

Tales of The Un-inspected By Eileen Chubb. Home Number Four.

Dear Mr Snell,

I recently visited.....Home number four, these are my observations,

I entered the home at 12.50 and was asked to sit and wait in the main entrance area which I did; I noticed that a large suction hose was connected to the wall opposite the main door. The hose was about three inches in diameter and was stretched across the front lobby and a large part of the lounge; I could hear a vacuum cleaner in the distance and was told when I asked that the hose was attached to the vacuum. I saw two female carers attending to residents; these carers were very kind to the residents and were trying to watch residents did not fall over the hose. It was clearly an accident waiting to happen and a couple of minutes later one of the carers tripped over the hose and fell hard face down. I went to ask if she was alright and she said " At least it was not one of them that cleaner is always doing that" she got up and said she was alright just a bit shaken. It could easily have been one of the residents who had fallen and they may have suffered serious injury, the hose is clearly an on-going risk to both residents and staff. A short while later a cleaner appeared pushing a vacuum, this member of staff was totally oblivious to the residents and did not look up from her task once she just continued to yank the hose behind her as she went. It looked like a disaster scene from a health and safety training video.

A couple of minutes after this the manager appeared and said she would show me around, we entered the main lounge and dining room, all the residents were sat in rows of chairs and looked interested to see someone pass and greeted us. I noticed that all the residents looked clean and well groomed and that the public areas of the home were clean and odour free.

The two care staff were taking drinks to the residents and I noticed that they went back to check the residents were drinking. I sat talking with the manager in the dining room for about ten minutes and was able to watch what was going on. I asked the manager what activities the home provided and she pointed at a small pile of board games on the sideboard, which had a film of dust on them, I must have looked unimpressed as she quickly added they have manicures for the female residents sometimes. The manager chatted away and during the course of the conversation she mentioned her son was a GP. She said that she and her husband owned the home and had come into this business after looking at several different business options.

I was shown the grounds through the locked patio doors and it looked generally tidy apart from one corner which had building materials and a cement mixer stored there.

I was told that the home had no vacancies at the moment but two residents were in hospital and she said she would show me their rooms. The first room was on the ground floor and belonged to a male resident, there was a strong smell of urine in this room and it was not as clean and well decorated as the public areas of the home were.

I was taken upstairs to the 1st floor, I noticed all the lights had been switched off and the corridors was in semi darkness, which could be a risk to residents with impaired vision had there been any indication residents were encouraged to come and go to their bedrooms as they wished.

I was shown the second room that belonged to a female resident who was in hospital. This room contained the residents personal belongings which were covered in dust, the bed cover and carpet were covered in paint and in one corner more builder's materials were stored, I was told a en-suite was being installed. I wondered what would happen if this resident was discharged from hospital as the room was un-inhabitable. The manager said I could have this room as the resident in question was blind and would not mind moving to a shared room when she returned. I was shown a balcony which could be accessed from this room and noted the door was unlocked, I went out on to the balcony and saw a flight of metal stairs led down into the garden.

We went back to the front entrance and I asked if I could have an information booklet and was given a leaflet and I left the home at 1.20.

On reading this booklet I saw that the home is described as " An elegant and luxurious residential home" it then goes on to describe the luxurious facilities available in the social rooms as being that these rooms have chairs, which renders the waiting room at Clapham Junction luxurious if chairs are the only requirement.

The booklet also states that the home manager is a registered nurse, this implies that a level of nursing care is available in spite of this home not being registered to provide nursing care, there is also the question of the managers on-going training as a nurse, if this booklet is stating she is a nurse than she should be competent to provide nursing care.

My most serious concern is the fact that this booklet states that residents have easy access to the " Family Doctor " . Is this family doctor the son of the care home owners?

The last available CSCI inspection report for this home is dated February 2008, it grades this home as one star meaning it is adequate, the unfortunate phrase " The manager says so " is relied on throughout and overall I could only describe this inspection as cursory.

Eileen Chubb