

21 July 2008

**SIR MICHAEL PARKINSON AND IVAN LEWIS PROMOTE DIGNITY CAMPAIGN
IN YORKSHIRE****£3.8million for Barnsley extra care housing announced**

Sir Michael Parkinson and Care Services Minister Ivan Lewis will be in Yorkshire today as part of a national dignity tour to ensure that all people using care and health services are treated with respect at all times. They will also be presenting the Bethel Road Extra Care scheme in Barnsley with a cheque worth £3.8 million.

The Dignity in Care Campaign, launched by Ivan Lewis last year, aims to inspire and equip people to drive up care standards and encourage people to become Dignity Champions, spreading best practice and giving advice to other health and social care workers. The Government wants to double the number of dignity champions to more than 3000 by the end of the year and has recently appointed Sir Michael Parkinson as the first National Dignity Ambassador to help raise the profile of this important agenda.

Dignity Ambassador Sir Michael Parkinson said:

“I am delighted to be in Yorkshire today as part of the National Dignity in Care tour.”

“What really inspires me about this campaign is that we can all contribute to make it a success. Most of us will at some point be in contact with care services - be that in our work, or as a service user, a carer or a relative or friend. I would encourage everyone to help drive up care standards, whether that be by reporting poor care if we see it, or if we witness someone going that extra mile we should take the time to show our appreciation.

“Dignity is about being treated as an individual with respect and compassion. I intend to use my role to help make a real difference and work to ensure that everyone who comes into contact with the NHS and care services gets high quality, dignified and compassionate care.”

Care Services minister Ivan Lewis said:

“With an ageing population, one of the most important challenges we face is making sure older people are treated with dignity and respect. I’m pleased to be here in Yorkshire to help spread our message - that people want, and have a right to expect, compassionate services that treat them as an individual. “

“We’ve invested £117 million to help drive the dignity message home, but this isn’t just about money. I want NHS and Social Care services to apply a simple test - if it wouldn't be good enough for my mum and dad, why should it be good enough for someone else's?”

“The £3.8million for Barnsley’s Bethel Road Extra Care scheme will help create the kind of accommodation older people want, where couples can stay together rather than being forced to live apart and people with dementia are supported to remain in their own homes for longer. I look forward to seeing the improvements come to fruition.”

Extra care housing gives people a home of their own where wide ranges of care and support services are provided on site. Tenants enjoy greater privacy, dignity and independence, couples can stay together, and social and leisure opportunities can be enjoyed at the resident's convenience. In addition, homeowners may be able to keep some of the equity in their property.

During his visit to Yorkshire Ivan Lewis will also hear views from local experts on shaping the future of the care and support system, continuing the debate launched by the Prime Minister in May.

In the next 20 years the number of people over 65 in Yorkshire and Humber is expected to increase from 825,000 to 1.2 million, of whom 193,000 will be over 85.

The debate on the future of care and support involves stakeholders, including local councillors, representatives from local authorities, the NHS and third sector joining the Minister to discuss their views on how best to develop a system for care and support that meets the needs of society well into the future.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

A national debate on the future of care and support was announced by the Prime Minister on 12 May.

People can contribute to this debate in the following ways:

1. Via one of the stakeholder or public events
2. Via our website www.careandsupport.direct.gov.uk
3. By emailing careandsupport@dh.gsi.gov.uk
4. Be writing to Care and Support Team, Room 543, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS

Care and support describes the activities, services and relationships that help people to be independent, active and healthy, as well as able to participate in and contribute to society, throughout their lives.

It is about helping people to do day-to-day things like:

- living in your own home
- working
- cooking

- shopping
- caring for a family

Further events for the future of care and support debate will take place from June to November this year.