

**This is a family statement to the First Minister regarding our Aunt Mrs Edith Evans.**



This is a happy picture of my Aunt, Edith Evans, with her husband Morris John Evans, taken many years ago. They were both typical valley people enjoying their life to the full. They were not blessed with children and after my Uncle passed away we began to see the early signs of dementia in Edith and as the result of accidents at her home we realised that she needed constant care and attention.

At first she went to a local nursing home in Rhymney which suited her needs but as her mental health deteriorated she had to be transferred to an EMI home for additional care and this is when she went to the Brithdir Nursing Home. At first her care seemed fine but looking back there were warning signs which we the relatives did not pick up upon during our visits. Edith lost the top of a finger in an accident at the home, which was never fully explained and neither were we made aware that she contracted the MRSA virus at this point.

As her dementia progressed she became more and more isolated in the home with little or no stimulation from the carers and was kept in a room with little outlook or TV/radio until we complained. Eventually she could not be fed normally and had a PEG inserted and was at that time confined to her bed. Little did we know that basic hygiene standards were not being followed and the PEG site and machine were not being cleaned properly. At meetings with Social Services this problem was aired and we assumed something would be done.

One afternoon my sister was asked to accompany my Aunt Edith into hospital as she had an infection and that the Care Home did not have any staff available to go with her. When she was admitted the hospital staff were horrified with the infection around the PEG site to the point they took photographs, as they realised that there was something wrong in Brithdir Nursing Home and that the matter needed investigating. Aunty Edith must have been in terrible pain for some time and due to her dementia could not communicate this to anyone to seek help. The infection had such a hold that my Aunt died a few weeks later leaving us all blaming ourselves for not seeing what was happening to her.

Aunt Edith was not the only case of neglect found at the home and it is now very clear that Brithdir Nursing Home had serious shortcomings in its standard of care for many years and that what ever systems were in place to check on the wellbeing of residents were inadequate. **Could this happen to you or to a loved one in the future we ask?** We are all living longer and can expect even more people to go into care in the future so we need to ensure that minimum care standards are met in every Care Home and that there are ways and means to identify situations where there is substandard care and to provide an immediate remedy to protect the vulnerable who are in care.

Our action group Justice for Jasmine has been formed to seek a Public Inquiry into care standards and it is hoped that we will have a positive impact on care standards for the future so that cases like my Aunt's and others will not be repeated ever again.