



for dementia
training ■ development ■ admiral nurses

A Care Home Partnership Gerry Robinson Would Approve Of

In his latest BBC 2 documentary; aired on 15th December 2009, Sir Gerry Robinson examines the state of dementia care homes. "We want to believe, perhaps need to believe, that our loved ones are in some kind of happy, fuzzy, state in homes where they are well looked after and cared for night and day. The stark reality is that, for most people, that cosy picture is a long way from the truth."

For many this programme came as a shock, some were angered others were saddened but many found inspiration and hope in the homes and services which had a clear commitment to making a difference. Services such as Dementia Care Mapping can improve the evaluation of quality of care, whereas the Admiral Nurse service is designed to work with family carers and people with dementia, improving understanding of the condition and, consequently, coping strategies.

Friends of the Elderly (FotE) is a national charity which has been helping older people for 104 years and believes in helping older people maintain their independence, dignity and peace of mind for as long as possible. FotE offers high quality residential and nursing care in 14 care homes, some with dementia units and is the only independent care provider to employ an Admiral Nurse in a residential care setting.

Admiral Nurses are specialist dementia nurses, supported by the charity **for dementia**, working within the community to provide specialist advice and practical and emotional support to carers of people with dementia. Cheryl Rothschild is the Friends of the Elderly Admiral Nurse and describes the role thus, "It can be distressing when a loved one develops dementia. Feelings of guilt, powerlessness or premature bereavement are not uncommon. Family carers need someone to turn to who understands the issues and can provide practical support and advice...both while decisions are taken about residential care and then once the relative with dementia has moved into a Friends of the Elderly care home."

By 2025 over a million people will be affected by dementia. As an ageing population we are living longer, meaning that people affected by dementia may be living with the disease for 20 years or more. Care homes need to invest now in training and specialist support such as an Admiral Nurse, ensuring that they are well equipped to deal with the complexities that caring for someone with dementia brings.

Notes

1. **for dementia** is committed to improving the quality of life for all people affected by dementia through the provision of **Admiral Nurses**, a dedicated helpline **Admiral Nursing DIRECT** (0845 257 9406, direct@fordementia.org.uk), providing high quality affordable **training** to care staff professionals and empowering and

supporting carers through the network ***Uniting Carers for dementia***. Visit www.fordementia.org.uk or call 020 7874 7210.

2. **Friends of the Elderly** has been helping older people since 1905. Our vision is that all older people should retain their independence, dignity and peace of mind. We offer high quality residential and nursing care in 14 homes, some with dementia units. We support older people to stay living in their own homes with a range of community services including welfare grants for those in financial need, day care, home support, home visiting and telephone befriending. Additional information at www.fote.org.uk