

**News release from the Right to Care campaign,
Emgargoed until Tuesday 11 Nov 00.01 am**

Claire Rayner leads Armistice Day protest to Number 10

Leading care campaigner and Royal Commissioner, Claire Rayner, will today lead war veterans, pensioners and disabled people in an Armistice Day protest organised by the Right to Care coalition calling for greater financial support for those needing long-term care.

The campaigners, including Rodney Bickerstaffe (National Pensioners Convention), Paul Burstow MP, Myfanwy Manning (Unison) and Angela Begun (care worker) will present a 100,000 strong petition to Downing Street at 11.45am, supported by protestors holding giant medals with the slogan "no medal for Mr Blair - thousands still paying for care".

The Right to Care campaign is concerned that under the existing care rules, patients in hospital receive assistance with personal care such as bathing, bandaging and dressing free of charge, whilst those receiving the same care in care homes or in their own home have to pay. Campaigners believe this is unfair because it discriminates against older and disabled people.

The current system judges that 120,000 people in care homes are too rich for state help and have to pay for all of their personal care costs. Yet official figures show that 61% of these people have an income of less than £200 a week and are expected to pay typical care home bills of over £300 a week.

Clare Rayner said: "A quarter of us will need long-term care at some time in our lives and thousands of people with low incomes are currently having to pay for it. How can it be fair that we share the cost of treating cancers, but not that of caring for people with medical problems like dementia. Those who have given a lifetime of service to this country deserve better and society has an obligation to offer them much more support."

Pat Moran, a founder of the Burma Star Association, will also be amongst the ex-service people paying their respects to those that lost their lives in military service and asking the government to remember it has a duty of care to those that live on.

Pat Moran said: "Many voluntary organisations and charities provide money to old soldiers who cannot meet the costs of their care, but really it is the government's moral duty to fill this gap rather than relying on war veterans shaking tins on street corners."

Prof Harry Keen, President of the pressure group that campaigns for a comprehensive NHS - NHS Support Federation said; "The arguments which lead the government to support the universal provision of healthcare through the NHS should apply to the care of older and disabled people at least as strongly."

more> Paul Evans, NHS Support Federation, 01273234822 / 07775583528

notes: The Right to Care Campaign, a coalition of 17 national organisations believes that the Government must fully fund personal and nursing care that is free at the point of use for all who need long term care, wherever they live throughout the UK, as recommended in the Royal Commission report.

members of the Right to Care campaign include UNISON, Association of Charity Officers; Action on Elder Abuse; Age Concern England; Age Concern Scotland; Arthritis Care; Carers UK; Coalition on Charging; Counsel and Care; Leonard Cheshire; Mencap; National Pensioners Convention; NHS Support Federation; The Patients' Association; RADAR; Royal College of Nursing; VOICES. **Patrons are Claire Rayner and Robin Wendt. both members of the Government's Royal Commission in to Long Term Care of the Elderly**