

Media Release



Alzheimer Scotland
Action on Dementia

**EMBARGOED RELEASE: 08:00 THURSDAY 08
OCTOBER 2009**

To: News/Politics/Health editors

**PHOTOCALL – 12.30PM, GARDEN LOBBY STAIRS, SCOTTISH
PARLIAMENT. Photos will also be sent via wire to all major newspapers by
1.30pm.**

Bringing dementia rights out of the shadows: the Charter of Rights for People with Dementia and their Carers in Scotland

Today, Irene Oldfather MSP, convener of the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Alzheimer's, will announce Scotland's first Charter of Rights for people with dementia and their carers. The Group will call for support from all MSPs and the public. The announcement will be made immediately after First Minister's Questions, in the Garden Lobby of the Scottish Parliament at 12.30pm. Copies of the Charter will be available at this time.

People with dementia and their carers (family members and friends) have the same human rights as everyone else in Scotland. However, it is widely recognised that, in addition to the impact of the illness, they face cultural, social and economic barriers to fulfilling these. This Charter aims to empower people with dementia, those who support them and the community as a whole to ensure their rights are recognised and respected.

Irene Oldfather MSP, convener of the Cross Party Group on Alzheimer's, said, "The publication of a Charter of Rights for people with dementia and their carers is long overdue. In recent years numerous reports have demonstrated that levels of care for people with dementia are simply not at a high enough standard. This Charter should be used both as an empowering tool for service users, and also serve as a framework for care homes, hospitals and other organisations when developing services for people with dementia."

"Publishing the Charter is not the end of a process, but rather a beginning. We want the Scottish Government to put the Charter at the heart of the dementia strategy and send a vital message that all of Scotland wants to bring about culture change about how dementia is

perceived, and ensure that there are high quality levels of care and support, from diagnosis through to end of life.”

Henry Simmons, Chief Executive of Alzheimer Scotland, said, “For too long the rights of people with dementia and their carers have been in the shadows. Although they have the same rights as everyone else in Scotland, people with dementia have become disadvantaged, disenfranchised and disowned. We call on as many people as possible to sign up in support of this Charter, which we want to act as both a charter mark for service providers and a key influence on the National Dementia Strategy that’s currently in development.”

Duncan Wilson, Head of Strategy and Legal at the Scottish Human Rights Commission, said, “This Charter brings some long overdue focus on empowering people with dementia to understand and claim their rights, and will help to increase the ability - and accountability - of those responsible for caring for vulnerable adults.

“The Commission welcomes the efforts of the Cross-Party Group to reflect international human rights standards in their work. Looking ahead, we hope that a wide range of public and private bodies will be encouraged to make human rights part of their day to day work with older people.”

Anonymous quote from a relative of a person with dementia, submitted during the consultation process for the Charter, “My family have been shocked by the treatment some people living with dementia receive. Things are improving in some areas, but the Scottish Government needs to take a far more serious approach to deal with discrimination towards people who have a life limiting illness. Dementia strategies are words and we really need to see actions. Anyone currently supporting someone living with dementia would want to see things improve for other people diagnosed in the future. Life could and should be much better for people living with dementia and their family and friends.”

You can register your support for the Charter of Rights for people with dementia and their carers at the Alzheimer Scotland Charter site – www.dementiarights.org

ENDS

Members of the Cross Party Group and the Scottish Dementia Working Group (an independent group run by people with dementia) will be in attendance and will be able to speak to the media about the charter.

Contact details:

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Quotes from other members of the Cross Party Group on Alzheimer's:

George Kappler, Deputy Director of the Mental Welfare Commission welcomed the launch of the Charter, “our organisation has a legal duty to safeguard the rights of people with dementia and to ensure they are offered equal protection under Scottish law. We wholeheartedly support the aims of this Charter which will help individuals, made vulnerable through the illness, to better understand and access their rights.”

Notes for editors:

- Dementia affects approximately 69,500 people in Scotland.
(<http://www.alzscot.org/pages/statistics.htm>)
- Alzheimer's disease is the main form of dementia (60% of cases). The second most common is vascular dementia (17%). As yet there is no cure.

Alzheimer Scotland is Scotland's foremost voluntary organisation working for people with dementia and their carers. It:

- speaks out for the rights and concerns of people with dementia and their carers;
- operates services on over 60 sites throughout Scotland providing practical services such as day, evening and weekend centres, home care and befriending and carers' support services;
- provides the 24 hour national freephone Dementia Helpline **(0808 808 3000)**;
- provides the website **www.alzscot.org**;
- supports a network of over 40 carers' support groups;
- provides information to carers, professionals and people with dementia;
- publishes leaflets, booklets, reports and a quarterly newsletter keeping carers and professionals up-to-date
- has a research programme.

More about the Scottish Human Rights Commission can be found at
www.scottishhumanrights.com

More about the Cross Party Group on Alzheimer's can be found at
www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp/crossPartyGroups/groups/cpg-alz.htm

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