

Department of Human Services, Disability Services, Victoria

"Revolving Door Policies and Practices"

The Victorian ombudsman has found Department of Human Services (DHS) carers dragged a disabled man along the floor of a Melbourne care home, causing second-degree carpet burns. The 39-year-old man, who is unable to talk and has an intellectual disability, did not receive medical treatment for more than 24 hours, despite a number of departmental staff and contracted care workers being aware of the injuries

The Victorian Ombudsman's damning report ([click here](#)) cites just one of the massive range of on-going questionable activities of the Department of Human Services, Disability Services, Victoria.

Public Advocate Colleen Pearce condemned the DHS for its "shocking and shameful" response to the incident. "I have never come across a case before where there has been this level of cover-up and the fabrication of documentation around this matter," she said.

Shocking and shameful incidents of a level and nature which catch media attention come around like a revolving door. Everyone shouts condemnation, the media have a field day, the DHS keeps its head down and everything is soon forgotten.

The not so media glamorous, are the shameful occurrences and questionable activities which happen consistently everyday, every week, every month and every year within this state government's direct care services for people with a disability.

Public service captive market culture is masterful at issue avoidance, dodge and weave and manoeuvre every which way to avoid their responsibilities for fixing their systemic problems or even admitting they have any.

Caring parents/families are frequently told, "It's just your opinion!" - Whenever they dare raise service level and quality concerns! The department's public service captive market management infer parents/families are always wrong and don't know what they are talking about.

When Heather was directly told by DAS management, she did not know what she was talking about, Heather did one year full time TAFE, got her ACRACS (Cert 4), and worked in group homes for both DHS and CSOs for four years - like police under cover.

And, yes, she saw the type of questionable activities being currently reported! Departmental unwritten practice is, however, very much against whistle blowers! And we needed Heather undercover for as long as possible.

There is no question, the department's disability accommodation service regional management, above house supervisor, cannot properly manage the business of ensuring care level and quality is fully and consistently implemented at their group home service points within the direction, intention and spirit of departmental care policies, standards and values, and within residents' BSP and PCP.

Regional management above house supervisor cannot man-manage staff "lore", "peer-pressure" and "general disruptive behaviour" not conducive to the provision of proper and consistent quality of life care for the residents of their group homes.

Families take significant risk raising service level and quality concerns regarding their family members quality of life care, given traditional public service management pass consumer concerns directly to service point staff, rather than using customer complaints/concerns as tools to discretely investigate/adjust systemic service processes to ensure these are achieving meaningful client/family focused outcomes in accordance with departmental care policies, standards and values.

Late last year, the LISA Inc (Lifestyle in Supported Accommodation Inc) Committee of Management met with Mr Bernie Finn, MLC, Liberal Member for the Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne, to have the above, and more concerns presented to the new Minister for Community Services, once she had settled in her new portfolio.

Mr Finn's only answer to the massive range of service level and quality concerns presented to him by the LISA Committee of Management, during the one hour meeting, was just one simple sentence, "Remove the DHS from providing direct care services for people with a disability and their families".

Given the present range of major concerns underpinning the department's disability disaster management, totally unable to properly manage the business of providing quality of life care within the direction, intention and spirit of departmental care policies standards and values for people with a disability.

We call on the Baillieu government to have a "Royal Commission Inquiry" into Disability Services of the Department of Human Services, Victoria.

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