

# Shameful ...it's profit over people

Campaigners  
fight for care  
residents not  
to be evicted

## EXCLUSIVE

By Sarah O'Grady  
Social Affairs Correspondent

PENSIONERS as old as 104 were handed eviction notices just a few days after their care home was sold by a charity to a private owner.

The plight of the 16 elderly residents mid-pandemic has been slammed as "absolutely shameful" by campaigners and politicians.

The pensioners have been told they must leave Mary Feilding Guild (MFG) home in Highgate, north London, by the end of May after the charity sold the site to Highgate Care, on March 4.

The new owners want to knock it down and rebuild it.

Now the UK's biggest pensioner group is calling for an investigation by the Charity Commission and the Care Quality Commission.

The National Pensioners Convention (NPC) has written to Baroness Barran, charities minister, and Health Secretary Matt Hancock.

In it, they also back the Daily Express crusade for the appointment of a Minister for Older People.

The letter says: "We urge you as a



matter of extreme urgency to pause the evictions while you investigate the concerns we have raised.

"We are campaigning for a Minister for Older People in England...backed by robust legislation to protect older people, which is long overdue.

"Only then will older people truly have a voice."

Highgate Care was established in August last year. It is run by Mitesh Dhanak, the director of more than 20 residential care companies.

Jan Shortt, general secretary of the

NPC, said: "We have serious concerns around selling their assets to a 'for profit' buyer."

"These decisions have affected the lives of residents who are between 80 and 104 years old.

"It seems humanity is thin on the ground with this provider. Sadly, the case of this home is not the first example of the rotten care system we are working under today, which is in urgent need of radical reform."

Dr Jean Scott, 88, who lives in the home, is a former head of computer

science at City University. She said: "We have not been allowed out since last March. Any home hunting must take place using the internet or by proxy.

"If we go out ourselves we face 10 days of isolation. 'Shopping around' is not practicable, and the owner's timing makes this closure particularly egregious.

"As is to be expected, our physical and mental health have been affected."

Kate St John, whose aunt aged



Letter...Baroness Barran

104, is the oldest resident at the Guild, said: "It should be illegal to do this. It's profit over people."

MFG was founded in 1877 by Lady Mary Feilding. Residents at the 42-room home, which was rated "good" by the CQC in 2018, have included novelist and editor Diana Athill OBE.

Catherine West, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, said: "This is an absolutely shameful way to treat elderly residents."

A spokesperson for the trustees of

MFG said: "We were deeply shocked and saddened to hear the new owner has already concluded the home needs to be rebuilt from scratch."

Highgate Care said the closure was "regrettable" and that residents would be helped to find new homes.

A spokesperson said: "The new owners, who have significant experience in the care sector, have reviewed the existing business model and have concluded that unfortunately it is not possible to continue to provide care in the same way."