

The Dignity in Care Campaign continues to inspire

In November 2006 the Department of Health launched the Dignity in Care Campaign. The campaign aims to stimulate a national debate around dignity in care and end tolerance of services that do not respect the dignity of those using them. Dignity covers all aspects of daily life, including respect, privacy, autonomy and self-worth.

While 'dignity' may be difficult to define, what is clear is that people know when they have not been treated with dignity and respect. Dignity is about interpersonal behaviours as well as systems and processes. The following are some examples from people when they felt their dignity was not respected:

- Feeling neglected or ignored while receiving care
- Being made to feel worthless or a nuisance
- Being treated more as an object than a person
- Feeling their privacy was not being respected during intimate care, eg, being forced to use a commode in hospital rather than being provided with a wheelchair and supported to use the bathroom
- A disrespectful attitude from staff or being addressed in ways they find disrespectful, eg, by first names
- Being provided with bibs intended for babies rather than a napkin while being helped to eat
- Generally being rushed and not listened to.

The campaign hopes to inspire and equip people to drive up care standards and encourage people to become Dignity Champions who come from different walks of life. Anyone can become a Dignity Champion. The current champions (over

We take a look at the campaign which is inspiring people nationwide to take the dignity challenge and tackle, rather than tolerate, services that do not respect dignity.

4000 at the time of press) include front-line staff, local councillors, people from voluntary organizations, volunteers, and of course people who use care services, their relatives and carers, and members of the public.

The dignity challenge

The dignity challenge is a clear statement of what people can expect from a service that respects dignity. It is backed up by a series of 'dignity tests' that can be used by providers, commissioners and people who use services, to see how their local services are performing. High quality care services that respect people's dignity should:

- Have a zero tolerance of all forms of abuse
- Support people with the same respect you would want for yourself or a member of your family
- Treat each person as an individual by offering a personalized service
- Enable people to maintain the maximum possible level of independence, choice and control
- Listen and support people to express their needs and wants
- Respect that people have a right to privacy
- Ensure people feel able to complain without fear of retribution
- Engage with family members and carers

as care partners

- Assist people to maintain confidence and a positive self-esteem
- Act to alleviate people's loneliness and isolation.

This challenge is to service providers to ensure their services respect dignity. It is a challenge to commissioners to ensure they commission only services that respect dignity. It is a challenge to the public to test how their local services measure up and to tackle rather than tolerate services that do not respect dignity

What do Dignity Champions do?

The roles of Dignity Champions varies widely but what they all share is a commitment to making a difference, however small, to the way citizens experience care. There are many small things that Dignity Champions can do that can have a big impact on people's lives, as well as taking on a more active role. Dignity Champions are willing to:

- Stand up and challenge disrespectful behaviour rather than just tolerate it
- Act as good role models by treating other people with respect, particularly those who are less able to stand up for themselves
- Speak up about dignity to improve the way that services are organized and delivered
- Influence and inform colleagues and commissioners
- Listen to and understand the views and experiences of citizens.

Two Dignity Champion stories *The award winning project leader*

One Dignity Champion led Leeds City Council's flagship Dignity in Care project. The project recently won the national NHS Health and Social Care Award 2008, which was based on the Council's work to raise the standards of dignity across all Leeds City Council's health and social care settings. The project encouraged cul-

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tural change through a publicity campaign depicting older people in Leeds and their expectations from services. Older people were interviewed and chose an image of themselves in varied settings. Our champion said:

The campaign has been incredibly successful and we had to reprint the publicity materials several times. But we also needed to check how well we were doing in action, so, at Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust, for example, we asked staff to observe care in action and also to talk to patients, carers and staff about their approach to dignity in care. Not only did this provide a snapshot of dignity in care in action, it also helped the observers to think about their own practice.

This approach was so successful that a new project, in partnership with Age Concern, is being planned. This involves training and mentoring groups of older people who will carry out dignity audits in care homes.

We believe passionately that dignity in care is a right, not a privilege. So we have taken the ten dignity standards set out by the Department of Health and converted these into contractual obligations for our residential and care home providers as well as Leeds Primary Care Trust and Leeds partnership Foundation Trust.

The Council has also set up a multidisciplinary network of dignity champions including carers, volunteers, directors and board members who all meet to share good practice across the city.

The innovative day centre manager

Our second champion is the Manager of a day centre which throughout the week provides day care for 106 Asian elders in Batley, West Yorkshire. The centre, which has a care philosophy that recognizes the individual's and their history, prides itself on providing a service that is both sensitive and appropriate to the needs of its members so the organization was more than ready to meet the dignity challenge. Our champion said:

Dignity in Care is at the heart of everything we do - which is exactly as it should be. It's not rocket science - everyone has a basic right to be treated with respect.



Over 4700 people have signed up to become a Dignity Champion to help improve dignity in care.

It sounds like a cliché but 'treat others as you would want to be treated' was our starting point and we have worked hard to raise awareness with staff by training and sharing best practice. It was quickly apparent that this was something we should be doing and we looked first to the many little ways in which we can show respect for people's dignity, self-esteem and right to privacy.

The Asian community values its older generation and this fundamental principle does shine through in our day to day work. We encourage our staff to stop and think about the way they talk to, and deal with our members. It may only be a matter of not being too casual in the way we approach service users but any minor humiliation and a loss of dignity is just not acceptable. Once it was explained to them, our staff embraced these principles wholeheartedly.

Similarly we have worked hard to encourage an understanding of dementia as an ill health issue - something which is not always widely recognised within the community - and together with the Alzheimers Society we have made a CD aimed at helping families

understand this problem.

Proud of the good practice he has been able to reinforce in his own centre, he has been pleased to sign up as a Dignity Champion to highlight these issues in the wider community. He sums up his approach this way:

Dignity in care to me is about providing quality care in a dignified and respectful manner where the service users does not feel embarrassed or humiliated when receiving the care and support they require.

Dignity Ambassador

Over the past six months, in his role as Dignity Ambassador, Sir Michael Parkinson has together with Care Services Minister Phil Hope met with Dignity Champions and citizens. They have listened to the views of people receiving and commissioning care services, and Dignity Champions. They have found out what constitutes best practice, how to share that practice and where improvements can be made to ensure everyone receiving care is treated with dignity and respect.

Sir Michael Parkinson said:

Hopefully I can use my role as Dignity

Your Care, Your Dignity, Our Promise.



To Older People.



Material used as part of the campaign

Ambassador to make a real difference and ensure the issue of dignity move to the heart of all NHS and care services.

Minister of State for Care Services, Phil Hope said:

People want and have a right to expect services with dignity and respect at their heart. Ultimately, higher standards will enable people to live their own lives as they wish, confident that services are of high quality.

Peoples Award for Dignity in Care

Anyone wanting to recognize the dedication of an individual or team who have gone exceeded the call of duty to improve patient dignity in care, can nominate them for the People's Award for Dignity in Care. Local nominees will be put forward for the nine regional awards and one overall winner will then be chosen by panel of national judges.

Further information about the People's Award for Dignity in Care and the Health and Social Care Awards 2009. Resources for dignity champions include:

Dignity in Care Practice Guide

This guide has been designed to help support people front-line workers, practitioners, managers, commissioners, carers and older people to take up the dignity challenge. It includes detailed information about what we mean by dignity in care,

practical advice and tips on how you can make a difference with instant help for those using the dignity challenge.

Dignity in Care podcasts

A range of podcasts on the Dignity Champions website covering ways to improve the care and treatment that citizens receive. These include personal experiences and ways in which ageism can be tackled, choosing a care home and active ageing. These podcasts are designed to be used online or as a download to support local training. It can also be used to raise awareness in teams, business meetings, conferences and other events.

Dignity Champions website

This provides a range of national and regional information for dignity champions as well as updates on policy, workshops, conferences and stories from dignity champions which give examples of work they are doing to promote dignity and respect. Champions also receive a newsletter every quarter.

Taking the campaign forward

The campaign started with a focus on older people, now through the NHS Constitution, Putting People First and the NHS Next Stage Review, we are strengthening our commitment to ensure dignity and respect for all who use care services. The NHS Next Stage Review, Putting People First, the Carers Strategy and the draft NHS Constitution all place a strong emphasis on dignity and respect. Respect for peoples' dignity and compassionate care are core values of the NHS and the new NHS Constitution includes the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

The campaign is not a one-off event. It is a major priority for the Department of Health. It has wide spread support from our partners in the advocacy sector and will involve a sustained series of actions, events and policy development, the campaign includes:

- An active programme of service improvement support delivered locally
- Support from the health and social care regulators
- A review of national policies including:
 - safeguarding vulnerable adults;
 - complaints reforms;

- training and registration of the work force
- improving the care environment.

Nutrition action plan

Other work that is integral to promoting dignity and respect includes improving nutrition. A joint action plan from the Department of Health and Nutrition Summit stakeholders has been developed. This plan outlines how nutritional care and hydration can be improved and suggests five key priority areas through which managers and staff working in health and social care can address this. The action plan makes it clear that nutrition is about dignity but also central to older people's good health and ability to recover from illness. The action plan outlines five priorities for health and social care organizations:

- To raise awareness of the link between nutrition and good health and that malnutrition can be treated;
- To ensure that accessible guidance is available across all sectors and that the most relevant guidance is appropriate and user-friendly.
- To strongly encourage nutritional screening for all people using health and social care services; with particular attention to those groups who are known to be vulnerable.
- To encourage provision and access to relevant training for frontline staff and managers on the importance of nutrition for good health and nutritional care; and
- To clarify standards and strengthen inspection and regulation.

As part of the plan, the Government and stakeholders will also be encouraging the NHS to use the Council of Europe Alliance (UK) *10 Key Characteristics of Good Nutritional Care*, a landmark document which creates a common understanding of what good nutritional care looks like in all care settings.

If you are interested in becoming a Dignity Champion, call the Dignity in Care line or visit the Dignity in Care Champions Network website to register. **NRC**

Further information

The Dignity in Care
Website: www.dignityincare.org.uk

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