



**15 December 2010**  
**Press release**

## **SPARE SOME TIME TO 'KNOCK ON YOUR NEIGHBOUR' THIS CHRISTMAS**

### **NACC launch new campaign encouraging communities to look in on their elderly neighbours**

While families up and down the country gear up for the Christmas break, the National Association of Care Catering is urging everyone to spare a thought for the 50% of older people aged 75 and over who live alone<sup>i</sup> by launching the new *Knock on Your Neighbour* campaign.

The new campaign is simply asking everyone to spare some time to call in on at least one elderly relative or neighbour during the Christmas break to make sure they are keeping well and warm throughout the festive period.

Last winter 81% of the total number of deaths recorded between December 2009 and March 2010 were pensioners. Of the 25,400 adults who died from cold related deaths during the last bitter winter, 20,600 were aged 75 and over, meaning last year's winter months saw nine pensioners needlessly dying every hour<sup>ii</sup>.

With more arctic weather on the horizon, this winter is set to be even worse than the last according to reports. More snow and ice could mean we see these grim figures increase even further.

Older people can struggle with everyday tasks many of us take for granted, such as shopping for groceries, carrying shopping home or even getting to the shops. This can become even harder during the winter months as the cold weather also marks the arrival of winter illnesses, such as colds and flu, which are most likely to affect the more vulnerable, including the elderly.

For the half a million older people who spend Christmas alone<sup>iii</sup> the Community Meals on Wheels Service is a vital lifeline as they deliver thousands of meals on Christmas and Boxing Day. Without this service, and with no transport available, some older people would be left to survive on their own for nearly a week.

Derek Johnson, Chairman of the NACC explains: "For those elderly people who live on their own Christmas can seem just like any other day. Many older people aren't able to put up decorations or cook a traditional Christmas dinner. For some, the television is the nearest they get to human interaction on Christmas Day. The NACC believes the most valuable Christmas present you can give this year might simply be a visit to an older person and check they are healthy and happy."

The NACC has also been working with Local Authorities to develop new 'Keeping Well in Winter' guidelines which have been issued throughout the UK to help elderly people cope throughout the winter



months. While this will go some way to helping pensioners stay well, it is still vital people visit their elderly neighbours throughout the Christmas break to check they are sticking to this advice and keeping safe and well.

Key things to look out for when you ‘*Knock on Your Neighbour*’ include:

- Are they keeping warm?
  - Check they are wearing several thin layers of clothes rather than one thick layer
- Are they keeping their home warm?
  - Make sure at least the main room in the house is well heated
- Are they eating well?
  - Check they have had at least one hot meal a day and hot drinks regularly through the day

Join our campaign and make some time to ‘*Knock on Your Neighbour*’ this Christmas. For further information or to download a copy of the leaflet please log on to [www.thenacc.co.uk](http://www.thenacc.co.uk) or The NACC 08707480180 to get a copy.

**Ends**

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**Notes to editors:**

The National Association of Care Catering (NACC) is a progressive organisation representing professionals providing catering to the care industry. They are recognised by Local Authorities, independent providers, the charitable sector and Government departments as a prime source of information and opinion on all aspects of catering within the care sector and whose primary aim is to improve standards.

The NACC works with a number of partners to:

- To promote and enrich the standard of catering within the care sector, whether that catering be provided by Social Care Departments or other Caring Agencies
- To provide a forum for debate among individuals, companies and organisations of all kinds involved in catering for the care sector
- To facilitate the exchange of information, experience and expertise
- To promote the development of professional standards among those involved in catering for the care sector
- To commission research into matters relating to catering for the care sector
- To publish guidelines, policy papers and authoritative statements on all aspects of catering for the care sector

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<sup>i</sup> Please include the reference

<sup>ii</sup> Office of National Statistics data

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