Inquiry into regulation of care for older people

Scottish Ambulance Service

Does the regulatory system ensure care services for older people are providing good quality and appropriate care?

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

It appears that the breadth of the national care standards coupled with the standards set out in respect of skills and regulation should be adequate. The process of initial assessment to determine the extent of scrutiny and assessment necessary builds in an additional security but also offers a degree of flexibility for those services being delivered in line with the standards; as such, this should pick up on poor quality services.

Are there any particular weaknesses in the current system?

The separation of regulation between Social Care and Health may be a potential area of weakness where the service delivered involves healthcare services. For example, where care homes or NHS Boards convey people to and from hospital for appointments, they may make use of private ambulance services and we would have some concerns over the regulation of these services, not least their skills and competencies in dealing with any potential health requirement on route, compliance with infection control standards, and maintenance and appropriateness of vehicles employed.

It is not very clear how the multi-agency approach will work in practice and how data and analysis will be collated from social care and NHS to determine whether any service should be subject to assessment.

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

There appears to be genuine opportunity for service users to engage in the process of regulation through use of focus groups and interviews as part of the inspection process. The regulatory body appears to make every effort to encourage user involvement.

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?

See comments under question 2. The focus of each regulatory body will understandably be around either healthcare or social care and whilst both will be regulating in the context of the national care standards, effort will be required to ensure that the healthcare requirements around skills of staff,
infection control, sharing of information between social care and healthcare are not lost.

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