

# Serious injuries to elderly in care homes double

'Deeply disturbing' figures show 43,500 cases reported to Care Quality Commission in 2018

By Mason Boycott-Owen

THE number of serious injuries reported by care homes in England has almost doubled since 2011, *The Sunday Telegraph* can reveal. Almost 290,000 reports of serious injuries in non-NHS

care homes have been reported to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) since October 2010, the watchdog said.

Charities, former ministers and MPs last night described the figures as "deeply disturbing".

Serious injuries, which include deaths, have risen rapidly year on year, reaching a record high of 43,594 in 2018, almost twice the number recorded in 2011, when there were 23,709.

There have already been more than 14,600 reported injuries this year up to the start of April, indicating that 2019

could be another record breaking year. Sir Norman Lamb MP, a former health minister, said: "The truth is that the social care system is living on borrowed time with wholly inadequate resources to guarantee high quality care for all.

"The result is that we are witnessing too many failures of care. This is intolerable in a civilised society. We must be judged by how we care for our most vulnerable citizens.

"Yet the Government keeps delaying the Green Paper on the future of social care. Given that it is likely to take years

to move from a Green Paper to implementing reform, it means that more older people will suffer harm in the years ahead. This shameful scandal must end."

Of some 12,800 care homes providing data, there were a total of 20 that recorded 150 serious injuries or more.

More than two thirds of the worst 20 care homes are rated either "Good" or "Outstanding" by the CQC, with only one described as "inadequate". The worst performing care home recorded 210 serious injuries. Caroline Abrahams,

the charity director at Age UK, said: "Most providers are doing their best under very difficult circumstances, but the reality is they are trying to navigate a perfect storm caused by cuts to local authority social care budgets and chronic workforce shortages."

Rachel Power, the chief executive of the Patients Association, said the data "paints a very worrying picture". Barbara Keeley, the shadow minister for mental health and social care, said both the Government and CQC had failed. Kate Terroni, the chief inspector of

adult social care at the CQC, said: "A number of factors have contributed to the increased numbers of notifications since 2011, including increased public safeguarding awareness, better understanding and a more robust system for capturing information.

"People, their families and carers, can be confident the vast majority of care homes registered with CQC are providing good, safe care, and where we identify improvements are needed, we find on reinspection that most services have made these."