

**NEWS RELEASE FROM
THE REGISTERED NURSING HOME ASSOCIATION**

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**RNHA WELCOMES FIGURES SHOWING IMPROVEMENT IN
CARE HOME FOOD STANDARDS –
AND CALLS FOR MORE GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT TO
BOOST NHS COMMUNITY DIETITIAN SERVICE**

Figures from the Commission for Social Care Inspection showing that as many as 83 per cent of care homes are meeting national nutritional standards for older people were welcomed today (13th March) by the Registered Nursing Home Association (RNHA), which also described the latest CSCI guidance as ‘helpful and constructive’.

Commenting on this morning’s release by CSCI of statistics recording a 5 per cent increase over two years in the number of care homes achieving the required standards, RNHA chief executive officer Frank Ursell said: “This information helps to refute the wilder claims that have been made in recent months about the quality of food provided in care homes. The Commission has highlighted a wealth of good practice in well-managed homes across the country. I hope very much that care providers and the relevant agencies can focus now on sensible, practical measures for sustaining this improvement.”

Mr Ursell also called on the government and local authorities to provide additional resources for the long-term care of older people. He said: “As the Commission points out, care homes have on average around £2.43 per day with which to feed each of their residents. It is a tribute to care homes that so many of them manage within this very limited budget to provide good quality, nutritious food. But if Britain’s policy-makers are really serious about enhancing residential care for older people, they will need to match their fine words with hard cash.”

He added: “Of course it is important that the 17 per cent of care homes that are currently adjudged not to be achieving national minimum standards on diet and nutrition should be encouraged and helped to catch up with the vast majority of homes that are. But it is not just a question of management expertise or staff commitment, it is also a question of funding.”

The RNHA is keen to ensure that all care homes receive nutritional advice and support from community dietitians employed by NHS primary care trusts, as recommended by the Commission for Social Care Improvement.

Said Mr Ursell: “It is essential that community dietitians are involved. However, as CSCI acknowledges in today’s report, the deployment of these experts across the NHS is patchy and the services they offer can be severely stretched. We therefore need more investment by the government to ensure that care homes can readily access the expertise they are told they ought to be using.”

END

Notes to editors:

1. The Commission for Social Care Improvement has today (13th March) published a report entitled *Improving Meals and Mealtimes in Care Homes*.
2. The Registered Nursing Home Association represents over 1,200 nursing homes across the United Kingdom.

For further information and comment, please contact:

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