

## Putting Elderly Health Care First

### Mental Health Shake Up Announced

A shake-up of mental health nursing has recently been announced by the government. Mental health nurses will be urged to spend less time doing paper work and more time with patients. More psychological therapies will be provided as alternatives to drug treatments and there will be efforts to improve care on mentally ill wards. The government has also said that efforts will be made to improve recruitment and retention of mental health nurses.

A new report sets out how the Department of Health will improve older people's services in the next 5 years. The plans contain three themes: Dignity in care; Joined up Care; and Healthy Aging. The plans include introducing a senior nurse into each hospital with the responsibility for making "dignity in care" a priority. Tougher inspections will also be carried out, and inspectors will be encouraged to view breaches of older people's dignity as serious failures in care.

The report states that there should be focus in more joined up care, particularly for those who have suffered a stroke or falls, have mental problems, have complex care needs or need urgent care.

### Abuse of Dementia Sufferers

The Alzheimer's society has released research into experiences of caring for people with dementia and challenging behaviour in 200 care homes across the UK. It has reiterated its call for more staff training and condemned the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's plan to deny people with dementia who have behavioural problems access to licensed drug treatments.

In the care homes surveyed 73 per cent had records of a person with dementia being verbally or physically aggressive in the past 3 months.

More than half of all people with dementia experience behavioural problems such as depression, delusions and aggression. Around 40 per cent of people with dementia in care homes are prescribed neuroleptic drugs to relieve behavioural symptoms. It is estimated that 75 per cent of people in care homes have some form of dementia yet only 10 per cent of care home staff have any form of dementia training.

Many of the symptoms of dementia can be relieved by training care staff and by treatment with anti-dementia drugs.

Ridings Law Solicitors was established by Linda Pratt who is a member of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners and founding member of Solicitors for the Elderly. If you feel you would like an informal talk with a legally qualified and experienced member of Ridings Law Solicitors, to discuss any of the above issues please telephone 01943 434 400 and Ridings Law will be pleased to help to give you peace of mind.