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DESPITE STEPS FORWARD, COUNSEL AND CARE STILL HAS MAJOR CONCERNS ABOUT THE QUALITY OF CARE EXPERIENCED BY OLDER PEOPLE IN A CARE HOME

While the general standard of care is getting better, according to the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) first report into the standards of adult social care services in England published today (3 December 2009), national charity, Counsel and Care still has major concerns about the quality of care provided to vulnerable older people living in a care home.

Almost a quarter of care homes for older people (24%) continue to provide care that is of a poor or adequate standard rated as one or no stars, and almost one-fifth of care services overall still remain poor or adequate, according to the CQC's report. Areas highlighted as needing urgent attention include record-keeping, medication, service user care plans and staff supervision.

And, improvement in the provision of social contact and activities in a care home has increased by only 8% since 2003, showing that there is a long way to go before the care provided in care homes across England can truly be judged as person-centred.

Echoing this, the review of council performance revealed that one quarter of local authorities could do much more in terms of enabling all people who use

services to receive personalised care and one third of local authorities could improve in ensuring that people are protected through rigorous safeguarding policies and are always treated with dignity and respect.

Stephen Burke, Chief Executive of Counsel and Care said: “The Care Quality Commission’s report shows that despite some improvement overall, the standard of care experienced by many vulnerable older people living in care homes in England still remains completely inadequate.

“It also shows how far we still have to travel before full transformation of the social care system is achieved, and a place is reached where we can confidently state that when an older person is being supported in a care home to manage their complex care needs, the quality of care they will receive will always be of the highest possible standard.

“More work needs to be done by local councils and care providers to ensure that personalised services become a reality for all older people and carers regardless of whether they live at home or in a care home, including access to good information and advice.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- Counsel and Care is now offering its expert, in-depth national advice and information service on community care issues to local authorities. For more details contact Rebecca Shaw, Development Manager on 020 7241 8534 or rebecca.shaw@counselandcare.org.uk
- Counsel and Care is a national charity working with older people, their families and carers to get the best care and support. Advice on issues

affecting older people and carers can be obtained by calling 0845 300 7585 or emailing advice@counselandcare.org.uk

- Counsel and Care's Advice Service opening hours are 10am-4pm Monday-Friday except Wednesday afternoons.
- More information about Counsel and Care can be obtained from www.counselandcare.org.uk