

## **PRESS RELEASE from The Relatives & Residents Association**

**For immediate release: 6 May 2009**

### **Survey of care home inspection reports shows too much tolerance of poor practice**

'Care home inspection is a lottery and needs to be tightened up,' says Gillian Dalley, chief executive of a national charity championing the rights of older people living in care homes, in a call to the new care homes regulator, the Care Quality Commission. 'Our new report, *Inspection in Action*, analysing a sample of 100 inspection reports, shows wide variation in what care home inspectors rate as adequate (1 star) in their assessment of a care home. There are too many examples of inspectors tolerating poor practice from one inspection to the next.'

'The same standard of service may be given different ratings in different homes. This is not fair on the residents or on care home managers. Increasingly the public are looking to inspection reports to guide them in choosing a care home. But how can prospective residents choose between one home and another if inspectors' judgements are so inconsistent? How can managers be sure they are making progress in improving standards if what is judged as adequate in one home is judged as poor (and vice versa) in another?'

'At a time when public anxiety about the safety of frail older people in their own homes and hospitals has reached fever pitch, attention also needs to be paid to ensuring conditions in care homes meet acceptable standards, to rating them clearly and consistently when they do and when they don't, and ultimately to stamping out bad care practice wherever it is found.'

Gillian Dalley calls on the Care Quality Commission, the new inspecting body for care homes that has recently taken over from the Commission for Social Care Inspection, to establish a more robust and reliable inspection system than the one it replaces. She concludes: 'The public must be able to have confidence in the regulator's judgement.'

**ENDS**

#### **Notes to editors**

1. The R&RA is the national charity that supports older people in care and their relatives, and campaigns for improved standards and better quality of life for all care home residents.
2. *Inspection in Action: making inspection work* is published by the R&RA on 6 May 2009.

3. For further information, contact Gillian Dalley or Alison Clarke on 020 7359 8148, or Les Bright, R&RA professional adviser, on 01392 424696 or 07712 386846.

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