

Dignity Action Day:

Give the gift of time

On 25 February 2010

Community Resource Pack

You can make a difference!

Find out in this resource pack how you as a member of the public can help to support Dignity Action Day in your local community.

“It might well be that the difference people make individually is a mere ripple on the surface of our care system, but each of those ripples added together create a wave, a social movement, and if this makes life better for some – then it has to be worthwhile.”

Sir Michael Parkinson, National Dignity Ambassador



Dignity Action Day is supported by the Dignity in Care Campaign & its partner organisations. Visit us at www.dignityincare.org.uk. Contact us at dignityincare@dh.gsi.gov.uk. Or call on 0207 972 4007

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What's it all about?

Dignity Action Day asks members of the public to do what they can to take action on 25 February to highlight and promote dignity for vulnerable people in their communities. It asks health and social care workers to take action in their place of work to promote dignity in the delivery of care services. If you are someone that works in Health and Social care please view the [Staff Resource Pack](#)

Dignity Action Day:

- **Is intended to remind society that dignity in care is everybody's business;**
- **Is about giving everybody the opportunity to contribute to upholding peoples' right to dignity in the community;**
- **Is about respect for both staff and the people they care for;**
- **Includes activities which give those people who use care services the chance to give something back too.**

As a member of the public, you are likely to come into contact with health and social care services at some time in your life, be that personally or as a carer, family member or friend. You are being asked to dedicate February 25th to taking some action in support of the importance of maintaining dignity in the delivery of care services. This can involve as much or little of your time as you want. Read on to find out how you can give those receiving care a Dignity Action Day to remember.

Phil Hope, Minister for Care Services, supports the work that people do to make a difference:

"The impact of so many people working together for change is fast becoming a social movement that is making a real difference to people's lives"



The [Dignity in Care Campaign](#) aims to end tolerance towards indignity and discrimination in health and social care by getting both the public and staff talking about what preserving dignity in care means and inspiring them to take action. An army of over 12,000 members of the public and staff have joined the campaign as [Dignity Champions](#) and are doing what they can to improve Dignity in Care.

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In the words of **Sir Michael Parkinson, National Dignity Ambassador** it doesn't matter who you are, everyone can get involved.

"Dignity in Care must be everybody's business. I hope people will step up to this challenge and do whatever is in their power to make a difference"

As a member of the public please support this initiative and do whatever is in your power to ensure the success of Dignity Action Day.

Supporting Dignity Action day will:

- Raise awareness of the importance of dignity in care
- Provide someone in your community with an extra special day
- Be part of a national celebration and demonstrate solidarity for Dignity in Care
- Remind others that respecting the dignity of people in your community is not the sole responsibility of health or social care staff- we all have a role to play

Remember: You can do almost anything - we all have a role to play

Pledge your time to give a little respect

For Dignity Action Day we are asking you to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining dignity by pledging a small amount of your time to make a better day for others. We are only asking for your time on this particular day but, who knows, may be it will inspire you to volunteer again in the future.

Things that contribute to vulnerable people feeling a loss of dignity include isolation, not being treated as an individual and not having stimulating activities to occupy them. See what you can do to help.

A volunteer can be anyone

From helping an older neighbour with their shopping, to providing legal advice for a local charity, volunteers make a vital contribution to all aspects of community life. As a member of the community, your efforts to respect the dignity of others might be as simple as being there for someone to talk to, to share memories with and look at old photos. It might be as simple as checking your elderly neighbour is warm and has enough food in the cold weather.

It could involve helping people do something new and interesting for the day – something they have never done before but always wanted to do - or maybe something they used to do but now need a little help with. You could perhaps help in a practical way by tidying a garden, doing some decorating or a spring clean. Opportunities to help are endless read on for [ideas to inspire you](#).

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Preserving dignity means different things to different people. People tell us that being able to give something back really helps them to maintain their personal dignity. Think about how you could enable people to share their skills, expertise and time not just for their benefit but for yours too.

Remember you can volunteer at any time of the week, day or night, even if you work full time. Even if you can only dedicate one hour to providing someone with a dignified experience on Dignity Action Day – the difference to that person may be immeasurable.

Dignity Action Day suggestions:

We understand that it might not be easy to identify what you can do to promote the dignity of people who receive care, so we have made a list of possible things you might consider. You might feel daunted that you don't have anything to contribute. Please don't- you will be surprised how even small actions can have a big effect. The ideas offered below are actions over and above the basic care requirements that should be delivered by the authorities. They are suggestions that will add value to a person's day by contributing to the dignity of the recipient.

Each of the ideas below helps promote dignity by meeting one or more of the [dignity challenges](#). If you are undecided about what you might do to support Dignity Action Day then why not take your cue from a recent survey of 3000 people, who, when asked 'what are the most important things needed to ensure dignity in care?' responded that providing a stimulating activity for someone in care or giving someone a greater sense of purpose were priority issues to help deliver dignity in daily lives.

Below you'll find a list of great ideas that might help you to decide how to get involved. The list is split into informal volunteering, formal volunteering and intergenerational ideas. Take a look at them all and see what suits you best. Once you have decided on your support for Dignity Action Day please [tell us what you are planning to do](#), so we can share these ideas to inspire and encourage others to participate.

Informal Volunteering

This might be a one-off act to support Dignity Action Day. These ideas typically benefit people in your local community, be that a neighbour, a local community group, day centre or care home. These ideas could be organised independently and flagged for a helping hand when you share your idea on our pledging page. Examples might be:

- Teach someone how to use the internet

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- to connect with their family and friends
- to do their shopping online;
- to find out more about the things they are interested in
- to make contact with old school friends or find former acquaintances
- to network with people of the same age, background or experiences
- Run a local activities session to bring people together
 - Tai chi, music, dance, bowls, crafts, a quiz
- Share your skill
 - Contribute to a pamper day
 - Assist at a crafts evening
- Give someone the opportunity to communicate
 - Listen to someone talking about their family
 - Look at photographs from the past
 - Play games
 - Listen and learn from people's experiences
- Help around the home for neighbours
 - Gardening
 - Decorating
 - Spring cleaning
 - DIY
 - Cooking
 - Shopping
- Dedicate some time to read to someone who has difficulty with their sight
- Entertainment – share their passion
 - Watch their favourite film
 - Listen to their favourite music
 - Talk about why the film or music is so important to them
- Transport –take the stress out of a day
 - Collect prescriptions for someone
 - Drive people to care centres (e.g. day centres, GP surgeries or hospital)
 - Or to appointments
 - Or to a place of worship
 - Or to see a long lost friend
- Spend time in hospital with someone who rarely gets visitors
- Organise a get together with others in the community to reduce the feeling of isolation
- Organise a day trip or help on an already organised trip

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Formal Volunteering

To undertake one of the activities listed here or something similar it would be advisable to contact a [volunteering organisation](#) to help you organise your volunteering. It may be that these activities require more planning and a longer commitment than a one off activity. Examples might be

- Regularly help your local meals on wheels service. Some people may need help with eating and drinking
- Join a homecare worker on their rounds for the day, take some of their load so they have time to have a chat with the people they visit
- Meet and Greet - many people arriving in hospitals are anxious and would appreciate some support and a friendly face
- Assist your local hospital radio for the day
- Join your [local involvement network](#) (Act as a voice for people in your local community)
- Help at your local hospice
- Contact your local hospital and ask how you can volunteer your help.

What can you do to help close the divide between generations? Intergenerational Volunteering

Over the past three years since the Dignity in Care campaign launched, it has become apparent that the lack of dignity that older people experience often stems from a lack of respect and appreciation from other generations. This needs to be addressed - especially in today's ageing society. To live in a truly dignified society, everyone needs to respect each other and the simplest thing that anyone can do is to help different generations interact more so a mutual appreciation can be formed. Examples of what you might do are:

- Set up a gathering to
 - invite older adults and younger people along to share experiences (e.g. Brownies, guides or cubs)
 - choose a theme or activity that everyone can relate to
 - facilitate a session where the generations can interact and learn from each other and have fun
 - try to dispel the myths that all old people are useless and all young people are hoody-wearing hooligans
- Set up a visit to your local school
 - Arrange for an older person to talk to others and share their experiences on a particular topic e.g. the Second World War, the first motor vehicle

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- If you or someone you know is under 18 and has a talent, showcase it at your local care home
 - entertaining, singing, magic, crafts, a specialist skill
- Set up a reading scheme
 - Older people can help pre-schoolers
 - Younger people reading to those with failing eye sight
 - Devise a project that different generations can work on together. For example older generations could share recipes and younger generations provide the IT skills to work together and produce a community cook book

Age Concern can help you find an [intergenerational project](#) near you

Volunteering Support - Get involved

If you have a volunteering idea that you need the help and support of others to complete then make sure you let us know. When you upload your idea onto our [Dignity Action Day pledging site](#) you are able to flag your idea with a 'helping hand'. This indicates to others that your idea needs some more support and people who are interested in helping out can express their interest to you. If you choose to set up a gathering, share your skill or something similar but you need more people to get involved then this is the way to do it.

If you have an idea to support Dignity Action Day and are looking for a number of volunteers to turn up and help out and want to reach out to volunteers beyond the Dignity in Care website you could post your idea on [flocklocal](#). This new free website provides you with a set of tools to advertise your event and sign-up volunteers. If you have an idea to tidy up the garden area of a hospital or care home so people can enjoy it once the summer comes, then this website would be good for you to get casual volunteers involved who you do not require to have a specific skill.

It is also possible for you to view what pledges others are making in support of Dignity Action Day and [get involved with their ideas](#). Simply search activities in your local area where 'volunteers are required' to see what you can get involved with. Perhaps a care provider in your local community is organising a day trip for service users but needs an extra body to make the idea become a reality. You can offer your support to particular activities and work together to provide a truly memorable day for a member of your local community. If there are no activities that you would like to get involved in on our [pledging pages](#), [Flocklocal](#) may have some events near you which you may be interested in.

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WHERE ONE PERSON LEADS ANOTHER WILL FOLLOW : PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU ARE DOING

We are really interested to know what activities people are planning to undertake around Dignity Action Day and importantly we need to share these to inspire and encourage others. Be proud of your involvement with Dignity Action Day.

Tell us what you plan to do at www.dignityincare.org.uk

Volunteering organisations

Here are organisations that can support you to get involved with volunteering activities. Some of these organisations will match you with an activity that will suit you and allow you to search out possible activities in your area. Others advise you to contact them for help and advice.

Do It. Volunteering to support dignity needn't always mean direct care of patients or vulnerable people. Fundraising for hospices, and helping out in charity shops, for example, are invaluable ways to give your time and skills. Volunteering opportunities that Do It can provide you with include befriending terminally ill patients- Good communication and listening skills, patience, a sense of humour and sensitivity to the needs of others are needed for this role, becoming a therapeutic care practitioner, or a care volunteer for people with Leukaemia –lending a listening ear and support.

Mentoring and Befriending Foundation If you are looking for a longer term volunteering opportunity then take a look at Mentoring and befriending Foundation. They rely upon local support from people of all ages and community backgrounds to carry out projects working with specific groups of people offering a one to one non judgemental informal and social relationship.

Sue Ryder care. Volunteering with Sue Ryder Care will help support service users in retaining contact with relatives through the internet, keep up to date with current affairs by reading and maintain their appearance with hairdressing and manicuring sessions. Service users are also keen to give something back themselves and feel that by volunteering they maintain their dignity in an environment that is supportive and understands their needs. Find out more by emailing tracey.mealing@suerydercare.org

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[Age Concern / Help The Aged](#) There are many opportunities to get involved with Age Concern and Help the Aged. For example, volunteers run activity classes, give information and advice, provide support as a befriender, help in day centres and help out around the home as a handy person.

[British Red Cross](#) have a variety of volunteering activities to get involved in including [informal volunteering](#) opportunities, medical equipment volunteering (demonstrating how to use and maintain wheelchairs), skin camouflage volunteering (teaching people with physical skin conditions cover over techniques) and therapeutic volunteering for vulnerable people in stressful situations.

[WRVS](#) – The Volunteering opportunities at WRVS fall into 4 categories: Helping at community information centres and cafes, Meal and book delivery driving, Hospital patient support & emergency service response teams.

[Voluntary worker](#) encourages retired people to get involved and organises placements with local hospital radio, proving transport in the community and helping people with learning disabilities.

[CSV](#) Touch the lives of others by volunteering with CSV. They can make volunteer placements mentoring and befriending others and specifically working with older people in your community.

[St Johns ambulance](#) – Get involved with one of the community projects and help out at the hospital library services, or help those that have suffered an acute illness access and participate in leisure and sport activities.

[Marie Curie cancer Care](#) –Volunteer placements can include helping in hospices- from volunteer driving to complimentary therapist, to working in the offices dealing with incoming queries.

[Volunteering England](#) – does not directly place volunteers but you can search for your local volunteer centre on their website and get involved that way.

You could also try contacting national organisations that support a condition (e.g. the [Alzheimer's Society](#)) that you feel passionate about- they may not take volunteers themselves but they may know of local opportunities where support is needed.

These organisations are here to help you volunteer. Please take advantage of that in your support of Dignity Action Day!

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Supporting Dignity in Care beyond Dignity Action Day

If volunteering isn't for you but you want to support Dignity Action Day and the Dignity in Care Campaign take a look at our suggestions below.

- Tell your friends, family and colleagues about Dignity Action Day.
- If you use online social networking tools such as MySpace, Facebook , Twitter, Bebo or have your own online blog or organisational website, newsletter, or email network, use these to help spread the word
- Sign up to [become a dignity champion](#)- we will keep you informed what you can do in the future to support the Dignity in Care Campaign
- Wear a dignity in care badge
- Contact your local councillor or MP at www.writetothem.com to:
 - a. Ask them to prioritise and fight for dignity in care locally;
 - b. Share with them your personal dignity story and why this issue is important to you; or
 - c. Encourage your local councillors to undertake a local Overview and Scrutiny Review around Dignity in Care.
- Attend one of our [forthcoming regional events](#) for Dignity Champions.
- Find out what improvements are being made [in your area](#)
- If you are in contact with care services, take the time to give your feedback, good or bad, about your experience:
 - a. Use the suggestion box
 - b. Send a thank you card
 - c. Talk to the ward or care home manager
 - d. Feedback online at [NHS Choices](#) or [Patient Opinion](#) or www.iwantgreatcare.org/
- Share your views on local care services or get more actively involved in holding services to account through your [Local Involvement Network](#)

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Summary

Everyone knows someone who has not been treated with dignity and respect when receiving care services

Dignity Action Day is an opportunity for all of us to address that and show our support for the importance of treating vulnerable people with dignity and respect.

Dignity Action Day is not about grand gestures. It is about all of us – you and me - doing our own thing – however small and personal - to underline the need to treat people with dignity.

Don't be put off. And don't be shy. Even the apparently smallest things can make a difference. Please get involved – this is so important.

[Tell us what you plan to do.](#)

How better to end than as we began:

“It might well be that the difference people make individually is a mere ripple on the surface of our care system, but each of those ripples added together create a wave, a social movement, and if this makes life better for some – then it has to be worthwhile.”

Sir Michael Parkinson, National Dignity Ambassador

How to contact us:

Please get in contact with us if you have any queries or concerns. If you wish to support the campaign further, please sign up as a Dignity Champion and take a look at our toolkit for action detailing what members of the public and health and social care staff can do on an ongoing basis to support dignity for people in care.

You can contact us directly on dignityincare@dh.gsi.gov.uk or 020 7972 4007.

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