

Minister Of State For Care Service Announces 3,000 Dignity Champions

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,000th DIGNITY CHAMPION IS FROM WESTON-SUPER-MARE

A nurse from Weston-super-Mare is the 3,000th volunteer to become a Dignity Champion, Care Services Minister Phil Hope announced today.

Jayne Biddiscombe joins other frontline staff, MPs and, most famously, Michael Parkinson, as a volunteer who commits to make a difference to the way older people are cared for.

The Dignity in Care Campaign, launched in 2006, aims to ensure that all people using care and health services are treated with dignity and respect at all times. The campaign hopes to inspire and equip people to drive up care standards and encourage people to become Dignity Champions, spreading best practice and giving advice to other health and social care workers.

At the start of the tour in May the Government's aim was to double the number of dignity champions to more than 3,000 by the end of the year. Sir Michael Parkinson was appointed as the first National Dignity Ambassador to help raise the profile of this important agenda.

Minister of State for Care Services, Phil Hope said:

"Jayne Biddiscombe joins a long and celebrated list of volunteers who will make a difference to the way older people are cared for. We now have over 3,000 Dignity Champions dedicated to ensuring that dignity and respect are central to the care people receive.

"People want, and have a right to expect, services with dignity and respect at their heart."

Jayne Biddiscombe, a staff nurse from Weston-super-Mare is the 3,000th person to sign up as a Dignity Champion. She said:

"I was originally inspired to sign up as a Dignity Champion after reading a heart wrenching article in a magazine about a mother who's daughter did not receive the dignity she deserved when she was in care. I wanted to make a difference and ensure that other people do receive the dignity and respect they deserve when they are at their most vulnerable.

"Since joining the campaign I have become increasingly aware of how patients are treated in care. I plan to continue to highlight the importance of dignity in all aspects of my job at Weston General Hospital, and I passionately believe that maintaining and ensuring a person's dignity is important right to the end. Dignity in death, is just as important as in life.

"As a dignity champion, I hope to gain confidence in encouraging others to realise that maintaining dignity is a vital part of their practice. I would also hope that it will help me gain confidence to challenge those who do not respect the dignity and respect of those in their care.

"The Trust in which I work has totally embraced the issue of dignity and I look

forward to attending the forthcoming meetings to continue its awareness."

Director of Nursing at Weston Area Health NHS Trust, Carolyn Moore said:
"Being treated with Dignity is a fundamental right in all aspects of life, but especially when being treated in a health care setting. At Weston Area Health NHS Trust we are working with all our staff, our patients and their carers to ensure that the Dignity agenda is considered in every aspect of the care we provide.

"We are delighted that Jayne has become the 3,000th Dignity Champion and has joined our other Champions in the Trust's Dignity Action Group."

Dignity Champions come from different walks of life. Anyone can become a Dignity Champion, and the current 3,000 include frontline staff, local councillors, people from voluntary organisations, volunteers, and of course people who use care services, their relatives and carers, and members of the public. What they do in their roles as Dignity Champions varies widely but what they all share is a commitment to making a difference, however small, to the way older people experience care.

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Notes to Editors:

For Dignity Champion case studies in other regions across England please contact Christine Phillips at COI News and PR on 020 72618529.

Over 3,000 Dignity Champions have signed up all committed to taking some action locally to improve dignity in care (original target of 1,000).

For further details or to sign up to become a dignity champion see <http://www.dignityincare.org.uk>

In order to promote the campaign we have enlisted the help of a new Dignity Ambassador, Michael Parkinson, who will help spread the Dignity message through media work and engagement with stakeholders. Michael himself is has signed up to become a Dignity Champion to show how close to his heart the Dignity Campaign is.

Thousands of people in care homes and hospices have benefitted from £117m investment to promote dignity through improvements to their care environment High quality care services that respect people's dignity should:

Have a zero tolerance of all forms of abuse

Support people with the same respect you would want for yourself or a member of your family

Treat each person as an individual by offering a personalised service

Enable people to maintain the maximum possible level of independence, choice and control

Listen and support people to express their needs and wants

Respect people's right to privacy

Ensure people feel able to complain without fear of retribution

Engage with family members and carers as care partners

Assist people to maintain confidence and a positive self esteem

Act to alleviate people's loneliness and isolation

Further events for the dignity campaign and the future of care and support engagement will take place from June to November this year

or any other media related queries, please contact the Department of Health press office newsdesk on 0207 210 5221