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Fair Care and Funding for Care

CCC warmly welcomes today's follow-up report from the Health Service Ombudsman on the funding of long-term care, and strongly endorses the Ombudsman's conclusions and recommendations.

CCC also welcomes the announcement by Dr Stephen Ladyman MP, Health Minister, on 9 December, that he has commissioned a new national framework for the assessment for fully funded NHS continuing care.

Commenting on the Ombudsman's view that the only way to make the system transparent and fair, is to have national minimum eligibility criteria, with a national set of assessment tools and guidance on how to conduct and report on the reviews, Dr Clive Bowman, CCC's chairman, said.

"We are delighted that there has been progress in the Department of Health's thinking; CCC and CCC members will be happy to help the Department and the Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) to build on good practice. The Ombudsman is absolutely right to highlight the critical importance of national eligibility criteria and assessment tools and guidance. CCC strongly advocates national eligibility criteria and a single consistent measurement tool".

Dr Bowman also stressed the importance of regular reassessment of care needs.

"Most older people need care because of underlying conditions that are often progressive. Once a person has undergone assessment it is important that it is regularly repeated to ensure that the level of commissioned services meets their personal needs.

Assessment should not be restricted to people seeking eligibility for fully funded care. It should be a seamless process that responds to the changing needs of people - from simple support through to fully funded care. A single joined up approach would bring much needed transparency to overly complex systems and provide a basis for the development of regulation.

We want a system that gets it right at the outset and which continues to deliver the right care, as people's needs change."

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Notes for Editors:

1. Contacts from Thursday, 16 December for further information:

Dr Clive Bowman	020 7222 1265 / 0771 278 9117
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2. The Health Service Ombudsman's report, *NHS funding for long term care: follow up*, is available at <http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/hsc/document/care04/care04.pdf> and the press release dated 16 December 2004 is available at http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/hsc/document/care04/care_04pressnotice.htm.
3. On 3 November, CCC launched, *The Best Care Possible?*, CCC's long-term care policy healthcheck, which identifies a wide range of issues and outlines measures needed to enable people to get the best care possible to meet their needs. Among its recommendations, CCC urges the adoption of a single national assessment instrument to ensure equity of access at appropriate levels of care and support, and recommends regular reassessment at prescribed intervals. CCC has consistently argued for national eligibility criteria and assessment.
4. CCC is a broad-based, independent coalition of commercial, charitable and public service organisations with a shared interest in providing better long-term care for older people. CCC has been acting as an advocate for managed change since it was established in 1992 as the Continuing Care Conference with the objectives of:
 - increasing awareness and developing understanding of long-term care of older people as a political issue
 - raising the standards of care available to older people
 - developing the standards of financial products used to fund long-term care
5. CCC believes that all older people in Britain should live their lives in dignity, comfort and in a place of their choosing. We want all elements of society to make the necessary individual and social investment to ensure that happens. Our task is to ensure that policy-makers pursue this goal and to encourage the public to join with us in our mission to persuade them to do so.
6. CCC's Chairman is Dr Clive Bowman FRCP, Medical Director, BUPA Care Services. More information about CCC, including its members and Steering Group, are available at www.ccc-ltc.org.uk.