

# Health and Social Care Committee

## Inquiry into residential care for older people

### RC2 – Carol Roberts

I have been caring for my elderly, disabled and partially sighted mother since 2000 and her condition has deteriorated gradually over the years. This has meant that I have had to devote a lot of my time outside of work to her care. Recently, I visited a number of care homes and was shocked to see that the quality of life in these care homes was very poor. The residents were sat in one room (on chairs which were placed around the room against the walls) without any entertainment or mental stimulation other than a television on the wall (which they didn't appear to be watching, bearing in mind that many elderly people's sight is so poor that they wouldn't be able to see the screen anyway). I got the impression that the residents were discouraged from going to their rooms if they wanted to have time on their own, which I think is a restriction on their personal freedom. They all looked so miserable and bored. The thought struck me that prisoners probably get more mental stimulation than these people who looked positively depressed. One lady was very distressed and crying because she was missing her husband and the staff didn't show much empathy towards the lady.

A friend of mine's grandmother was put into a care home for a couple of weeks respite while they were on holiday, and when she came home, she told her family that she was constantly hungry while she was there and that they were given very little food and that the portions were very small. This lady only weighed about 7 stone before she went into the care home and she is a small build and doesn't eat a lot normally, so this worried me because although my mother has health problems she has a good appetite and I wouldn't like to think of her being in a care home and not being given enough to eat. This particular care home was charging over £500 per week and wasn't even providing adequate food for the residents.

The other problem with care homes is that there are very few areas where residents and their visitors can meet comfortably to socialise.

I think a lot more needs to be done with the regard to regulating care homes and ensuring that the residents are well-cared for and that the fees threshold should be reviewed.

Yours sincerely,

Carol Roberts