

**PE1179/JJ**

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**Housing & Social Work Services**

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Dear Ms Wilson,

**North Lanarkshire Council response to the Scottish Governments Public Petitions Committee re PE1179**

*"The Public Petitions Committee is currently considering the above petition on Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). The Committee received information from the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW) which highlighted the approach taken in West Dunbartonshire in relation to the provision of social care and support for people with ABI's (PE1179/AA on the petition webpage). The Committee now wishes to hear from all local authorities on how they each provide social care and support for people with ABI's.*

North Lanarkshire Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the question from the Public Petitions Committee regarding how the Council provides social care and support for people with Acquired Brain Injuries.

As the committee has already heard in the ADSW response of the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2009 the term Acquired Brain Injury covers a wide range of causes; from road traffic and industrial accidents to poisoning; and symptoms including cognitive and physical issues to emotional and behavioural changes.

Our view is that to establish a specific service that can appropriately meet the needs of such a diverse group of people requiring, as it does, links to a range of different medical specialism's would prove cumbersome and ultimately unresponsive to the individual.

The Council believes that the emphasis should be on the personal outcomes for the individual not just in terms of functionality but also quality of life. The importance of developing structures based on the outcomes of people who use services should be

established as the foundation of the response to someone and this is done most effectively through the development of joint working mechanisms at a local level.

Within North Lanarkshire the Locality Planning structure operates across 4 specific care groups, Older Adults for people over 65, Younger adults for those between 16 and 65, Addiction and Mental Health. This allows us to avoid the categorisation of people into narrow condition specific groupings and respond to their individual wishes and build methods of support that maintain their wellbeing in a personalised proactive way.

The Council along with NHS Lanarkshire operate a system of care group specific Locality Planning groups based around the six townships of North Lanarkshire, at these fortnightly meetings representative from nursing including nurse specialists, allied health professionals, social work and housing discuss people complex care and support needs including those with Acquired Brain Injury who require a joint response that is swift, multi disciplinary and effective. The Locality Planning Groups have undertaken the building of enhanced links with colleagues from the Stroke MCN and nurses that work with people who have a range of neurological conditions which has resulted in improved professional responses for people who require to use our services.

In addition NHS Lanarkshire has recently developed a Traumatic Brain Injury Pathway which is supported by a team which has specialised Occupational, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language therapies, a Neuro-psychologist resource worker and Manager. North Lanarkshire Council were key partners in the development of this pathway which has also been embedded into the Locality Planning Structure.

It is our opinion that using a multi agency and disciplinary structure that responds to people at a local level and ensures support is targeted at their individual outcomes that this provides a robust person centred response to people in North Lanarkshire with either Acquired or Traumatic Brain Injury.

This structure allows us to consider the individuals physical and mental health needs but also their employment, active citizenship, volunteering, family and community roles which are of key importance in the recovery of someone from an Acquired Brain Injury. We are in a position to utilise a wide range of mainstream and specialised supports and have developed North Lanarkshire's Making Life Easier website and the use of Fast Track assessment systems to ensure ease of access to people for a wide range of equipment, aids and information about adaptations. With assistive technology playing a key role in how people can be supported in the least invasive way.

In the context of the current demands of Health and Local Authority services it is our belief that the most effective responses are those that are built around robust meaningful joint working that holds the successful meeting of an individuals outcomes as the indicator of a quality and cost effective support. We believe that our work around people with Acquired Brain Injury is only one example of how we have achieved this.

Yours sincerely

**Duncan Mackay**  
**Head of Social Work Development**