The Care Quality Commission is an independent body which monitors and inspects health and social care services in order to ensure that they are up to standard.

After a difficult start following criticism about the organisation's priorities and methods of inspection, a new Chair and Chief Executive were appointed alongside 3 chief inspectors to provide leadership and responsibility for inspecting hospitals, primary care and social care. Their teams now include expert assessors with experience working in these settings as well as members of the public who are experts through experience.

I was delighted to chair an event in Parliament for the public and professional to challenge the CQC on their work. Issues were raised around protecting people from discrimination, communication and support for carers, handling complaints and the importance of continuity of care. The treatment of vulnerable people with learning disability and of mental illness was highlighted as an issue the CQC should monitor.

The need for competent managers of care homes with sufficient experience and skills was discussed as well as the importance of ensuring whistleblowers are treated fairly. It was clear that people wanted to see the CQC following up the response of health and social care institutions to complaints.

The CQC can carry out their role to protect the public far better if people bring concerns to their attention. If you have a concern about any health or social care service you should be made to feel comfortable to raise it directly with any member of the team but you can also email enquiries@cqc.org.uk or complete their online form at http://www.cqc.org.uk/.