



See it. Stop it. Prevent it.

## WEAAD 2011

### Dom Pomocy Społecznej w Tolkmicku Poland

To mark this years **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** "June 15<sup>th</sup> 2011, **Elder Protection** travelled to the little Polish town of "**Tolkmicku**" a once thriving fishing port on the North Coast of Poland, a population of around 4000 and approximately 80 kilometres from the city of "**Gdansk**".

**Elder Protection** decided to take a look at the way **Poland** treats its elderly and vulnerable people to mark the **2011 WEAAD** for two reasons:

- 1/ with its economic problems Poland has seen thousands of its national's up-route and start a new life in the United Kingdom. Many of these people have taken up jobs in the UK care industry and in 2010 Elder Protection, were contacted by a Polish care worker concerned by the amount of abuse happening in the Care home she was working in. With her help, 8 care workers and the care home manager were suspended for Abuse of residents in their care with criminal charges later brought against a number of them.
- 2/ with the constant failings in the UK care system and the major crisis of Care Home Accommodation highlighted by the problems of "**Southern Cross**" was there something we could learn from a poor country, a country that took family life and the dignity of its elders more seriously!

So with the help of a Map and Pin, our choice of Polish towns had been made, all we needed to do now was find a Care Home. Luckily "**Tolkmicku**" did have a care home and on our un-announced arrival the care home manager was more than pleased to show us round and answer our questions.

Firstly we explained about **WEAAD**, which surprisingly no one had ever heard of before, and then after explaining a little about the UK system, we learnt about the Polish way of caring for its elderly and vulnerable.

The "**Tolkmicku Care Home**" is a 3 story building, housing 116 residents, 50 of which are "bed-ridden" the remainder either need assistance in their daily routine or are self-dependent, these later residents occupy the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor where they have their own communal lounge, kitchen and laundry facilities.

The second floor is occupied by the bed-ridden residents where none of the rooms have any washing facilities as these are in the corridor and have electric hoists which every carer is trained to use.

On the first floor are the remainder of residents, here we also found a fully equipped Doctors surgery which is used every other day by a visiting doctor. The home has a fully equipped physiotherapy room with trained staff, two art and craft rooms where residents do everything from basket making, flower making, rug making etc.

A drugs room is also on the second floor and can only be accessed by trained staff and strict records of medications are kept and inspected regularly by the external Health Services.

Daily staffing consists of 9 care workers and 2 qualified nurses working 12 hour shifts and this number of staff remains the same 24/7, care staff are backed up by cleaning staff, kitchen staff and administration staff as well as the physiotherapy staff and volunteers who assist with daily use of the arts and crafts rooms.

The home also has 6 mini buses, which are used for such things as shopping trips, to attending social or sporting events. *(Yes! The home has a number of trophies for residents who have taken part in various types of sport)*

Given that the town of "**Tolkmicku**" is poor since the loss of the fishing industry, we were very surprised at the quality of the care home, and the fact that our un-announced visit posed no problem.

The cost of care is 2294 zloty which converts to approximately £500 per month and 70% of this is normally expected from the resident or their family, and where there is financial difficulty in meeting this obligation the state covers it.

Family are able to visit at any time night or day and if a resident is ill a family member can stay at the home in the special family unit.

#### Abuse

Elder abuse is said to be non-existent, and the only abuse in the 20 years that the homes director had dealt with was the occasional dispute between residents due to its close family orientation. The homes are also regularly

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inspected by the courts as they are state owned, regular inspections by other Social agencies and health services also take place without appointment. The financial accounts are inspected without warning and checks are done on the accounts of the residents which all helps to prevent any financial abuse.

***The overall picture is that the UK could learn a great deal from the Polish when it comes to care of the Elderly and Vulnerable, and with the current crisis highlighted by the problems of Southern Cross now would be a good time to start taking note.....***

**Ed Mullenger**  
**Elder Protection**



**Ed with map of Tolkmicku.**



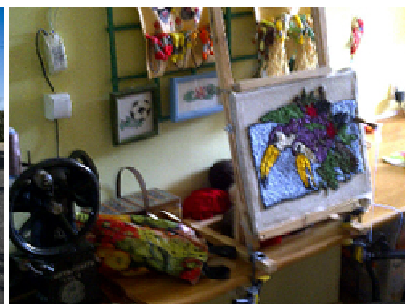
**The Tolkmicku Care Home**



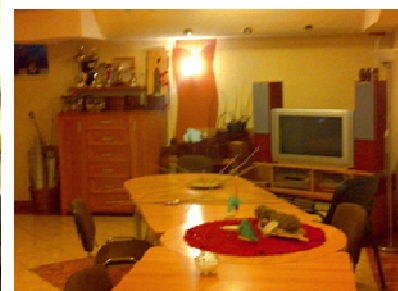
**Physiotherapy Room**



**Care Home Residents**



**Arts and Craft Work**



**Crafts Room**



**Basket Making in Craft Room.**



**Care Home Trophies on display**



**The Spotless Kitchen**



**The Old Fishing Port of TOLKMICKU showing the disused fish canning plant. The only boats now are for pleasure.**

**Elder Protection WEAAD 2011  
Tolkmicku Poland**