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FAILING NHS CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE 'UNACCEPTABLE', SAY COUNSEL AND CARE

Counsel and Care, the national charity working with older people, their families and carers, is concerned by the report published today (February 15th 2011) by the Health Ombudsman exposing the abuse of older people's rights in the NHS. The failure of the NHS to recognise the rights and dignity of older people and the harrowing tales of mistreatment are clear indications that changes must be made in the health system to support and care for all people, including those most vulnerable.

Caroline Bernard, Deputy Chief Executive, Counsel and Care expressed concern about the report's findings: "This report makes distressing reading. Older people are the biggest users of NHS services, and we are very concerned that these sorts of reports are being repeated over and over again - such failings of care are unacceptable.

"Older people, as well as anyone using hospital services, deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Families and carers need to ensure they are armed with the right information and advice that can enable them to know what to expect when an older person is admitted to hospital. And there should be no fear of reprisal if a complaint has to be made if there are concerns about the level of care being received.

"Our guide about care in hospital gives clear information about what you should expect, and is available free from our website."

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **Counsel and Care's** guide 'Hospital Care in England: What you need to know before, during and after your stay' is available for download here:
<http://www.counselandcare.org.uk/category/health-care/pdf/hospital-care-in-england-everything-you-need-to-know-before-during-and-after-your-stay-guide-11>
2. Copies of the *Care Concerns 2009* report can be downloaded from our website:
www.counselandcare.org.uk/influence/publications
3. 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
4. Counsel and Care's Advice Service opening hours are 10am-4pm Monday-Friday.
5. More information about Counsel and Care can be obtained from www.counselandcare.org.uk