

Age Concern Lewisham and Southwark

Lay Inspector's Report

Name of Home: Tower Bridge **Date of Visit:** 09/02/2012 1.35pm – 3.30pm

I visited this home with fellow Inspector Tom White. Over the previous couple of years we had expressed some dissatisfaction with this home due to standards and turnover of senior staff. The home has however been steadily improving.

The home is now run by HC One who are a large care home operator. We had previously met with the owner and area manager and were impressed with their plans for the homes they have taken over. The home is currently embargoed for new admissions and the owner said he does not want this removed until the home is up to his company standard.

We noticed a major improvement in the attitude of staff and residents who feel the new management is a good thing. We met the new manager Linda. Due to a scheduled staff meeting we were not able to spend long with Linda at the end of the visit.

The home is on 4 floors but we were informed that the ground floor is now closed (except for the dedicated smoker's lounge).

Third Floor. This is generally for EMI residents. There were 6 staff present for 20 residents. We were impressed by the very clear notices (on all floors) about activities and events. We noted there is a Manger's Surgery for staff and relatives weekly. We have not seen this openness in any other home. There is a new TV and stereo. The carpet is looking shabby but it is expected to be replaced soon.

Second Floor This Floor is registered for Nursing EMI residents. There were 18 residents with 6 staff.

We think this floor has a big problem with a persistent bad odour worse than urine – more like fermented urine. It cannot be explained by reference to a few residents who have hygiene problems. There have been attempts to clean the carpet but surely it needs a fresh start. The manager recognised this problem and hopes to deal with it soon. From our point of view it is **completely unacceptable** for residents, visitors and staff.

First Floor _This floor is a general residential floor. There are 28 residents with 7 staff. We had a long talk with a new resident (93yo) who was very pleased to move to the home and was amazed at the meals, laundry and other services provided.

The Ground Floor This floor is closed except for the Smoking Lounge and offices.

Due to the staff meeting we were able to explore only a limited number of other issues.

Activity Organisers We were told there are now 5 staff. They are part time but the number of staff should give a wide range of ideas. 5 residents had gone to the maritime museum at the time of our visit. The monthly budget for activity expenses is £341 which in our experience is low - £600 being typical.

Doctors Visits. The doctor comes every day and is available on call 24/7, SELDOC not being used, we were told. This seems very good. We suggested that residents consulting a doctor were positively offered the opportunity to not have a care assistant present so their consultation could be confidential. The manager accepted this idea and agreed to discuss in the staff meeting.

Personalisation The home does not use any commercial methodology but we were shown a 'Life Story' book which is being developed for each resident. There is also a pro forma to record preferences. This seems a good start and it would be interesting to see some anonymised results of this process. We think that Adult Services should lay down a minimum standard and timescale for the personalisation process in all homes it monitors.

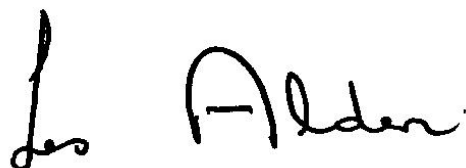
Laundry The home labels all clothes and they are washed in large commercial machines. One senior carer said she would like to change to the individual net laundry bags which avoid labelling of clothes which is institutional. We strongly suggest that all homes with commercial size machines should change to this system.

The Embargo We understand that Southwark and Lambeth currently have an embargo on placing new residents. One staff member mentioned this as demotivating. There is clearly some improvement and the new Manager is motivated to increase standards. Physical improvements are required such as decoration and carpets. Staffing generally is good and have high hopes for the new management.

Conclusions

The home is functioning well. However until physical improvements we do not think the embargo should be lifted.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Les Alden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

Les Alden
Tom White