



## **Dignity and Respect in Health and Social Care Services**

**April 2010**

**Supporting your right to the best  
health and social services in England**

# Table of Contents

Annex A

	Page
Dignity and Respect in health and social care .....	1
National Dignity Ambassador .....	2
Dignity Champions .....	2
Dignity and Respect on the York LINK work plan .....	3
Dignity and Respect questionnaire and responses .....	4
Dignity Action Day .....	5
Conclusions .....	6
Further Information .....	7
Dignity and Respect Questionnaire .....	Appendix 1

## Dignity and Respect in health and social care

One of the times at which people are most in danger of losing their dignity and self-respect is when they need health or social care services. These services are provided when people are at their most vulnerable and so respect for dignity is particularly important.

The Dignity in Care Campaign was originally launched by the Government in November 2006. It aims to end tolerance of services that do not respect people's dignity by:

- Raising awareness and stimulating a national debate around Dignity in Care
- Inspiring and equipping local people to take action
- Rewarding and recognising those who make a difference

The Campaign was originally launched specifically to promote dignity for older people but its focus was extended to all those receiving health and social care services. As part of the Campaign, the Dignity Challenge was issued. Based on consultations with service users, carers and professionals, it lays out the national expectations of what constitutes a service that respects dignity. It focuses on ten different aspects of dignity – the things that matter most to people.

### The Dignity Challenge

To pass the Dignity Challenge, health and social care services must:

1. Have **zero tolerance** of all forms of abuse
2. Support people with **respect**
3. Treat each person as an **individual** and offer them a service that suits their own needs
4. Encourage people to be **independent**, give them **choices** and give them **control** over their treatment.
5. **Listen** to the people being cared for and encourage them to **talk** about how they feel
6. Respect people's right to **privacy**
7. Ensure people feel they can **complain** without being worried about the consequences
8. **Engage** with family members and carers
9. Help people to feel **confident** and **positive**
10. Help **prevent** people from feeling lonely or isolated

## National Dignity Ambassador

Sir Michael Parkinson was named as Dignity Ambassador in July 2008. He agreed to help raise the profile of the campaign by bringing it to the attention of the public, saying: "I am honoured to take on this role as Ambassador for the Government's Dignity in Care campaign.

I have always had immense respect for the contribution older people have made to our country. Like many others I have experienced the care system in the past as the son of elderly parents.

Dignity is about being treated as an individual with respect and compassion. I intend to use my role to make a real difference and ensure the issue of dignity moves to the heart of all NHS and care services."

During his time as Dignity Ambassador Sir Michael visited many health and social care settings and met both staff and people using the services. He has written a report about his experiences, which was published in January 2010. The report is on the Department of Health's Care Networks website:

[www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/dignityincare/Ambassador/12345/](http://www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/dignityincare/Ambassador/12345/)



## Dignity Champions

There is a network of well over 10,000 Dignity Champions set up by the Department of Health. These are people who are committed to taking action to create a care system that has compassion and respect for those using its services. The role of dignity champions varies depending on their knowledge and influence and the type of work they do. Dignity Champions include health and social care managers and frontline staff. They also include doctors, dieticians, porters, care workers in care homes, MPs, councillors, members of local action groups and Local Involvement Networks (LINKs). People from voluntary and advocacy organisations, people who use care services, their relatives and carers are also becoming Dignity Champions.

Dignity Champions are willing to:

- stand up and challenge disrespectful behaviour rather than just tolerate it
- act as good role models by treating other people with respect, particularly those who are less able to stand up for themselves
- speak up about Dignity to improve the way that services are organised and delivered
- influence and inform colleagues
- listen to and understand the views and experiences of citizens



Further information about Dignity Champions is available from:

**[www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/dignityincare/BecomingADignityChampion](http://www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/dignityincare/BecomingADignityChampion)**

The cartoons used in this report are part of the toolkit of resources which is available for Dignity Champions to use when promoting the Dignity Campaign.

## **Dignity and Respect on the York LINK work plan**

Dignity and Respect was one of the issues on the York LINK work plan for 2009-10. The York LINK Interim Steering Group used a voting system to prioritise the work of the LINK and create the work plan for the year. A debate on the issues that had been referred to the LINK from a variety of sources took place during the 2009 AGM, and members then voted for their preferred issues. To try to include as many members of the community as possible, and have a recorded process that provided evidence for LINK priorities, the voting document was also sent to all registered members prior to the AGM and was available on request from the LINK office. Dignity and Respect was one of issues which was voted onto the work plan.

The Steering Group wanted to find out whether the people of York feel that they are treated with dignity and respect when they receive health and social care services. This includes hospitals, ambulances, clinics, doctors, residential care, day care services, respite care services.

## Dignity and Respect questionnaire and responses

To try to find out about the experiences of people in York around dignity and respect in services, York LINK designed and produced a questionnaire (See appendix 1), based on a respect and dignity checklist produced by The British Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).

From October 2009- February 2010 people visiting the York LINK stand at roadshows and other events were invited to fill in the questionnaire. It was also sent out to groups and organisations on the LINK's mailing list and was available to download from the York LINK website. People were asked to comment on a time within the last year when they or someone they know/care for received a health or social care service in York. The services could include hospitals, ambulances, clinics, doctors, dentists, residential care, day care services, respite care services. In total 90 questionnaires were completed and returned.

The questionnaire responses were as follows:

Question	Yes	No	Not sure	
Did staff care <b>about</b> you as an individual? – not just care <b>for</b> you?	72	11	7	
Were the staff courteous and respectful?	77	8	5	
Did you feel safe and secure when you were there?	79	7	4	
Were you, or someone who knew what you would want, involved when decisions were made about your care and treatment?	58	15	17	
Were you happy with the treatment you got?	73	8	9	
Were you given information about how to make a compliment or complaint?	29	44	17	
Question	Not applicable	Yes	No	Not sure
If you were given a meal, did it meet your dietary needs?	53	24	7	7
If necessary, were you given help to eat and drink?	10	69	4	7
Did you get pain relief when you needed it?	33	43	7	7
Were your hygiene and continence needs met?	31	50	6	3

A response from 90 people is only a small percentage of the number of people who have used health and social care services in York during the past year. This small sample cannot be used to draw hard and fast conclusions, but it is a useful 'snapshot'.

The majority of people who responded to the questionnaire gave answers which indicate that their dignity was maintained and they were treated with respect.

11 of the respondents used the questionnaire to provide further details about their experiences of services. These have been added to the list of issues which have been referred to York LINK. This list is used to compile the issues voting form for LINK members to decide the next years work plan.

The responses to 2 of the questions indicate that there are some services which would not pass the Dignity Challenge:

- Two thirds of respondents (61) were not given, or were not sure if they were given, information about how to make a compliment or complaint.
- Just over one third (32) of respondents answered 'no' or 'not sure' to the question about whether they (or someone who knew what they would want) were involved when decisions were made about their care and treatment.

Both of these relate to ineffective communication. York LINK is already aware of a number of issues regarding ineffective communication, and communication is one of the items on the LINK 2010-2011 work plan voting form. Carers rights is also an issue on the work plan voting form.

It is hoped that a Carers 'passport' will be available in the near future which might assist with both of these areas.

## Dignity Action Day February 25<sup>th</sup> 2010



Dignity Action Day was part of the national Dignity campaign. It was designated as a reminder that the dignity of people in the community is not the sole responsibility of health or social care staff.

One of the aims of Dignity Action Day is to ensure that people in care are treated as individuals, are given choice, control and a sense of purpose in their daily lives. Health and social care workers are asked to take action in their place of work to promote dignity. Members of the public are also asked to do what they can to promote dignity for people in their communities.

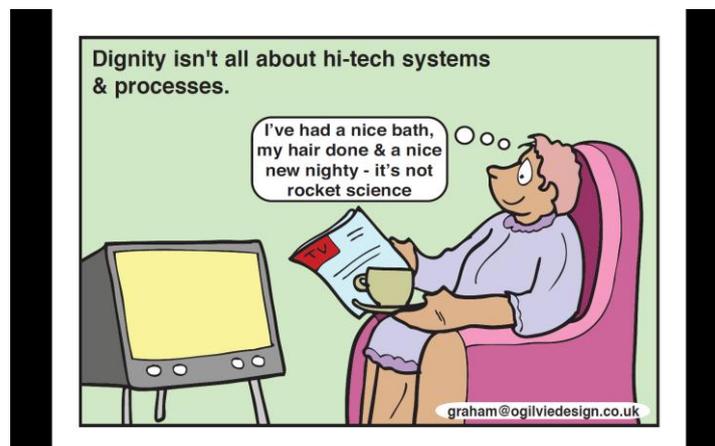
The LINK decided to use Dignity Action Day to raise awareness of the importance of dignity in care with people in York. A display and stand was set up at Morrisons Supermarket, Foss Islands Road on 22nd February and at St Sampsons Centre for older people on 25th February. At both of these events members of the LINK Steering Group talked to shoppers and visitors about the Dignity Campaign and the role everyone can play in promoting dignity and respect in services.

## Conclusions

Dignity and Respect is not an issue which should stand in isolation or be regarded as another 'flash-in-the-pan' initiative. The York LINK Steering group have pledged to make sure it is a fundamental part of all the LINK's future work plan items and will work to make sure that:

- Issues of dignity are embedded in the commissioning of health and social care.
- Health and social care services in York have policies in place to promote dignity and respect and are able to pass the Dignity Challenge.

To demonstrate their commitment to the Dignity Challenge, in April 2010 the York LINK Steering Group decided that all Steering Group members will sign up to become Dignity Champions.



York LINK has noted that awareness about the issue of dignity in health and social care services is increasing and has resulted in some practical actions which will really make a difference. The Design for Patient Dignity programme, led by The Department of Health and the Design Council, has brought together teams of leading UK designers and manufacturers to help solve privacy and dignity issues for patients. The LINK is particularly pleased to see that new hospital gowns, specially designed with dignity in mind, as well as practicality, will be available for hospitals to buy (at the same price as the old style gowns) from next year.

## Further information

Annex A

More information about the Dignity in Care Campaign, the Dignity Challenge and Dignity Champions can be found on the Department of Health website at:

[www.dignityincare.org.uk](http://www.dignityincare.org.uk)

The Royal College of Nursing dignity campaign is described on the RCN's website:

[www.rcn.org.uk/newsevents/campaigns/dignity](http://www.rcn.org.uk/newsevents/campaigns/dignity)



**York Local Involvement Network (LINK) has been set up to give everyone in York the chance to influence local health and social care services.**

We want to hear about your experiences of health and social care services and your ideas for improvements and changes.

The local NHS, the City of York Council and other organisations provide our health and social care services – including doctors, dentists, hospitals, clinics and care homes.

We help local people and groups to influence the local NHS, the City of York Council and the organisations who provide our health and social care services.

One of the issues on the LINK work plan for 2009-2010 is **dignity and respect in health and social care**. We need to know the views of people in York – are you, or someone you know and care for, treated with dignity and respect when you receive health and social care services?

Please take a couple of minutes to complete the attached questionnaire. We want to know about a time within the last year when you or someone you know/care for received a health or social care service in York. This includes hospitals, ambulances, clinics, doctors, dentists, residential care, day care services, respite care services.

Completed questionnaires can be returned free of charge to:

**York LINK  
FREEPOST  
Holgate Villa  
22 Holgate Road  
York YO24 4AB**

Or you can return the questionnaire to the organisation/group who gave it to you. Please contact York LINK office if you would like additional copies of the questionnaire.

If you have any further concerns about the care that you or someone you know has received, please contact York LINK:

**Telephone: 01904 621631**

**E mail: [admin@yorklink.org.uk](mailto:admin@yorklink.org.uk)**



## Dignity and Respect in Health and Social Care

Everyone has the right to privacy, dignity and respect when it comes to health and social care. Think about a time within the last year when you or someone you know/care for have received a health or social care service in York. This includes hospitals, ambulances, clinics, doctors, dentists, residential care, day care services, respite care services.

Please answer the following questions:

Did staff care **about** you as an individual? – not just care **for** you?

Yes  No  Not Sure

Were the staff courteous and respectful?

Yes  No  Not Sure

Did you feel safe and secure when you were there?

Yes  No  Not Sure

If you were given a meal, did it meet your dietary needs?

Yes  No  Not Sure  Not applicable

If necessary, were you given help to eat and drink?

Yes  No  Not Sure  Not applicable

Did you get pain relief when you needed it?

Yes  No  Not Sure  Not applicable

Were your hygiene and continence needs met?

Yes  No  Not Sure  Not applicable

Were you, or someone who knew what you would want, involved when decisions were made about your care and treatment?

Yes  No  Not Sure

Were you happy with the treatment you got?

Yes  No  Not Sure

Were you given information about how to make a compliment or complaint?

Yes  No  Not Sure

If you've answered no to any of the questions over the page, please use the space below to tell us about your experience, the name of the service and approximate date.

Your name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Tel No: .....

E mail: .....

If you give us information, we will not divulge your name or contact details to anyone except the Department of Health on their request.

York LINK will add you to our mailing list so you will receive newsletters and information about the work of the LINK. Please tick here if you do **not** wish to be added to our mailing list.

**Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire**



## York's Local Involvement Network

Holgate Villa  
22 Holgate Road  
York  
YO24 4AB

Tel: 01904 621631/  
07971 054829

E mail: [admin@yorklink.org.uk](mailto:admin@yorklink.org.uk)  
Web: [www.yorklink.org.uk](http://www.yorklink.org.uk)



### Dignity in Care Campaign



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