews with staff and residents
- Cheshire Home Provincial Management communication

## Findings

**The investigation conducted, explicitly proved correct the allegations that were made by anonymous. During engagements with the board, residents, and provincial office, DSD officials found that:**

- **The organisation struggles to fully meet nutritional meals as per the menu available in the kitchen - confirming the complaints of the residents to be true.** On the day of the visit, there were groceries in the kitchen, and the staff mentioned that the groceries were received from a company that the organisation is affiliated with. The company provides the facility with groceries which costs R5000, and the organisation pay R250 per month. The fridge was empty, there was no meat or other perishable food items which should be stored in the fridge.
- **The organisation has three board members.** The board members who are currently mentioned as active members had not committed themselves to perform their functions and had allowed the manager to run the facility on his own.
- **Lack of communication skills from the manager.** The staff mentioned that the reason for the organisation to be in chaos is because the manager does not inform them on time when there are problems. The manager failed to inform the staff that they will not get paid until two days before the time. Staff were also not provided with information on what is happening with their pension fund and UIF. They want answers.
- **Poor leadership skills from both management and the board of the facility:** The staff reported that there are internal conflicts between the manager and the nursing sister. The sister and facility manager allegedly disrupt the board meetings because of their arguing, which results in the board members cancelling the meeting, with no resolutions taken.
- **Exclusion of residents in decision-making.** Management has not been transparent on the operations and challenges of the facility to the residents. The residents complained in the presence of the manager that they do not know what the manager does with their money and donations as they do not benefit.
- **Staff using the beneficiaries to deal with differences with management:** staff confirmed that they were on go slow strike for three days during August 2022 where they did not move the residents from their beds because they wanted the manager to pay their salaries and address their issues. DSD officials informed the staff of the consequences of neglect to beneficiaries.
- **Deficit:** the organisation will always operate in a deficit. The organization currently has a backlog in paying salaries and electricity. Salaries for September 2022 were paid on 05

October 2022 with the subsidy paid by the department for the third quarter (October – December). The manager appears to be the reason for the financial challenges as he did not do risk management and follow instructions from the donors. For example, the manager mentioned that the reason for the centre being in a crisis is because the Department of Health stopped the material support which resulted in the centre having a shortfall in their budget without acknowledging that he did not complete the required documents. Most of the funding from DSD and beneficiary grants is spent on salaries.

- No fundraising strategies or sustainability plans are in place.

### **Interventions to address the problem**

The department requested that the board should provide DSD with plans on how they intend to manage the current crisis i.e., poor service delivery, lack of finances and lack of transparency. DSD requested that residents and staff also provide plans/reports on how they are going to deal with / or how their issues can be resolved. The reports were provided to DSD by 11 October 2022 and their intended plans did not seem viable. Only the residents and board provided reports. Staff refused.

The department then contacted the Provincial Board Chairperson of Cheshire Homes, Mr Etienne Schlechter who acknowledged that the provincial board is aware of most of the issues already and indicated that the provincial board would be meeting the following day. To remedy the current situation at Langa Cheshire Home the provincial board of Cheshire Homes committed itself to implement the following strategies:

- The Cheshire Home Western Cape branch is going to be stepping in to take control of Langa Cheshire Home.
- Participate in the AGM to be held on 02 November 2022 where the new board members of Langa Cheshire Home will be elected.
- Have cost-cutting measures
- The Provincial Cheshire Homes board and the new board of Langa Cheshire Home to accept the request of the current manager to take retirement at the end of 2022. The current manager is willing to take retirement in December 2022.
- The Provincial Cheshire Homes board will temporarily contract an external organisation called O Grace Land to put measures in place to address the current challenges experienced by the organisation. The contracted organisation will look at governance, financial management, service delivery, and fundraising.

“O Grace Land is a Residential Independent Living Program for youth (girls) ageing out of care. Youth from the ages of 18 to 23 at entry. O Grace Land is a non-profit (NPO) organization that aims not only to empower the youth (girls) but give them the tools and guidance to empower themselves. Especially girls transitioning from care into independency and to equip them in a manner that allows them to contribute to their own and the nation’s growth and development. Operating in Cape Town South Africa and founded/led by Philani Zama who responded by the birth of O Grace Land” google search.

**The above measures are implemented to achieve the goal of the Cheshire Home WC branch**  
“Our goal is to put the correct systems in place to make the home sustainable in future”  
(Chairperson of Cheshire Home WC Branch).

### **Conclusion**

Langa Cheshire Home is in crisis seemingly because of a lack of oversight and commitment from the board and poor management skills. Interventions suggested by Cheshire Homes provincial board are supported and should be implemented as a matter of urgency.

### **Recommendations:**

Based on the above information, these are the recommendations from the programme:

- Support measures of the provincial board be implemented
- DSD to monitor the progress quarterly as well as the Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP)
- Provincial board and the board of Langa Cheshire Home to provide a quarterly report to DSD on the progress of the interventions.
- DSD acknowledges that Langa Cheshire Homes is in a dire financial crisis and as such propose that the organisation be subsidised with a 25% administrative fee for a period of 12 months.
- DSD to provide the residents of Langa Cheshire Home with feedback before 30 November 2022.



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**Date: 4 November 2022**

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