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USING THE EVIDENCE TO END AGE DISCRIMINATION IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

THE CENTRE FOR POLICY ON AGEING is hosting a symposium on 2 October 2009 to support the banning of age discrimination in health and social care outlined in the UK government's Equality Bill (April 2009). Unjustifiable age discrimination and unfair treatment based on age have no place in a fair society, which values all its members.

The Centre has produced four reviews from the literature to identify possible evidence of age discrimination in policy and practice in secondary health care, primary health care, mental health services and social care in the UK, commissioned by the Department of Health.

The four studies, and the symposium to discuss issues arising from them, are intended to inform the national review on age discrimination, led by Sir Ian Carruthers and Jan Ormondroyd, to examine the extent to which health and social care services are differentiated by age, where people may receive less favourable treatment because of age, and where this may be unlawful and therefore constitute discrimination under the Equality Bill.

Gillian Crosby, the Centre's Director said 'I am very pleased that the Centre is contributing to such important work that will help to improve the lives of many older people who have experienced difficulty in accessing services and the care that they need. Evidence from the reviews carried out by the Centre suggests that ageism continues to have a negative effect on the range and quality of services available to older people.'

End

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Notes

1. Age discrimination was banned in the workplace in 2006 and the Equality Bill will make it unlawful to discriminate against someone aged 18 or over because of age when providing services or carrying out public functions. It will not affect products or services for older people where age-based treatment is justified or beneficial. The law will only stop age discrimination where it has negative or harmful consequences. Legislation will be in force in financial services and all other services, with the exception of health and social care, in 2012. Access the Equality Bill, accompanying documents and impact assessments via the Government Equalities Office website http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx or the CPA Policies on Ageing website http://www.cpa.org.uk/cpa/policies_on_ageing
2. There is no firm date for banning discrimination in health and social care services but the government has initiated a review of the practical action that is needed to tackle age discrimination in these areas, which will report in October 2009, led by Jan Ormondroyd, Chief Executive of Bristol City Council and Sir Ian Carruthers, Chief Executive of the South West Strategic Health Authority.