

APP.A. 14.3.3
036

Ref: Gladys Mabel Richards

Following my mother's admission to Haslar with a fractured neck of femur - I was asked by the Social Services Department why I had stated that, if and when my mother recovered, she would not be returning to the Nursing Home she came from. The level of care is no longer acceptable to me.

The following is a catalogue of unacceptable events over the past seven months, culminating in the latest accident from which I made the decision.

December 97. Just after Christmas. Heavy fall with severe facial bruising. No phone call. Found on normal daily visit. Staff surprised I had not been told. Mother continually moaning and holding her head. Pain in shoulder. Medication changed following Consultant's visit. Appointment with G.P. to discuss this. Mother's speech affected. Hearing aids (both ears) lost yet again. Frequent requests over seven months for renewal - no result.

March. Fall, hurting ribs. Mother clutching side. No x-ray as quote "They don't do anything for ribs nowadays". Request from N. Home to increase her medication, as mother calling and "wailing".

April. On visiting at lunch time found sitting in lounge with wet hair. On enquiry found hair had been washed in bath? Why when she had the hairdresser each week. Two days later developed cough, generally unwell. Brought to the attention of staff daily. Five days later very poorly. Copious

mucus - and coughing, holding her side. Requests for G.P. to see from family. Mother very poorly. Five days before seen by G.P.

April 11th. Fall, pain in hip - to Haslar for x-rays. No bony injury. Very shocked. Night time Discharged back to home. Family visiting for lunch and supper daily and sometimes for breakfast. Good days and bad days. Glasses lost. Staff requested to look for them please. No result. Mother deaf in both ears is now existing with no form of communication other than staff shouting at her and now without her glasses (post cataract opn) so she cannot see properly. She is almost blind in the other eye from another cataract.

April 22nd. Collapse in dining room. Telephoned from Home to come. Mother unconscious. Home don't know what happened. "Collapsed" at dining table and put to bed.

Family nursed Mother day and night for the next approx. 10 days as staff stated they could not watch her. Mother regained consciousness but was very poorly. She remained continent. Attempting to get out of bed or chair if she needed the toilet. Staff again stated they could not watch her. She was very ill and remained in her room. I stayed during the day - my sister slept in the room during the night. When Mother wanted the loo during the night - although the bell was rung - my sister stated staff did not respond and my sister toileted my mother. There were no falls during the period we stayed.

May. Told by staff that my mother had been "lost" for over an hour at night and finally found down the back stairs. Told by staff Mother wanders - always around 2 a.m. - All she needs is taking to the toilet and settling back to bed.

Decision made to have ground floor room.

Lesley visiting daily throughout this period for lunch and supper most days - but always for supper.

16th July. Fall at 7.45 a.m. Getting up to go to loo on her own. Cut to bridge of nose and forehead grazing. Large facial swelling. To Haslar. I went with her. X-rays and head scan done. Back to N. Home 1.30 p.m.

Visited and fed daily.

17th July. Electronic pad put by bedside to alert staff if Mother got out.

Frequently found to be unplugged.

Told by other relatives that Mother was left in lounge till 10.45 p.m.

I started to stay later after I had fed her her supper.

21st July. Phoned 10 a.m. to say I could not visit today 3 p.m. My sister visited about 10.45 - 11.00 a.m. Asked where Mother was. Told she has put herself back to bed. Found to be on the bed, head against the wall, sideways on. Foetal position across the bed. Still no visit from G.P. following fall.

23rd July. Asked for help following supper to put Mother to bed. She had been very poorly since 16th and I no longer could manage her without help.

Shirley, RGN, said she would send a carer to help me when she could. At 8.15 p.m. Diane came to help me. Mother put on the toilet and washed and undressed and nightie put on. Taken to bed - sat on bed and legs lifted to bed to take tights off. Nurse c/asst. And I removed her tights which were clean to discover dried hard faeces covering sole of foot and up between each toe to the front surface of her foot. A warm soapy flannel removed the faeces and the RGN in charge was informed in front of staff in the office for hand-over.

24th. Spoke to care assistant Jackie who had got my mother up the previous day. She stated she must have stepped in it during the day. This is not feasible as there was no dirt on slippers or tights. I suggest she was not checked in the morning.

July. Mother taken to the toilet by me. Found to be red on her buttocks with very small "skin off area". I opened door from toilet and asked care assistant for a clean pad and "whatever cream" is used here for sore buttocks. I was given a large container of E.45. I explained I did not want a moisturiser for a moist area. She said I'm only a care asst, I don't know! I saw Sue RGN through the door. Request repeated. Mother still standing by the toilet distressed and waiting. Sue brought E.45. Explained again. Sue said, You'll have to wait if you want something else, I'm busy. I waited. I washed Mother and put clean pad on and walked her back to the lounge. Sue came 20 minutes later, saying "stores" are not due till tomorrow but I have put some

Drapolene into a small pot for Mother's use. I asked the care asst I saw to please apply some to the sore area when they next took her to the toilet.

Next day I told Margaret RGN about the small area broken.

Three days later I asked Margaret how was mum's bottom. She replied I don't know I haven't seen it yet.

My daily visits continued.

July. My mother still without hearing aids or glasses and I am told that the Hearing Aid Dept. have no priority for those over 90. Mum is 91 - but she was 90 when they were lost.

Wed. 29th July.

Could not get to the N. Home for lunchtime feeding as I was at the Redcliffe in The Avenue feeding another Grandma as my daughter was away. Rang home to tell them I'd be in later.

I arrived at 3.50 p.m. Mother was laying in her armchair - anxious expression. I asked a care assistant to help me sit Mother up. We did so with difficulty and my mother screamed out. I saw John Perkins RGN, Matron/Manager in the loo doorway. I asked if there was anything wrong with Mother - Is she o.k. She's fine he said. I explained I would not be here to feed her at 5 p.m. as I had to get to Southampton Airport. Fog had delayed flights from Guernsey so my timing was out. I left at 4.15. I arrived back home at 6.10 p.m. Message on my answerphone at 3.28 p.m. from Margaret RGN. Your Mother had a little fall earlier. She is all right but a bit noisy and

upset. I know you come at teatime but would you come earlier and sit with her.

6.15 p.m. I rang the Home. I spoke to John Perkins RGN. I asked about the message. I said I've seen you since this message and spoken to you. Yes he said, but I did not know about your mum's fall till it was mentioned at the 6 p.m. handover when Margaret went off duty. Well how is she I asked - well she is o.k. now he said.

Right I said, my daughter has a meeting in Fareham 7 p.m. 8 p.m. I'll call when I get back from her house. I got back at 8.30 p.m. Three messages on my answerphone.

1. 8.08 p.m. John. Your mother is quite agitated and noisy perhaps you would like to come and sit with her.
2. 8.29. Mother is calling as if she may have pain. We have put her to bed. I may call the Doctor.
3. It's Sue here - night staff. I'm sorry but I'm sure your mother has a fractured femur. When I came on John said go and see Gladys - she has been shouting for ages and when I saw her it was obvious. I've called an ambulance.

I rang back and said I'd meet the ambulance at Haslar.

On admission the xrays were consistent with having been walked since fall. There was shortening of limb with external rotation of foot. Despite the injuries and the trauma - things are even worse because of her inability to hear. The frustrations of xray - drips - keeping still etc. have been exhausting for all concerned and not least Mum who could not hear and cried and wailed in fear.

As a family we have wanted to move Mum for some considerable time and have discussed this, but felt the move would be unfair as she knew her surroundings and where things and rooms were. She was familiar on a day-to-day basis.

I asked for a full explanation from Glen Heathers for the 29th.

We had an interview with Pauline RGN, Consultant Advisor to Glen Heathers.

Several statements from staff were read out to us.

They confirmed:

The fall was at 2.50 p.m.

It was in the dining room.

What was she doing in the dining room at this time following 12 noon lunch?

No answer. Frequently those sitting quietly at the table are left in this room.

If mum was left - she would have attempted to get up to go to the loo.

The statements show she was walked to the lounge. The statements show she was walked to the bedroom from the lounge.

I do not know what time this was.

A Dr was not called.

Fall at 2.50 p.m.

To Haslar at 9 p.m.

Walked twice in the meantime.

(There are numerous incidents I could relate. RGN raised voices. Care shouting at residents. Call system going for ages. Mother's named clothes on other residents. Drawers full of other people's clothes.

In 10 days following Mother's collapse in April, John did not visit her room once.

Constant requests for hearing aids made me feel a nuisance.

I could go on.)

The above events are a true statement.

Lesley Lack

August 1998