

Media Release from Save Southend NHS campaign – for immediate release

Weds 25th October 2017

Southend Save NHS Campaign uncovers new NHS-funded scheme to accommodate hospital patients in spare rooms in a bid to cut costs

The Save Southend NHS campaign group has today raised serious concerns in the HSJ about a new privately-run enterprise called Care Rooms (www.carerooms.com) – an Airbnb style company which places discharged NHS patients in people’s spare rooms.

Through Care Rooms, the NHS pays private home owners “with no care experience’ up to £1000 per month to host patients who still require some medical support and would normally be in a hospital setting for the rest of their recovery or awaiting a place in an intermediate care or residential facility.

The supposed aim is to reduce the number of patients remaining in hospital, or other care settings, for the duration of their recovery. As a result, potentially vulnerable people may end up in unsuitable accommodation and being cared for by people who have little training. The scheme also doesn’t appear to be regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The Save Southend NHS campaign has discovered that this cost-cutting scheme is being piloted in the Southend area as part of the Mid and South Essex STP (or ‘Success Regime’), and promoted by the Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust – with leaflets being handed out to patients and visitors in public areas of the hospital.

While we accept that there is a national crisis with DTOC as a result of chronic cuts to social care funding, the Save Southend NHS campaign is seriously concerned that this is a dangerous, unregulated scheme which could leave vulnerable people – who should be in a care setting appropriate to their needs, and being cared for by

trained professionals – without the care they really need, all in the name of releasing beds.

A spokesperson for the Save campaign said:

“The risky and unregulated private Care Rooms scheme opens a huge can of worms for safeguarding, governance and possible financial and emotional abuse of people at their most vulnerable time”

“While we accept that there are issues with delayed transfers of care due to chronic social care cuts and underfunding, we do not accept that this is in the best interest of recovering patients in the Southend and Essex area. In our view, there is no room for unregulated, unprofessional AirBnB-style care in our NHS.”

The Care Rooms company is advised by former NHS England Director Mike Bewick – who co-incidentally is also the Independent Chair of the Mid and South Essex Success STP. This is just another example of our local STP attempting to cut costs at the expense of people’s care.

Notes to editors

1. You can read the original article by the HSJ here:
<https://www.facebook.com/SaveSouthendNHS/posts/248321219027450>
2. Find out more about Care Rooms here: www.carerooms.com
3. About the Southend Save campaign: We are a resident run and non-party political group of campaigners who welcome anyone in the community to join our fight to save our local NHS services and campaign against cuts from the Mid and South Essex STP (Success Regime).
4. For more information, contact savesouthendemergency@gmail.com or telephone Secretary Mike Fieldhouse 07721685376

