Chairman’s Introduction
On 9th June Members of the Network's Board met with Annette Bruton, (Chief Executive), Gordon Paterson, (Head of Inspection) and Sue Neilson, (Depute Director Adult Services) of the Care Inspectorate. This was the second meeting the Network has had with Annette Bruton. It provided an opportunity to share and explore areas of mutual interest and concern relating to Care Standards in Care Homes and Care at Home. Following the meeting a joint statement was released to the press on 16 July 2014.

“Annette Bruton, Chief Executive of the Care Inspectorate, said:

“Hearing the views of the Highland Senior Citizens’ Network was very helpful. People across the Highlands are entitled to excellent care. Most care homes and care at home services perform well, but there remain some that are not up to scratch. Our job is not just to inspect these services, but help them improve and if care services don’t improve, we will not hesitate to take further action. We work closely with NHS Highland, the council and other providers to support improvement where possible.

“We are in the process of changing the way we inspect at the moment. Public expectations are rising and standards need to rise too. Getting the views of people who use care services is really important for us. A big part of our inspection involves the inspector speaking with residents, families and friends.

“We inspect every care home at least once a year – and much more regularly where we have concerns. We look at the quality of care, the staffing, the management and the physical environment of the home.

Each theme is graded on a scale from unsatisfactory to excellent. Most perform well, but where we have concerns we can issue requirements and recommendations for change. In serious cases, we can serve a formal Improvement Notice which is legally enforceable. In the most extreme cases, we can propose to close a care service...
subject to an appeal to the sheriff. “We also investigate complaints about care homes - anonymously if needed. In many ways we rely on members of the public being our eyes and ears. Last year we received over 3,000 complaints and we uphold the majority of complaints we investigate.

People with concerns about a care service can call us on 0845 6009527 or visit www.careinspectorate.com.”

Dr Ian McNamara, from Highland Senior Citizens’ Network, said: “The HSCN found its discussions with the senior representatives of the Inspectorate very constructive. We share their ongoing concerns over the quality of some of the care provided in both residential care settings and in people’s own homes. We welcome the Inspectorate’s current review of its inspection methodology.

"We are reassured that the Inspectorate will not tolerate care that fails to meet its standards. HSCN applauds excellent care when it is provided and we, along with the Care Inspectorate, wish to see such care become the norm across Scotland. “HSCN has a critical role in representing service users, especially those who cannot speak for themselves, and on their behalf we look forward to continuing fruitful engagement with the Inspectorate.”

Care at Home Concerns : Despite the Scottish Government’s flagship policy to look after the elderly in their homes, an Investigation by The Herald has revealed delays as long as 36 weeks before people receive a visit from staff trained to help patients look after themselves.’ So began a leading Article in the Herald on 11th August 2014.

However, the article continued ‘there is wide variation across Scotland, with some health boards claiming rehabilitation teams can go in as soon as they are needed and others saying they do not have information on how long patients are waiting.’

NHS Highland has asked us to consult with our constituents and members to find out what the issues and questions are that they would like answers to over ‘Care at Home’. We will be printing NHS Highland’s response to the questions we have put to them in our next issue. It is worth noting that Scottish Health Secretary Alex Neil recently pledged £5 million to upgrade local health services to help patients stay at home. Let’s hope it is enough.

GREAT WILDERNESS CHALLENGE   The morning of the Great Wilderness Challenge dawned with an interesting weather forecast predicting all four seasons in one day. Seven of us took part on behalf of HSCN and were well–equipped with our wet weather gear. Stuart, Anne and Simon Campbell from Dingwall left first as they were doing the 13 mile route and were brave enough to camp overnight at the campsite in Poolewe. Simon had an interesting night in his tent with gale force winds and torrential rain. Ian McNamara, his daughter Emma, Moira Murray and her husband Alasdair accompanied by dogs Caspar and Gille set off in lovely sunshine which sadly didn’t last. The views were stunning even in the rain and wind but the path was very rough, muddy and slippy so a lot of the time was spent scrutinising the path for hazards. It was an invigorating experience and for all of us it was lovely to be away in the peace and quiet of the hills and glens and nice to share the experience with so many others. The soup and sandwiches at the end were much appreciated and the organisers are to be congratulated on all aspects of the organisation of such a challenging event. We hope to raise at least £700 for our funds and look forward to next years Challenge. A big thank you to all who sponsored us.
Warm Home Discount scheme now open

SSE’s (Scottish Hydro) Warm Home Discount (WHD) scheme is now open for applications for low income and vulnerable customers to receive financial assistance with their winter fuel bill. The annual scheme provides a range of support for customers in particular circumstances, including those with a disability, long term illness, or who are elderly and on a low income. The assistance available includes a credit towards winter fuel bills, debt relief, free energy efficient appliances and benefit entitlement checks.

Last year over 330,000 SSE customers received support through the scheme and this year it is expected the fund will help a similar number of customers. The assistance includes customers who meet the Core Group category and are identified and contacted through the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The Broader Group is for other vulnerable customers who don’t automatically qualify under the Core Group, but may meet SSE’s own eligibility criteria - one of widest in the industry. In addition to the Core and Broader group classifications of the WHD, SSE’s Priority Assistance Fund can, in some cases, also help with debt relief and provide free energy efficient appliances.

The company also offers support to all customers, irrespective of their circumstances, such as energy efficiency advice and tailored payments plans. It also recently committed to freezing prices until 2016 providing long term peace of mind for customers. Annette Sloan, SSE’s Priority Services and Partnerships Co-ordinator, said: “The Warm Home Discount is an important scheme which helps us give support to some of our most vulnerable customers. However, not everyone is aware of it but our front line advisors and partners such as Citizens Advice and Energy Action Scotland work hard to help spread the word and identify those who are eligible. As always, we’re here to help each and every one of our customers and ask that anyone worried about their fuel bills or looking for help with managing their energy use to get in touch. We can help customers find ways to save money, provide energy efficiency advice or change payment plans to better suit a customer’s specific circumstances.”

Applications for SSE’s Warm Home Discount scheme for 2014/15 are now open. You can find out more by visiting our branded supply sites below:

• Customers can also contact SSE to get all kinds of advice and support by calling 0800 980 8831.
• The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will contact eligible customers for the ‘Core Group’ between September 2014 and November 2014 to confirm that they are entitled to receive this discount.
• For those who are not automatically eligible, qualification may still be possible under the ‘Broader’ group. Some pensioners, chronically sick and/or disabled people and families receiving qualifying benefits may meet the criteria for this category.
• You can view the eligibility criteria for the Core and Broader Group categories on the website http://sse.com/
The Consultation Document on National Care Standards is inviting people to make recommendations and HSCN are putting in a response. If you would like to be part of that response please get in touch either by post or email. It is probably the most important issue that is currently live and is our chance to make recommendations. These are the links to the current Standards


Does He/She Take Sugar?
Or
How an elderly person can seem invisible

My one good eye is perfect, my teeth are all my own I can hear every word that is spoken, even when using the phone My bones are a little bit weaker now, and sometimes I’m in pain But the little grey cells are working fine, so there’s nothing wrong with my brain Pythagoras and Einstein hold no fear for me
So if that’s the case, please ask me to my face Do you take sugar in your tea?

Mrs F Davenport, age 84
Address supplied

An invitation to join HSCN and representatives of the Scottish Older People’s Assembly (SOPA) on

Thursday 25 September 2014 14:00-16:00

Inshes Church Hall, Inshes Church, Inshes Retail Park, Sir Walter Scott Drive, Inverness, IV2 3TU
Booking by Monday 22 September
Tel 07716 884 989
Email : hscn@hotmail.co.uk

Isla Cuthbert, a Committee Member at HSCN will be taking a stall at the following event.

All invited to pop-in and have a chat with her on the day.

Information/Network Day aimed at older people and their carers in the Ullapool Village Hall on Thursday 9th October from 12.00 noon -3.00pm

ALZHEIMERS SCOTLAND

MEMORY WALK 2014

Join us for a 5—10 mile walk along the Caledonian Canal

SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 12.00 noon—2.30 pm

Register www.memorywalkscotland.org
Email walkwithkaren@alzscot.org
Tel 01463 711 707
Silver Sunday
Boccia Highland
Tournament

Intergenerational Event
Join in the competitive fun!

All day tournament for teams of 3

Sunday 5th October

11.00am- 4.30pm

Strathpeffer Pavillon

To register the team:  https://boccia.eventbrite.co.uk

Contact:  rcop@htspinterface.org.uk
          01349 864289
New rights when Buying 'on premises' - what you should know – advice from Highland Council Trading Standards (September 2014)

As from 13th June 2014 all traders must comply with the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 when they sell goods, services and digital content to consumers from their business premises. These are called 'on-premises' contracts.

These new regulations will not affect most day to day purchases you enter into on a shop premises however you should therefore not be too overly concerned about regular purchases you may make such as newspapers, sweets, groceries, lottery tickets, mobile phone top-ups etc. However, when purchasing one-off larger items, such as fridge/freezers; cookers or other household goods or personal goods such as personal computers/laptops, tablets and mobile phones, traders must give you key information before a contract is concluded. This key information will greatly assist you if you want to shop around for the best deal before you buy.

Also any ‘extras’ that a trader may want to charge you must now be given up front, before any agreement is concluded. (Any ‘Extras’ that a trader offers you must be linked to the main contract and would include services such as gift wrapping or special delivery). The trader must obtain your clear agreement to charge you for any ‘extras’. So for instance, a trader cannot have a pre-ticked box in an order form, that you have to ‘un-tick’ or ask the trader to remove, to avoid payment. If you did not agree, you will not have to pay and if you have paid, you are entitled to claim a refund.

Costs relating to aftersales customer telephone lines have also been affected by this recent change in the law. Where a business currently uses a premium rate line number (telephone numbers starting with 0845, 0870 and 09) they will now have to be changed to start with digit 03. This change will ensure that aftersales customer telephone lines or helpline numbers will only charge customers the basic rate for their telephone call. Any business who fails to comply with this requirement will have to pay back any excessive charges made to their customers.

There are some contracts which are excluded from these regulations - such as supply of food and drink and other such consumables by a trader on regular rounds to your home, workplace or residence or some contracts may be regulated under other legislation such as services of a banking, credit, insurance, personal pension, investment or payment nature. Full listing of exclusions can be found at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/3134/contents/made

The new rules do apply to contracts you have with the trader which fall into one of the categories of contract listed below:

* Sales contracts - contracts for the sale of goods, such as household goods and contracts for the supply of goods with services, such as mobile phones with airtime.
* Service contracts - contracts for the supply of services only, such as soft play centres
* Digital content - contracts for data which is produced and supplied in a digital form, such as music or film downloads

Information the trader must give you before you enter into a contract: When you buy goods, services or digital content whilst you are in a shop or retail premises (includes market stalls), you are entitled to expect that the trader gives you certain information in a clear and understandable way as follows:

* Main characteristics of the goods, services or digital content.
* Identity of the trader, geographical address and telephone number.
* Total price of the goods, services or digital content including taxes or, if the price cannot be worked out in advance, you must be given the method of calculation
* Any additional delivery charges. (If the charges cannot be worked out in advance, you must be informed that additional charges may have to be paid).
* Payment, delivery and performance arrangements and the time the trader expects to take to deliver the goods, perform the service or supply the digital content.
* Any complaint handling policy.

The trader must also remind you that they are under a legal duty to supply goods that conform to the contract. This includes your existing statutory rights which states that goods must be:

* as described.
* fit for particular purpose.
* and of satisfactory quality).

The trader must also inform you of any of the following (where applicable):

* Details of any after-sales service and guarantees.

* Length of the contract - or, if the contract does not have a set length or is extended automatically, you must be given details of how the contract can be ended.

* Digital content functionality such as regional coding and any technical protection measures.

* Digital content compatibility with relevant hardware and software (i.e. how the CD, DVD or download works with your PC, laptop, gaming machine, etc.).

This information forms part of the contract that you have with the trader so if they fail to supply you with the information or the information is incorrect, then you can take action against them for breach of contract. If the trader changes the information either before you make the contract or at a later stage, it does not take effect unless you and the trader have clearly agreed that it will.

Delivery of goods  When you buy goods from traders’ premises you may be able to take them away with you there and then or collect them later if they are small items which can be easily transported or carried. However more usually, if you order large items such as a settee and chairs/beds/ mattresses/fridge freezers etc the items may not be in stock at the time of your purchase and/or because of their weight and size such goods may have to be delivered to you from the shop or directly from the manufacturer. As a result, you may decide to agree to a specific date of delivery with the retailer which suits your needs. If you do agree on a specific date for delivery you should always ensure this arrangement is written into the contract.

As from 13th June 2014, your consumer rights have been enhanced with regards to delivery of goods. If you do not agree a specific date of delivery with the retailer, then goods which are ordered on a retail or business premises must be delivered without undue delay or in any event not more than 30 days after the date on which you entered the contract. If a trader fails to comply with this requirement you are entitled to cancel your contract and ask for a full refund. You also have an alternative to ending the contract, if you order multiple goods from the trader and only some of them are not delivered on time or not at all. You can now cancel the order for any of the goods or reject goods that have been delivered. The trader must refund you for the part of the order you cancelled or for the goods you rejected. However, where goods form part of a ‘commercial unit’, for example a dining room suite, you cannot cancel part of the order; you have to cancel the whole order.

These regulations do not prevent you from seeking other remedies for late delivery if you so wish.

Remember that you become responsible for the goods when you, or a person identified by you to take delivery, takes actual possession of them. Until that time, the trader is responsible for them even if they use a carrier. If, however, you organise your own carrier, then the trader is only responsible for the goods until your carrier takes possession of them.

These regulations also cover ‘distance contracts’ (when you buy without face-to-face contact with the trader) and ‘off-premises contracts’ (for example when you buy at home or your place of work).

For further advice about your consumer rights, you can also speak to an advisor from Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 03454 04 05 06 or write/visit Highland Council Trading Standards, 38 Harbour Road, Inverness IV1 1UF.
The HSCN website has been updated to include profiles of the Board.

http://www.hscn.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=507658

Please check out the site

www.hscn.co.uk

We have now also uploaded Duncan Wilson of the Scottish Human Rights Commission’s speech to our Conference held in April 2014.

Also accessible is the feedback from the World’s End Café event at the conference and the Conference evaluation:

http://www.hscn.co.uk/news.asp

Further information is uploaded concerning Sara Bradley’s Research

http://www.hscn.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=508174

There is a DVD relating to Sara Bradley’s research and if you would like a copy, telephone or email us and we will give you a copy, stock permitting.

Patient Transport Service

You should always call 999 if someone is seriously injured or their life is at risk

Some examples of medical emergencies include:

- chest pain
- breathing difficulty
- unconsciousness
- severe loss of blood
- severe burns or scalds
- fitting or concussion
- drowning
- severe allergic reactions
- choking
- a child with sudden unexpected symptoms

If it is not a life threatening or serious emergency you should consider other options before dialling 999. These could include:

- NHS 24 – Dial 111
- Your local GP

From 23 September the Patient Transport Service will occur from 8.15am not 8.00pm as previously.