

Health and Social Care Committee

Inquiry into residential care for older people

RC78 – GMB

National Assembly for Wales Health & Social Care Committee

GMB Submission to the Inquiry into the Residential care for Older People in Wales 16th May 2012

GMB is a campaigning trade Union focused on protecting members in their workplaces and growing the number of GMB members in order to maintain strength. We are a general Union which means that we can represent any workplace. The GMB has almost 610,000 members and we are organised in 34 of the UK's biggest companies.

Staffing resources and training

The GMB welcomes the news that the Welsh government will formally launch the Academy of Care practitioners, which will hopefully raise the status of Care staff and ensure that in future Care staff will be looked upon as professionals in their areas of expertise, which we hope will raise the low wages and terms and conditions of this important workforce. In our experience the previous training of staff in some care homes has been nothing more than a paper exercise, that should the worst case happen, the Employer can pass all responsibility onto the individual.

Financial Viability

GMB has heavily criticised the statement made by the Care Quality Commission on the 30th March that “The large health and care organisations are not overseen financially by anyone. The Care Quality Commission requires that a provider is financially stable, but it is outside of our remit to carry out financial audits or financial background checking of any service provider that is putting the care of Service users at risk, whether they are large companies like Four Seasons and Bupa or are small one person one location. We can then request that the company gives us information about the state of their finances and future plans and concerns”.

GMB questions how any organisation can be allowed to provide for the care of our most vulnerable people in our society without any financial viability.

GMB had been at the forefront of campaigning to highlight the plight of Clients, families and Care Staff which were involved in the downward Spiral of Southern Cross which was in the hands of the debt ridden company Four Seasons for a period of 6 months and who are now in the process of being taken over by the private equity company Terra Firma.

GMB call for the committee to consider that all organisations prove their financial viability, ensuring that they are able to provide and maintain a safe and long term environment for their clients.

GMB also call for the return of minimum care staff Client ratio as all too often in our experience homes are staffed at a dangerously low level, coupled that with the high use of agency workers being used to cover staff shortages, concerns need to be raised regarding the care that is provided.