

Carers let man with dementia live off biscuits as others starve

By Laura Donnelly HEALTH EDITOR

DEMENTIA sufferers have been left to starve or live on biscuits, with others left in soiled sheets and dirty clothes, according to a damning report warning of failures to care for the vulnerable.

The Alzheimer's Society report warns that more than 400,000 dementia patients receive care in their homes but more than one in three care workers has no training for dementia.

Its research found one elderly man with Alzheimer's disease was reduced to 7st, after workers left him to live on biscuits and cold snacks.

Another pensioner with dementia was admitted to intensive care after paid carers ignored warnings to remove out-of-date food from the fridge.

In other cases, patients were left unbathed for weeks, sleeping in wet or soiled bed sheets, or able to walk outside into the road at night because their homes were not secure.

The new report is based on a survey of 1,200 people affected by dementia, and a poll of more than 700 home care workers, conducted in partnership with the union Unison, which found that 38 per cent had not received dementia training.

Jeremy Hughes, chief executive of the Alzheimer's Society, said: "Care scandals in hospitals and care homes have been well-publicised, yet unacceptable home-care practices are widespread and happen behind closed doors, hidden from public scrutiny."

A Department of Health spokesman said more than 100,000 social care workers had so far received dementia awareness training.

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