

CARER INSPECTORS PLAYING KEY ROLE IN IMPROVEMENT OF CARE SERVICES

Inspection findings unveiled at joint national care conference

The benefits of involving carers as inspectors as well as how unpaid carers view the social work services received by them and the person they care for, will be highlighted as part of a national conference entitled 'Inspecting for Excellence' in Glasgow today (01 September 2009).

The conference, jointly hosted by the Social Work Inspection Agency and Carers Scotland, will explore the valuable role unpaid carers play in improving care services in Scotland, identify good practice and generate debate about how best to support carers in the essential role they play.

The findings highlight that carers largely value the services and support available to them, but many feel the range and choice and quality of information available could be improved.

Inspectors also found that the availability of services and support was very uneven across Scotland and carers were generally not treated as full partners in care arrangements for family or friends.

More also needed to be done to ensure carers are involved in the planning and delivery of services.

SWIA and Carers Scotland have worked in partnership since 2005 to develop a framework to involve carer inspectors as part of the inspection process, and carer inspectors will speak about their experiences and learning at the conference.

Alexis Jay, Chief Inspector, Social Work Inspection Agency, said:

"Carer inspectors have undoubtedly played a vital role in the inspection process, and this conference has been designed to help learn from and build on the successful user involvement model we have developed with Carers Scotland.

“Our role is to improve the quality and delivery of social work services, and the involvement of unpaid carers as lay inspectors has allowed us to get a real understanding of what needs to be done to support and improve help for unpaid carers.

“Many examples of good practice were identified by the inspection process, four of which will be presented at the conference today, and we will work to ensure good practice is communicated to all local authorities to help involve and support unpaid carers in the delivery of care services in Scotland.”

Pat Begley, Director, Carers Scotland, said:

“This conference is an opportunity to celebrate the very real benefits of fully involving unpaid carers as equal and expert partners in the inspection of social work services. As evidenced in inspection reports, the involvement of carers as lay inspectors has greatly enriched the inspection process and demonstrated the merits of this innovative partnership approach.

“We hope that this empowering and participative model will be adopted by the new scrutiny bodies, when they merge in 2011, and that unpaid carers will continue to contribute significantly to achieving good outcomes for everyone in the delivery of social work services.”

The conference will be chaired by Cathy Peattie MSP, Convenor of the Scottish Parliament’s Cross Party Group on Carers and will be addressed by Shona Robison MSP, Minister for Health and Sport.

- ends -

For further information:

SWIA:

Linda McIntyre at Consolidated PR
0131 240 6423
swia@consolidatedpr.com

Carers Scotland:

Patrick Begley, Director
0141 221 9141
pat.begley@carerscotland.org

Anne Conlin, Training and Development Manager
0141 221 9141
anne.conlin@carerscotland.org

Notes to editors:

- The views of unpaid carers were gathered from questionnaires (over 3500 returned as part of the inspection process), focus groups of carers during inspections and interviews with carers and carer organisations.