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Contact: Anna Passingham 020 7241 8523 (out of hours Stephen Burke
07714334510)

NEW HANDBOOK ON CHOOSING, PAYING FOR AND LIVING IN A CARE HOME AVAILABLE FREE FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES AND CARERS

Counsel and Care, the national charity working with older people, their families and carers, has today (2.11.09) published a new *Care Home Handbook* as part of National Care Homes Week (2-6 November 2009). Fully updated with the support of the Department of Health, this 56-page handbook includes a foreword by Phil Hope, Minister of State for Care Services.

This new edition provides vital information for anyone who may be considering care in a care home, and for people who are exploring options on behalf of someone they advise or care for. The *Care Home Handbook* sets out clearly the rights that a person has, the choices they can make depending on their situation, and the control and independence they should be able to retain throughout. It guides the reader through the different options available for funding care and gives advice on how to choose a care home that suits a person's individual needs.

The *Care Home Handbook* covers the following areas:

-  who can help you to decide what would be the best care for you
-  getting your needs assessed by the local council
-  what alternatives there may be to going into a care home

- choosing the right care home for you
- who will pay your care home fees?
- will you have to pay anything yourself?
- living in a care home
- how to make a complaint if things go wrong at any stage
- where to go for further help and advice.

Phil Hope, Minister of State for Care Services, said: “More and more of us are living longer and everyone will come into contact with the care system at some point — whether it is ourselves or our families and friends. Finding a care home and getting used to living in new surroundings can be very difficult. I want to congratulate Counsel and Care's helpful new *Care Home Handbook* that can help guide people through these challenges.

“Living longer is worth celebrating but does mean that we need to radically change the way care is provided and paid for. We need a system that is fair, simple and affordable for everyone, whilst delivering high quality care. That is why we are currently consulting on a Green Paper, ‘Shaping the Future of Care Together’, which sets out a vision to build a National Care Service for the future – this is the ‘Big Care Debate’. I want to urge everyone to help shape the future of care in this country by giving us your views and joining the debate.”

Stephen Burke, Chief Executive of Counsel and Care, said: “Counsel and Care’s advice service receives more and more enquiries from people concerned about how to choose the right care home and how to ensure they are able to pay the ever-increasing costs of care.

“All too often, older people and their families and carers have to make a choice of care home based on incomplete information and often during a time of great stress or illness.

“It is crucial that when making such a life-changing decision, older people, their families and carers have access to the right information and advice at the right time so that they know what their options are, what are the costs involved and as a result can get the best care and support available to suit their needs.”

“The *Care Home Handbook* provides much needed advice to older people and their families about choosing and paying for a care home and is a significant addition to Counsel and Care’s comprehensive and growing range of publications for older people, their families and carers.”

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The *Care Home Handbook* can be downloaded from: www.counselandcare.org.uk/helping-you/carehomehandbook
Alternatively, to order a copy free of charge (plus postage and packaging) telephone Counsel and Care’s dedicated publication orderline: **020 7241 8522** or email your request with your name and full postal address to: sharon.ridsdale@counselandcare.org.uk.
2. Counsel and Care has produced a wide range of accessible publications aimed at older people, professionals and policy-makers. To order any of our publications, log on to our website to view our publication order form: www.counselandcare.org.uk/influence/publications/. If you wish to order by telephone, please call us on our publication orderline: 020 7241 8522.
3. 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.
4. More information about Counsel and Care can be obtained from www.counselandcare.org.uk