

PRESS RELEASE

1 June 2011

Abuse highlighted at the Winterbourne View unit in Hambrook, near Bristol

Alleged scenes of abuse of people with learning disabilities were broadcast in yesterday's BBC Panorama programme '*Undercover Care – the abuse exposed.*' These incidents were reported to have taken place at Winterbourne View unit in Hambrook (near Bristol) and cannot be defended. If proven, they represent a failure of the home's owners, of management, of nurses, of care assistants and of regulation.

We welcome the Nursing and Midwifery Council's commitment to investigate the nurses whose unacceptable behaviours were shown in the programme. We also believe that in working in close cooperation with safeguarding authorities, the police, employers and the Care Quality Commission, important lessons can be learned from these incidents in order to improve the quality and standard of care for all patients.

We recently published an article in our regular CHRE series 'CHRE Viewpoint' discussing why health professionals and others employed by care demonstrate a lack of compassion or respect for their patients. We are conducting research to address the gap in knowledge about the influence that healthcare regulation has on individuals and how that influence can be maximised in the pursuit of a better standard of care (see <http://www.chre.org.uk/media/18/400/> for full details).

Harry Cayton, our Chief Executive said: 'In these situations it is easy to call for more regulation. But if regulation has failed, more of it is not the answer. Problems of abusive, neglectful and inadequate care must be solved in the places where care is delivered. Nurses must take responsibility for the staff they supervise, managers must do their jobs, staff must be trained and supported adequately and employers must be held to account. Regulation certainly has a part to play and should play its part properly, but it is never the simple solution.'

For further information on our approach to right-touch regulation please see our paper http://www.chre.org.uk/img/pics/library/100809_RTR_FINAL.pdf

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

1. We promote the health and well-being of patients and the public in the regulation of health professionals. We scrutinise and oversee the work of the nine regulatory bodies¹ that set standards for training and conduct of health professionals
2. We share good practice and knowledge with the regulatory bodies, conduct research, and introduce new ideas about regulation to the sector. We monitor policy in the UK and Europe and advise the four UK government health departments on issues relating to the regulation of health professionals. We are an independent body accountable to the UK Parliament
3. We have the power to appeal final Fitness to Practise (FtP) decisions made by the regulators' FtP panels to the High Court of Justice in England, Northern Ireland and Wales and to the Court of Sessions in Scotland
4. If a case proceeds to a High Court hearing, the possible outcomes are that our appeal is:
 - Dismissed
 - Allowed and the relevant FtP panel decision is quashed
 - Allowed, and the High Court substitutes its own decision in place of the decision made by the FtP panel
 - Allowed, and the case is referred back to the FtP panel for reconsideration
5. We review the performance of the regulators on an annual basis. We identify where things are being done well and where improvements can be made. See <https://www.chre.org.uk/overseeingregulators/305/> for further information about our annual performance reviews. Our Performance Review for 2010 – 2011 is due to be published on our website on 29 June 2011

For further details of our work, please visit our website: www.chre.org.uk

¹ General Chiropractic Council, General Dental Council, General Medical Council, General Optical Council, General Osteopathic Council, General Pharmaceutical Council, Health Professions Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council, Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland.