Inquiry into regulation of care for older people

Mrs Janette Cockwell

I wish to submit the following as evidence in respect of the above inquiry, as a service used when my late parents were residents in an Edinburgh Care Home. I therefore feel able to take part in this inquiry.

I feel strongly that the Care Commission (now SCSWIS) failed in their duty to ensure that older people were provided with good quality and appropriate care in a safe environment.

When I complained after my mother fell whilst being hoisted out of a bath without any safety equipment and in the care of an inexperienced member of staff, she died a week later from the injury she sustained in the fall. I found the Care Commission dilatory, weak, inefficient and ineffectual and biased to the point that important facts were omitted from a report which was passed to a higher authority.

They failed to check that the care provider had notified the Health and Safety Executive which is a requirement under R.I.D.D.O.R. when a fatality occurs.

They also failed to ensure that the providers were aware of their duty to check for medical device alerts and perhaps if this had been best practice ‘incidents’ like my mother’s might not happen. No-one seems to take responsibility to ensure these incidents are reported to M.H.R.A.

They should ensure that providers are aware that they are required under the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Acts 2001/2002 that the staff they employ hold the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience to look after frail and vulnerable residents.

I feel that inspection reports and particularly Improvement Notices when served should be sent out to Health Centres in the areas where care homes are based – then perhaps GP’s would have a better idea when residents require more specialist care from the NHS.

I also feel strongly that the inspection of these care homes should only be on an unannounced basis as the inspectors are obviously not getting the true picture which is vital for the proper monitoring of these establishments.

During the last few years since the Commission came into force, they seem to have lost sight of who they should be protecting and it seems that their first priority was keeping care homes open at all costs even to the detriment of the residents.

I hope that my input will be of some help to your inquiry and if I can provide documents, reports etc, I would gladly assist, as my family and I feel so badly let down by the system. In fact I wish I had never involved the Care
Commission as it is now two years and we still do not have the answers we require.

Mrs Janette Cockwell
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