

Tales Of The Un-Inspected

Home Number 126

By Eileen Chubb

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In January 2015 a local newspaper ran a story about a local care home being slammed by the care regulator CQC for failing to keep people safe, failure to provide adequate staffing numbers, the use of excessive restraint and having staff not being able to speak English.

I decided to check to see how long this home had had such problems, and if this damning inspection report was the first to highlight such concerns.

Random inspection report dated 28th January 2009

This report notes that this home had a long history of outstanding requirements some going as far back as 2007, on-going concerns about insufficient staffing numbers, accounting issues, employment checks not made, concerns about medication procedures, health and safety issues such as window restrictors not in place and fire safety notices.

The home is graded "one star: adequate"

Inspection report May 2009

There is very little evidence and many of the conclusions are based on the manager's say so. The accounting systems are still found to be poor with residents' money being pooled to buy for all the residents in bulk, and some people had direct debits taken from accounts for toiletries and other sundries even when they were not purchased.

Because there is very little evidence in this report and because this home has a history of not sustaining improvements I believe there is cause for concern.

The home is graded "two star: good"

Inspection report December 2011

The new allegedly "improved" CQC inspection system has now replaced the star system. The home is now rated compliant in all areas but that it needs to make improvements to sustain that rating. Either a home is meeting the regulations or it is not: if improvements are needed it should not be judged compliant, especially given what is noted in this report.

There is reference made to some residents being denied rights and halfway through the report it is stated that several incidents came to light earlier in the year where people had been denied

human rights, that the home had been asked to investigate its own shortcomings and had assured the authorities such incidents would not happen again, however further such incidents did occur.

The manager says all staff are fully trained, however on checking records this is found to be not the case. I would have said that this impacted on the manager's credibility and fitness, however CQC whilst noting these issues still took the manager's word on other areas without checking.

The home is judged "compliant but needs to make improvements".

Inspection report February 2013

The home is judged compliant on four out of the five standards checked but **failed the standard relating to protecting people from abuse.**

This was due to the fact abuse allegations had not been reported to the safeguarding authority nor were they reported to the CQC. If abuse is still not being reported I fail to see how the home can meet the other standards as this issue reflects on them all. For example, the standard relating to the homes management cannot be judged compliant if the management are not reporting abuse, however this is exactly what happens in CQC inspections.

The home is judged "compliant" in four out of five areas

Inspection report September 2013

The home is now inspected on six standards and fails in four, the following failures are noted:

The home is now so dirty that it is reported to the Environmental Health Department, some staff are using the same gloves on several residents, unsealed food is found being stored in a dirty garden shed.

Care plans are found not to contain the correct information about people's needs, some care plans have not been updated from as far back as 2011, yet previous inspections did not pick this up.

There are found to be serious medication concerns, with medication unaccounted for, no records of what dosage was given and no justification for giving sedative medication.

The home's internal audit systems (which previously resulted in the home being judged compliant) are now checked and found to be a complete sham, for example they record that all care plans were checked and found to be in order. This applies also to all other areas which failed at this inspection. So this brings us back to the credibility of the management, as I noted from earlier inspections, which should have been acted on at the time instead of being ignored.

The requirements that relate to protecting people from abuse is one of the two areas now judged compliant based on the home's audits and the manager's assurances.

Some residents are found to have been restrained. Others who have capacity have not been consulted about the care they receive.

Six standards are inspected, only two are met.

Inspection report January 2014

Six standards are inspected, one is found compliant, three are found to be requiring action and enforcement action has been taken on three standards. After the last inspection the home was asked to provide an action plan to the CQC stating that the home had taken the required action by October the previous year. However four months later the CQC check and find that no such action was taken which left vulnerable people at risk for four months. The CQC's reliance on what a care home is telling them is unacceptable, given that this home's assurances have been repeatedly shown to be unreliable, untruthful and deliberately misleading.

Medication issues have resulted in harm. Staff are now found to be lacking in training, supervision and qualifications.

Residents' care is so poor that some people have had no fluids for up to 24 hours at a time.

So finally the CQC are taking enforcement action, but will that be the end of poor care, suffering and abuse in a un-fit care home which should have had action taken against it a long ago?

Inspection report February 2014

Six areas are inspected and all but one is now judged compliant. I find this hard to believe given the amount of work that needed to be done and the time-scale of just four weeks. The whole inspection is based on the say so of the management, the home's audit system and very little hard evidence.

The management say their new audit system found medication to be in order and make a point of saying that they brought in a pharmacist for a medication audit which took place in December 2013, a month before the last inspection which had found medication to be such a shambles. The CQC fail to connect this information even though they noted it in their report.

Staff training in just weeks is now found to meet the requirements, and observation of medication being administered on the day of the inspection is relied on. The home's audits are also relied on even in the area of staff recruitment, but when checked it was found that the home had failed to carry out the proper checks.

Inspection report October 2014

This inspection is yet another new CQC inspection regime. Five requirement areas are inspected: three are judged inadequate, two are judged requiring improvement. The following issues are found:

Staff are using excessive restraint (first noted seven years previously in 2007)

Care plans and health records are found to be inaccurate, repeatedly an issue in past inspections.

Staff are not trained and staffing numbers are too low.

The provider's audit system is found to be unacceptable - nothing new there.

Some way into the report the information is recorded that a large number of healthcare professionals visiting the home had raised concerns about the standards of care and that is why the inspection was taking place.

Three out of the five staff on duty had very poor English, medication was again a shambles, people were at high risk of pressure sores, people were not protected from abuse and unsafe care.

There have been two abuse investigations in recent months, the first of these appears to have come from a whistle-blower reporting excessive restraints being used. This report went straight to the local authority and when the CQC inspected the home they decided to check the abuse victim's care plan to see if they had consented to be assaulted.

The second abuse investigation seems to have resulted in the care home producing an action plan to reduce further allegations. Surely this plan should have been to reduce abuse not allegations as this implies whistle-blowing is not to be encouraged.

Enforcement action is taken against the home again.

Inspection report January 2015

Again the same serious concerns are listed page after page. The local authority visited the home and had now placed an embargo on any new placements.

The same enforcement action is taken, with the presumption that listing all the shortfalls means anything at all to a poor care provider.

Inspection report May 2015

Yet again page after page of the same serious failures are noted by the CQC who waited four months before inspecting the home again, which is the same old "ignore and it might get better"

approach that resulted in so many suffering. This report just finds the same dire care but this time no requirements are made, the conditions that have resulted in residents suffering for over eight years are again just noted and the CQC walk away.

However the CQC have put a great deal of effort into PR and spin when it publicises how dire they have found a home to be. The same effort cannot be said to have been applied to tackling abusive un-fit care homes.

I have waited some months before continuing with Tales of the Uninspected in order to allow CQC time to prevent the suffering of vulnerable people. The reports I have looked at so far under the new "Mum test" show the same level of incompetence, inability to use common sense, and ineffectiveness to hold bad care providers to account. This home sadly is just one of many.

Whilst admitting to not having much faith after many promises of new improved inspections, I had at least expected to find something different, but we have the same approach dressed up in a new way - with coloured spots instead of ticks. I never forget for a moment who pays the price for this kind of inspection failure.

Edna's Law would protect whistle-blowers, resulting in abuse actually being investigated properly and stopped by holding bad care homes to account by law, negating the need for the CQC's existence at all.

Eileen Chubb