

# Care Home Management

Incorporating PIR Healthcare Management

Issue 24

## NEWS SECTION

Does the CSCI Rating do your Home Justice?

ThirdForce Tackles Training Barriers

New Deal for Older People

Keeping your Laundry Green

Brand New Features Care Show 2008

Fire Safety in Residential Care Homes

Safety Radiators

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## Ritalin-style drug set for wider role in adult mental illness

A significant number of adults with unresolved depression, anxiety or addiction may actually have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), a condition that has been widely considered to resolve in late adolescence.

Armed with the correct diagnosis, adult ADHD sufferers could soon be prescribed Ritalin-style stimulant medications for a range of mental health problems that are not usually associated with the disorder, the Royal College of Psychiatrists' annual meeting was told recently.

Stimulant medication is currently only licensed for children with ADHD. However, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is expected to recommend that this class of drug can be prescribed for adults with ADHD in September 2008 – following the recognition that the condition persists into adulthood in about 20 per cent of cases diagnosed in childhood.

But while ADHD symptoms in children include inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsiveness, the condition in adults is associated with a much wider range of co-existing mental health problems.

Professor Phillip Asherson, professor of molecular psychiatry at the Institute of Psychiatry, told the meeting: "Most frequently, adults with ADHD are diagnosed with chronic and persistent depression and anxiety,

difficult-to-treat alcohol and drug addiction and personality disorders.

"We don't yet know whether these co-existing disorders are separate problems or whether these people are actually suffering from a form of ADHD that is presenting in a different way from the normal symptoms. It could be that many people are being diagnosed as having a separate disorder when in fact they have got ADHD."

Currently, clinicians are wary of using stimulant medication in adults, as the only group of drugs that are licensed only for use in children. However, Professor Asherson said: "This is likely to change once the new NICE guidelines are launched in September."

Meanwhile, Professor Asherson is about to embark on a major study to identify adults with ADHD who present in GP surgeries and addiction centres. "We have no idea as yet whether these problems will respond to stimulant medication. If they do, then this type of drug could provide effective treatment for a significant number of adults who currently have unresolved mental health problems," he said.

For further information contact Liz Fox or Deborah Hart in the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Press Office: 020 7594 8636 or 020 7594 1847.

## Managers face tough decisions as market slows

Massive congestion amongst the UK's largest Care Homes companies is putting unprecedented pressure on the managers of these companies to keep their companies in the market, says a new study by Plimsoll Publishing.

The study found that the UK's largest 100 companies now control 84% of the market, an increase from 80% 2 years ago. As a result, these major companies are fighting each other headlong in a battle for market share. The latest results leave us in no doubt that this is having a huge impact on their financial performance.

David Pattison, senior analyst with Plimsoll, comments: "The recent slow down in the UK economy will only accelerate a long standing problem in the market. Following the last few years which have been largely profitable, business leaders have been keen to invest heavily, and in turn have borrowed heavily. Yet due to the turbulent economic climate of 2008 they are seeing very little by way of return. This ambitious investment strategy has

left some companies in severe financial danger, and as a result 68 companies have been awarded a danger rating in this study as result of their failing business strategy."

Pattison continues "The consequences are serious; these companies need to have serious rethink when it comes to their business models. It's likely that jobs will be lost and key projects could be cancelled in an attempt to control the spending- but for some companies it could well be a case of too little, too late.

It's likely that the management at some of these companies could be changed to accelerate the cutback process, as it's a lot easier for new managers to come in with a clear remit and instigate these tough decisions. The other obvious option is that some of these businesses will be sold off."

The complete Plimsoll 100 Care Homes Analysis offers a full industry overview and analysis of each of the UK's 100 largest Care Homes companies. Copies of this analysis are available for £500 by calling Clair Sherwood on 01642 626422 or emailing c.sherwood@plimsoll.co.uk. Readers can get a £100 discount when quoting PR05.

## Marketing budget reductions 'misguided'

In uncertain economic times, businesses that reduce marketing spend to achieve a 'quick fix' are usually misguided according to marketing specialist Dr John Rudd of Aston Business School.

Information should be used to react rapidly to meet new challenges and whether there are thriving times, or times of uncertainty, businesses must be marketing led.

It is relatively easy for businesses to sell goods and services within the "boom town" mentality of a thriving economy. However in times of environmental turbulence and uncertainty, "customers", whether these are businesses customers or consumers on the High Street, will naturally scrutinise their spending and be more selective. It is the job of marketing to make it their company's product or service that customers select.

History suggests that in uncertain economic conditions organisations tend to immediately reduce marketing expenditure in a misguided attempt to improve their economic position to provide a "quick fix". It is not the marketing budget that is usually the problem.

Effective marketing can help organisations to cope with the problems of increasingly uncertain and discerning customers and come out in front. This can be done in a number of ways, firstly changes in the market should be identified through market research, with the collection of customer and competitor information. This information should be analysed and strategies re-aligned rapidly to meet new challenges. If this results in being able to add value for the customer, this should be communicated to them. Highlighting any products or services that truly add value to their customers, should be drawn to their attention through the most appropriate media, including advertising.

In times of uncertainty, successful organisations will be able to recognise and adapt to changing conditions. The faster the change in the environment, the faster the response from the organisation must be, in order to meet the new set of challenges presented.

So for successful marketing departments, any economic uncertainty should mean more work, not less, which should reflect in holding or increasing budgets, certainly not cutting them.



Julia Goldsworthy, MP

## Government has failed the elderly - Goldsworthy

Audit Commission report on adult social care, Liberal Democrat Shadow Communities and Local Government Secretary, Julia Goldsworthy said:

"One of Gordon Brown's first pledges was to deal with the ageing population but his Government's record is one of failure.

"The web of targets has trapped councils and prevented them acting innovatively to support older people in all areas of their lives.

"A painfully tight budget settlement has left councils struggling to meet the immediate challenge of helping those most in need of adult social care. In too many areas around the country this is now rationed to those in the most extreme need.

"Ministers would like to palm this challenge entirely on to local government, but they have ensured that resources are very scarce at a local level."

## Infection Control In The Workplace By Bill Tansley, Technical Specialist BREG, JohnsonDiversey UK

Infections can be bad for business. Employees need time off work which leads to disruption, missed opportunities and reduced productivity. The reputation of the business can suffer and if customers are directly affected, or infected, the results can be damaging to the bottom line. Some basic cleaning precautions can help limit the potential risks.

We are all familiar with the idea that viruses such as influenza, norovirus and even the common cold are more frequent during winter. And we have all heard about the potential problems associated with less common, but potentially more serious, infections such as MRSA and C. Diff. Many of these infections spread through hand contact or by water droplets, in the air and on surfaces, originating from coughs, sneezes and vomiting. The potential for transmission is increased when people are closer together indoors and some estimates suggest that upwards of 60% of illnesses are contracted at work.

Cleaning product suppliers are constantly working with their customers, including contract cleaners, to develop tools and equipment which perform better and make it easier to eliminate and prevent the spread of infections. Different products may be required for hard surfaces and fabrics. There is no single "magic bullet".

Improving the personal hygiene, especially hand care, of staff and visitors may be the most important and simplest precaution to help reduce infections. Washroom hygiene is an essential part of any cleaning regime although it is often taken for granted. It is still a surprise to learn that many people do not know how to wash their hands properly. Training staff and providing signage to remind them and visitors to keep their hands clean is a good idea. Even this most basic of measures makes a difference.

Good quality liquid hand soaps in a wall mounted dispenser are easy to use and maintain, help keep the washroom tidy and are all that is needed for hygienic results. Scented products are pleasant and more likely to be used. When soap is impractical, for example when water supplies are limited, an alcohol based hand rub gel, which disinfects and kills many pathogens, is a good alternative.

Areas where food is prepared or consumed are also important. Separate areas should be used for preparing and serving cooked and uncooked food. For most cleaning a QAC sanitiser, which cleans and kills germs, that complies with the EN1276 standard should be used regularly on surfaces but especially if there is an increased risk of infections that can spread rapidly in enclosed spaces. Products for professional use contain no perfumes and should offer "broad spectrum" performance which means they can be used on different surfaces and against a number of potential bugs.

A recent innovation in sanitising are products containing accelerated hydrogen peroxide which provide powerful disinfection against many viruses, bacteria and fungi without compromising on cleaning performance. They do not contain quaternary ammonium compounds or chlorine based ingredients which means they can be used on most washable surfaces, including fabrics. Hydrogen peroxide based products break down to oxygen and water after use and a mildly acidic formulation can help to prevent the build up of limescale with regular use.

Tools based around innovative microfibre and ultra microfibre technology have grown in popularity for general cleaning in recent years. Simple and efficient, the ultra microfibre cloth is often more effective at removing dirt and bacteria than traditional methods such as mop and bucket. It can be used when dry or damp and requires little or no chemicals which

means it is versatile, cost effective and sustainable. Microfibrils can be used with or without chemicals while ultra microfibrils can remove 99.9% of bacteria from surfaces without the need for chemicals. Colour coded cloths should be used for cleaning different surfaces to reduce confusion and the risk of cross-contamination. Many microfibre tools form part of the trolley systems that help staff to stay organised by holding items in the correct position for ergonomic working, easy access and safe handling.

Infection control has become an issue in organisations that introduce "hot desking", where people share desks and other equipment such as telephones and computers. Keyboards and handsets can harbour bugs that might infect the next person to use them. Routine cleaning can be tricky which is why it helps if staff observe good personal hygiene to reduce the chances of leaving infective agents on surfaces. A sensible precaution is to wipe the most frequently touched parts of the handset and keyboard before using them.

As organisations become more environmentally aware, many have recognised the benefits of using concentrated chemicals in conjunction with controlled dosing, where water is added at the point of use. This reduces waste and ensures the correct concentration of chemical for the best possible cleaning results. It also minimises the environmental impact and "chemical miles" of packaging and transport.

Infection control does not have to be difficult and some simple precautions can eradicate many of the commonest potential risks. It always makes sense to discuss cleaning issues with a specialist supplier who will be able to advise on the most appropriate product, tool and procedure for a particular circumstance.

Further information on 0800 525525 or at [www.johnsondiversey.co.uk](http://www.johnsondiversey.co.uk)



## Does the CSCI rating do your home justice?

Reply No. 3

One of the best ways to find out whether a home meets your requirements is to read what the residents have to say about it in the 'service users guide'

The media are sometimes too quick to shoot something down before giving it a chance. Newspapers and the news broadcasts seem to thrive on reports of disasters and shocking behaviour. Every page printed or story told is just another tale of bad news. But there are always two sides to every story.

The CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection) star rating system has fallen victim to the negative headlines that plague the care sector. The system, that has taken years to develop, is meant to denote the quality of a care home, not add fuel to the negative, publicity fire.

It may be the case that press and consumers outside of the care industry have misunderstood how the CSCI system works. Perhaps the root cause of this is because 'stars' have been used for classification purposes and have consequently been compared with the hotel rating.

The star rating, commonly found in hotels,

awards higher star ratings to indicate more luxury. Generally, the number of facilities they offer determines how many stars they are granted. This is a stark comparison to the CSCI's system, which groups common standards and offers a star grade on how well they meet the national minimum standards.

It is not enough for prospective residents and their families to choose a care home based on its overall star rating, like they would a hotel. Because you cannot assume a care home awarded with 3 stars (the maximum under the CSCI system) will offer the premium care you are looking for. Each care home offers a unique and tailored service. I.e. a home, which specialises in wheelchair accessibility, may not be able to offer the same, high quality service for dementia care. Even though it's been awarded a '3 star' rating.

This means you shouldn't rely on the 'stars' alone to determine whether the care home you are looking at is suitable for your needs. A much closer inspection is required, to make

sure it can offer the correct care and support. One of the best ways to find out whether a home meets your requirements is to read what the residents have to say about it in the 'service users guide'. This explains what kind of service the home offers using residents' opinions. To ensure you make a fully informed decision, combine this with the care home's full inspection report.

Snap judgements have been made about the headline star rating given to care homes. This has intensified press activity, which has been sceptical about this system from the beginning. It is important to fully understand the intentions of the ratings and not compare them to those found in the hotel industry. Shackletons have produced a straightforward guide to the CSCI inspections. So if you would like to find out more, visit their brand new website: [www.shackletonsltd.co.uk](http://www.shackletonsltd.co.uk).



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Reply No. 6

# ThirdForce tackles training barriers with e-learning

Training is a priority for all care home managers. According to the CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection) guidelines, all care homes should carry out the requisite training for their staff, to ensure each and every resident is well cared for. However, in the face of increasing budget restraints, ensuring that staff are adequately trained proves to be a significant challenge to many care home managers.

The practice of learning online has been around for several years, yet the healthcare sector has recently seen a significant boom in training delivered through e-learning. Chris Parr, Head of Products and Markets at ThirdForce, a global provider of e-learning and assessment software, investigates how an increasing number of care home managers have been realising the benefits of e-learning in overcoming these challenges.

## What's it all about?

e-Learning can be defined as computer based learning, encompassing training, education, just-in-time information, and communication. The computer is now an essential piece of equipment both in our everyday lives and in the delivery of teaching and learning. Essentially, e-learning enables care home managers to reap the benefits that computers and the internet provide. Staff can gain the groundwork they need for their profession, with the advantages of being both cost-effective and educationally rewarding.

## Why ThirdForce?

ThirdForce is a specialist in its field, with over ten years experience in designing innovative e-learning solutions. It has extensive experience in managing and delivering a complete e-learning management and support service, and leads the way in customised learning. ThirdForce's latest program, the new 'Knowledge Set for Care: Infection Control', ensures care home staff are aware of how to prevent the spread of infections like MRSA. ThirdForce's e-learning programs help combat the challenges faced by care home managers in training their staff on subjects just like this.

## Challenge 1: Tight-budgets

Cost is a huge factor for care home managers and with limited funding, training can seem expensive. With traditional 'pen and paper' teaching methods learners have to travel to and from the classroom, or book into overnight accommodation, and managers can see the cost pile up whilst having to arrange cover for absent staff. e-Learning however supports streamlining, cost effectiveness and economies of scale. Up-to-date content is easily accessible from one central source,

enabling anytime, anywhere learning. This can be across multiple locations – learners can study from their place of work or from the comfort of their own home – meaning geographical barriers are eliminated, and environmental costs are also reduced. ThirdForce provides a comprehensive range of training courses for care home staff, saving managers from having to seek out a number of different training providers and making it highly cost effective. e-Learning also has the ability to flex with the workforce allowing compliance to be maintained within rapidly growing or acquisitive organisations.

## Challenge 2: Audit trails of learning

Care home managers need to be able to track how their staff are progressing in terms of learning. The ThirdForce e-learning program is easy to track as the administrative functions facilitate learner registration, monitoring of learner progress, and testing and record-keeping, removing the need to develop additional systems. A comprehensive audit trail allows the remote tracking and monitoring of learner progress at company, division, area, site and learner level. It therefore highlights each student's underperforming areas. This enables individuals to revisit learning materials on their problem areas, and improve their knowledge on these topics. Also an audit trail allows for demonstration of compliance. Evidence of training and qualifications can then be presented to regulatory bodies.

## Challenge 3: Accessibility for all

Not all care home staff will have the same



educational background prior to embarking on a training course, and classroom learning can be ineffective as information is tailored to the masses, rather than the individual. Designed to provide a comprehensive guide to caring for others for all students, ThirdForce's e-learning programs use easy to understand words and graphics. Subjects are broken up into manageable sections to ensure learning is accessible for all. Easy to use software, so as not to daunt the 'ICT beginner' in the workforce, and interactive features such as demonstrations of work tasks, help to engage all types of learners. For older staff who may not have grown up in the 'digital native' generation, where the use of technology comes as second nature to many of today's youths, thorough instructions highlight that e-learning is not a task to be feared.

An added advantage is that learners can study in a relatively anonymous environment, without the embarrassment of failure. Any socio-cultural bias from personal contact is eradicated, and each individual can take learning at their own pace.

ThirdForce's el-box™ enables care home managers to deliver learning content to suit the individual requirements of each staff member. Many learners find using a computer or the internet a daunting experience, so ThirdForce provides the el-box™, a tailored touch screen tablet PC that is ideal for workforces with little or no previous experience with ICT. It is also effective for managers concerned about the lack of ICT

availability - with the el-box™, learners with no access to a computer either at work or at home can still embark on training courses.

## Challenge 4: Necessary but tiresome?

Training, if delivered in a classroom, can be one-way, monotone and uninspiring. However, learning need not be a negative experience. An important aspect of e-learning is that it provides a fun and enjoyable learning experience. e-Learning content can be challenging yet rewarding, with stimulating resources providing video, graphics and animation. These multi-sensory approaches positively affect motivation and retention. User-friendly platforms are intended for both

advanced learners and those with basic IT skills, meaning resources are entertaining and informative. The global learning community really is at the students' fingertips with online education.

ThirdForce's e-learning programs provide an efficient route to training, facilitating companies to undertake a modern and forward thinking approach. In this way care home managers can lift performance, raise standards and guarantee best practice throughout their organisation.

For further information, please visit [www.thirdforce.com](http://www.thirdforce.com) or call 020 8843 5500

## Employers warned as landmark ruling extends rights to carers

A leading North West law firm is warning employers to carefully consider employment practices which involve employees who act as carers, following a landmark ruling by the European Court of Justice.

The ruling, in the case of Sharon Coleman, declared that an EU Directive banning employment discrimination on grounds of disability is not limited to people with disabilities themselves, but covers their carers as well. Mrs Coleman claimed she was forced to resign from her job because of her employers remarks about her disabled son and response to her occasional lateness because of his care needs (see notes to editors). She said she suffered "discrimination by association" and this should be covered by the Directive – and the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg agreed.

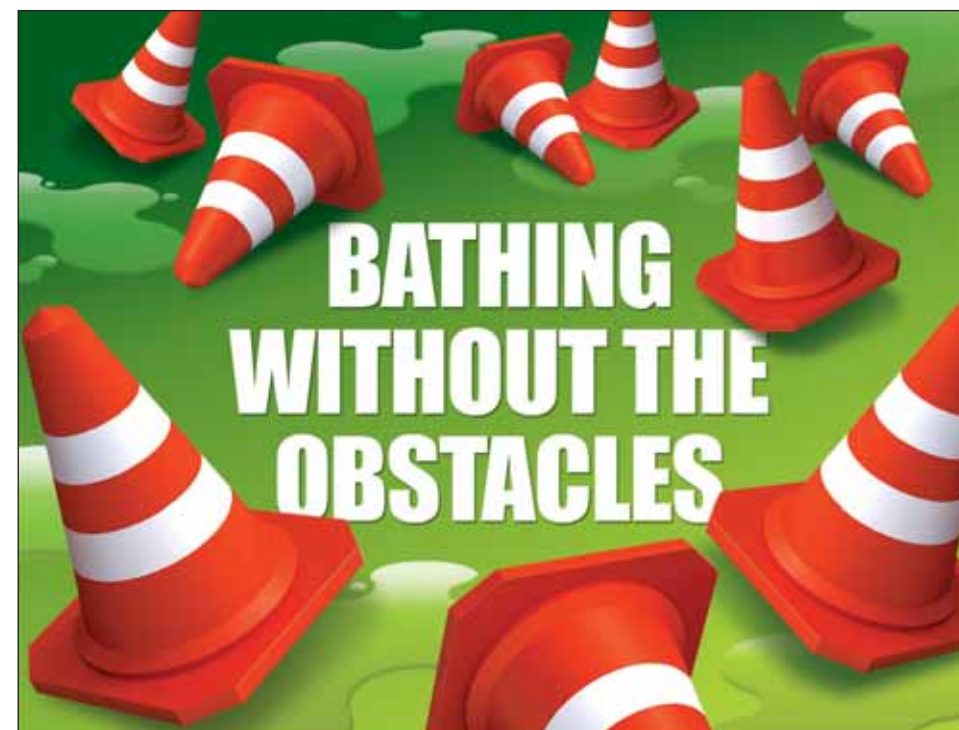
Mace & Jones employment law partner Phil Allen said the verdict effectively gives new rights to many of the UK's estimated six million carers.

"This decision significantly extends the number of employees covered by the Disability Discrimination Act and it is now likely to be followed by UK tribunals," he said. "It means that, if for example, an employee is ridiculed because of their disabled child, parent with cancer, or partner who is HIV positive, that will be disability discrimination. If a new employee is dismissed because their employer finds out their child has leukaemia and is concerned about the time they might need off in the future, that's discrimination."

Mr Allen urged employers to examine their practices carefully to ensure they do not directly discriminate against those who are caring for those with disabilities, including their children or elderly relatives.

"The decision does not necessarily go as far as may have been feared," he said. "To avoid disability discrimination, employers are under a positive duty to go the extra mile for those with disabilities, including adapting premises, changing working arrangements and providing additional training. However, the new extended carer rights will not go this far. The obligation is to treat those who care for people with disabilities no less favourably than others. This is less onerous than the obligation to positively make adjustments as is the case for employees with disabilities."

Employers wanting further advice on disability discrimination law or any form of employment law can contact [phil.allen@maceandjones.co.uk](mailto:phil.allen@maceandjones.co.uk)



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## All Party Parliamentary Local Government Group



# PARLIAMENTARIANS CALL FOR A NEW DEAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Parliamentarians have today called for a new deal for older people to recall services from the brink of collapse and give people back certainty that they will be cared for in later life. An inquiry by the All Party Parliamentary Local Government Group found that the current system is in financial crisis, and that as we face an economic downturn action and a rapidly ageing population, action must be urgently taken to radically re-shape how we think about later life and how we provide for it. It proposes a radical shake-up that would break down boundaries between councils and health, and between the public, private and voluntary sectors, with the basic aim of

ensuring everyone in the country can expect the same kind of services, and have a single place to go to access them. The report, *Never too late for living*, comes ahead of the government's own recommendations for care for older people which are due for publication next Spring. The cross-party group inquiry, which is supported by the Local Government Information Unit, was launched in March. Clive Betts MP for Sheffield Attercliffe chaired the panel of parliamentarians which included Phillip Dunne MP, Lord Hanningfield, Jim Dobbin MP, Joan Humble MP and Baroness Greengross.

Clive Betts MP said: "This report comes at quite a critical time: clearly society as a whole is not delivering for older people in many cases. It is right that local government take a lead to deliver a new vision to make a difference to people's lives." The report is significant because it represents consensus arising out of a diverse range of players across sectors, not only a large number of local authorities, but local and national voluntary sector agencies, private sector providers, central departments and older people themselves.

Reply No. 11

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Reply No. 12

**Just tell me what I need to know**

Ovwhelmingly, the report found that older people are suffering from a confused system that people don't understand, and which doesn't offer the right things. The report calls for central and local government to agree a new deal that sets out a national commitment alongside a single source of information, coordinated by the council, where people can go to find out what is available to them, not just from the public sector, but from local businesses, charities and community groups.

**We can't do this on our own**

The report says that public perceptions about ageing need to change so that the lives of older people are thought of as "our lives" not "their problem". It says: "Central government should lead this change nationally by tackling the current crisis which is impeding progress. Local government should lead locally, by providing services which bring people together, particularly across generations. Publicly funded media should support this by raising the profile of the current challenges, opportunities and collective responsibilities surrounding ageing."

**We need to use scarce resources where they count**

It also calls for a greater focus on preventative care so that less money is spent on costly

hospital stays and treatment. The report advocates creating a system so that councils who can show that investing in keeping people fit and well saves the NHS money, can claim that money from the NHS to spend on preventing illness.

LGIU chief executive Andy Sawford said: "Everyone working in this area knows we need to prevent illness, not treat it. This means paying for exercise classes to avoid paying for operations, but it consistently fails to happen. We need to give councils the tools to move the money or things will never change."

**We can't afford to manage services separately**

The inquiry also calls for a staged process to break down the artificial barriers between health and social care services. It found evidence that many local areas are already forging ahead and that this inevitable merger should be accelerated. The commissioning of local services for older people currently done by primary care trusts should move into the local authority.

Lord Hanningfield, leader of Essex County Council, said: "Fragmentation of services is a genuine burden for older people. We need health and social care, and a much wider spectrum of services, to work as one. To achieve this we need to increase democratic accountability, and the way to do this is

through the elected mandate of local councils."

**We need to get a grip on what older people actually need**

The report comes in the middle of the Government's consultation on the future of care funding. The report criticises the narrow focus on health and social care and says that we must look at what really matters to older people. Big issues for older people are about housing and transport, and any reform needs to address these as much as health and social care.

It should be easier for older people to move home to free up equity, be closer to grown children or live somewhere that is more accessible, and it should also be easier for people to stay in their own homes by adapting them.

The report follows the publication of the Audit Commission report on older people's services Don't stop me now, which found that councils were struggling to meet the demands of an ageing population, and reinforced the message that the system needs urgent reform.

For further information contact LGIU's media manager Jennifer Sprinks: 020 7554 2858; Jennifer.sprinks@lgiu.org.uk

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**Consultation on Assessment of Adult Social Care**

The way in which councils are assessed on their performance in providing social care for adults is set to change. The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is seeking views on proposed modifications to its performance assessment of adult services in 2008-09.

John Fraser, CSCI's Director of Quality, Performance and Methods, said: "Councils' commissioning and delivery of adult social care are vital to local people who use these services, and their families and carers. It is our job as the regulator to reflect policy changes and ensure that what we assess is contemporary and relevant."

There are four key areas in which the emphasis will change, in line with Government expectations for: more power to be given to individuals to take control and commission their own services; more power for councils to set their own priorities in meeting local needs, with less central direction; a potentially universal entitlement to advice and information and to a range of support and care services, and better access to community services and personal care; health and social care services to be delivered together effectively for people who need both, particularly those with more complex support needs. The closing date for views is 8 August.

CSCI is the inspectorate for adults' social care in England, responsible for regulating and inspecting all social care providers - whether in the public or independent sector, and for assessing the performance of local councils in delivering their adults' social services functions. The Commission's primary aim is to improve social care by putting the needs of people who use care services first. [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

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## Keeping your Laundry Green



Every size of care home needs an on-premise laundry to ensure it can wash and dry considerable quantities of clothing, uniforms, bedding and towelling on a daily basis. Hygienic washing is always of paramount importance in the care environment and especially so when having to deal with soiled items. As we all become more environmentally conscious, energy efficiency, reduced carbon emissions and the controlled use of water are also increasingly important factors when choosing the best laundry equipment. The good news is that equipment manufacturers are responding to these trends, so if you are thinking of equipping or refurbishing your laundry, you can now look to do so with more advanced, energy and water efficient washers and dryers than ever before. The latest generation of high-speed washer-extractors can save both time and money. High-speed extraction removes moisture quickly by applying a higher "G" force than was previously possible in the older style of rigid machines. The newer generation machines can process more washing per hour and clothes washed in them will typically dry in 25 to 30 minutes because of lower water retention. As well as being more productive, high speed washers use less energy than conventional washers, reducing carbon emissions and overall impact on the environment. High speed washer extractors have a greater range of programmes to ensure that they can deal effectively with any fabric that will be encountered in a care home environment. Cotton sheets are ideal for washing with high-speed extraction, but table linen tends to wrinkle when extracted quickly, and delicate clothing may require special programmes. A further innovation that is helping to revolutionise care home laundry operations is

the introduction of ozone washing systems. Ozone is a powerful, natural disinfectant which has been proven in the US for over 15 years and is also used to purify drinking water. It is over 3,000 times faster-acting than chlorine bleach. Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) is a form of oxygen, which more commonly occurs as O<sub>2</sub>. Ozone that occurs naturally in the air at the seaside is associated with the "fresh air" smell you notice most when you first arrive on the coast. Ozone can destroy some of the UK's most widely prevalent superbugs, like MRSA even at low temperatures. Clostridium difficile (a spore former which has a protective "shell" that is notoriously difficult to penetrate) is also reduced to safe levels using ozone washing technology. Previously, satisfactory disinfection could only be achieved by high temperature washing which was costly and time-consuming, and could cause damage to delicate articles such as silk blouses and cashmere sweaters. However ozone cleaning is effective at low temperatures and uses less energy than traditional systems. Wash cycles using ozone systems require less detergent than traditional washing machines and are much shorter, meaning that less water is consumed. Reducing energy consumption also reduces the carbon footprint of the whole laundry operation, making it kinder to the environment. Overall using ozone can reduce average laundry running costs by between 15% and 25%. In addition to time and cost savings, an ozone-equipped laundry can provide a cooler, more pleasant working environment for laundry staff. Ozone washed garments are often said to smell fresher too. Drying is an equally important part of the laundry operation. The latest tumble dryers

are designed to deliver energy efficiency, high productivity, quick drying and low maintenance and commercial dryers offer load capacities from 10kg up to around 70kg. For most care homes, dryers heated by gas rather than electricity will offer the best drying and energy efficiency performance. The latest dryers feature advanced airflow systems to cut drying times and reduce fabric wear. Other features to look out for include a robust belt drive system that will assure years of quiet, trouble-free use. Easily accessible components and a high-capacity lint compartment will also make your dryers easier to maintain. When buying new laundry equipment, it can be a false economy to buy cheaper washers and dryers. In heavy use, they often turn out to be less reliable and they may also be less energy efficient. If future expansion of the care home is anticipated, it will also make sense to plan excess capacity into your laundry to cope with increased volumes. Even if expansion does not occur, the larger washers will offer greater operational savings for the existing facility. However, as care home laundries typically need to run every day, it may pay to buy two smaller capacity machines rather than one higher capacity machine. If one breaks down you still have at least one machine until the breakdown is repaired. This choice can also give you greater flexibility to run different washes at the same time in separate machines. Once the proper equipment is selected, it should be positioned for maximum efficiency and convenience: pay close attention to entrances, drains, exhaust areas, ventilation and machinery access. A good rule of thumb is to allow at least 50 centimetres between washers. Dryers can be placed side by side. Placing equipment in a manner that takes maintenance needs into account is also

important. Some manufacturers offer a laundry design service that you can use to optimise laundry operation within the constraints of the space and facilities available. Reliable operation is essential for most care home laundries, so when procuring new

equipment it also pays to consider planned maintenance programmes and repair services. Some manufacturers offer finance packages that can include service and maintenance, so it is worth checking before you buy what deals are on offer.

Peter Marsh is Managing Director of Girbau UK Laundry Equipment. For further information contact 0844 391 0395, e-mail: [sales@girbau.co.uk](mailto:sales@girbau.co.uk) or visit [www.girbau.co.uk](http://www.girbau.co.uk)

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## BRAND NEW FEATURES EXPAND CARE SHOW



Several significant new features at the NEC's Care Show, 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> November, will give increased opportunity for care home owners and managers to meet with key industry specialists and see the very latest innovations in the elderly care sector. They will run alongside the Bettercaring Seminar Theatre and the National Association of Care Catering Nutrition Kitchen, both of which have been an integral part of previous shows.

- **Networking Lounge**  
A new lounge area, hosted by a local care association, will offer attendees an informal venue to meet experts in the care home business and to chat with colleagues over a free sandwich and drink.
- **Association Street**  
There's an impressive representation from the main care sector associations, including the NACC, NCA, NCF, RNHA, ECCA and NAPA, and a new central isle called "Association Street" will give focus to this aspect of the show.
- **New product gallery**  
A window on the latest in elderly care. This is a valuable opportunity to view what's new in the industry and visitors are invited to vote on the show website for the product that impresses them most to help decide the winner of the show's 'Best New Product' Award.
- **Garden Café**  
A relaxing garden specially designed with care homes in mind will provide a pleasant area to have lunch or coffee. There's even a free massage to help you unwind.

The Birmingham Care Show runs from 10am – 4pm on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2008 at the Birmingham NEC. Entry is free. For further information, or to register, visit [www.careshow.co.uk/nec](http://www.careshow.co.uk/nec) or contact Lewis Swan, Marketing Manager, on 020 7921 8196.

### The Care Show

The Care Show is the UK's primary exhibition for the care home industry and a key event for care home owners and managers. It is organised by CMP Information Ltd, one of the largest publishing houses in the UK and owners of Caring Business Magazine. The Birmingham Care Show is sponsored by The Royal Bank of Scotland.



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## New inspections raise the bar on dementia care - A new report published on 03 June 2008 raises the bar on the care of people with dementia living in care homes

A new way of inspecting, used by CSCI inspectors for the first time, focuses on the needs of people who cannot easily communicate and gets under the skin of the real relationship between staff and the people they care for. Using the new technique, inspectors observed the interactions between staff and people with dementia in 100 care homes across England.

Launching the report, *See me, not just the dementia: Understanding people's experiences of living in a care home*, CSCI Chair Dame Denise Platt said:

"People with dementia are often unable to communicate easily. This new way of inspecting, developed in partnership with the University of Bradford, is unique, and lets us look beyond the surface of routine care practice to understand people's emotional well-being, and how staff relate to them. "This is helping us to raise the bar and drive improvements in the quality of care for people with dementia. We have developed the new inspection technique in partnership with the University of Bradford."

CSCI Chief Inspector Paul Snell added: "The quality of life for people with dementia living in care homes is hugely affected by the way in which care staff communicate and empathise with them. Much depends on a care home's leadership and ethos, and the quality of training and support given to staff." CSCI's study will contribute to the forthcoming Government consultation on dementia that will have high quality care as a key objective. Inspectors used a new method called SOFI (A Short Observational Framework for Inspection), to watch the interaction between people with dementia and care home staff. SOFI is based on Dementia Care Mapping first developed by Tom Kitwood and recognised as a powerful way of evaluating the quality of care from the perspective of the person with dementia.

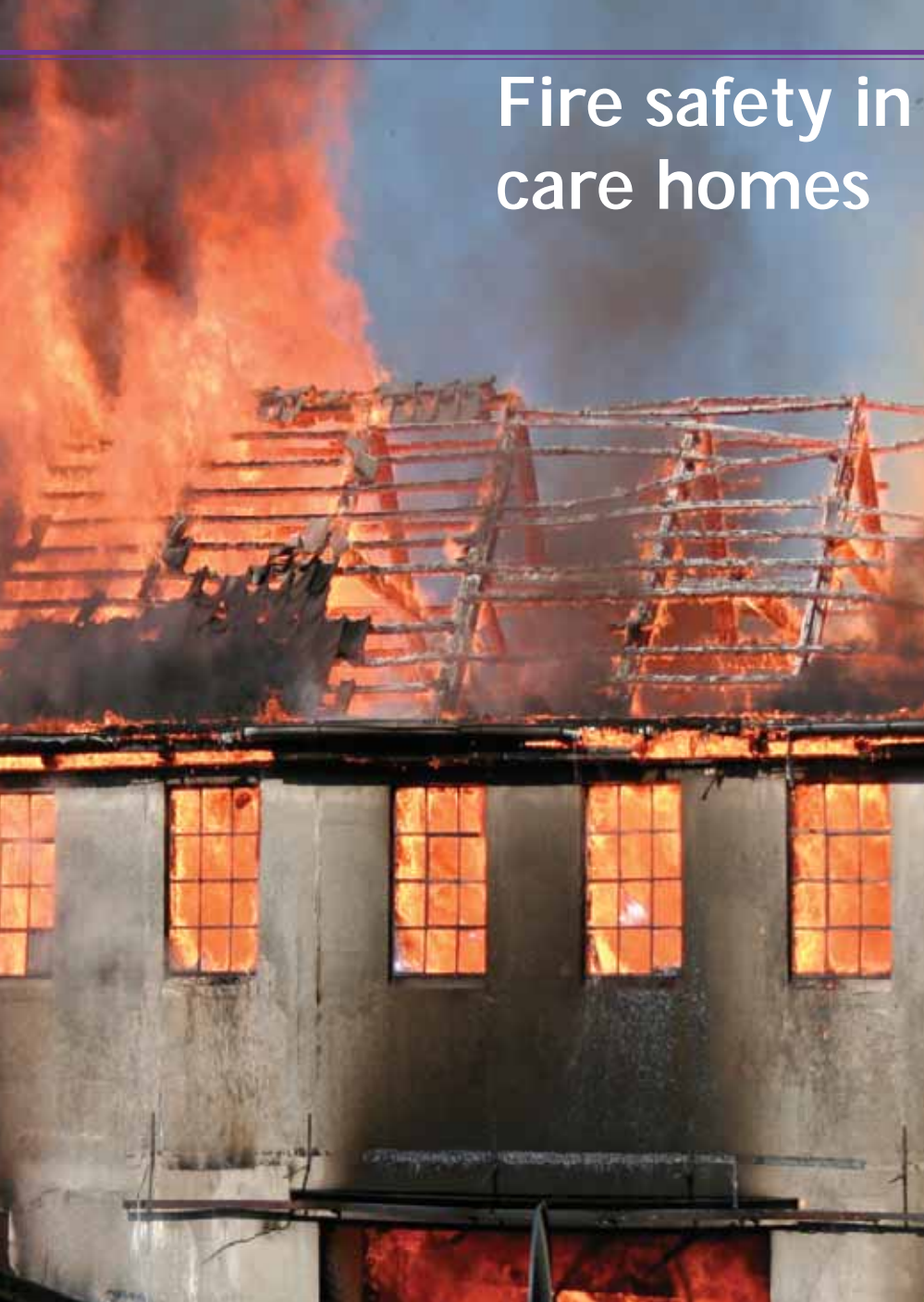
The report: *See me, not just the dementia: Understanding people's experiences of living in a care home* is available on CD-ROM as well as on paper. The CD version contains a number of video clips of interviews with people with dementia, care staff, inspectors and others talking about their experiences. CSCI is the inspectorate for adults' social care in England, responsible for regulating and inspecting all social care providers - whether in the public or independent sector; and for assessing the performance of local councils in delivering their adults' social services functions. The Commission's primary aim is to improve social care by putting the needs of people who use care services first.



Dame Denise Platt

For more information and other topics please visit [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

# Fire safety in residential care homes



A new booklet from the Fire Protection Association brings managers, duty holders and 'responsible people' in premises providing residential care up to date with the management requirements placed upon them by recent changes in fire safety legislation and the changing role of the fire and rescue service



Fire safety management at residential care homes can be particularly challenging. Care homes differ from most other commercial premises in that they provide accommodation for residents who are not able to provide for themselves or live independent lives in the community. This means that every resident will have individual needs that must be taken into account should evacuation be necessary because of a fire. The residents – or service users – may be short-stay or long-stay; they may be in any age group from children to the elderly; they may be infirm because of old age, mentally alert but with limited physical abilities, or further handicapped by being partially sighted and hard of hearing. They may be young with behavioural, mental or physical handicaps, or they may be suffering from addiction to drugs, alcohol or nicotine. With recent changes to fire safety legislation

across the UK, managers, duty holders and 'responsible people' in premises providing residential care must carry out a fire risk assessment of the premises. The Fire Protection Association – the UK's leading publisher in the fields of fire safety, fire prevention and related topics – has produced a new booklet in its Fire risk management series aimed at these people. The series already includes guides on industrial premises, hotels and guesthouses, retail premises and offices. The FPA's new, full-colour booklet – called Fire risk management in premises providing residential care – provides sufficient guidance for a responsible person to carry out a fire risk assessment in smaller care premises without having to undertake formal training. In addition to guidance dealing with the regulatory life safety aspects, which clearly must drive fire precautions, the FPA's booklet

also deals with additional fire safety precautions that may be implemented in order to protect the business. This includes the provision of enhanced building, property and business continuity protection in the event of a fire breaking out. The booklet also contains a checklist offering a reminder of what fire safety checks should be carried out on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis.

### Vulnerability of service users

People in general are particularly vulnerable to the effects of smoke and toxic fire gases when they are asleep. People asleep in residential care bedrooms are especially at risk from the effects of fire as they are used to being looked after, cared for and told what to do. If the service user is infirm through old age or a young person with a mental or physical handicap, they may well be unable to look after themselves in a fire emergency. For example,

## Don't leave it to chance!

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order places new responsibilities on care home owners and managers to ensure fire safety.

Every year in the UK, deaths and injuries occur in care homes as a result of fire: several tragic incidents have received news coverage in the last few years. In addition to the human loss, significant property damage is incurred every year too. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which came into effect in October 2006, places an emphasis on preventing fires and reducing risk - but furthermore, the legislation has transferred the responsibility for fire safety from the fire authorities to whoever has day-to-day control of the premises. This places fire safety responsibility firmly with owners and managers of care homes.

One important aspect of a building's fire safety is the fire doors - they play a vital role, holding back the spread of fire and hot smoke through a building, and giving time for building occupants to escape. An integral part of a fire door is the intumescent fire seal, which expands to seal the gaps around the edges when the fire reaches the door. Cold smoke sealing on fire doors is vital too, as cold smoke can be even more lethal than the fire itself: it travels much more quickly, reaching the door long before the fire, and causing many more casualties. Combined smoke and fire seals, such as the Lorient DS featured on the front cover, offer an integrated, durable solution to both requirements.

Lorient also provides seals to upgrade existing fire rated doors so they provide smoke containment too – such as the Lorient Batwing® seal, pictured here. And the threshold of the door is often an overlooked area, providing a straight-through gap for smoke if it is not appropriately sealed - again, Lorient provides a range of threshold seal choices. All Lorient's upgrade solutions can be quickly and easily fitted without having to remove the door.

When considering fire rated doors, there are other factors to be taken into account too. Many fire doors, including those in care homes, also need to provide acoustic containment, to meet the requirements of Approved Document E to the Building Regulations, and enhance quality of life for residents. Furthermore, access for all is an important consideration, and particularly pertinent in care homes. All Lorient's products have been developed with these considerations in mind – so choosing a Lorient system offers complete assurance that all requirements have been taken into account, without needing to install numerous different products.

Correctly sealed fire doors are integral to satisfying the RR(FS)O regulations – yet it's all too easy for this to be overlooked and present a major risk in the case of a fire. Just one or two small products can make a big difference - so don't leave it to chance!

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they may be incapable of becoming familiar with the premises and associated escape routes. Similarly, if they are sedated at night time, they may be in a disorientated state when first awakened by, for example, the sound of a fire alarm. A slowly developing fire may smoke log corridors and escape routes and make it particularly difficult to evacuate residential care premises during night-time hours.

In addition, there may be residents who are mobile but not able to behave in a responsible manner when outdoors. Therefore, access control might be required not only to restrict entry by strangers, who may not be challenged by the residents, but also to make sure vulnerable or 'wandering' residents do not leave the premises unbeknown to care staff. Added to this, there may be inherent fire risks, such as large-scale food preparation and cooking facilities. There may also be a laundry and linen drying areas, which may contain both ignition sources and combustible materials. Similarly, stores of therapeutic oils, cleaning materials, linen, furniture and cooking oils may present high fire loads, which are relatively easy to ignite, and susceptible to deliberate ignition.

Some of the residents may pose a fire risk by having a wish to 'play with matches', deliberately start fires, or to smoke in their bedrooms or covertly and surreptitiously

smoke in other unsupervised parts of the premises.

Fires are often uncontrollable by the time firefighters have arrived and deployed themselves, and it is not uncommon for large parts or even the whole of the premises to be smoke logged, fire damaged, or even destroyed. This has been seen several times in connection with premises providing residential care residential and has been a driver to providing specific government guidance on fire safety in residential care homes.

#### Solutions for care home managers

As well as chapters on fire protection equipment (such as detection, warning and suppression systems), building design (including fire-resisting compartments and escape strategies in the event of fire) and legislative requirements (covering design and structure of buildings, management of fire safety, who is responsible, definitions and enforcement of the law), there is a detailed explanation of how to carry out a fire risk assessment.

There are many methods of conducting a fire risk assessment, and the FPA's recommends a well-developed seven-stage approach:

- Stage 1: identify all the fire hazards;
- Stage 2: identify the people at risk;

- Stage 3: eliminate, control and avoid the hazards;
- Stage 4: review the existing fire safety provisions;
- Stage 5: record findings and actions;
- Stage 6: prepare an emergency plan; and
- Stage 7: periodically reviewing the assessment.

Each step is explained in detail in the FPA's booklet. It is important that the fire risk assessment is carried out in a practical and systematic way and that enough time is allocated to do a thorough job. The fire risk assessment must involve an inspection of the whole of the premises, including outdoor locations and any rooms and areas that are rarely used.

For those running residential care homes with staff that provide round-the-clock care for residents, this fire safety management guide will help them to comply with the law and make their workplace a safer place.

For more information about Fire risk management in premises providing residential care or other fire prevention and protection publications, contact the Fire Protection Association, London Road, Moreton in Marsh, Gloucestershire GL56 0RH; tel: 01608 812500; fax: 01908 812501 email: sales@thefpa.co.uk web: www.thefpa.co.uk.

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£2,573	-	£475,000	£1,675,000	£9,073
£2,979	-	£550,000	£1,800,000	£9,750
£3,657	-	£625,000	£1,950,000	£10,563
£4,469	-	£825,000	£2,225,000	£12,052
£5,146	-	£950,000	£2,600,000	£14,084
£6,365	-	£1,175,000	£3,100,000	£16,792

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Reply No. 26

## telguard®

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### TelGuard PABX based intercoms – the flexible solution

The TelGuard range of telephone and GSM based intercom systems are suitable for new build or retro fit. In both scenarios the entrance intercom system simply plugs into an extension of the site PABX the same as a normal extension telephone. The only other requirement is for local power and the intercom can be installed. Installation is not disruptive as the telephone system is either already in situ or needs to be installed anyway so the installation takes place at the entrance to be controlled and there is no need to put handsets into rooms or offices as they are already in place.

The telephone extension numbers of the rooms and offices are then programmed into the intercom system with any access codes required and the system is ready for use.

A visitor enters the extension or room number into the intercom via the keypad and then presses the 'CALL' button. The receiver of the call picks the telephone in the room up and can speak to the visitor and allow access by pressing a digit on their telephone keypad. This sends a signal to the intercom that activates the door lock or entrance gate and the visitor is able to gain access. If the receiver of the call does not want to grant access they simply put their phone down to end the call.

The TelGuard system is not only quick to install compared with hard-wired systems but also extremely flexible. Calls can be answered on cordless telephones making it possible for staff to answer entrance requests while going about day to day duties or it is possible for a mobile phone to be called for access requests. Our vandal resistant range of systems are suitable for anything from a single user system right up to a 1000 user system, the installation process is still the same.

We are able to provide systems with backlit keypads and buttons, integrated proximity access and video. The video picture can go to a dedicated monitor or into the communal aerial for viewing on any television in the premise.

DDA systems are available with large halo illuminated Braille buttons with big letter easy to read displays and audio and visual call progress indication. Bespoke applications are also undertaken making it possible to provide almost any style or shape of system. It may be that we have to provide a system to replace an existing installation so we are able to manufacture our panel to fit the aperture of an old, non-functional system.

For further information, please visit: [www.dooreentry.co.uk](http://www.dooreentry.co.uk) or email: enquiries@telguard.co.uk or telephone us on: 01306 710120

Reply No. 29



## Safety radiators



radiators to choose? Standard gas central heating radiators – and in particular their pipework – can reach temperatures as high as 70°C – hot enough to cause serious burns within seconds. For disabled residents living alone in sheltered housing or even in managed residential accommodation, falling unnoticed onto a hot surface could have disastrous consequences. Similarly, gas central heating needs to be carefully considered when housing vulnerable residents. The implication of a gas leak might be too big a risk to take for multiple occupancy properties where residents have limited mobility and an evacuation would be difficult.

It is imperative therefore that when choosing a heating system, vulnerable users have a safe heating provision, cannot come into contact with a hot surface, risk danger from gas leakages and have an easy to control, cost effective solution.

It may also be necessary to protect against tampering and vandalism. Radiators therefore need to be resistant to physical abuse and have tamper-resistant fixings so the casings can be removed only using special tools.

The most practical way to prevent people from coming into direct contact with hot surfaces is to use radiators that are designed to eliminate the risk. While traditional radiator casings can provide a cover for the radiator itself, additional boxing is also required for hot,

exposed pipes making the casings option costly and time consuming.

Purpose-built Low Surface Temperature radiators are designed to provide a safe, cool-touch solution to heating a building where the occupants may have special needs. In particular, LST radiators that provide a strong visual presence in a room will easily be seen by visually impaired residents or building users. David Garrity is Managing Director of Heat Electric, the Yorkshire-based manufacturer of Heat Electric and Easy Heat electric water filled radiators. Specialising in easy to use, energy efficient and controllable heating solutions and having just launched an even more energy efficient version of their water filled electric radiator range, he explains: "Not all Low Surface Temperature radiators are the same. Our LST models are perfect for a disabled living environment because they are pipe-free individual units which look and work just like a conventional gas central heating system. However, each Heat Electric radiator works independently of the rest and by containing its own mini boiler and pump, requires no external pipework which immediately eradicates a further potential burn hazard."

The Heat Electric LST radiators are differentiated from the other models in the Heat Electric range by their specialist, impact resistant steel casing which prevents the

surface temperature exceeding 43°C. This makes the radiators particularly suitable for use in hospitals, nursing homes, schools and nurseries.

David continued: "Another important consideration when specifying heating systems for disabled or elderly use is the risk of people falling onto a radiator and injuring themselves from the impact. Conventional radiators tend to have sharp edges that can cause serious injury so it is important when selecting LST models to opt for those, like the Heat Electric LST models, where the outer casing has safer, radiused edges to minimise the risk of injury in the event of a fall.

"While the surface temperature never exceeds 43°C the LST still provides 95% of the heat output of our standard system by relying more on convection to heat the room to the desired temperature than other models," David continued. "The radiators are fully programmable and thermostatically controlled, allowing residents or users to set the room temperature they are happy with. And as the LST radiators are water filled they also emit comfortable heat."

100% efficient - as all electrical energy is delivered into the room as useful heat – Heat Electric's intelligent control system ensures heat is only ever delivered when and where it is needed which ensures optimum controllability which enhances energy and cost

efficiencies.

Adding to the controllability and ease of use of the Heat Electric LST radiators, each unit can be programmed to achieve a specific room temperature for its location. While a number of radiators can be set to come on and off together, each one will only activate if the room it is in is too warm or too cold. This avoids cold spots, overheating and eliminates energy wastage.

The built in air thermostat also enables the temperature to be adjusted as required and, when not in use, the LST radiator can be switched off completely so rooms are not unnecessarily heated. By not constantly drawing electricity and with the facility to be powered under the low cost energy tariff Economy 10, users can benefit from all important lower energy bills.

David Garrity added: "A practical and cost effective solution, our LST radiators can be fitted either throughout a property or solely in high risk areas. "Easy to install, they ensure that the most vulnerable members of society are not only protected from a very real danger to their health, but also have the most efficient, responsive and effective form of heating at their fingertips 24 hours a day, ensuring their optimum well being."

For more information on the Heat Electric LST radiator range, call 01422 231943

Specifying heating for properties which house disabled or elderly residents requires careful consideration of their needs, the functionality and ease of use of the heating system and cost efficiencies of installation and longer term fuel bills. While at first glance a standard radiator may not be an obvious health hazard, for the most vulnerable members of society it represents a dangerous and potentially harmful feature of any room. Optimum safety – including minimising the risk of injury from a fall - controllability and energy efficient warmth are key priorities when supplying heat for disabled or elderly users. Whether it's a new build project or whether modifications are being made to an existing property to make it more user friendly, heating is a primary concern.

Those with thin, delicate skin can suffer

superficial burns from even a glancing touch of a conventional radiator – the surface temperature of which can reach up to 70°C – while contact burns to those over 65 can prove to be fatal.

According to the annual Home Accident Surveillance System (funded by the Department of Trade and Industry and managed by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) 27,429 people were injured in their home in 2002 (the last year the data was collected and published) by either a radiator or hot pipework.

So what steps can be taken to prevent such accidents?

For spaces with high ceilings, underfloor heating may be the best solution, but in all other areas, radiators are considered the most cost effective and efficient option. But which

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Reply No. 30

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Reply No. 31



## A care home we can all enjoy

With its radical moves to combine collective accommodation and social care, cohousing could revolutionise life for the elderly in Britain.

With the government's recent pledge to transform social care funding by introducing individual budgets, some elderly groups are looking at ways to revolutionise their care and accommodation requirements.

One such experiment that has largely been ignored by the politicians and local authorities is cohousing. This is where a group of elderly people club together to buy a site, build flats or maisonettes and move in. The idea is to live an independent life with neighbours nearby for support if needed.

The scheme links ideally with government proposals on independent social care provision and less state involvement in housing and welfare. Moreover, those involved with cohousing claim they can hire care staff among the collective and keep an eye on those members of their community who become increasingly frail. So cohousing also helps overcome the issues of loneliness and isolation that haunt the elderly.

The movement is already popular in Europe, Australia and the US, where cohousing networks are a proven success. But it has yet to take off in Britain where individual home ownership is more common and where housing associations and local authorities tend to focus their funds more on homeless individuals rather than elderly groups.

### Cohousing in Fife

Hugh Hoffman is a member of Vivarium, a cohousing group comprising 25 over 50s members in Fife. The group is currently lobbying the Scottish government to look more closely at how the cohousing movement can help to drive the idea of communities taking charge of their own decisions, rather than relying on the state.

"Cohousing is to do with a choice of lifestyle and having social support," Hugh says. "The choice is made for people who want to continue to live an independent life, rather than looking at getting older as a problem for society."

"It goes against a lot of administrative procedures, such as providing housing grants. They tend to be allocated to housing associations on the basis of housing need and we don't fit into that criterion, so that source of support is not obviously available."

Vivarium received charity status last November and is now defining its objectives, to promote cohousing to the general public and Scottish policy makers.

Hugh has also been active, speaking at conferences and has had help from Age Concern Scotland and the Scottish Green Party. But he admits it will take "a lot of lobbying before any changes of policy occur". While Hugh's lobbying has been partially successful at gaining a sympathetic ear at regional government level, he believes Vivarium still has a way to go before policy makers change their views: "Cohousing is novel in Britain. It's not a '60s commune, it's not a care home, it's not sheltered housing, but it's got elements of all of them. So we have to come up with a way of showing that to people."

### Housing for Women

Meanwhile, south of the border other groups are starting to take the cohousing idea a step further than Vivarium. For Elizabeth Clarkson, chief executive of Housing for Women – a London-based housing association – the concept of cohousing beginning with the community rather than simply bricks and mortar is something worth promoting. What is attractive for Elizabeth is that

cohousing is accommodation for the elderly that is not imposed from above. "We find the idea very attractive because it is giving choice and it's enabling the residents of a cohousing group to be in charge of themselves," she says. "They are the ones who will be taking the decisions. They may well opt to contract management services to us or another body, but they will definitely be in charge." Moreover, Elizabeth believes the idea cuts across the stereotypical view of old age as being 'done to'.

"And it satisfies a lot of current concerns about residents' choices and people being in charge of their own life and sorting out the management themselves," she adds. "We feel it is a good concept for people who are growing older because it will hopefully cut down on the isolation that many older people feel."

"I think it could become one of the options for housing for older people in the future if we can make it a reality, which we are working towards. Not quite there yet, but getting there."

### Owch

Likewise, a group of elderly women in London that believes it's only a matter of time before a successful cohousing movement exists in Britain is the Older Women's CoHousing group (Owch).

Owch first set up 10 years ago as a loose network of women who were over 50 years old and wanted to opt for some kind of collective living in London. Owch has a core membership of 24 women with the idea to develop two cohousing developments in London. Any equity is pooled between the group, so a third would be owners, a third shared owners and the final third social renters.

"The ethos is very strong around mutual, day-to-day support," says spokesperson Maria Brenton. "We've had several people breaking bones during the past few years. Mentally and physically you feel better when you know other people are around and you know you're not going to be vulnerable."

So members of Owch provide support if neighbours are ill or lonely, while with the more serious caring issues they will act as advocates to receive all the necessary care they're entitled to.

"Connected with the mutual support is the possibility of pooling together care package resources," Maria adds. "That is hiring staff between the group and employing them ourselves. Hire, fire and get them to come in at the times we want them. It reduces the awful dependence on the state services, which is where they come in when they want to."

To achieve this unique care package, Owch would set up its own company. Maria's logic is that this would make any funds from individual budgets go further by pooling such resources and hiring the same staff: "We've heard very frightening stories about carers coming into work in homes who aren't the right people working with the elderly who are vulnerable. It needs people around to keep an eye on what's happening."

"I'm looking forward to living in a place where I can be young elderly and when I start to get frail the place will still suit my needs."

### Funding the venture

To fund the venture, Owch has a grant from the Housing Corporation, which allows the group to purchase a site anywhere in Greater London. These funds, however, have to be expended through a housing association that will develop the site for them.

Most of the brownfield sites that have been identified so far are ex-factories or hostels and are valuable commercial land that tends to sell to the private sector almost immediately. "The sites we're hearing about are there one day and gone the next," Maria complains. "If this were a private initiative, we could take it over tomorrow."

Recently, the group managed to secure a site in the London borough of Brent, but the project unravelled after two frustrating years.

"We had all the plans drawn up, several of them to satisfy the planners," Maria says. "We were down to the fine detail of the building with the project manager and then a new planning officer came along and said we were blocking the eyeline of a grade 2 listed building. So we were bumped off the project."

Unsurprisingly, Maria is critical of how local government handles elderly housing issues. She believes older people are not high on the list of priorities: "When I talk to local authorities, the last group they're interested in is us (older people). And I can't count how many housing associations we've had meetings with. For the first five minutes they're

enthusiastic, then it goes into their bureaucracy and they have no interest in building something from the ground up. They haven't got time for elderly people who already have homes."

Maria has also upset the sheltered housing movement by claiming her members "don't want to go into sheltered housing. It's full of strangers who don't know each other, whose values are different and who have never agreed to live together".

Meanwhile, members of Owch continue to lobby central and local government, with mixed results. But they're convinced that cohousing can be a viable solution to the housing and social care crisis facing the UK's elderly people. To date, they have had a sympathetic ear from policy makers, but no firm assurances.

But with Owch now working closely with Elizabeth Clarkson's Housing for Women, most agree that it's only a matter of time before cohousing projects take the initiative on elderly care and accommodation.

"We hope it will give the elderly something to look forward to as they grow older," Elizabeth says. "That it will become a model that can be replicated for other groups."

Andrew Chilvers, Editor of Bettercaring, a care home search engine that includes information and feature articles on social care issues.

T: 01993 810 300 [www.bettercaring.com](http://www.bettercaring.com)

## CareDocs - The new name in Care Home management software

CareDocs is the new name in Care Home management software, and it's already making an impact. Why? Because it's been designed by Care Home owners for Care Home owners; it's bright, very versatile, exceptionally easy to use and, above all, it will automatically write full Care Plans for you! "It's a program we originally wrote for our own use, but it proved so popular we've brought it to market" says Jonathan Ann, CareDocs' Managing Director "We identified those areas of managing our Care Home that took the most time and effort, and wrote a program to do it for us...remembering of course that most of our staff are new to computers. The ability to create complete Care Plans from a simple multiple choice assessment has transformed life at our Home, saving hours of Staff time, and it's helped us achieve our CSCI three star excellent rating too."

CareDocs was launched just a couple of months ago and seems to be taking the market by storm, with many clients having already taken delivery of their new systems, which comes already loaded on a dedicated Dell laptop. Initial feedback is overwhelmingly positive, "Customers are telling us that they don't need any training, the system is entirely intuitive, and they're not using the program just to write Care Plans but to manage every aspect of the management of their homes, from staff work sheets and holidays to equipment maintenance and kitchen temperatures" says Jonathan. Originally designed for use in residential Care Homes, there has been an astonishing response from every part of the Care Home market. "We've been busy adding several series of extra questions to the original assessment set, and now have a product suitable for every use including Nursing, Dementia, Domiciliary and slightly more specialist areas such as acquired brain damage, and of course the good news is that no matter how many extra questions we add the assessment process remains simple and easy to use because each new question is driven by how you've answered the multiple choice questions you've already answered, so the system automatically skips sections which aren't relevant to the Resident or Client you're working with."

Each new customer has the opportunity to add further specific questions or other management or staffing issues to the system prior to delivery. "We're absolutely committed to supplying our customers with a bespoke system that completely meets their individual needs and requirements" confirms Jonathan.

Judge for yourself on the CareDocs website: [www.caredocs.co.uk](http://www.caredocs.co.uk).



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the discounted products available plus their communal space with forums, games, information and support. Alternatively pop into one of their friendly and established retail outlets.

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The CL50 from Robot Coupe has been one of the industries veg prep workhorses for many years - trusted as much for its rugged reliability as valued for its work-rate and impressive selection of cutting discs.

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The launch of the CL50 Gourmet means that the current range of 49 cutting discs will be extended by 3 Brunoise (dicing) and 2 waffle discs. The Brunoise disc sets now include 2x2x2mm, 3x3x3mm and 4x4x4mm cuts, so it's possible to create the finest dicing for any number of uses including fine and visually stunning garnishes. The 4mm and 6mm waffle cuts also create interesting dishes and are perfect for salads or cooked or steamed vegetables. To find out more about the CL50 Gourmet, please contact Robot Coupe on 020 8232 1800.



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**Armstrong supports floor cleaning system**

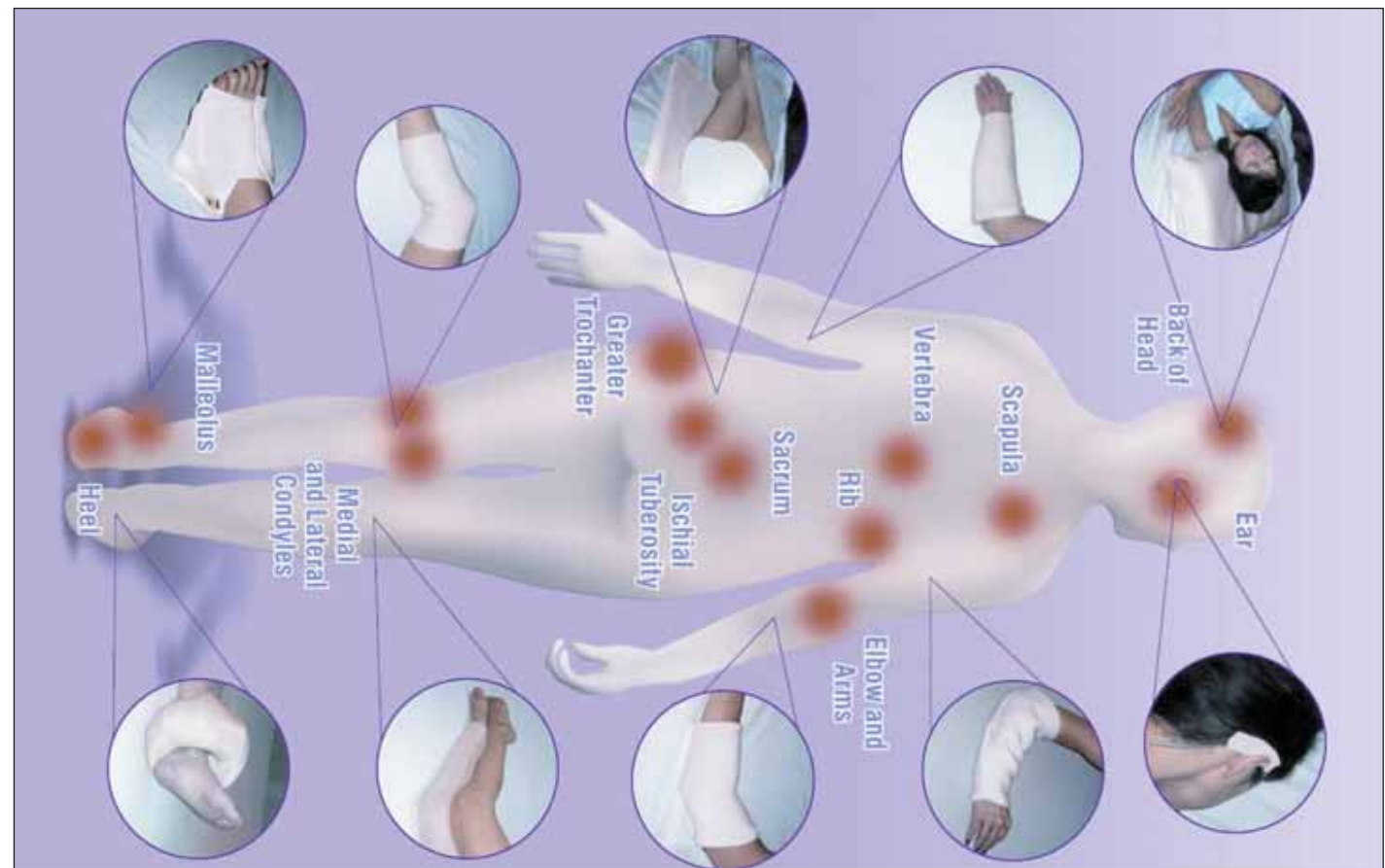
When St Mary's Hospital on the Isle of Wight decided to install a sophisticated, efficient floor cleaning system to minimise cross infection risks, Armstrong Commercial Laundry Systems was selected to supply the equipment that forms the backbone of the system. The laundry comprises two 22 kg Primus washer-extractors and two matching Huebsch tumble dryers.

St Mary's has 16 wards with 20-28 patients per ward and each ward has several rooms, some of them with only one patient. To minimise risk, every room has its own mop which is used to clean that room and no other. Additionally, the system is used in all the other areas - clinics, offices, corridors, public toilets, A & E, etc. Again, each area has its own dedicated mop or mops - 30 to 40 in the case of A & E.

The hospital carries enough mops for 2/3 days and each mop is laundered every time it is used. When not in use, the mops are kept and laundered in their own net bag.

For further information contact Armstrong Commercial Laundry Systems, Ampere Road, Newbury Berkshire RG14 2AE **Tel 01635 263410 Fax 01635 32434**

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**Door closer complies with revised Document M**

Samuel Heath & Sons plc has announced that the company's revolutionary controlled, concealed door closer, Perko Powermatic®, is compliant with the newly revised requirements of Approved Document M of the Building Regulations (Access to and use of buildings 2004) as well as BS EN 1154, making the closer suitable for use in areas accessed by the less able.



The CE marked closer falls well within the requirements of a Technical Memorandum recently issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which stipulates opening forces not exceeding 30N from the closed position and 22.5N when the door is between 30° and 60° open.

Specification advice issued by the Guild of Architectural Ironmongers states that only closers classed as "extra efficient" (65%+ efficiency) should be used where fire doors are fitted on accessible routes. With Perko Powermatic® delivering efficiencies of between 75% and 80%, this offers further assurance of the closer's suitability for a wide variety of applications in commercial, public, health and leisure situations.

Full details on Perko Powermatic's technical specifications can be found on a dedicated website at:

[www.perko-powermatic.com](http://www.perko-powermatic.com). Alternatively, enquiries can be made direct to the company's head office on: **0121 772 2303**.

**James Spencer hits the road**



James Spencer & Co is taking to the road to better promote its healthcare furniture and equipment ranges.

During its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, the company, based in Wilsden, Bradford, has invested in a purpose-designed new show van and trailer, which can be equipped to showcase customers' individual product needs and interests.

As well as touring specific regions over the coming months, one-to-one visits can also be booked by arrangement.

"We have invested in the new show van and trailer to provide us with a more effective platform for our products, as well as enhance response capabilities on behalf of our existing clients who may not have time to personally visit our on-site showroom," explained James Spencer & Co chairman Richard Spencer.

For details of the show trailer's up-and-coming visits' schedule, or to book a personal visit, contact James Spencer's Commercial Manager Dill Butt on **01535 272957 Mob: 07940 503046**

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**Girbau UK Boosts Laundry Performance for Four Seasons Healthcare**

Headington Care Home, part of the Four Seasons Healthcare Group, is enjoying significant performance and efficiency gains in its in-house laundry after the installation of two new washing machines, two dryers and a small rotary press from Girbau UK.



The Headington is a large care home catering for up to 60 elderly residents, some with specialist needs including dementia to Alzheimer's. An efficient laundry helps the home to maintain the highest levels of hygiene and present the right image to residents and visitors alike. Since they were installed Girbau UK's two HS-6013 (13kg) washers, two (23kg) gas dryers and a small rotary press have significantly boosted laundry efficiency in the home. Staff are now able to launder 25kg of bed linen and towels every hour.

Girbau UK Limited [www.girbau.co.uk](http://www.girbau.co.uk) Tel: 0844 391 0395 Sales Email: [sales@girbau.co.uk](mailto:sales@girbau.co.uk)

**PORTAPARK INTRODUCES THE PERFECT HEALTHCARE PARKING SOLUTION**

York based Portapark, part of the Shepherd Group, has unveiled an exciting new modular car park decking system designed to assist healthcare professionals who are struggling to fulfil their patient, visitor and staff parking needs.



With the wider patients' choice agenda, the Government wants every patient to elect where they have their procedure performed. Patients will make their choices individually for a host of reasons, and with many not having access to clinical information they will make their decisions based on the more obvious areas like access to and ease of parking.

Portapark facilities allow the rapid maximisation of existing parking by increasing the number of parking spaces through a cost effective, robust, solution. Portapark facilities can be erected on most ground surfaces with little or no foundations. This means less environmental impact and a quick and easy installation. Each module provides six 2.5m spaces or four 3.75m disabled spaces and modules are fitted together to create as much space as required.

For more information on Portapark and its services please call the team on 0845 602 6185 or log on to [www.portapark.co.uk](http://www.portapark.co.uk)

**a-line**



a-line is an antibacterial handrail, balustrade and accessories system that can inhibit the spread and growth of 99.9% of surface bacteria including MRSA, E-Coli, Salmonella, and Legionella. The anti-bacterial properties will last the life of the product and cannot be washed or scratched off.

The handrails are 40mm diameter with a warm-to-touch, 4mm thick nylon sleeve on a metal core. The balustrade complies with the 3kN side impact regulation.

Available in White, Red, Yellow, Grey and Black, or other colours for special orders.

For more information including estimates, test reports and installation, please contact: Sales, a-line, Hurlingham Studios, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PA

T 02077311243 F 02077361327 skype:aline e [alineinfo@mac.com](mailto:alineinfo@mac.com) [www.alinerails.eu](http://www.alinerails.eu)

**'Fantastic' Armstrong laundry for Hollybush**

When Hollybush House, the Ex Services Welfare Society care home in Ayrshire needed a new laundry, Facilities Manager Diane McAughtrie did a thorough appraisal of the market and settled on Armstrong Commercial Laundry Systems. 'Price is extremely important, especially since we are a charity' said Diane 'and so is the quality of the service. Armstrong were outstanding.'



The new laundry comprises a 7 kg Primus washer-extractor, a 201 litre Huebsch tumble dryer and a 1000 mm rotary ironer. Everything is processed on the premises - clients' personal clothing, all the linen from the rooms, curtains and kitchen cloths. Laundry Manageress Mary Morton says 'The Armstrong equipment is fantastic. There's the right programme for everything we do and the results are absolutely beautiful, even the jumpers. The ironer makes short work of the sheets and duvet covers and the whole laundry is so quiet I can hear myself singing as I work.'

For further information contact Armstrong Commercial Laundry Systems, Ampere Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 2AE Tel 01635 263410 Fax 01635 32434 E [enquiries@armstrong-laundry.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@armstrong-laundry.co.uk) Website [www.armstrong-laundry.co.uk](http://www.armstrong-laundry.co.uk)

**Siesta 7'FS' Air Purifier Summer Offer**

Just in time for the pollen season, the Siesta 7 'Flash Streamer' from Space Air Solutions has been reduced in price to £319 helping to make this summer more enjoyable for you.



Carrying the British Allergy Foundation Seal of Approval and TUV Nord, the well proven and tested Siesta 7FS' Air Purifier from Space Air Solutions, removes harmful elements from the air we breath, namely dust, pollen, pollution, germs, viruses, bacteria, car exhaust emissions and chemicals, creating a healthier and cleaner environment.

By filtering out offending particles in the air, hay fever or Asthma symptoms will decrease; viruses and bacteria (99.99% efficient) will be eliminated and odours will be reduced (95% efficient); these benefits are now available at £40 off the usual recommended retail price.

The SIESTA 7FS 'FLASH STREAMER' provides the ultimate in air purification. [www.siestaair.co.uk](http://www.siestaair.co.uk)

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