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OFT REPORT: CARE HOMES HAVE IMPROVED BUT MOST STILL DO NOT OFFER CLEAR ROUTE TO MAKING A COMPLAINT

Counsel and Care, the national charity working with older people, their families and carers, welcomes the report published today (May 12th 2011) by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). The OFT conducted an independent evaluation of its 2005 market study into care homes for older people and found that improvements have been made across the sector. However, Counsel and Care is concerned that the OFT has reported that only 60 per cent of care homes regularly provide information to residents on complaints procedures.

Caroline Bernard, Deputy Chief Executive, Counsel and Care had this to say about the report: "We are encouraged by the great strides made by care homes since 2005. It would seem that transparency about fees and paying for care in a care home has increased. As an independent provider of advice and information, Counsel and Care is heartened to hear that better quality guidance on fees is being given to older people and their families when moving to a care home.

"However, older people deserve access to all the information needed to make the best choices for their own care, including access to complaints procedures. Families should be armed with the right information and advice that can enable them to know what to

expect when an older person decides to move in to a care home. 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 Care Home Handbook gives clear information about what you should expect when moving in to a care home and how to go about making a complaint should you need to. It is available free from our website."

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **Counsel and Care's** 'Care Home Handbook' is available for download here:
<http://www.counselandcare.org.uk/category/category-publications/pdf/care-home-handbook>
2. The OFT's evaluation of Care Homes for Older People in the UK can be downloaded from http://www.of.gov.uk/shared_of/reports/Evaluating-OFTs-work/OFT1322.pdf
3. Care Concerns 2010, Counsel and Care's annual report of the issues raised by callers to its advice service, can be downloaded from:
<http://www.counselandcare.org.uk/category/publications-for-professionals/pdf/care-concerns-2010> and is also available in other formats on request by emailing lillian.hoag@counselandcare.org.uk
4. 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
5. Counsel and Care's Advice Service opening hours are 10am-4pm Monday-Friday.

6. More information about Counsel and Care can be obtained from www.counselandcare.org.uk