

NEWS IN BRIEF

Care home elderly are being dressed in each other's clothes



A "culture of apathy" in care homes means residents are not treated as individuals, a watchdog has concluded.

Even good homes are falling to get the basics right all the time, with patients ordered around to suit the needs of staff, according to a report by Healthwatch England.

Residents are humiliated by being dressed in other people's clothes because staffs do not sort the laundry, and have to put up with filthy homes with peeling wallpaper, rotting windows and dead plants, it says. Call bells are not answered for an hour, residents are struggle to get medical attention and in many homes residents lack any purpose beyond a choice of "television or television" to fill their days.

The consumer champion, which has powers to inspect care services, condemned an "it'll do" attitude in some places after visiting 197 homes. It praised homes where staff got to know the residents as people, taking time to chat with them and adapt meals and activities to their preferences. While acknowledging the pressure on a fraying social care system, the watchdog said this was no excuse for not treating people as individuals.

Imelda Redmond, national director of Healthwatch England, said: "Getting the basics right doesn't have to cost the earth and should be the least we should all be able to expect for our loved ones."

While most homes visited were good, she said: "Even the best we visited aren't perfect, and it is vital that managers and carers regularly speak with their residents to work out what's going well and where they might need to improve. None of us would want someone dictating how we should live our lives in our own homes, so why should we expect care homes residents to

tolerate it?

“Care homes are not institutions, they are people’s homes.”

A quarter of homes visited did not reply to Healthwatch’s concerns, despite a legal duty to do so.

Last month an overview by the Care Quality Commission found that one in three nursing homes was not good enough, with homes struggling to find and keep staff as wages stagnated.

Caroline Abrahams, charity director at Age UK, said: “It is great to see that some residents and relatives are reporting a positive experience. Sadly however, by no means every care home offers these fundamentals and in the worst cases older people have experienced unforgivable levels of abuse and neglect. This reinforces the urgent need for the government to stand by its pledge to put social care onto a sustainable basis for the future.”

If you would like a free initial consultation to discuss your situation and options open to you then contact me Chris Berry at:

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