NPC Dignity Campaign Enters Next Stage

The NPC recently met the Care Minister Paul Burstow MP to discuss the next stage of the campaign to promote the Dignity Code. The NPC hopes it will become the minimum standard in the care and health services eventually finding its way into legislation. It has already received widespread support from health professionals and public bodies as diverse as the TUC and the Equality and Human Rights

Commission. Pat Healy, NPC vice president said: “Older people and their families should have proper rights that can protect them from abuse and neglect.” Supporters can back the Code by signing an online petition at <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/27050> . For more information visit [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org) .

**Dignity Code**

The purpose of this Dignity Code is to uphold the rights and maintain the personal dignity of older people, within the context of ensuring the health, safety and well being of those who are increasingly less able to care for themselves or to properly conduct their affairs.

This Code recognises that certain practices and actions are unacceptable to older people, such as:

* Being abusive or disrespectful in any way, ignoring people or assuming they cannot do things for themselves
* Treating older people as objects or speaking about them in their presence as if they were not there
* Not respecting the need for privacy
* Not informing older people of what is happening in a way that they can understand
* Changing the older person’s environment without their permission
* Intervening or performing care without consent
* Using unnecessary medication or restraints
* Failing to take care of an older person’s personal appearance
* Not allowing older people to speak for themselves, either directly or through the use of a friend, relative or advocate
* Refusing treatment on the grounds of age

This Code therefore calls for:

* Respect for individuals to make up their own minds, and for their personal wishes as expressed in ‘living wills’, for implementation when they can no longer express themselves clearly
* Respect for an individual’s habits, values, particular cultural background and any needs, linguistic or otherwise
* The use of formal spoken terms of address, unless invited to do otherwise
* Comfort, consideration, inclusion, participation, stimulation and a sense of purpose in all aspects of care
* Care to be adapted to the needs of the individual
* Support for the individual to maintain their hygiene and personal appearance
* Respect for people’s homes, living space and privacy
* Concerns to be dealt with thoroughly and the right to complain without fear of retribution
* The provision of advocacy services where appropriate