

HALF OF ALL COVID DEATHS

BY EILEEN CHUBB ©

Looking at other country's data there is consistent evidence to show that half of all Covid 19 deaths occurred in care homes. Most recently Ireland reported the same pattern.

This means that Social Care staff will be providing half of all Covid 19 care.

The largest volume of calls to our helpline from the start of this crisis continues to be predominantly from staff working in residential care homes (Homes with no nurses or specialist equipment)

In total staff from 92 residential care homes have contacted us raising concerns such as,

Little or no PPE

Residents with dementia wandering into the bedrooms of people with Covid 19.

No oxygen or other specialist equipment.

No training or support from management

Chronic understaffing due to sickness.

People dying in great distress gasping for air.

Many staff are also concerned that even if they can access a test and they return to work there should be further testing every few days and they are not confident this will happen.

There is only one difference between Covid patients on ventilators in Hospital Intensive Care units and those dying in Care homes, those in Hospital have 50% more chance of surviving.

This situation is wrong, peoples right to life should not hang on their date of birth, when we start turning a blind eye to such human rights abuses where will it end? Who will be the next dispensable group?

In recent weeks we have seen the press full of quotes from people representing the interests of the care industry, Care England, The

National Care Forum and others. These organisations represent the Care industry, not the people living in care homes nor the staff working in them.

We were the only Charity to challenge the official Government Policy of discharging Covid 19 hospital patients into care homes, a policy that has resulted in countless avoidable deaths. Care homes should have been locked down but instead infection free homes were infected needlessly. The Government have since changed policy.

Most people including staff were shocked by this policy, dedicated staff doing everything to protect their residents were totally demoralised to be told that Covid 19 patients were being admitted to care homes. The loss of trust this has caused may never be earned back.

Whilst there are good homes and owners who refused to go along with this killer policy, there are far too many unscrupulous companies who are happy to keep filling beds at any cost.

Care England gave the following statement to Birmingham Live news on April 15th,

“Care homes will be in a much better position to face this virus head on once they have been able to test both their staff, residents and any new residents who have been discharged from hospital into their care homes. Martin Green”

This statement firstly confirms that those representing the care industry were aware of the killer policy. Its no use testing a resident after they have left hospital and been admitted into a care home, it's too late.

Fill empty beds is the mantra of a care industry that has and continues to be worth billions in profit, profit gained by low staffing levels resulting in at best basic care but all too often neglect abuse and suffering, cheap food, asset stripped homes where the sheets on the beds are rags and the staff are run ragged.

Many small homes have closed, and private equity taken over. We have been in two homes on the same road, one heaven and one hell, both rated good by the CQC, one home family run and one a

large chain of homes. The small home that was heaven was charging much lower fees.

Not so long ago those representing the care industry were up in arms at the very notion of care staff being paid a living wage, those same staff are now giving half of all Covid care.

Do not for a minute think that those residents in care homes with Covid are not as sick as those in intensive care, if they are sick enough to die then they were sick enough to need hospital treatment.

The care industries record on whistle-blowers is appalling with so many good care staff forced out for caring enough to report abuse only to find the abuse is allowed to continue. There are also staff working in social care who are completely unsuited or unsafe to work with vulnerable people, but in an industry where whistleblowing means you forfeit your job those bad staff will continue working.

It is all those good Social Care staff that we are asking to be recognised and helped, they have no trust in their employers and feel abandoned by the Government. These staff are traumatised and frightened, are going to work everyday with little or no PPE at all. We do not ask for more money for the care industry, little or none of that reaches those on the front line. We ask for full PPE to be sent to every care home.

We ask that care homes are locked down, that those who are sick or dying from this virus receive the same care and medical treatment as the rest of the population.

No one should die who could be saved and no one should die without oxygen gasping for air. No member of staff should die for the want of PPE.

I have never encountered anything like this, I have seen abuse and torture first hand and I deal with abuse every day, but what I am seeing now is the crisis I always knew would happen in a social care system that does not work, where staff and vulnerable people are abandoned when they need help most.

There must be a full and credible inquiry into how it came to this and there must be accountability. The voices of those on the front

line need to heard not those who represent the care industry's interests.

Bearing witness is all we can do and continuing to give support and being here for those staff contacting us.

Finally, we all need to look to our culture, ethics and the journalism we demand or deserve. The celebrity news that leaves little space for the suffering.

If all the ventilators in a hospital were deliberately turned off it would make front page news worldwide, but in care homes the ventilators were never turned on, there are no ventilators. There is only silence.