

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009**

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**MAKE IT EASIER FOR CARERS TO CARE, SAY NATIONAL CHARITY**

Counsel and Care, the national charity working with older people, their families and carers to get the best care and support, has welcomed today's report by the Public Accounts Committee on the challenges faced by unpaid carers when trying to access benefits, or combine their caring role with part-time work.

Of particular concern is the lack of commitment in last year's carers strategy to addressing the 'overlapping benefit rule' experienced by older carers in receipt of State Pension.

Stephen Burke, Chief Executive of Counsel and Care said: "The government published its carers strategy last year, but there are still areas of unfinished business around benefits.

"Older people have told us that one of the things they want to see from the next government is a recognition of the role of carers – including changing the rules that prevent older carers from receiving State Pension and Carers Allowance.

"As the government begins its nationwide consultation on the future of care and support, it is crucial that the plight of carers is addressed. We cannot continue to

rely so heavily on the army of 6 million unpaid carers, yet make it so difficult for them to access benefits and work".

-ENDS-

## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **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](mailto:advice@counselandcare.org.uk).
2. *VotingAge: an older people's manifesto* can be downloaded at [www.counselandcare.org.uk/influence/publications](http://www.counselandcare.org.uk/influence/publications).
3. Counsel and Care's policy paper, *A new strategy for carers: better support for families and carers of older people*, October 2007 can be downloaded from <http://www.counselandcare.org.uk/influence/publications/>
4. Hard copies of both above documents can be requested by contacting Counsel and Care's orderline on 020 7241 8522.
5. **Counsel and Care's Advice Service** opening hours are 10am-4pm Monday-Friday except Wednesday afternoons.
6. More information about Counsel and Care can be obtained from [www.counselandcare.org.uk](http://www.counselandcare.org.uk)