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# Patients describe 'culture of abuse' as 15 hospital staff arrested



IMAGE SOURCE, DAWID WOJTOWICZ

Image caption,

Anne said her daughter had been injured by staff using inappropriate restraint techniques

By Jon Ironmonger and Matt Precey, East Investigations

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**Patients, relatives and whistleblowers have described a culture of abuse at a mental health hospital, while 15 staff members have been arrested following allegations of rape, ill-treatment and neglect.**

St Andrew's Healthcare in Northampton, which provides specialist care for about 600 people with complex mental health needs, is the subject of three police investigations following alleged assaults and the deaths of two patients.

The charity that runs the private hospital said it had dismissed several staff members and was delivering an urgent action plan to address the issues.

St Andrew's Healthcare said it was committed to "full transparency" and took a "zero-tolerance approach to any allegation of harm or poor practice".

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated the hospital as inadequate last year and **imposed an urgent condition** on its registration, and new admissions have been restricted.

*Warning: This article contains distressing content*



IMAGE SOURCE, DAWID WOJTOWICZ

Image caption,

The Care Quality Commission has taken urgent enforcement action to "keep service users safe" at St Andrew's Healthcare in Northampton

Anne, whose name has been changed, told the BBC she was horrified by the injuries sustained by her daughter while she was a patient at St Andrew's Healthcare.

"They were restraining her with four adults and on one occasion she was knelt on by a male member of staff," she said.

"She was waking up every night for months and was obviously in a severe amount of pain with her ribs," she added.

Anne said her daughter had "lost half her body weight" and showed "all the symptoms of being malnourished".

"She lost the use of her hand while in long-term segregation" and on two occasions she had suffered severe burns from coffee, she added.

Anne has made a series of safeguarding referrals to West Northamptonshire Council, but said she had not gone to the police due to the lack of witnesses and CCTV.

"It's traumatic. Something's got to change and the only way things can change is by people now speaking out," Anne said.

Northamptonshire Police said 15 people had been arrested as part of investigations into incidents at the hospital that reportedly took place since October 2024. Ten people remain under suspicion and have been bailed or released pending inquiries.

- Eight people were arrested on suspicion of wilful neglect and ill-treatment in relation to an alleged assault in July 2025 on a man with a brain injury. One person was also arrested on suspicion of rape. All remain on bail

- Five people were arrested on suspicion of corporate manslaughter and gross negligence manslaughter following the death of a man in February 2025. Four face no further action while one person remains on bail for the offence of wilful neglect by a care worker
- One woman was arrested on suspicion of assault and ill-treatment or wilful neglect following an incident on 29 June 2025 and remains on bail
- One person was arrested in relation to an investigation into gross negligence manslaughter following the death of a teenage girl in October 2024. Police said no further action would be taken

## 'Horrendous injuries'



**IMAGE SOURCE, SUBMITTED**

Image caption,

These are some of the injuries Anne says her daughter sustained while being restrained at St Andrew's Healthcare

Jamie, whose name has been changed, was a staff member at St Andrew's Healthcare until recently and has spoken out about "massive safeguarding issues" at the hospital.

"I've seen senior nurses goading a patient," he said.

He added that a patient who was being observed on a one-to-one basis by staff had incurred "horrendous injuries" after self-harming when staff were withdrawn.

On another occasion, Jamie said he had been locked in a room with an "extremely violent" patient after a nurse refused to open the door.

He also described bed-bound patients being ignored while screaming in distress and others being roughly handled.

"When you do restraints, you're supposed to do them in a certain way, and some patients were getting pulled to the floor by their arms – that's not restraint," he said.

He claimed that instances of what he considered "cruelty and neglect" were due to poor culture and unqualified staff who "didn't have enough experience". An employee, who wanted to remain anonymous, told the BBC they were now "ashamed" to work at St Andrew's Healthcare.

"It is so sad, some staff trusted to work with patients have acted so terribly. Not all staff are bad, but the organisation needs to take action to make sure patients are protected," they said.

## 'My wrists popped'



IMAGE SOURCE, MATT PRECEY/BBC

Image caption,

Beth Sheridan, a former St Andrew's Healthcare patient, described having to be taken to A&E after staff restrained her

Beth Sheridan, 26, from Northampton, was a patient at St Andrew's Healthcare in 2021 and said staff would "fall asleep quite a lot – at one point I managed to do something to myself where I needed CPR because one of them was asleep".

"[Staff would] bend people's arms back, be dragging them across the floor," she said.

Sheridan said staff once came to restrain her after an emergency alarm had been pulled and "they bent my wrists back and one of my wrists popped".

She continued: "I was screaming out saying that it was hurting. Nobody cared. Nobody told them to stop. No-one told them it was wrong."



**IMAGE SOURCE, JON IRONMONGER**

Image caption,

A former staff member described witnessing "cruelty and neglect" while working at St Andrew's Healthcare

The charity's services are largely commissioned by the NHS and it had an income of almost £220m in the year ending March 2024.

During an executive meeting, recorded and leaked by a staff member, Sanjith Kamath, the hospital's medical director, said the charity may not be able to continue in its current state of "significant financial stress".

However, St Andrew's Healthcare said in a statement that the hospital was being reshaped "to be a smaller, more focused charity".

"In the year ending March 2025, we made a small surplus, giving us the resilience to navigate the financial challenges we currently face," it said.



**IMAGE SOURCE,DAWID WOJTOWICZ**

Image caption,

St Andrew's Healthcare is a charity that had an income of almost £220m in the 2023-24 financial year

St Andrew's Healthcare said it had reported the cases subject to Northamptonshire Police investigations to the force and launched internal investigations.

"All staff were immediately suspended and several staff were dismissed. We referred several members of staff to the Nursing and Midwifery Council," the spokesman said.

The hospital said the use of restraint was carefully planned and only undertaken as a last resort, but it acknowledged "care hadn't always met the standards patients deserve" and apologised to those affected.

It added it had introduced new training for all front-line staff, had significantly reduced the use of agency staff and had now installed CCTV on most wards.

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