

17 million reasons

Improving the lives of people living with long-term conditions

NEWS RELEASE

1 April 2005

Political parties to be grilled on long-term conditions care

Politicians representing the three main parties will be quizzed on their manifesto plans for the NHS, and in particular care for people with long-term conditions, at the first major health debate of the General Election campaign.

A partnership of 22 organisations representing patients, healthcare professionals and managers called *17 million reasons* will host the Hustings event on Tuesday, April 5.

The political panel will include:

- Labour – John Hutton MP, Minister of State, Department of Health
- Conservatives – Andrew Lansley MP, Shadow Health Secretary
- Liberal Democrats - Baroness Barker, Health Spokesperson

The hustings will be chaired by renowned broadcaster and author John Humphrys.

The audience will include representatives from the *17 million reasons* partnership, healthcare professionals, key opinion formers, as well as people living with long-term conditions.

David Pink, Chief Executive of the Long-term Medical Conditions Alliance said: “We hope that the hustings will provide a forum for questions to be answered concerning care for the 17 million people in the UK who live with long-term conditions. Last year, the *17 million reasons* partnership launched its manifesto. This event is the next step in our campaign and we hope that the political parties will listen and take on board the views of those living day-to-day with conditions which limit their quality of life.”

Donna Covey, Chief Executive of Asthma UK said: “This event will highlight the issues faced by people who have a long-term condition. People with asthma, for example, need rapid access to expert diagnosis and a personal asthma action plan written in consultation with their healthcare professional that details their treatment and what to do should their asthma worsen. The 5.2 million people in the UK who have asthma have a right to good care and the political parties need to address this in their election manifestos as a matter of urgency.”

The General Election Hustings, which is supported by GlaxoSmithKline, will be held at 6.30pm at The Royal Society, 6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AG.

For more information on the General Election Hustings or if you would like to attend the event, please call Kirsty Jackson at Asthma UK on 020 7704 5841.

-ends-

Notes for editors

1. *17 million reasons* is a manifesto that sets out a shared vision for people living with long-term conditions. It outlines a series of practical proposals which we believe, taken together, could transform the lives of one third of the population.
2. The partnership is made up of the following organisations: Alzheimers Society, ARMA – Arthritis & Musculoskeletal Alliance; Arthritis Care; Asthma UK; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; British Heart Foundation, British Society for Rheumatology; CancerBACUP; Continence Foundation; DANDA – the Developmental Adult Neuro-Diversity Association; Diabetes

UK; Epilepsy Action; Long-term Medical Conditions Alliance; Macmillan Cancer Relief; MS Society; National Society for Epilepsy; New Health Network; Parkinson's Disease Society; Rethink; Skin Care Campaign, Stroke Association; and The NHS Confederation.