

Scottish care provider found guilty of Health and Safety breaches following death of a vulnerable adult

Care provider, The Richmond Fellowship Scotland, has been fined after being found guilty of health and safety breaches after a vulnerable adult with severe learning difficulties drowned in a bath.

Glasgow Sherriff's Court heard that on 10 June 2016, at Cherry Tree Court in Cambuslang, Glasgow, one of the residents, Margaret Glasgow, a vulnerable adult with severe learning difficulties, drowned in a bath within her flat in the early hours of the morning.

The Richmond Fellowship had supplied a baby monitor to alert support workers that Ms Glasgow was out of bed but a HSE investigation found that it was neither suitable nor sufficient as she was so light on her feet.

The two support workers, one of which was on her first shift at Cherry Tree Court and who also were supporting four different service users in four different flats, failed to hear that Ms Glasgow was out of bed.

Sometime during the early hours of the morning of 10 June 2016, she was able to run a bath in which she subsequently drowned. The water to the flat should also have been isolated but neither carer knew to do so.

HSE's investigation concluded that there were severe staff shortages at the time of Ms Glasgow's death which resulted in two carers who were not familiar with Ms Glasgow being put in charge of her care over-night. Richmond Fellowship had no specific induction procedures at Cherry Tree Court and relied on staff finding time to read the care plans after their shift had commenced. There were no clear shift plans to alert the support workers to the critical needs of the four people they were supporting and no clear instructions on how checks should be made.

Staff had raised concerns on a number of occasions after finding Ms Glasgow out of bed, but Richmond Fellowship had failed to put more appropriate measures such as door sensors or pressure mats in place.

The Richmond Fellowship Scotland of Cumbernauld Road, North Lanarkshire pleaded not guilty to charges under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work (etc) Act 1974 but were found guilty following a two-week trial.

The organisation was fined £450,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Kathryn Wilson, said: "This was a desperately tragic case which has left Ms Glasgow's family devastated.

"The baby monitor was a wholly inappropriate method of alerting staff that a resident was out of bed, being designed to alert a parent that a baby is

crying or choking.

“Margaret Glasgow should have been safe at Cherry Tree Court but a failure by the Richmond Fellowship Scotland to identify and put in place simple and reasonably practicable safety measures resulted in two support workers being given insufficient information to protect this vulnerable lady in their care.”

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>