Relatives should always complain about poor care

By Chris Longhurst @news_rcni

Families should never be afraid to raise concerns about the standard of care their loved ones are receiving, according to a nursing leader.

Joanne Strain, head of nursing at care home provider Four Seasons Health Care, was commenting on a Care Quality Commission (CQC) decision that care homes will have to reveal how many residents they evict, and how many relatives have had visiting rights restricted.

The CQC’s decision followed reports that relatives had been prohibited from visiting loved ones after complaining about poor care.

‘Most people know how to complain, but it is understandable some might be afraid to,’ said Ms Strain. ‘If anyone has concerns about care, then they have a right and a duty to speak out.’

BBC Two’s Victoria Derbyshire programme reported last week that a Somerset care home prevented a man from visiting his 93-year-old father after he made a complaint; also, the family of a woman in an Essex care home said she was evicted after they raised concerns.

The CQC told BBC Radio 4’s You And Yours programme last week that care homes will have to tell inspectors how many people have had visiting rights restricted and how many residents have been removed against their will.

Ms Strain said: ‘While any good provider will have a clear complaints policy, unless everything is well documented then how will the CQC quantify all that data?’

‘There are about 500,000 people living in care homes in the UK, so it will be a massive task.’

In brief

Nurses who care for people in hostile environments or in the wake of international disasters are among an eclectic range of speakers at a conference in Scotland this month. London’s St Thomas’ Hospital emergency department senior sister Chrissy Alcock, who has worked in humanitarian crises, will speak about training for disaster response at the World Extreme Medicine Conference and Expo in Edinburgh on 18-21 November. Go to tinyurl.com/NS-extreme

Unison Scotland has launched a free app for nurses to raise concerns about patient care via their smartphones or tablets. The Duty of Care app allows staff to register their concerns about, for example, reduced staffing levels or lack of equipment. The app then sends an email report to Unison and to the staff member’s local director of nursing. The app is available on iTunes and Google Play. Go to tinyurl.com/dutyofcare-app

Prisoners must receive the same standard of care as those outside of prison, according to new guidance for healthcare professionals working in prisons in England. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence advises that every new prisoner undergo a healthcare assessment, performed by a trained healthcare professional, or a healthcare assistant under the supervision of a nurse. Go to nice.org.uk/guidance/NG57

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Data from the National Child Measurement Programme on levels of obesity and overweight in schoolchildren

1 million schoolchildren in England have their height and weight measured as part of the programme every year

1 in 5 reception children (aged 4-5) are overweight or obese

1 in 3 year 6 pupils (aged 10-11) are overweight or obese

£5.1bn the annual cost of treating obesity and its consequences, according to the programme

Read more at rcni.com/child-weight-figures