Inquiry into regulation of care for older people

NHS Tayside

Can we be confident that the regulatory system is picking up on care services where the quality is poor?

NHS Tayside currently access residential care home places from a number of private sector providers in conjunction with local authority partners. There have been instances where NHS Tayside have had concerns regarding the provision of care in local care homes. These concerns have been raised with NHS staff either from relatives, carers of from other NHS staff members. When this has occurred it has led to the Community Health Partnership (CHP) instigating a senior nurse led independent review of the residence or residencies concerned. Where a review has been instigated the standards outlined within the ‘NMC Older People’s Standards’ were applied. Based on the findings of any review a joint improvement plan would be prepared, agreed and implemented. Following implementation the residence would be re-inspected by SCSWIS. One of Tayside’s CHP’s has suggested a senior nurse participate to undertake a joint inspection with SCSWIS at that time to ensure a holistic approach to the assessment of care provided.

Are there any weaknesses in the current system?

Discussions have taken place within NHS Tayside regarding how we ensure quality of care for our local population when accessing residential care home beds within the private sector. We believe it is essential that we work with our local authority partners to achieve this and support care home staff in the provision of good quality care. Social work staff are empowered to undertake inspections within care homes, however, NHS staff are not. Discussions are underway in Tayside regarding the potential for introducing a co-ordinated approach from both local authority and NHS staff. This would then address all aspect of care, quality and environment in an integrated way.

Does the system adequately take into account the views of the service users?

Social work colleagues provide assurance of care through inspection, the focus of which is around the qualitative aspect of care. Care home staff, residents and their carers and families are interviewed and opinions and experiences determined. Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) assess care and assign a rating based on standards found.
Does the registration and regulatory system provide an appropriate basis for the regulation, inspection and enforcement of integrated social and NHS care in the community?

SCSWIS conduct routine inspections within all care home environments and are the authority empowered to regulate the care provided. NHS Tayside Board have raised concerns however that they should be in receipt of information that would assure them of appropriate standards within the private sector care homes that are accessed for patients being discharged from NHS care. It has been proposed that a report will be prepared and presented to NHS Tayside Board, on a quarterly basis, which will brief Board members on the SCSWIS ratings of all nursing homes that have Tayside residents in them and will include information on the number of residents in each home and in what category. NHS Tayside Board will consider this proposal at their meeting on August 25 2011.

We would be happy to provide any further clarity should you require it.

Hazel Scott
Commissioner for Older Peoples Services
NHS Tayside
24 August 2011