

For immediate release: Wednesday 9 June 2010







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SMARTER SPENDING COULD DELIVER BETTER CARE AND UP TO £3 BILLION SAVINGS TO SUPPORT AGEING POPULATION

Central and local government are today (Wednesday 9 June 2010) challenged to use social care funding more smartly to deliver better care for Britain's ageing population. The national charity Counsel and Care believes smarter spending could release up to £3 billion that could be redirected to provide better care and support for the growing number of older people and their carers.

With the government preparing its emergency budget on 22 June and setting the parameters for the spending review for 2011-15, Counsel and Care argues that smarter spending is needed urgently to make the best use of existing resources and ensure that the needs of older people are top priority.

In a new paper, 'Smarter spending for better care', Counsel and Care sets out ten ways in which current resources could be spent differently. These include:

-  Improved access to advice and information, particularly specialist financial advice
-  Support for families and carers
-  Helping older people stay in their own home for longer
-  Closer working between housing, health and care
-  Greater use of new technology such as telecare
-  Prevention through schemes like homechecks

- Volunteering and intergenerational schemes
- Access to drugs and treatments to reduce the impact of dementia.

Many of these ideas are promoted in the Audit Commission's *Under Pressure* report published earlier this year and the Department of Health's *Use of Resources in Adult Social Care* report published last autumn. While some measures will require pump-priming, Counsel and Care estimates that together they could release up to £3 billion of savings that could be re-invested in delivering better care for the ageing population. Total Place has already demonstrated the potential for savings by local agencies working better together.

With councils facing growing demands and financial pressures, the charity calls for urgent action by national and local government to deliver more for less. Funding from the social care transformation grant and savings from the non-implementation of the Personal Care at Home Act should be used to stimulate smarter spending.

Stephen Burke, Chief Executive of Counsel and Care, said: "The Government is setting up a commission to look at the long-term funding of care but we can't afford to wait another five years for radical reform of the crumbling care system. We need action now to make the most of current spending.

"We know a lot about what works and what could generate savings. We need leadership to make this happen. If social care can deliver better value and better care, then more older people can get the help and support they need.

"The alternative – cuts in services, further tightening of eligibility criteria and hikes in care charges – should not be countenanced. We owe it to older people

and their families to deliver better care and protect some of the most vulnerable people in our society.”

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

- Copies of Counsel and Care’s new paper, ‘Smarter spending for better care’, can be downloaded from our website at:
www.counselandcare.org.uk/influence/publications
- 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
- 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