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Dementia UK backs National Dementia Declaration

Dementia is a devastating disease that changes lives – not only for those with the disease but for their families too. It currently affects 820,000 people in the UK.

Today, Tuesday 26th October 2010 sees the launch of the National Dementia Declaration from the Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) at the Department of Health conference 'Improving Dementia Care in London'. The DAA consists of 45 organisations, including Dementia UK, from the charity, public and private sectors coming together in a united front to bring about radical change and to transform quality of life for people living with dementia.

The Declaration outlines seven outcomes people with dementia and their carers say they would like to see in their lives, including having support, personal choice and being able to live in an enabling environment.

The organisations involved in the DAA have pledged to commit to ensuring that their work is informed by the view of people with dementia and their carers and that they will publicly report their progress. Working in partnership with other organisations to share best practice and knowledge is also encompassed in the pledge.

Barbara Stephens, Chief Executive Dementia UK, says "As a member of the Dementia Action Alliance, Dementia UK is pleased to support the launch of the National Dementia Declaration for England. In these challenging times, it is vital that all organisations contributing to fulfilling the objectives of the National Dementia Strategy work closely together and share their resources and expertise.

To meet our commitment to the Declaration, Dementia UK will continue, with vigour, to support Admiral Nurses, and will strive to extend the reach and availability of this specialist nursing approach. We will re-double our efforts to develop the workforce by expanding our educational programmes and widening access to all parts of the health and social care economy. We will endeavour to involve family carers and people with dementia in all of our activities, and in the broader dementia care environment, by engaging members of Uniting Carers, our national network of current and former family carers, relatives and friends, and by forming partnerships with other organisations.

We should not underestimate the scale of this challenge. Two-thirds of people with dementia do not get a formal diagnosis. Family carers provide the lion share of support for people with dementia in the community; many have to give up work to do this and are economically and socially disadvantaged. There is a scarcity of specialist help for people with dementia at the end of their lives; little recognition is given to the importance of supporting family carers through this loss. Frontline care staff are poorly paid and receive little acknowledgement of the demanding and vital work they do. There is so much to be

done to realise the 'call to action', and this against the backdrop of an ageing society and escalating numbers of people affected by dementia. No one can afford to be complacent".

Ends

Notes to the Editor:

1. Dementia UK is the national charity that is committed to supporting families affected by dementia. It provides and supports Admiral Nurses, Admiral Nursing DIRECT, Uniting Carers – a national network of carers of people with dementia – and provides accredited and affordable training via Dementia UK Training. All initial enquiries to 020 7874 7200 www.dementiauk.org

2. The national helpline and email service Admiral Nursing DIRECT is provided by experienced and specialist Admiral Nurses and is for family and professional carers, people with dementia and those worried about their memory. Call 0845 257 9406 or email direct@dementiauk.org

Interviews available with Barbara Stephens Chief Executive, Ian Weatherhead Lead Admiral Nursing DIRECT and Jean Tottie, Chair of Uniting Carers.

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