

**EMBARGOED UNTIL: 00.01 hours Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010**

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**MORE FAMILIES AND CARERS WORRY ABOUT CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE WHO ARE LOSING CAPACITY TO MAKE DECISIONS AND HOW TO PAY FOR IT**

Worries about older people who are losing or lacking the mental capacity to make decisions for themselves has become the emerging issue for Counsel and Care's advice service in 2009, according to the *Care Concerns 2009* report published today (22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010).

Last year, ten per cent of all calls to Counsel and Care's advice service were from families and carers concerned about whether older relatives or friends starting to lose mental capacity are receiving the most appropriate and high quality care in the setting of their choice. Enquirers were very worried about the support available to older people who are finding it difficult to manage their finances or struggling to make decisions about their care and support themselves.





Overall, worries about how to pay for a care home remain the biggest concern for older people contacting Counsel and Care's advice service, making up over 25% of all calls. In addition, over 60% of calls to Counsel and Care's advice service from people paying for care without financial support from their local authority were concerned with how to pay for a care home. This figure reflects

the fact that 155,000 people or 41% of all care home residents now have to pay for all their care themselves<sup>1</sup>.

At least 90,000 older people with the highest needs pay for all or some of their care in their own home. With some councils charging over £18 an hour, the maximum weekly charge faced by some older people currently is £455<sup>2</sup> per week. The Personal Care at Home Bill currently in Parliament aims to address the personal care costs of older people with the highest needs.

The average standard rate paid by councils towards the residential care home costs of an older person with savings of under £23,000 is £402.86<sup>3</sup> per week (less the individual's contribution). However, older people who pay all their care themselves have to pay on average £479<sup>4</sup> per week for residential care.

Enquirers' other main concerns in 2009 included:

-  lack of available information and advice for older people and their families and carers, particularly for those who pay all their care costs themselves
-  difficulty in accessing the care and support system
-  difficulty in navigating the complaints process if you experience poor quality care
-  the ever-increasing costs of care and support.

Stephen Burke, Chief Executive of Counsel and Care, said: "This report shows that doing nothing is not an option for government in 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics for the number of people estimated to have to pay for residential care were calculated by the House of Commons library on behalf of Norman Lamb MP. They were calculated using Laing & Buisson's Care of Elderly People, UK Market Survey 2009.

<sup>2</sup> This figure is based on evidence from Counsel and Care's survey of local authorities in relation to care charging and eligibility criteria in 2009-10.

<sup>3</sup> This figure is based on evidence from Counsel and Care's survey of local authorities in relation to care charging and eligibility criteria in 2009-10.

<sup>4</sup> Laing and Buisson (2009). Care of Elderly People UK Market Survey 2009, London.

“While the Personal Care at Home Bill is a step on the way towards a better care and support system, the issues highlighted from Counsel and Care’s Advice Service in 2009 show that radical reform is urgently needed.

“The forthcoming White Paper on the future of care must answer the concerns of the public. It must be clear about what care people will get and how much they and their family would be required to contribute.

“And when reform takes place, universal information, advice and advocacy must become an integral part of the new care and support system.”

**-ENDS-**

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- The *Care Concerns 2009* report is based on a sample of 2,746 telephone enquiries taken by Counsel and Care’s Advice Service in 2009. Evidence has also been included in the report from a survey of local authorities in relation to care charging and eligibility criteria in 2009-10.
- Copies of the *Care Concerns 2009* report can be downloaded from our website: [www.counselandcare.org.uk/influence/publications](http://www.counselandcare.org.uk/influence/publications)
- Counsel and Care’s Annual Conference: ‘**Delivering quality care: fair to everyone, affordable to all**’ takes place on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2010 at the Inmarsat Conference Centre, London, EC1. For more information see: [www.neilstewartassociates.com/sh267](http://www.neilstewartassociates.com/sh267) or [www.counselandcare.org.uk/influence/events](http://www.counselandcare.org.uk/influence/events)
- 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)
- 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](http://www.counselandcare.org.uk)