

# The Daily Telegraph

## **The Government must make reforming the care system a top priority**

Elderly 'robbed of dignity' by failing social care services

03 Jan 2012

Sir – As a society we face a growing care challenge. We should celebrate the fact that we are all living longer lives, particularly disabled people and those with long-term conditions. But the unavoidable challenge we face is how to support the increasing number of people who need care. It is a challenge which we are failing to meet – resulting in terrible examples of abuse and neglect in parts of the care system.

This comes at huge cost to the dignity and independence of older and disabled people, but also to our society, family life and the economy. An estimated 800,000 older people are being left without basic care – lonely, isolated and at risk. Others face losing their homes and savings because of soaring care bills.

Disabled people are unable get the support they need to live their lives independently and be part of society.

Businesses are losing increasing numbers of experienced staff who are forced to give up work to care for older or disabled relatives. These carers can then be pushed to breaking point, providing round-the-clock care. Our NHS is also paying the price, as a lack of support leads to avoidable hospital admissions and then keeps older and disabled in hospital beds because they cannot be cared for at home.

We have a duty as a nation to change this – but it requires political leadership.

Last summer, the independent Dilnot Commission into Funding of Care and Support published its recommendations. In response, the Government has committed to publishing a White Paper on Social Care by April. With new cross-party talks on the future of care, we are closer than ever to reaching a new consensus.

We urge the Government and the other party leaders to seize this opportunity for urgent, fundamental and lasting reform: delivering a social care system which can provide the well-funded and high-quality care and support we would all expect for ourselves and our families.

**Dr Roger Wicks**

Director, Research, Policy & Government Relations, Action on Hearing Loss

**Gary Fitzgerald**

Chief Executive, Action on Elder Abuse

**Jane Ashcroft**

Chief Executive, Anchor

**Jeremy Hughes**

Chief Executive, Alzheimer's Society

**Michelle Mitchell**

Charity Director, Age UK

**Otto Thoresen**

Director General, Association of British Insurers

**Rick Henderson**

Chief Executive, Action for Advocacy

**Caroline Waters**

Director of People and Policy, BT plc; Chair, Employers for Carers

**Dr Hamish Meldrum**

Chairman, BMA Council

**Hilton Dawson**

Chief Executive, The British Association of Social Workers

**Mark Ellerby**

Managing Director, Bupa Care Services

**Michael Adamson**

Managing Director, British Red Cross

**Mike Parsons**

Founder and Chief Executive, Barchester Healthcare

**Anne Roberts**

Chief Executive, Crossroads Care

**Baroness Campbell of Surbiton**

Crossbench Peer

**Baroness Meacher of Spitalfields**

Crossbench Peer

**Lord Low of Dalston**

Crossbench Peer

**Emily Holzhausen**

Director of Policy & Public Affairs, Carers UK

**Gavin Hayes**

General Secretary, Compass

**Gillian Guy**

Chief Executive, Citizens Advice

**Helen O'Brien**

Chief Executive, Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN)

**Mel Flogdell**

Head of HR Policy, Centrica Plc

**Professor Sue Yeandle**

Director, Centre for International Research on Care, Labour & Equalities, University of Leeds

**Martin Green**

Chief Executive, English Community Care Association

**Andrew Harrop**

General Secretary, Fabian Society

**Bruce Moore**

Chief Executive, Hanover

**Rachael Byrne**

Executive Director, Care & Support, Home Group

**Baroness Greengross**

Chief Executive, ILC-UK

**Janet Morrison**

Chief Executive, Independent Age

**Simon Morris**

Chief Executive, Jewish Care

**Alex Turner**

Managing Director, Listawood Ltd

**Anthea Sully**

Director , Learning Disability Coalition

**Terence Stokes**

Chief Executive, Lasa

**Ciarán Devane**

Chief Executive, Macmillan Cancer Support

**Dr Kirstine Knox**

Chief Executive, Motor Neurone Disease Association

**Imelda Redmond**

Director of Policy & Public Affairs, Marie Curie Cancer Care

**Mark Goldring**

Chief Executive, Mencap

**Roger Davies**

CEO, Methodist Homes (MHA)

**Simon Gillespie**

Chief Executive, MS Society

**Arlene Wilkie**

Chief Executive, Neurological Alliance

**Elaine Kerr**

Chief Executive, Norwood

**Eve Richardson**

Chief Executive, National Palliative Care Council

**Jeremy Taylor**

Chief Executive, National Voices

**Mark Lever**

Chief Executive, National Autistic Society

**Oi Mei Li**

Director, National Family Carers Network

**Roger Phillips**

Regional Vice President, Nutricia

**Sue Bott**

Director, National Centre for Independent Living

**Liz Fenton**

Chief Executive, Princess Royal Trust for Carers

**Steve Ford**

Chief Executive, Parkinson's UK

**Lesley-Anne Alexander**

Chief Executive, RNIB

**Liz Sayce**

Chief Executive, Radar

**Matthew Taylor**

Chief Executive, Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA)

**Paul Jenkins**

Chief Executive, Rethink Mental Illness

**Gillian Morbey**

Chief Executive, Sense

**Alex Fox**

Chief Executive, Shared Lives Plus

**James Lloyd**

Director, Strategic Society Centre

**Jon Barrick**

Chief Executive, The Stroke Association

**Paul Woodward**

Chief Executive, Sue Ryder Care

**Brendan Barber**

General Secretary, Trades Union Congress (TUC)

**Lord Adebowale**

Chief Executive, Turning Point

**John Hannett**

General Secretary, USDAW

**Su Sayer**

Chief Executive, United Response

**Val Morrison**

Moderator of the General Assembly, United Reformed Church