

Tales of the Un-Inspected

Home Number 77

By Eileen Chubb

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This Home was raided by the police in July 2010. I looked at the regulators inspections of this home prior to these events to how see how well particular areas were inspected.

The first inspection report I looked at is dated June 2008. The Home is graded 1 Star Adequate.

The home is praised for activities provision and rightly so, the activities coordinator has worked for many years at the home and it is important to highlight such good staff.

I note there are indications that pressure care or the lack of it has been a problem in this home as it is briefly referred to as an area that has improved.

It is noted that some staff do not understand safeguarding procedures so residents may not be protected from abuse. When records were looked at there had been an incident that should have been reported but was not, however the inspectors think it not too much of a problem as the home reported it to Social Services during the inspection.

Staff tells inspectors they would report incidents of any suspected abuse to the homes Manager but were unaware that it should be reported to Social Services. This is noted but not considered an indication that this home has a closed culture as staff are not given the option of going outside the home with any concern.

The Home is judged to have robust recruitment procedures. Staff files were checked and were found to have all the relevant documentation such as references, POVA and CRB checks and documents that staff from overseas are eligible to work in the country.

The Manager is considered highly qualified, with a foundation degree in care home management as well as being a qualified nurse. The Manager tells inspectors of his work with the company in developing a future business plan including recruiting more staff and getting, The Investor in People, accreditation.

There are no outstanding requirements.

The next inspection is one year later in June 2009. The information that I find of particular concern is listed below,

A number of surveys were sent out to staff, residents, relatives, but not a single staff member returned one.

The home is praised in particular for its robust recruitment process which protects residents from unsuitable staff being employed. Five staff files were checked and judged to be all well organized and demonstrated good practice as no staff member started work with out, two references, POVA and CRB checks and documents to confirm staff from overseas were eligible to work in the country. The files had interview notes. The AQAA also listed that the home employs 30 staff of which 21 have achieved NVQ level 2 or more.

I find it hard to believe that a home that has 80 residents employs only 30 staff in total that would include, nurses, carers, maintenance, laundry, kitchen, domestics and administrators. Something is very wrong here.

There is nothing that concerns inspectors, the home is judged good in every area and graded 2 Star.

The next inspection takes place 5 months later in November 2009

The inspection is being carried out to check all the requirements made have been met. However the last inspection made no requirements, they audited the homes audits on drugs and found them to be in order. However a subsequent pharmacist inspection found plenty wrong and now inspectors inspect and find plenty wrong also, such as missing drugs including controlled drugs. The manager says they were destroyed so that's accepted without question and the home is judged good at medication.

Despite the warning signs that all is not well the inspectors say there are no outstanding requirements. The home remains as 2 Star.

The next inspection is just 12 WEEKS later, in February 2010.

The first thing that struck me was that the home had been downgraded

to 1 Star adequate, could it be that the inspection found things wrong? No unfortunately the regulator reacted to events rather than acted. As is so often the case when the inspectors are told things are wrong they act but people will already have suffered and the damage will have been done, but the regulator was in a position to prevent it happening in the first place.

It is referred to that other agencies (Social Services) have given the regulator information about the standards in the home; it should have been the other way around surely. The home is now in crisis but the worst is yet to come.

The local council has placed an embargo on the home as it may be adequate for CQC but it's not good enough for the local Authority.

The community matron and tissue viability nurse are overseeing the care of residents. This is due to ongoing safeguarding concerns about the home and neglect of residents with pressure sores.

There have been a number of safeguarding investigations taking place, none reported by the home, the investigations relate to the safety and welfare of residents.

Now all of a sudden inspectors who previously praised the environment, suddenly find shabby and broken furniture, curtains hanging in tatters, parts of the home with no heating, rubbish dumped by the entrance, no signage to assist residents with dementia, the dining rooms are too small and cramped, unlocked chemical cupboards, bedrooms bare, dirty equipment, threadbare sheets. Quite a lot to go wrong in 12 weeks.

But at least the inspectors find areas to praise, the staff recruitment procedures are robust and protect residents from unsuitable staff being employed. Well not exactly.

Border agency officers raided on the home in July in order to arrest a number of illegal immigrants working in the home.

11 staff from Ghana, Malawi and the Philippines was arrested. During the raid the care of residents was questioned which resulted in 4 further arrests for neglecting residents.

The local Authority had already removed many of the most vulnerable residents from this 1 Star adequate home, so there were only 33 residents in the home at the time of the raid. They local authority were making arrangements to remove the remainder of the residents and drafted in care staff until this could be done. This leaves CQC with the decision of whether they should close an empty home, only they had to review the evidence before they decided if enforcement action was required.

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