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COUNSEL AND CARE CALLS FOR THE DEMENTIA STRATEGY TO BE TREATED AS A NATIONAL PRIORITY

Counsel and Care is not surprised to hear of the National Audit Office's findings (published today, 14 January 2010) showing delays in the first year of the National Dementia Strategy. However, the charity says no further time must be wasted in implementing such a vital strategy with the potential to totally transform the experiences of older people, their families and carers.

Together with the shocking results of a significant Department of Health review into excessive and unnecessary use of anti-psychotic medication to 150,000 older people, this report highlights the level of urgent action required by Government in terms of increased funding for dementia care training and easier access to good quality information and advice for older people with dementia and their carers.

Stephen Burke, Chief Executive of Counsel and Care, said: "The National Dementia Strategy is ambitious in its aims to initiate wholesale change for the better. Sustained public promotion of the importance of early diagnosis and easy access to support from a dementia care adviser could, relatively quickly, ensure real change is felt by the general public and those older people using services.

“Any plans for change must be supported by realistic funding and resources. Throughout the five-year plan it is important that the dementia strategy becomes a national priority, for example by including it in the NHS Operating Framework for primary care trusts. In this way, it is much more likely that the issue of good quality care for older people with dementia will be elevated to the position it deserves.”

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

- 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