

PE1710/D

Scottish Government submission of 15 October 2019

As noted in our response of 6 August, the Scottish Government continues to invest in social care and we recognise the important role community hospitals and care homes play in providing integrated health and social care services to local communities.

In recent years placements in care homes have remained relatively stable, against the backdrop of an ageing population and increased demand for care. We are supporting people to live well in their own homes for longer and the number of people who receive personal care at home continues to increase. During 2017/18 47,070 older people received personal care services in their own homes, an increase of over 6% compared to 2008/09.

However, we appreciate that people with more complex needs, such as dementia, or who are nearing the end of their lives may require a higher level of care that can only be provided in a care home or community hospital. Care homes continue to play a key role in enabling people to have access to the most appropriate support for their needs and the sustainability of the care home sector is important. Scotland's National Care Home Contract, which defines the terms of Local Authority placements into independent or third sector care homes, has been a good foundation for care home sustainability for over 10 years. It allows independent care providers to invest in their staff, the quality of their service, and to take a reasonable return out of the business. Considerable progress has been made in reforming the contract, including the development of an evidenced-based care home cost model used to determine fees in a clear and transparent manner that takes account of changes in cost pressures.

The role of care homes, including those run by local authorities, continues to develop in response to the increasingly complex needs of people who use them, including for example the provision of more intermediate care, specialist care for people with dementia or with neurological conditions, and palliative and end of life care. Our approach to health and social care integration, which requires Integration Authorities to include within their strategic commissioning plans an assessment of the role of care homes and community hospitals, has opened up new opportunities in this regard. Our adult social care reform programme, which was launched in June 2019 will also include a substantial review of the future role and support of care homes.

Community hospitals can play a similar role in providing long-term specialist support for people with complex needs. In addition, between 1,000 and 1,800 people with dementia are currently being cared for in 92 specialist NHS dementia care units across Scotland. It is worth noting, nonetheless, that the independent expert report¹ we commissioned on specialist NHS dementia services, published in June 2018, reported that such care is, in some instances, being provided in outmoded physical care environments and that at least 60% of patients had no clinical need to be in the units. We are providing national support and advice for implementation of that report.

We therefore remain focussed on the importance of ensuring people have access to the right kind of care, in the right kind of setting, at the right time for them. With that in mind, we are providing support for local service improvement and workforce development support.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/transforming-specialist-dementia-hospital-care/>