

## Case Study

**Date:** 2015 and ongoing

**Region:** North Wales Mental Health Unit

**Overview:** Independent Review into the treatment of patients within a dementia ward at a District General Hospital.

**The details:** In February 2014 a NHS Wales University Health Board requested an independent review into concerns regarding potential mistreatment of patients on one of their wards.

In order to carry out the investigation patients families and staff were interviewed and evidence was gathered. The concerns were proven and are said to amount to institutional abuse. The investigation also identified practices on the ward which may violate individual patients' human rights.

General findings of the 2015 report included lack of action by the senior leadership team, lack of systematic review, significant under reporting of serious incidents and doctors and nursing staff found to have seriously breached standards of professional behaviour.

It was also reported that there was little evidence of timely actions put in place by the team further to previous reports which highlighted specific concerns with the service.

The 2015 report exposes very serious failings in care and mistreatment of very vulnerable patients.

It is clear that the problems on the ward go back a number of years and the failure of health board staff and local NHS leaders to deal with issues that were brought to their attention has led to unnecessary patient suffering.

## Outcome:

The health board has apologised for the "inexcusable and unacceptable" treatment and a number of members of nursing staff have been suspended on full pay and a "significant" number of both nursing and managerial staff have also been transferred to other roles.

The 2015 reports findings has been an urgent agenda item in the Welsh Senedd on a number of occasions for Darren Millar AM, Shadow Minister for Health, who has insisted on timely action from the Welsh Government to intervene and ensure Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board rebuild public confidence and trust in its services.

The reports recommendations are still to be implemented and the conversations between the National Assembly for Wales and the health board are ongoing as at September 2016.