

GMB calls for urgent reform ahead of Ballymoney home closure



GMB has today warned a funding fiasco which has led to the closure of the Court Care Home in Ballymoney is “a shameful example of what the crisis in care looks like”.

27 residents will be displaced and 50 staff face losing their jobs, with registered owner Stuart Gibbons, a Managing Director of property investment firm Investinrooms.com, denying responsibility for the home’s collapse and staff redundancies, after a split with fellow Court Care Home (Ireland) Ltd investors George Houghton and Fraser Brice.



The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) gave notice last month of its decision to deregister the provider's license over financial concerns, with the home due to close on Friday 15 October.

The union is reiterating its call for the Health Minister Robin Swann to intervene and protect the rights of affected staff, and to urgently bring forward the promised public consultation for the reform of social care in Northern Ireland.

GMB Senior Organiser Denise Walker said:

"This is a shameful example of what the crisis in care looks like and we need radical change to rebuild a broken system where profits are prioritised over human need.

"Vulnerable residents are being uprooted and dedicated key workers face uncertain futures, while a private investor tries to cut and run from his responsibilities.

"It also underlines how poorly the care workforce are valued by employers and the state, strengthening GMB's argument for a £15 an hour care minimum to boost pay and rights.

"The Minister has promised reform, but this can't come quick enough when private equity sharks loot the public purse and exploit years of political failure at the expense of residents and staff.

"For GMB the response is obvious, funding should be redistributed to the people who need it the most - the service users and the staff delivering the care they depend on."

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