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PRESS RELEASE

NICE Citizens Council to examine health inequalities

The Citizens Council of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), which provides public input into the Institute's work, will hold its next meeting in London from 8 to 10 June 2006. At this meeting, NICE will ask the Citizens Council for its views on how social factors that influence people's health – such as low income, employment status and ethnicity – should be addressed in the development of NICE's guidance. The Citizens Council will hear evidence from speakers covering all aspects of this topic before taking part in thoroughly discussing and deliberating on these issues.

The Citizens Council is made up of 30 ordinary members of the public, reflecting the age, gender, socioeconomic status and ethnicity of the people of England and Wales. The council meets 2-3 times a year, for 3 days on each occasion, to hear expert information on contentious topics and thoroughly discuss the issues raised. It is a formal committee of the Institute, helping develop the broad social values that NICE should adopt in preparing its guidance.

Professor Sir Michael Rawlins, Chairman of NICE, said: "The Citizens Council makes an important contribution by enabling NICE to take the views of the general public into account when undertaking its work. Since its inception, the Citizens Council has provided valuable input on a number of contentious subjects, including social value judgements, and the 'rule of rescue'.

"Now we are asking the Council to consider health inequalities. It's well documented that a person's health is influenced by factors such as their social class, where they live, ethnicity, income and employment, and not just their personal lifestyle choices.

This leads to inequalities in health outcome – for example a difference in life expectancy of around seven years between the highest and lowest social classes, and higher rates of heart disease, obesity, and childhood accidents in lower social classes. We will ask the council to consider whether it is appropriate for NICE guidance to concentrate resources on trying to narrow the gap between the least and most disadvantaged members of our society even if this has only a modest impact on the health of the population as a whole."

Councillors will hear evidence from, and put questions to, a variety of experts and organisations active in this field to inform their discussions. After the meeting the Council will submit a report to the Board of NICE setting out its findings.

A limited number of places will be available to attend the presentations on Thursday 8 June. Contact Pauline Codjoe [Pauline.Codjoe@nice.org.uk] to request a place.

Ends

For more information contact Dr Tonya Gillis at tonya.gillis@nice.org.uk or on 020 7067 5937.

Notes to Editors

About NICE

1. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on promoting good health and preventing and treating ill health.

2. NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:
   - **public health** – guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention of ill health for those working in the NHS, local authorities and the wider public and voluntary sector
   - **health technologies** – guidance on the use of new and existing medicines, treatments and procedures within the NHS
   - **clinical practice** – guidance on the appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS.

3. The members of the Citizens Council are:
   - **John Baldwin** - an electrician who lives in Widnes, Cheshire
   - **Jonathan Barwick** – is a lecturer and trainer in hospitality and travel at a Further & Higher Education college in Norfolk.
   - **David Batchelor** – an engineer from Leicester.
   - **Auriol Britton** – a singer who lives in Bristol.
   - **Brian Brown** - an electrical engineer, from Chester-le-Street, County Durham.

- **Jennifer Brown** - a local government accounting technician and a part-time fitness instructor who lives in Derby, Derbyshire
- **Rod Crowshaw** - a store assistant who lives in Castle Bromwich, West Midlands.
- **Trevor Davison** - a supervisor scaffolder, who lives in Lincoln, Lincolnshire.
- **Freda England** – works for the Citizens Advice Bureau and is from Lymington in Hampshire.
- **Ron Findlay** – a database administrator from London.
- **Geraldine Fost** - a retired careers guidance manager, who lives in Hungerford, Berkshire.
- **Lorna Girling** - lives in Norfolk, and is a part time literature student and a housewife and mother of two.
- **Marie Goorun** - a dressmaker and part-time French tutor who lives in Gillingham, Dorset.
- **Terry Hamer** - lives in Southampton. He works on the cruise ships at the terminal.
- **Meryl Hobbs** – a retired teacher and farmers' wife from Herefordshire.
- **Susan Jackson** – is a cabin crew member from Surrey.
- **Robert Jones** - works as a warehouse operative and is a football referee in his spare time. He lives in Cwmbran, Wales.
- **Catherine Kaer-Jones** – a student support leader working in a Bradford school.
- **Jack Kelley** – is from Doncaster and worked in the construction industry but is now in security.
- **Claire Marshall** – is a freelance writer from London.
- **Tina McDonnell** – a trainer with a High Street bank from London.
- **Sharon Morgan** - a milliner who lives in Birmingham, West Midlands.
- **Linda Moss** - currently unemployed, trained as a TEFL teacher and now lives in Todmorden, West Yorkshire.
- **Bob Osborne** - a retired former pilot who lives in Horsham, West Sussex.
- **Paul Pendlebury** - an assembly worker, who lives in Preston, Lancashire.
- **Patricia Roberts** – an accounts assistant from Flintshire.
- **Heena Sabir** - worked for a while in human resources, and has recently moved to Huddersfield, where she is looking for suitable work.
- **Mohammed Shakil** – is from Rotherham and training to be an accountant.
- **Paddy Storrie** - a secondary school Deputy Headteacher, lives in Harpenden, Herts.