

**PRESS RELEASE** 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008

## **NCPC committed to Improving Quality of Life at the End of Life for People with Dementia**

*Is dementia getting the priority it deserves?*

**700,000 people in the UK have been diagnosed with dementia; two thirds live at home, many relying on a close family member for their care**

As these numbers are set to increase dramatically due to the ageing population it is now more crucial than ever for health and social care staff to have a better understanding of the palliative care needs of dementia patients.

Our findings show that the organisation and provision of palliative and end of life care for people with dementia is fragmented and variable. For many their simple physical needs remain unmet, let alone their social, psychological and spiritual needs.

As the numbers of people with dementia increases, this has become a topic of much current research, policy review and media attention. The BBC's Care in the UK Season has given particular attention to this important issue recently on Woman's Hour.

**Sarah Lewis** has shared the details of her mother's death in a care home with NCPC. Sarah felt her mother was not provided with the personalised care, comfort and support she needed during the last days of her life drawing attention to simple observations including:

*'staff respecting when her mother didn't want to eat and not pulling her hand away when it was guarding her mouth in order to force-feed her'*

*'staff being sensitive and not pulling her chair up to the loudspeaker of the radio, when feeding her, as it transmitted strident pop music'*

*'recognising that Sarah Lewis, as the carer, was correct in her observations that her mother was dying'*

NCPC has long since considered the needs of people with dementia a priority and are delighted to announce the launch of their new compendium on Dementia: *Creative Partnerships: Improving Quality of Life at the End of Life for People with Dementia*'

**Neil Hunt**, Chief Executive of the Alzheimer's Society and Chair of the National Dementia Strategy, External Reference Group said in his foreword:

*'It makes a timely contribution to the new Dementia Strategy and offers a wealth of valuable material, examples of good practice and understanding the range of services needed. The overarching theme of this publication is collaboration... It outlines where barriers can occur and provides practical solutions to facilitate effective partnership working to benefit people with dementia at the end of life'*

**Eve Richardson**, Chief Executive at NCPC said:

*'We need a cultural shift in the attitudes and understanding of the many groups of staff required to ensure that dementia sufferers are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve at the end of their lives. This compendium offers much needed practical guidance on the complex nature of dementia for staff and carers'*

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## ENDS

### Notes to Editors

1. For further information and press and media enquiries contact our Matt Lloyd on 020 7697 1520, or email him at: [m.lloyd@ncpc.org.uk](mailto:m.lloyd@ncpc.org.uk)
2. *Creative Partnerships: Improving Quality of Life at the End of Life for People with Dementia*' will be available from the 24<sup>th</sup> January at a cost of £25 per copy. To order the publication please contact Jenny Thurston on 020 7697 1520 or [j.thurston@ncpc.org.uk](mailto:j.thurston@ncpc.org.uk)
3. The National Council for Palliative Care (NCPC) is the umbrella organisation for all those who are involved in providing, commissioning and using palliative care and hospice services in England, Wales & Northern Ireland. NCPC promotes palliative care in health and social care settings across all sectors to government, national and local policy makers. To read more about the National Council for Palliative Care, log onto our website: [www.ncpc.org.uk](http://www.ncpc.org.uk)
4. The National Council for Palliative Care is a registered charity in the UK. Registered as charity no: 1005671.  
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