

PE1179/GG

**Scottish Parliament Public Petition PE1179
Response from South Ayrshire Council
17 May 2012**

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1179:

Can I refer you to the comments made by John Wilson during the discussion of the petition with regards to the comments made by the petitioner in relation to the social care side of treatment and support lagging far behind the clinical side. The petitioner states that she does not recognise a similar strategic approach (as with the Clinical side) being taken on by the Social Care providers.

She also hopes that similar progress can be made for Social Care as it was by the MCN for ABI in setting standards etc. Can you provide information to the Committee on how you are ensuring that this is taken forward as although it has been touched on, the Petitioner has stated that there is little evidence of any improvement?

The Committee draws your attention to the points made in the most recent response of the Scottish Government and the petitioner regarding their concerns around the lack of social care services for people with ABI? What are your views on this and do you have any suggestions on how things could be improved?

RESPONSE:

Acquired Brain Injury, as the Petitioner notes, is an area of provision that has tended to fall between a number of services in terms of assessment and care management: physical disability, learning disability, mental health and occupational therapy amongst others. This has created a perceived lack of expertise or knowledge in working with people with Acquired Brain Injury.

The Scottish Managed Clinical Network for Acquired Brain Injury and the specialist team in West Dunbartonshire are clear leads in developing specialist areas of knowledge and experience, leading to excellent practice and innovation in assessment and service delivery that all local authorities looking to improve practice in this area can learn from.

South Ayrshire Council will take into consideration these examples of good practice as we continue the process of developing our new Mental Health Strategy and our ongoing review of community services. This review, taking place in the context of significant change and challenges for local authorities throughout Scotland – increase service demand, reduced income, the integration agenda, the current Scottish Government Mental Health consultation on the Mental Health Strategy For Scotland 2011-2015 – will seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders including those with Acquired Brain Injury and their carers.

South Ayrshire Council contracts with Headway and Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland who are able to provide strong specialist knowledge in terms of advice, guidance and expert input to people with Acquired Brian Injury. South Ayrshire also purchases

specialist input from The British Red Cross who own an independent living unit in nearby North Ayrshire that focuses on conditions such as Acquired Brain Injury. This service provides respite and residential facilities that South Ayrshire purchases as well as specialist community based social care. British Red Cross have a base in South Ayrshire and work closely with care managers, carers and service users who purchase this service from South Ayrshire.

There are, of course, a number of other providers who support people with Acquired Brain Injury within South Ayrshire. Decisions on which care provider is the most suitable to meet the needs and outcomes of service users are always complex and multi-faceted. It is our expectation that the wishes and strengths of the individual are taken into account when these decisions are made and the choice of appropriate care provider is based on factors including but not only the diagnosis or condition the service user has been diagnosed with. For example, it may sometimes be appropriate, depending on the level of disability caused by the head injury, for the service user to work with a care provider with a level of expertise in learning disability or perhaps physical disability. It is our view that the service user, their needs and the needs of the carer should and must remain at the centre of the process of assessment and service delivery; this means making every effort to match the service recipient with a care provider who has the best combination of skills and expertise to achieve strong, positive outcomes for the service user and carer no matter their diagnosis.

South Ayrshire Council is currently in the process of re-structuring its Community Care services to provide more flexible and reflective services that take into account some of the issues that this Petition describes in terms of the provision of social care. The most significant change will be the increased use and provision of Self Directed Care. We are currently, as a local authority, developing creative services that will be of high quality for all people in need of social care and positioning ourselves to be ready for the enactment of the Self Directed Care Bill currently under discussion in the Scottish Parliament. We anticipate this will have positive outcomes for all those who need community care services and, of course, those with Acquired Brain Injury would be amongst those. We anticipate an increase in flexibility, choice and control for those receiving services and, as a consequence improved outcomes for both service recipients and carers.

In the meantime, South Ayrshire Council is committed to supporting, via assessment, multi-disciplinary team work and direct service provision, those with Acquired Head Injury to achieve strong outcomes that reflect their abilities and strengths. We would acknowledge that there is no single “care pathway” for people with Acquired Brain Injuries” within our current systems but believe that as we move toward a more locality based service delivery model we will evidence positive outcomes that reflect the aspirations of the various communities in South Ayrshire, based on their views and needs. This general aspiration reflects our wishes for all service groups – including those with Acquired Brian Injuries.

Kenny Leinster
Head of Community Care & Housing