

Thursday 28 October, 2004

**Age Concern Response to the Committee of Public Accounts Report on the
Criminal Records Bureau**

Gordon Lishman, Age Concern's Director-General, said:

"The introduction of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on care staff has been shambolic. Two years on, repeated delays and the failure to fully implement promised safeguards mean that older people are still vulnerable to abuse.

"It is disgraceful that rather than invest more into the system, the Government's response has been repeated delays and compromises in extending the checks to vulnerable older people. Anybody who is susceptible to mistreatment, regardless of their age, has the right to be protected and deserves peace of mind that they will not fall victim to an abusive care worker. Older people's carers must be subject to the same rigorous checks as other care workers.

"The intention to extend CRB checks to all NHS staff with direct patient contact is good - but existing faults with the system cast serious doubt on whether the CRB will be able to cope.

"The Government must act now to sort out this fiasco and ensure that the CRB is in a position to cope with the demand made on it, rather than continuing to delay full implementation of the system. Cracking down on crime against older people should be a priority."

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