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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE DEATHS HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR EXTRA VIGILANCE

The deaths of Jean and Derek Randall reported by the Daily Mail today (12 January 2010) highlight growing concerns about care for older people.

The national charity Counsel and Care warns that the combined impact of the very cold winter and public spending cuts could particularly affect older people living in their own homes. It calls for extra vigilance by public agencies, voluntary organisations, families, friends and neighbours to look out for isolated older people needing support.

Stephen Burke, Chief Executive of Counsel and Care, said: "I hope that Northamptonshire county council will hold an urgent inquiry into the deaths of Mr and Mrs Randall.

"We are very concerned that many older people will be affected by the cold weather and cuts in council budgets. Care providers and their staff have done their best to maintain services in difficult circumstances. But everyone needs to be vigilant to ensure that older people requiring extra support get the help they urgently need – whether it's from family, friends or neighbours or from voluntary or statutory agencies.

“With our ageing population, we need more not less invested in care. The Government’s forthcoming white paper must set out how we can pay for a national care service for this and future generations. Older voters and their families will be scrutinising the policies of all the parties in the run up to the general election to see who will deliver better care.

“Sir Michael Parkinson’s report on his year as Dignity Ambassador (also published today) highlights the need for a change in attitudes as well as more resources for care. If we value and respect older people, then we need to value those who provide their care too.”

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

- View Sir Michael Parkinson’s report of his year as the national Dignity Ambassador:
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_110973
- Counsel and Care is a national charity working with older people, their families and carers to get the best care and support. Advice on issues affecting older people and carers can be obtained by calling 0845 300 7585 or emailing advice@counselandcare.org.uk
- Counsel and Care’s Advice Service opening hours are 10am-4pm Monday-Friday except Wednesday afternoons.
- More information about Counsel and Care can be obtained from www.counselandcare.org.uk