

PRESS RELEASE

11 January 2007

SUCCESSFUL CARE FEES LEGAL BATTLE WILL PAVE THE WAY FOR HUNDREDS OF HOPEFUL FAMILIES, PREDICTS SYMPONIA

National advice network **Symponia**, the care fees and financial planning specialist for the over 65s, says that this week's landmark victory by Mike Pearce, a former detective, who has won his 5-year battle to have nursing home fees to the value of £50,000 returned to him, could open the flood gates for similar cases all over Britain.

Mr Pearce challenged Torbay Care Trust on behalf of his mother, who had Alzheimers but was denied NHS funded care despite extremely limited capabilities. Mr Pearce had sold the family home to meet care costs.

Stephen Wilkinson, a Chartered Financial Planner and Symponia member for York and Harrogate says:

"This case could inspire hundreds of families to take the same course of action, and whilst Mr Pearce is to be congratulated on his tenacity, and his victory is obviously just, I would add a note of caution to other families faced with a similar situation. Sadly, NHS Continuing Care is difficult to both assess and secure and guidelines can seem arbitrary and muddled. It is extremely emotional to have to place a loved one in a care home; elderly relatives can often appear very poorly and dependent to the family, yet still fail to meet the criteria applied to the assessment.

"The funding of private care fees is a difficult proposition to come to terms with, but with proper planning and expert advice, families can find their own dedicated solution. Whether or not an elderly person is entitled to NHS funded care is something that needs to be fully investigated from the outset and this is where high quality financial advice cannot be overestimated. But only an experienced and highly qualified financial adviser will be able to pursue the right course of action. Symponia members follow a strict Code of Practice & Conduct and are trained to look at all aspects of State funding before exploring and/or recommending any other option."

Symponia's mission statement is to liaise with the care sector and offer the very best care fees planning advice. Clients can also access genuinely caring, qualified and

competent advice on a whole range of elderly associated subjects, including Lifetime Mortgages, Inheritance Tax and potential care fees planning issues.

Symponia has members across the UK. To be introduced to a local member, please call 01789 774595 or visit <http://www.symponia.co.uk/findamember.php> and click on the relevant region for a full list of members.

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For further information, please contact:

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Notes to Editors

Symponia (which is the Greek word for compassion) was created by Jeremy and Janet Davies who have 20 years' combined experience in long term care. Founded in January 2005 Symponia is committed to raising standards and increasing training and compliance levels within the long term care advice industry.

- All members are qualified IFAs who are selected by invitation only, after a rigorous selection process designed to make sure that members have the right people skills as well as technical competence. All members are subject to a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. Symponia is the only advice group to carry out this procedure.
- Each member must pass a bespoke written examination every year. The exam is in addition to FSA requirements and tests market knowledge as well as technical competence. In addition to basic qualifications, advisers must have attained the industry benchmark examination known as CF8. Symponia is the only advice group to insist on this qualification.
- Members are subject to a Code of Practice and Conduct, and to a Customer Charter, which lays down strict service standards that the IFA must meet.
- Member IFAs pay an annual fee only (payable monthly). There is no commission split of business related fee.
- Symponia acts as an intermediary between care home providers and care fee specialist IFAs, providing the latter with introductions to providers in their area.
- Symponia is the only care fees planning advice group that has genuine national representation across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is the only group to guarantee face to face consultation for clients in every part of the country.
- Janet Davies is also an IFA and heads up the Care Fees Planning Division at Warwick Butchart Associates.