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VIDEO: Parky tells Leeds: Elderly deserve dignity

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Sir Michael Parkinson



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By [Alison Bellamy](#)

TV CHAT show legend Sir Michael Parkinson came out of retirement in Leeds to show his caring side. He told journalists gathered at the Marriott Hotel in Boar Lane that the problem with growing old was that people were all too often deemed insignificant because of their age.

Sir Michael has been named the Government's "dignity ambassador" with a mission to raise awareness of the importance of compassion in care services.

Barnsley-born Parky also took a trip down memory lane as he promoted the Dignity in Care campaign in the city on Wednesday and spoke about his own experiences of care.

He said: "My mother had a wonderful life except for the last five years, and experienced a variety of care.

"I came across an extraordinary mixture of care – some nurses who were utterly dedicated and wonderful."

The broadcaster said he had been forced to complain about the treatment his mother, Freda, received before she died two years ago aged 95.

The Dignity in Care Campaign 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.

Sir Michael then hosted a *Question Time*-style debate which 250 people from the NHS and care sector attended.

The panel included Government minister for Care Services Phil Hope; the Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal, OBE, director of the Y&H Faith Forum; and Andrew Harrop, policy manager of Help the Aged and Age Concern.

The audience posed tough questions about care and elderly people.

The panellists promised that much was being done to improve standards to ensure all older people in hospitals, care homes and elsewhere, received the dignity and care they deserved.

Sir Michael recalled his memories of Leeds, saying as a younger man he used to come to the posh shops and department stores, all the way from Barnsley.

He added: "Leeds was always a posh place for us, posh shops and a nice place to visit.

"I used to have a girlfriend in Hunslet," joked Sir Michael. "I used to walk here from Barnsley as a boy.

"My wife Mary used to come to college here and I have many fond memories of Leeds, especially the cricket at Headingley."

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