Help Us Keep Our Mailing List Up-to-Date

If you have received this newsletter through the post, your name is on our mailing list. Our newsletter is free of charge, but we do need older people to complete our occasional survey questionnaires in return.

If you know of an older person in Bristol who would like to receive our newsletter, or if you would like your name deleted from our mailing list, please complete the form below and return it to us at the Forum office (address above and on page 7).

Please add/remove this name to/from the Forum mailing list (delete as appropriate):

Name: ..............................................................................................................................................
Address: ........................................................................................................................................
Postcode: ...........................................................................................................................................

Disclaimer: BOPF welcomes contributions from members. We will always make every effort to include your views. Some of the opinions in our publications are those of individual contributors, and do not necessarily represent the views of BOPF.

BOPF would like to thank Bristol City Council for its financial support and also Age UK and Age UK Bristol for their professional help. BOPF is affiliated to the National Pensioners Convention.

Finished with this Newsletter? Please pass it on to another older Bristolian who might be interested in finding out more about the Older People’s Forum.

Social Care Truths Revealed

A stream of cases over the past months has revealed the desperately low standards in many care homes for vulnerable adults and older people says the Guardian:

“The horrific exposé by BBC’s Panorama of the culture of casual cruelty at Winterbourne View was preceded by example after example of neglect of the vulnerable in hospitals and care homes”.

According to Community Care, recent research carried out by the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) revealed that 81% of social workers who took part in their survey had witnessed abuse in adult residential care homes. 55% of this group described it as “extreme abuse”, suggesting abuse is more widespread than previously thought.

Many have placed blame on the Care Quality Commission (CQC) saying that although it was created “to ensure that carers couldn’t fall short of the highest standards…when the commission was warned last December about what was happening [at Winterbourne] it did nothing about it.” (The Daily Mail)

But Community Care argue that, while the government has ordered a probe into the CQC’s role in the Panorama abuse scandal, it has yet to act on wider concerns about how adult social care is regulated. According to the Guardian, if levels of care in England are to rise to a premium standard, then the CQC requires a radical overhaul. At present, it is under funded, understaffed and its inspections are neither frequent enough nor sufficiently detailed.

If regulators are not given the investment needed to identify low standards of care, and if social care continues to be provided by private companies, it appears unlikely reforms will bring real change: “most care workers are devoted and committed but they are poorly paid, poorly trained and caught up in systems where the emphasis is on profits for shareholders rather than care for people” (BASW England Manager).

Whatever reform brings, we need to push for investment in regulation to ensure that older people are cared for with dignity and respect. Perhaps now the culture of abuse has been highlighted to the UK public we can encourage the government to focus on the care of people, rather than care providers’ profits, and tackle the issue at it’s heart.

Sources: The Guardian, Daily Mail and Community Care

BOPF Membership Currently Includes 2570 Older Bristolians

But there are more than 93,000 people in Bristol over the age of 55. Do you know anyone else who might like to join us? We always need new members. Can you help by recruiting your friends and relatives? You can send us the details by using the form on page 8.