

MEDIA RELEASE Issued Monday 8th August 2011

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Bolton Admiral Nursing service under threat of closure

The charity Dementia UK has recently been informed of the intention of NHS providers in Bolton to shut down a vital service being provided for families affected by dementia in the community.

Admiral Nurses are specialist dementia nurses who provide a crucial lifeline to family carers and people with dementia living with the challenges and hardships of this unremitting condition. The Bolton Admiral Nursing service was established, as a partnership between local NHS providers and commissioners and the charity Dementia UK, in January 2001. The three Admiral Nurses who deliver this service have helped many hundreds of families affected by dementia in the years to date.

In a letter to the Chief Executive of the charity, Lynne Dormer from Greater Manchester West Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust outlined the basis for this precipitous decision, which appears to have been taken without any formal consultation with stakeholders, partners, the nurses themselves – or, indeed, the patients and carers who are benefiting from this unique and irreplaceable service. The intention is that the Bolton Admiral Nursing service will be wound down and closed by 31 March 2012.

Barbara Stephens, Chief Executive of Dementia UK expressed her shock and disappointment at receiving the letter. She says:

“Admiral Nurses provide a life raft for family carers. Without their support, many family care situations would be completely unmanageable and would simply break down. This in turn will place added pressure on health and social care services. Admiral Nurses in Bolton are highly valued and the positive impact of the service they provide is widely recognised.”

Some carers have already spoken to the press about their distress and dismay at the announcement. Mr Jim Swift who cares for his wife and who receives support from the Admiral Nurses has already raised his concerns and been interviewed by BBC North West.

Jim says:

“My wife, who is 67, has dementia and I rely on the specialist knowledge and support provided by the Bolton Admiral Nurse service. I have been supported for six years and I am furious that the service is going to be taken away.

The practical help from these specialist dementia nurses is vital and my Admiral Nurse has been the rock that I cling to, especially when things have got tough. The three Admiral Nurses in Bolton are irreplaceable. Their expertise has prevented many like myself from collapsing under the pressure of caring. I don't know how I will be able to cope without their support.

Dementia UK is encouraging family carers who use this service and others who wish to challenge this decision to make their views widely known.

Ends

Carers affected by the threatened closure, Barbara Stephens, CEO Dementia UK and an Admiral Nurse spokesperson are available to interview.

For more information please contact:

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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 or visit www.dementiauk.org

2. Admiral Nurses are mental health nurses specialising in dementia who provide support to family carers and people with dementia. Dementia UK works in partnership with NHS providers and commissioners and other organisations to promote and develop services provided by Admiral Nurses.

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