

# Improving Standards of Care in Scotland

☒ Care standards in Scotland are continuing to improve with more services receiving top grades than ever before, according to the country's care regulator.

The Care Commission has revealed that more than a quarter of all care services across the country have received the highest grades following their inspections over the past year, while only a small minority are performing below acceptable standards.

The findings have been published in the Care Commission's latest, and final, [Quality of Care Review](#), which appraises the standards of care being provided at services in Scotland – and highlights how the watchdog has helped drive up these standards since its inception in 2002.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of Scotland's care sector, and will also be offered to the country's new care regulator Social Work and Social Care in Scotland (SCSWIS) to use as a benchmark for future regulation of care services once the organisation is launched in April 2011.

David Wiseman, the Care Commission's acting Chief Executive, said: "The Quality of Care Review clearly shows that the overall quality of care in Scotland is good. In some cases, the standards of care provided are excellent and we have been greatly encouraged by the amount of good practice we have come across.

"Since we published our last national overview report 'The Quality of Care Services in Scotland, 2007', we have found that Scotland continues to develop innovative services that help improve the quality of life for people in care every day.

“From April 1 a new care regulator, Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS), will take over the duties of the Care Commission apart from the regulation of independent healthcare services, which will transfer to Health Improvement Scotland (HIS).

“This report provides a benchmark against which SCSWIS and HIS can measure their progress in improving the quality of care.

“By presenting what we have found in nine years of regulation, we have set the scene not just for SCSWIS and HIS, but for all of those with the power to change things for the better.”

The Quality of Care Review highlights all of the grading results collated from inspections carried out by the Care Commission at Scotland’s 14,578 care services between April 2009 and March 2010. Under the grading scheme, which was introduced in 2008, every service is awarded a grade of 1-6 across various different aspects of care – or “quality themes” – including Quality of care and support; Quality of information/environment; Quality of staffing; and Quality of management and leadership.

The report shows that 25.6% of services in Scotland achieved grades of 5 (very good) or 6 (excellent) during their inspections in 2010 – up from 17.2% in 2009.

In contrast, just 97 services (0.7%) received grades of 1 (unsatisfactory) or 2 (weak) across all quality themes – a slight drop from the 98 services recorded in 2009. The Care Commission has worked with each of these services to demand that improvements are made. Where services do not improve within a limited timescale the Care Commission will take formal action.

The new report also highlights how the majority of care services are promoting better involvement with the people who use them and their families. More than 36% of all care services in Scotland received top grades for their efforts in

involving people – up from 23% in 2009 – and this progress has been heralded as a result of a wider drive carried out by the Care Commission to promote involvement in care services throughout the country.

Independent health services are performing very well, with all services graded 4 or above, while fostering and adoption services are also of high quality.

Many children and young people's services have also made significant improvements in the quality of care they deliver. Just 0.3% of all childminders received grades of 1s and 2s in 2010, while 31.2% of childminders received grades of 5s and 6s (up from 22% in 2009).

Nurseries and daycare of children services recorded similar improvements, with just 0.7% receiving grades of 1s and 2s, while 21.4% of these services were awarded grades of 5s and 6s (up from 13.9% in 2009).

The report also shows standards at care homes for older people have improved, with the number of services achieving grades of 5s and 6s rising from 60 (6.5%) in 2009 to 146 (15.8%) in 2010.

However, this sector also has the most room for improvement – as a total of 23 care homes for older people (2.5%) are still achieving grades of 1s and 2s across all quality themes. Care homes for older people also had the most requirements, upheld complaints and enforcements made against them.

David Wiseman added: "Although the majority of services provide good standards of care, we continue to encounter poor services that need to improve. Where we have found poor or bad practice we have demanded that improvements are made and where necessary, used our range of powers to enforce change and compliance.

"The hundreds of thousands of people in Scotland who use care

services or have a family member who needs a care service, expect nothing less.”

Since its creation in 2002, the Care Commission has been at the forefront of improving care standards in Scotland – which has seen the organisation promote safer recruitment policies at care services, highlight problems with the standards of dementia and palliative care and identify improvements required to drive up nutrition standards at care homes for older people.

The organisation has now urged SCSWIS to make best use of the knowledge and information passed on in the report – and to ensure that future care service inspections are proportionate, risk based and targeted at poorer performing services, in order to drive care standards up further across Scotland.