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New help for relatives of people with dementia

Friends of the Elderly launches a new service for family carers of people with dementia – the Friends of the Elderly Admiral Nurse.

Friends of the Elderly, is currently the only charity to work in partnership with *for dementia* to appoint an Admiral Nurse in the UK, and this role is unique as it offers emotional and practical support for relatives of people with dementia at a point where most other services stop. The work of Friends of the Elderly Admiral Nurse starts as the person with dementia considers a Friends of the Elderly home and continues once they are there.

Says Cheryl Rothschild, the Friends of the Elderly Admiral Nurse, “It’s a very difficult time for families who are considering whether their relative should go into a home. And once that decision is made they need support too – they will often have been caring for their relative for many years and they’re suddenly left alone at home.”

Cheryl, a registered mental health nurse, is trained and supported by *for dementia*, the organisation which established the Admiral Nurse model. Her work will initially cover personal support for relatives, establishing support groups for relatives with a family member in a Friends of the Elderly home and helping our professional carers work with people with dementia.

Commenting on the launch of the service, Lorna Long, Director of Residential Care at Friends of the Elderly said, “Our model of person-centred care has always included relatives in care planning and decision-making processes. For family carers of people with dementia, we were increasingly finding their support needs were often more complex and demanding and that’s why we have invested in the Friends of the Elderly Admiral Nurse. We will be providing a model of excellence in continuity of care, which can be replicated by other organisations across the health and social care sector.”

Barbara Stephens, Chief Executive of *for dementia*, which oversees the work of Admiral Nurse, says: “*for Dementia* is delighted that Friends of the Elderly has taken this step in providing an Admiral Nurse to support carers and relatives of their residents. We look forward to working in partnership with Friends of the Elderly and hope this example will be taken up by other independent care providers”

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For further press information please contact:

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Note to editors

About Friends of the Elderly:

Friends of the Elderly offers its services based on need rather than the ability to pay.

The charity has been providing direct services to older people since 1905. Our vision is that all older people retain their independence, dignity and peace of mind.

We offer high quality residential and nursing care in 14 care homes, some with specialist dementia care.

We also support older people to stay living in their own homes with a range of community services including day clubs, home support, home visiting, telebefriending and welfare grants for those in severe financial need.

Additional information at www.fote.org.uk

About Admiral Nurses:

The Admiral Nurse model was first established by *for dementia* in 1990 as a result of the direct experiences of family carers. Working in the community, they provide practical advice, emotional support, information, training and education to the families and carers of people with dementia. There are currently 65 Admiral Nurses across the country, though none in the locations of Friends of the Elderly's care homes.

The service tends to end when a move into residential care has been made, as the assumption is that care home staff will now take on the support.

Admiral Nurses are managed by *for dementia* and funded by PCT's.

Carer's Week:

Carer's week takes place from 8-14 June 2009 and it will be highlighting:

- The huge impact and contribution that carers make is often unrecognised by society
- The need for carers to have access to better support and services
- Recognition by professionals, and by others who impact on carers lives, can help to make a huge difference to their wellbeing