



Introducing John's Campaign

www.johnscampaign.org.uk

for the right to stay with people with dementia in hospital

Nicci Gerrard and Julia Jones founded John's Campaign on November 30th 2014. Its catalyst was the death of Nicci's father, Dr John Gerrard, earlier in that month.

John Gerrard was 86. He had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's in his mid-70s but had been living well until he was admitted to hospital earlier in the year for leg ulcer treatment. Family visiting was severely restricted during his five week stay and the effect was catastrophic. He entirely lost his ability to function and required 24 hour care for the rest of his life.

Support from family or other carers is essential for anyone to live well with dementia and it makes no sense to impose limits on this support during the stressful and disorientating experience of a hospital admission. John's Campaign takes inspiration from the campaigns of the 1960s which established the rights of parents to stay with their sick children.

The response to Nicci Gerrard's initial article in the *Observer* newspaper showed how many other people had suffered separation from their loved ones in hospitals throughout the UK. In some cases families had even been excluded at the end of life. This was a measure of the lack of importance attached to family and carer involvement.

John's Campaign is a request both for access and recognition. Carers should not just be **allowed** on the wards but should be **welcomed**.

for the right of people with dementia to have their carers with them in hospital

John's Campaign is supported (among others) by the *Observer* newspaper, the Chief Nursing Officers of England, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland, the Alzheimer's Society, Patient Opinion and carers organisations. It has received clear political support and has an obvious role in national strategies to improve the care of people with dementia.

In this first year of the campaign over 180 hospitals have publicly stated their welcome to carers using the *Observer* John's Campaign website. (A 50 word statement is all that is required.) We are sure that number will continue to increase but it remains unacceptable that **any** hospital or inpatient unit would not welcome carers if the patient needs them and they are willing to be involved. No one should need to campaign for this — it should simply be accepted as giving these vulnerable patients their best chance to thrive — everywhere.

If your hospital still uses visiting hours to exclude carers please change this. If your hospital (or hospital ward) welcomes carers informally but does not say so, please clarify this for your patients and their families. And, although this is primarily a matter of compassion and human kindness, it has also been proved to bring many practical benefits.

For more information please visit our website www.johnscampaign.org.uk or email julia-jones@talk21.com nicci.gerrard@icloud.com or phone 01245-231898

