

EMBARGOED UNTIL: 00.01 HOURS THURSDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 2009

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‘FROM DEFERENCE TO DISRESPECT’: THE RT HON THE LORD HESELTINE BEMOANS THE PORTRAYAL OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE MEDIA

Today (10.09.09), former Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Heseltine speaks at Counsel and Care’s Annual Graham Lecture on the subject of Older People and the Media.

Lord Heseltine said that, “While older people are not alone in sometimes finding themselves uncharitably portrayed by the media, it is important for them to be represented in a fair and balanced way.

“This proves especially important during a period when the economy is brittle, and when society needs to rediscover more traditional values that unite society rather than more self-centred views that divide it.”

Lord Heseltine expresses concern about the erosion of news quality, giving reasons why the coverage, insight and balance supplied by news providers appear to be deteriorating. He uses the media’s frequently negative representation of the young as an example of over-simplistic, sensationalised and commercially-driven news provision. He also suggests that the quality of life of older people is especially vulnerable to the consequences of a constant stream of exaggeratedly negative news.

Finally, increasingly important though he feels the balanced coverage of older people's concerns and interests would become as their numbers and political weight increase in future, he argues that it is even more important to encourage older people to stay involved in the nation's life so that their experience and perspective is more obviously brought to bear on issues of national, regional and local importance.

A debate about the portrayal of older people in the media will be also be held by national charity Counsel and Care, and Lord Heseltine will present awards for positive media coverage of ageing and older people.

Older People and the Media

Chaired by broadcaster Sheena McDonald, the debate is entitled *Older People and the Media*, and guest speakers will be Evelyn Pellow, Director of Enabling Concepts, and Lynn Strother, Director of the Greater London Forum of Older People. Both Evelyn and Lynn are part of Counsel and Care's VotingAge: an older people's manifesto Leadership Group. Giving a response on the panel will be David Brindle, The Guardian's Public Services Editor.

ElderCare Week

The events form part of the third Eldercare Week (7-13 September 2009). ElderCare Week has been organised by Counsel and Care. This national awareness week aims to highlight the complex range of care and support issues facing older people, and how they and their families and carers can get the best advice and plan ahead for the future. The week also promotes Counsel and Care's advice and information service for older people, their families and carers.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Counsel and Care *Older People in the Media* debate, awards and **Annual Graham Lecture** takes place from 11.00am to 3.30pm on Thursday 10 September 2009 at the Grange City Hotel, central London.
2. Members of the media are invited to attend the event on 10 September. Please contact Anna Passingham on 020 7241 8523 or email anna.passingham@counselandcare.org.uk to obtain a media pass.
3. To obtain a copy of Lord Heseltine's speech, contact Anna Passingham as above.
4. **ElderCare Week** runs from 7-13 September 2009. For more information or to register a local event, please see our website www.counselandcare.org.uk/influence/events or contact Anna Passingham as above.
5. 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 can be obtained by calling 0845 300 7585 or emailing advice@counselandcare.org.uk.
6. Counsel and Care's Advice Service opening hours are 10am-4pm Monday-Friday except Wednesday afternoons.
7. More information about Counsel and Care can be obtained from www.counselandcare.org.uk.