

Inspection visit to the Valkla Home

On 6 October 2020, the advisers of the Chancellor of Justice carried out an unannounced inspection visit of the activities of the Valkla Home owned by AS Lõuna-Eesti Hooldekeskus and of the living conditions of its residents. Together with a medical expert, the advisers to the Chancellor of Justice took a tour of the care home's premises, examined the institution's documents and talked to the staff and residents of the care home.

During the inspection visit, 82 people resided in the Valkla Home, receiving all-day-round special care service in a maximum-security institution based on a court order. The service is provided in seven departments of which six are located in block C and one in block B. The people are divided into departments based on their diagnosis, dangerousness and ability to cope. The bedrooms of the residents of the care home are single and double rooms. There is video surveillance on the common premises, in the corridors and in the yard.

The care home pays particular attention to ensuring security – the employees carry an alarm button and a beeper with them and are familiar with how to act in the case of an extraordinary event. The isolation chamber has been decorated and its condition is considerably better than during the previous visit. It is good that rehabilitation services have become more easily available. The employees have been taught to use personal protective equipment and the procedure for conduct in the event a resident contracts the coronavirus or there is a threat of contagion has been discussed with the employees. The residents are able to move outside the territory of the care home (e.g. go for a walk by the sea) in the company of the activity instructors – in this way they are able to stay in touch with their daily life better.

However, dissatisfaction must be expressed with respect to the fact that not all of the activity instructors have participated in training required by law. The number of activity instructors meets the statutory requirement but in order to ensure a more individual approach to the care home residents with complicated mental disorders, their involvement in instructed activities and a safe living environment, there should be more activity instructors. The medical nurse service must be available to the extent required by law.

The living conditions and cleanness of the care home does not allow for providing the residents with a safe and rehabilitative environment. The residents of the care home must be provided with humane living conditions even if the care home is about to be closed down soon. The residents placed in a maximum-security institution cannot choose their living environment. This makes it especially important to ensure that a high-quality special care service is available to them throughout their stay in the institution. In solving extraordinary situations and placing a person in an isolation chamber the law must be followed.