

It shouldn't happen to a Housing Estate Manager

You would think, that looking after the housing needs of retired people would be a doddle wouldn't you? You would be wrong.

In my naivety, three housing estates of retired folk would be hard, but very pleasant work. Little did I realise that when you have little to do, the little things become HUGE issues.

There was Tom who was away at his holiday home each summer "what's he doing even living here when he can afford a holiday home in Spain? It should be allowed." There was Tony who had the luxury of owning a car "He is using water from the outside tap to wash his car every week, cheek. He should be using water from his own flat. the outside tap is charged on **our** service charge, why should **we** have to pay to keep **his** car clean?"

Then there was Dot. A lovely lady, semi-retired. She would come in from work at 4pm, and have a quick tidy up of her flat. "she should be cleaning in the morning, not at tea-time when I want to sit quietly, you can hear the hoover through the floor you know."

Mrs Watkins was partially blind. She lived in a block of apartments in Ruislip. Her flat was often a little untidy, and

there was a smell of urine which wafted into my nostrils when I made my weekly visits.

She rang one Friday afternoon to tell me that her lounge light wasn't working. It wasn't urgent she explained, but if I contacted the maintenance team she would be waiting until Monday. Guessing that it was probably just a bulb, and not expecting any visitors, I decided to drive to Ruislip. I shouldn't really have done it, but I didn't like to think of her in darkness.

I got to the flat and found the front door unlocked. I shouted in greeting "Hold on a moment Dear, I am just tucking something away." I braced myself for the smell of urine, and after giving my normal mini lecture about keeping her front door locked, we went to the lounge. Taking a spare bulb from my bag, I clambered onto the wing backed chair. "Mrs Watkins, you know I shouldn't really be changing your bulb, and I certainly shouldn't be standing on a chair to do so" Don't fret dear, I won't breathe a word to a soul. As I reached up, my foot slipped down and became wedged between the cushion and the side of the chair. I painfully yanked it out. Relieved that the light was now working, I just had time to whizz back to Watford to log off at 5pm. I bade Mrs Watkins farewell.

Pulling up outside my office, to my dismay, I saw my area manager getting out of her car. "Louise, have you been over to Mrs Watkins?" How on earth? Seeing my puzzled frown, she nodded her head to indicate for me to look down. There,

attached as if by superglue to the sole of my right shoe, was a rather damp looking incontinence pad.