

Dying mum's plea

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Health reporter

A dying mother wants the State Government to honour her final wish to have her autistic son moved from his Department of Human Services home, where he is being assaulted by other residents and left languishing in his room all day.

The Avondale Heights family has also accused the DHS of covering up the man's injuries in his Melton Community Residential Unit.

Mona Yassa says the behaviour and mental state of her 32-year-old son, David, who cannot speak, has deteriorated in the past two years after his day place was cancelled because of his difficult behaviour.

The Government intervened three years ago after intense lobbying by the family, ordering a care plan. But the plan has not been implemented and David takes no part in activities outside the home.

"David is worse and worse," Ms Yassa said. "Before he could go into the community, but now he is locked in the house and hits himself, hits things with his head and hits other people"

The family has photographed injuries that have occurred in the home including bite marks, deep bruising of his upper body and arms, wrist bruising from being pinched and bruising on his toes from being restrained.

David spent six weeks in hospital this year after suffering a spiral fracture to his leg when he tripped over a hole in the carpet. He was physically restrained at all times, unless his mother was visiting.

Doctors have told Ms Yassa she has two years to live, with cancer spreading in the past two years while she fought for her son.

"He's so afraid now to go back to the house, it breaks my heart and I'm afraid to keep him there," she said.

The DHS did not respond to allegations about the abuse, but acknowledged in a statement that David needed specialised accommodation and the department was trying to find him another home.

LISA Comment: There are many families with many concerns, too scared of intimidation to publicly raise these! This matters not, as this government department has a captive market.

Through its DSR ([Disability Services Register](#) - under review by DHS, June 2011), this government department controls almost every service and client in the State of Victoria. It, therefore, has little or no reason or respect for customers, customer service, or public/media opinion.

The department's new standards, "[One DHS Standards](#)", has an evidence guide. This guide is rather like the hundred points needed to open a bank account. Direct care staff must show many service angles, in an attempt to prove they are implementing the standards.

This may be fine for non government services, who "must comply to keep their funding". Whereas, government staff, DHS direct care staff, have secure employment no matter what they do, or don't do. So compliance is frequently dependent solely on management/staff lore.

Apart from getting the DHS out of direct service provision (move all their direct care services to the non government sector) - "How can their public service direct care management and staff be made accountable for fully and consistently implementing care policies, standards and values within their direction intention and spirit?"

Care level and quality in DHS supported accommodation group homes, and similar, is directly dependent on the integrity of their direct care staff, rather than the direction and support of their management above [house supervisor](#).

The NDIS principle should certainly fix unmet needs, but may not have the same impact on service level and quality for all, as its individualised funding may ensure only market place driven service level and quality - People with a disability frequently do not re-locate easily!

Extra 1: No Place to Call Home! Door shut on housing support!

Extra 2: Check-out some interesting aspects of questionable service provision on the "[LISA Forum](#)". Feel free to post to the forum page by registering, under a covert user name, on the left side of the forum page, under "Create an account". There will then be a short delay whilst we approve your registration.

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