

TALES OF THE UN-INSPECTED.

HOME NUMBER NINE, BY EILEEN CHUBB.

Dear Mr Snell,

I recently visited.....home number nine, these are my observations,

I entered the home at 11.30, I did not have an appointment but was shown around the home by a carer who was very helpful.

I was shown around the ground floor first, the residents were all sat in a large lounge area, there was total silence. Some residents were sleeping but most sat and looked bored with the exception of one male resident who was reading a newspaper. Mainly the residents looked cared for but one or two looked unkempt with uncombed hair or were unshaven and some of their clothing was stained.

The lounge area was very shabby and dark and as we crossed the room the level of the floor dipped so suddenly it caused me to stumble, the carer looked around and said, "Oh I meant to say watch that bit". If the floor caused me to stumble then it is reasonable to consider it a risk to residents.

We continued to walk around the ground floor, I saw one care staff in the corridor and a reference was made to the existence of a third staff member, I also saw a staff member carrying out domestic duties.

All of the ground floor was extremely shabby with dirty walls and chipped and worn paintwork, several fire doors were wedged open. I was shown a bathroom which contained a stained bath and on a shelf above the bath a pile of very threadbare looking towels, there was very little room between the bath and door and it would have been very difficult for a member of staff to assist a resident in or out of the bath in such a confined space.

I saw a side room off the main lounge which was used to store wheelchairs, I looked into the main lounge and the residents were still alone and then went up to the first floor, which was also very shabby and like the ground floor there was evidence of a lack of money spent on the upkeep of the home over a long period.

I was shown a double bedroom with had an en-suite bathroom accessed by stairs where a ramp might have been more suitable.

I was shown several rooms on this floor all of which looked superficially clean but smelt of urine, one room in particular had such a strong smell of urine it was overwhelming.

I saw a staircase leading downstairs which had a thin bar of wood placed over the top of it presumably to stop residents using it, however it was an insufficient barrier. To the right of this was another staircase leading up to another floor, I asked what was up there and the carer looked uncomfortable and gave a vague reply.

I got the impression that some staff may have been housed in the attic and this raises a number of issues should this prove to be the case. Firstly the carer showing me around was from overseas and as such could be easily exploited by deductions of rent from wages as well as the question of working hours and having sufficient rest time between shifts. It is not a situation that should arise in a care home, where stressed and over worked staff constantly on call can not cope and the inevitable consequences of this is that residents care will suffer.

We returned downstairs and the carer went to get me some information about the home, I saw a resident in the hall way who said she was very happy at the home, I noted this resident was very independent and was able to take herself to the toilet, I wondered how the less able residents were cared for as there was still no sign of any staff in the main lounge. The carer returned with a card giving the contact details of the head office.

I was told the manager was in the home but was busy and I left the home at 11.50.

The last available CSCI inspection report for this home is dated September 2007 and it grades this home as 2 Star, which means the care provided is good. One point of interest was the report states the care staff do all the laundry in what should be care hours, it fails to mention the laundry is located outside the building in the garden, which might explain where all the care staff were. If laundry is being done by carers then that is always at the expense of care.