

CARE IN THE BALANCE: the quality and cost of residential and nursing home care for older people.

Accounts Commission/Audit Scotland, 1999

(1) Key recommendations

- Residents fully involved in:
 - Assessing and planning for their own care needs
 - Planning and evaluating all aspects of life in the home.
- All residents provided with:
 - Keys to their doors if they want them.
 - A personal lockable drawer for valuables.
 - An alternative place to meet with visitors for residents who share rooms.
- Facilities provided for residents or their visitors to make tea or coffee.
- Links with the local community for the benefit of residents developed and sustained.
- Regular review of the effectiveness of residents' meetings.
- Home's policy on the use of part time, relief and bank staff should not affect the quality of care. Residents regularly consulted on the impact of the policy on them.
- Staff have adequate channels of communication to raise concerns about care practice in the home.
- Residents involved in identifying gaps in staff skills.
- Overall staff development plan linked to the home's objectives.
- Comprehensive induction training for new staff.
- Nursing/residential homes should provide organised activities (group and individual) and preferably have a dedicated (probably part time) activities co-ordinator rather than relying on staff members.

(2) Links with the outside world: visitors & local community

- Transport should be available for excursions, to take residents to local activities and to take individual residents on short journeys on request.
- Visits from volunteers and local community groups should be organised for residents who do not have many visitors.
- Links with the local community should be developed and sustained, and residents should be able to attend social activities or clubs outwith the home.
- Residents should be able to spend weekends or holidays away from the home.

(3) Communal areas

- Consideration should be given to creating different areas in the dining room (or having different meal times) for residents with different degrees of disability. Consideration might also be given to staff eating with residents.
- Residents should be freely able to access the garden/grounds of the home. Where this is not possible someone should be available to assist.

(4) Control of the Environment

- Residents should be involved in determining how the home is run, and should be consulted about menus and in the use of welfare or comfort funds. They should also be allowed to assist with domestic chores. There should also be residents meetings.
- Those residents who are able should be given responsibility for some aspects of the home itself (and garden), for example involvement with plants or animals or some aspect of running the home.

Suggested Performance Indicators

- *Sickness absence monitored; performance compared with other providers; targets set to reduce these if they go above an acceptable level. Both for managers and care staff.*
- *Staff turnover monitored; performance compared with other providers; action plan to improve performance if necessary. Both for managers and care staff.*
- *Percentage of staff working less than 20 hours per week.*
- *Number of staff studying for, or with, relevant qualifications.*
- *Percentage of residents who describe staff as 'excellent' or 'good'. Percentage of residents always called by their preferred name*
- *Percentage of residents who are very satisfied with the time staff spend with them.*
- *Comprehensive and user friendly brochures and contracts available to all clients.*
- *Each resident has a named key worker.*
- *Care plans include all elements of good practice, actively reviewed and updated.*
- *Residents exercise choice in:*
 - *daily routines.*
 - *the furnishing of their own rooms.*
 - *use of grounds*
- *Availability of tea/coffee making facilities for residents and visitors.*
- *Percentage residents satisfied with meals.*
- *Percentage residents satisfied with activities.*