

Views on Statement of Scope for Market Study of Care homes – Care Quality Commission

We note that the CMA's study will focus on four broad areas: consumer protection issues, information to support choosing a care home, the regulation of care homes and competition between care homes. We agree that these areas are extremely important in considering how well care homes meet the needs of residents, their families and carers.

We will be keen to see what CMA uncovers in relation to theme 1, consumer protection issues in the adult social care sector. We have developed our assessment framework in such a way as to build on the minimum requirements set out in legislation so that we can be clear on what good care looks like. While the regulations that underpin our framework do touch upon areas related to consumer protection it will be most valuable to understand the issues in more detail and to add to our evidence base. This will enable us to continue to develop our approach and ensure we focus on the issues that affect people so that the sector as a whole can evolve the consensus view of what good care looks like.

In our State of Care 2016, we highlighted our concerns about the sustainability of the adult social care market and are acutely aware of the pressures which providers are under, particularly where they are reliant on local authority funding. We engage with providers, commissioners and other stakeholders regularly to understand the impact that financial pressures have on the quality of safety and so welcome any work which would enrich that understanding.

In relation to complaints handling, we are very clear that providers must have arrangements in place for people to raise their concerns and they must demonstrate how they have taken this into account in how they run and improve their service. The best providers are exemplary in this area but we are all too aware of the variance which exists and work hard to uncover where this is the case so that we can respond accordingly. It is vital that people feel free to voice their concerns without fear of retribution and in the knowledge that the provider will respond to and address these concerns. This goes right to the very heart of what it means to have an open and transparent culture.

CQC look forward to continuing to engaging with CMA as the study develops.