

Two members of staff at UK care home sacked after 'locking mentally ill patients in cupboards'

By [Chris Brooke](#), Daily Mail, UK, 16 September 2011

Detectives are investigating alleged abuse by staff at an NHS care centre where severely handicapped patients have allegedly been locked in cupboards and bullied.

One blind woman in her twenties, suffering from cerebral palsy and epilepsy, was said to have been punched in the face on two occasions for making noises and had a series of epileptic attacks.

Others patients were allegedly threatened and humiliated at the hands of carers at the Solar Centre at Balby, Doncaster.

Police probe: Two carers at the Solar Centre, pictured, in Doncaster were sacked over the abuse of mentally ill and handicapped patients

Two members of staff have been sacked and two others have left the facility, which provides day care respite for around 10 severely handicapped patients aged from 18 to 50. It is the second police probe into alleged abuse at the Solar Centre, situated in the grounds of St Catherine's Hospital.

An earlier inquiry by South Yorkshire Police was halted after the Crown Prosecution Service ruled there was insufficient evidence to bring criminal charges, but detectives have now re-opened the case.

Cruelty: The Solar Centre is part of St Catherine's hospital, pictured. Police said that the alleged abusers will not face prosecutions

Two patients have accepted a compensation deal and three others are in legal negotiations with the Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber Mental Health Trust over their complaints, relating to incidents between 2005 and 2007.

STAFF OUTRAGES CAUGHT ON FILM

A care home for vulnerable adults was closed earlier this year after staff were filmed abusing patients.

Sickening footage showed residents with learning difficulties at Winterbourne View in Bristol being subjected to barbaric physical and verbal attacks by their 'carers'.

The film, shown on the BBC's Panorama, led to condemnation of the home's owners, Castlebeck Care, and the regulatory Care Quality Commission, both of whom had been told of what was happening.

The CQC issued an ‘unreserved apology’, admitting it failed to respond to the warnings but its chairman, Dame Jo Williams, insisted she would not resign, blaming ‘an unforgivable error of judgment’ by staff.

Care services minister Paul Burstow declared that the CQC would have to stage unannounced inspections on care homes, rather than giving them advance notice.

The Trust has always refused to name the four staff alleged to have been involved. Solicitor David Greenwood, representing some of the families, said: ‘We are talking about the abuse of probably the most vulnerable people in our society. These are people who are in care because they have multiple physical and mental difficulties. They are often unable to care for themselves or communicate.’

The evidence of abuse came from two staff ‘whistleblowers’ fed up with the cruel regime, Mr Greenwood said.

The families have been keeping the pressure on police to investigate further and he wrote to the force asking for a review of the case as more evidence came to light.

The Trust said in a statement: ‘Events at the centre have been the subject of a detailed inquiry carried out by the Trust following which systems have been reviewed and changed.

‘Two of the claims have concluded. There are three other cases that are currently in progress. The staff involved are no longer employed by the Trust.’

Last night a South Yorkshire Police spokesman said: ‘We can confirm the case has been re-opened and files have been sent to the CPS for their consideration.’

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2037879/Care-home-staff-sacked-locking-mentally-ill-patients-cupboards.html#ixzz1YBrqdfZ9>