

To: Chairs of SHAs
Chief Executives of SHAs
Chairs of PCTs
Chief Executives of PCTs
Chief Executives of local councils with social services responsibility
Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees (*via the CE of local councils*)
Directors of Adult Social Services
Lead Members for Adult Social Care (*via the CE of local councils*)
Chairs of NHS Trusts

6th December 2006

Dear Colleague

DIGNITY IN CARE

I wrote to you on 16 November to tell you that I was launching an important new campaign to raise the profile of treating people receiving care services with dignity. I explained that through the campaign, I intend that we will:

- Raise awareness of dignity in care and inspire local people to take action
- Spread best practice and support people and organisations to drive up standards
- Reward and recognise those who make a difference and go that extra mile

To take forward this campaign I am asking people to join a new network of local champions of dignity. That network will be open to anyone to join but we are particularly seeking high profile and influential people, such as you, to join this network of champions.

All Dignity Champions will be asked to:

- Use the influence, powers and levers available to them either through their job roles or personal contacts to raise the profile of dignity in care, challenge bad practice and improve services
- Share with each other their knowledge, expertise, experiences and enthusiasm through regional, local and online networks

The precise nature of a Dignity Champion's role in taking forward the campaign will depend in part on their sphere of influence and their willingness to get involved. We can't prescribe exactly what Champions should do but we

can give them lots of ideas of what is possible. Some Champions will inevitably be keener than others. This does not matter. Champions will themselves decide how involved to become.

You or anyone in your organisation can sign up online as a Dignity Champion by following the instructions at **Annex A**.

I am hosting two regional events to help bring together potential Dignity Champions and to help raise the profile of dignity in care. I am inviting a cross section of people from health and social care such as senior managers, elected members, service providers, service commissioners, those who have a scrutiny role and people who use services. The details of the events are:

- (i) at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, on Tuesday 23 January 2007 and
- (ii) at the Hilton Hotel, Leeds, on Tuesday 6 March 2007

I would like to invite you to come along to one of these events or to ask a member of your organisation to join us. Your attendance at these events would send a strong signal to others in your organisation and I hope as a result of the event that you choose to take part in the Dignity Champions Network and become a Champion of dignity.

The regional network meetings in Birmingham and Leeds will provide opportunities for mutual learning and central support. They will include presentations by myself, and by dignity champions from health and social care talking from their own experience of delivering and receiving services that respect dignity. There will also be plenty of time to contribute to small and large group discussions and to explore further the role you and your colleagues could take in this campaign.

For the Birmingham event, please make sure you or your nominee registers by **Wednesday 20th December** at the latest, at <https://secure.symphonyem.co.uk/dignityincare>.

For the Leeds event, please register in the same way by Friday 19 January 2007.

We are also keen to involve other key local influencers in these events. I would be grateful if the Chief Executives of local councils could ensure a copy of this invite letter is passed to:

- (i) the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (ii) the Lead Members for Adult Social Care, where they exist.

If you would like to know more about Dignity in Care please visit the Dignity in Care website at www.dh.gov.uk/dignityincare

Ivan Lewis MP
Minister for Care Services

Instructions for Joining the Online Dignity in Care Champions Network

Step 1:

Go to www.dignityincare.org.uk

This takes you to the homepage of the online network. Click on the arrows in the top right hand corner if you wish to make the text on the screen smaller or larger. You can read more about the online Dignity Champions Network on this screen.

Step 2:

Click in the bottom left hand corner "*or register here*" to join the network.

You will be taken to a screen and asked to provide some details and agree to terms and conditions. This should only take a minute.

Once you have registered you will automatically be taken back to the Dignity in Care Champions Network homepage.

Step 3:

To read and take part in discussions and to add your own Resources etc you need to Login at the bottom right hand corner using your email address and password

You only need to register (step 2) once, you will only need to go through steps 1 and 3 on subsequent visits to the online network.

Step 4:

On the right handside of the screen there is a link to click on to "*Join this group*" a day or so after doing this you will show up as a group member.

You can withdraw your membership at any time – by using the edit membership function once you are logged in.