

Media Release

16th February 2007



Registration of Domiciliary Careworkers with The General Social Care Council

The United Kingdom Home Care Association (UKHCA), the professional representative association for the UK's domiciliary care providers welcomed the Government's instruction to the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to begin the phased registration of domiciliary care workers. The announcement was made by Ivan Lewis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Care Services, at yesterday's GSCC Conference in London.

Responding to the announcement, UKHCA Chair, Mike Padgham said:

"Choosing the homecare sector as the first group to register after social workers indicates Government's recognition that homecare workers are vital to modern social care, and receive the trust of often isolated vulnerable people who are at the centre of the services we provide."

The Minister's announcement means that all domiciliary care workers and their managers will be required to join the social care register held by GSCC. Recognising that planning is still at an early stage, GSCC Chief Executive, Lynne Berry OBE, expects the register to take its first applicants in early 2008, although the date when homecare workers would be compelled to join the register has not been decided.

Until yesterday's announcement, there had been considerable speculation about the cost of registration. The Minister announced that fees would be set at £20.00 per year, contrary to GSCC's earlier recommendation that the fee should be set at £15.00.

UKHCA's Head of Policy, Colin Angel, a member of GSCC's stakeholder group, said:

"The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) recently emphasised that homecare providers are in direct competition with the retail and catering sectors for suitable employees. The real challenge will be to ensure that this additional cost is not a barrier to recruitment and retention.

"Some homecare providers are already considering whether they will bear the cost of their workforce's registration, to ease the burden on their staff. Careful planning will be needed as new budgets are created for the next financial year."

If employers bear the costs of their workers' registration, local authority purchasers must expect to pay for registration through increased fees.

UKHCA will continue to represent the sector's views with GSCC in the detailed planning needed for an effective transition to the regulation of our workforce. It will use its presence in the sector to highlight the benefits of registration for people who use homecare services.

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. The United Kingdom Homecare Association Ltd (UKHCA) is the professional association for over 1,630 home care providers in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Website: www.ukhca.co.uk
2. The Association's mission is "to represent, promote and support the sustainable provision of high standard homecare". UKHCA has a vetting procedure for its members, who agree to abide by the Association's Code of Practice, available from: www.ukhca.co.uk/downloads.aspx?download=102.
3. Domiciliary care, also known as homecare, is the provision of social care services, including personal care, to people in their own homes. People who require assistance with the normal daily activities, such as washing and dressing, meal preparation and the administration of medication often prefer to use domiciliary care services as an alternative to moving into the residential sector. Information for members of the public considering using homecare services can be found at www.ukhca.co.uk/downloads.aspx?download=108.

4. The General Social Care Council (GSCC) is the statutory regulator for people who work in the social care sector. So far, GSCC has completed the registration of over 90,000 social workers and social work students. Website: www.gsc.org.uk.
5. Once admitted to the GSCC register of social care workers, staff are required to comply with the GSCC Code of Conduct (www.gsc.org.uk/Good+practice+and+conduct/) and to obtain a recognised qualification and undertake 'continuing professional education'. They may have their registration withdrawn on the grounds of misconduct, removing them from access to vulnerable adults or children who use care services.
6. In the most recent cross-sector analysis available, UKHCA estimate that there were approximately 163,000 domiciliary care workers in the independent, voluntary and statutory sectors in England in 2004. [See McClimont & Grove (2004) "Who Cares Now? An Updated Profile of the Independent Sector Home Care Workforce in England", page 38, available from www.ukhca.co.uk/pdfs/whocaresnow.pdf].
7. The number of domiciliary care agency managers who will be expected to register with the General Social Care Council is unknown, but may range from 4,700 to 23,500 people.
8. The principal managers of all of England's domiciliary care agencies are already required to undergo a vetting and registration process with the statutory regulator, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), website: www.csci.org.uk.
9. An overview of the domiciliary care sector in the four nations of the UK, with the latest published statistical information is available from www.ukhca.co.uk/downloads.aspx?download=109.
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