

News Release

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FirstStop Sees a Dramatic Increase in Callers Seeking Refunds of Care Costs or Being Denied NHS Continuing Care Funding

FirstStop Advice has seen a dramatic increase in calls from people who feel their relatives may wrongly be paying for their care. This follows the recent news of the £30,000 payout Pauline Hardinges was given after she fought a year-long battle with Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Primary Care Trust for them to pay for her mother's 24-hour care.

Despite having to sign a confidentiality agreement before receiving the money Mrs Hardinges decided that she wanted to publicise the fact that the NHS could meet the cost of nursing care for people suffering with Alzheimer's disease.

Dementia is one of the most common reasons for someone needing to live in a care home never the less very few have their nursing care funded by the NHS. Instead, many older people have to sell their homes to pay for care that should otherwise be provided and fully funded by the NHS as an individual right.

Philip Spiers Chief Executive of FirstStop Advice says "Although we now have National eligibility criteria for continuing care there still appears to be vast differences Nationwide in the ratio of those receiving NHS funding to the local retired populations. For example at one end of the Country, Plymouth are funding .015% of their retired population whereas Cumbria only .002%. It still remains really important to scrutinize how the assessments are being conducted locally against the National criteria and that people seek advice about how their care is funded. It might well be that in the early stages of dementia then means tested social care is right, but as the disease progresses and care needs become more intensive people should seek a review of assessments and whether eligibility to fully funded NHS Continuing Care should apply."

FirstStop has produced a free Fact Sheet on NHS Continuing Care and a "Guide to Choosing and Paying for a Care Home" both of which can be obtained through the FirstStop Advice Line 0800 377 70 70 or downloaded from www.firststopadvice.org.uk

Ends

Note for Editors

Source: The numbers of people receiving NHS Continuing Care Funding can be found in Hansard <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200809/ldhansrd/text/91103w0003.htm#091103121000764> following a question asked of HM Government by Baroness Greengross on 3/11/09. "How many people receive NHS continuing care in each primary care trust each year?"

Source: The numbers of people aged over 65 by area - Department of Health