

Submission
No 27

**INQUIRY INTO SERVICES PROVIDED OR FUNDED BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF AGEING, DISABILITY AND
HOME CARE**

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 27/07/2010

Partially Confidential

To: Standing Committee on Social Issues

NSW Legislative Council

Submission by:

Introduction

My complaint is regarding the treatment my daughter [redacted] has received at the hands of ADHC. [redacted] has Down Syndrome with a mild intellectual disability and for the past nine years has resided in a group home in [redacted]. The level of care provided by this agency has been exemplary.

My daughter shared the cottage with two middle aged, gentle, Down Syndrome men and, until [redacted] another intellectually disabled lady, who unfortunately died.

In [redacted], this agency was forced to accept a young, large, non-verbal autistic male as the fourth member of the house without any consultation with the existing members of the household. This young man presents with extreme Obsessive Compulsive Behaviour of sock checking and has pinned my daughter up against a wall to check her socks. He has also knocked over another resident in the process of checking his socks. He has forced his way into the bathroom while she was getting ready to have a shower twice and needed to be escorted out by carers. This resident has also entered her bedroom on a number of occasions, one in particular where he pushed his way in as she was trying to shut the door. There were no fewer than 28 incidents between [redacted] where my daughter was targeted by this resident, resulting in her being so stressed and fearful that she had to be removed from her home where she had, previously been so happy.

Terms of Reference

1 a) Historical and current level of funding and unmet need.

need is to live in her home without fear and intimidation. This has not been met by ADHC, instead ADHC throughout these past months have always favoured the perpetrator of intimidation and fear and ignored the physical and mental well being of my daughter.

1 d) Compliance with Disability Service Standards

ADHC was made aware of at least 28 incidences that occurred between my daughter and the newest resident and the detrimental impact it was having on her. Representatives of ADHC said at a meeting my daughters and attended, that they could not guarantee her safety in the home. Their solution was to offer counselling to my daughter, instead of finding more appropriate accommodation for the newest resident. The fact that they could not guarantee her safety in the home and then wilfully kept this resident in the home shows how little regard ADHC has for the clients in their care, for their personal safety or mental well-being. This contravenes the Disability Service Standards as well as ADHC's own charter that every resident has the right to feel safe in their own home.

1 e) Adequacy of Complaint Handling, Grievance Mechanisms and ADHC funded advocacy services.

My family and I have sent numerous letters and emails to ADHC and have attended many meetings where our input and concerns have been brushed aside. ADHC have continued to ignore my family's and my repeated complaints over a fundamental error in their choice of a new resident, a mistake they refuse to rectify. In this ADHC are failing to follow their own policies and procedures. Stalling tactics used by ADHC have added to my frustration. All attempts at resolving this conflict have been to the benefit of the latest resident and have ignored the plight of the original 3 residents. My daughter has voiced her concerns. Family have voiced their concerns and yet we have remained

unheard because ADHC fails to address any complaints. Instead ADHC has a culture of trying to shift the blame for poor decisions made. For this culture to change, ADHC needs to be accountable and to put their resources into addressing the issues rather than trying to find someone else to blame.

1 f) Internal and external programme evaluation including programme auditing and achievement of programme performance indicators review.

Despite promises of regular updates, ADHC have not forwarded any reviews of the outcomes of strategies that have been tried to minimise the risk of harm to my daughter.

Recommendations

My recommendation is that an independent tribunal is to be set up to deal with complaints in a timely and unbiased manner. The tribunal would need to have the necessary authority to implement their findings and recommendations.

Summary

ADHC failed to follow their own policies and procedures leaving my daughter exposed to fear and intimidation in her own home. ADHC has acknowledged the situation yet throughout the complaints process has only ever considered the perpetrator of intimidation and not the original members of the household that are living very stressful lives.

This situation would never have occurred if ADHC had followed their own policies in the choice of the new resident. Elderly quiet, gentle Down Syndrome adults are not compatible with a young large non-verbal autistic male with obsessive and unpredictable behaviours. Nobody wins in this mix. Yet ADHC continue to waste thousands of dollars to "make it work".

My daughter remains out of her home because ADHC has discriminated against her by giving her the option of remaining in a house where she is at risk of serious harm or moving into a home in a completely different area. Should it not have been the new resident who was removed.