

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: Management and Funding of Nursing Home and Residential Care Placements for Older People
FROM: Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 24th November 1998	
REPORT AUTHOR: Jim Nisbet	
REF: JN\LW\TurnAug98	

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report advises Committee of issues concerning the management and funding of nursing home and residential care placements for older people.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Implementation of the National Health Service & Community Care Act (1990) in 1993 charged local authorities with a range of new responsibilities. Importantly, amongst these changes was the requirement to assess the community care needs of people and arrange services to meet those assessed needs. For many frail older people and people with dementia this resulted in placement in a nursing home or residential care setting.
- 2.2 Prior to 1993 responsibility for the public funding of placements in nursing home and residential care lay with the Department of Social Security (DSS), subject to means testing. The new legislation transferred this responsibility to local authority Social Work Departments and there followed a progressive transfer of resources from the DSS (known as Care Element Transfer).
- 2.3 Care Element Transfer is required to fund the direct care of people entering nursing home or independent sector residential care provision as well as the creation of alternatives to institutional care to support people who wish to remain in their own home.
- 2.4 Critically the sums of money received by local authorities from the DSS was capped at 1993 levels, with no recognition of the fact that an increasingly frail and ageing population would mean significantly greater demands for access to such services.

3 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 At the inception of North Lanarkshire Council in April 1995 there were 550 funded placements in nursing home and residential care at a cost of over £5 million. By April 1998 the Department had used Care Element Transfer monies to increase this to 944 placements at a cost of over £9 million. In addition the Department itself provides care for 388 people in its own residential care establishments.
- 3.2 The process of transferring monies from the DSS to local authorities is now effectively complete. The Council was only able to allocate £1.26m of the £2.6m allocated through the 1998/9 local government settlement as the remainder lay outwith capping. This is understood to be the final tranche, the majority of which is required to fund the full year effect of placements made in 1997/8. There is no further funding available to make additional placements.

4 THE MAIN ISSUES

- 4.1 At present, the Social Work Department was funding the maximum number of people within the allocated budget for this purpose. It is therefore only possible to make new admissions upon the death or discharge of residents in existing nursing home and residential care placements.
- 4.2 Assessed need for nursing home and residential care continues to rise. This is the result of a number of factors: demographic changes that have resulted in increases in the numbers of very old people (35% growth in numbers of people aged over 85 years in North Lanarkshire between 1991-1996) with further increases projected; changes in patterns of in-patient health care such as reductions in long stay hospital provision, shorter periods of acute admission with the discontinuation of convalescence; and changes in family life which have resulted in more frail older people living alone.
- 4.3 Demand is such that there are now a number of people assessed as requiring nursing home and residential care placements for whom funding is not available. These include people with high levels of need who are currently being intensively supported at home and others who are awaiting discharge from hospital when funding becomes available. At present the number of people awaiting funding for placements is 77. This figure is projected to increase to approximately 100 by the end of the financial year.
- 4.4 The Department is required to follow the Choice of Accommodation Directions issued by the Scottish Office in 1993 and wherever possible endeavours to meet the expressed preference of the person concerned. This is proving increasingly problematic. There are 895 nursing home places for older people in North Lanarkshire with at any one time the number of vacancies being approximately 60. Of these approximately 40 are located in the Cumbernauld area which is often not the preferred area of choice for people living in other parts of the authority.

- 4.5 The Department is working to develop alternatives to institutional care for people with similar levels of need who wish to remain at home. An intensive home care project is currently being established, as previously reported to Committee. However it should be noted that this will have a relatively small impact on the projected demand for nursing home and residential care provision.

5 PROPOSED ACTION

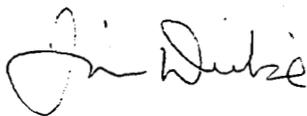
- 5.1 The Social Work Department together with other Community Care Partners have identified one off monies and rephased expenditure to create additional funding in this financial year for Nursing Home and Residential Placements. The Department will therefore work towards eliminating the waiting list for placements by the end of the financial year.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 There are a number of major issues facing the Council concerning the management of nursing home and residential care placements for older people which are set out in this report. Serious problems in placing people within these forms of care are now being experienced which the above action seeks to redress.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Committee is asked to:
- (i) note the issues concerning Nursing Home and Residential Placements;
 - (ii) note the action proposed to eliminate waiting lists;
 - (iii) request the Director of Social Work to bring forward a report updating the position to a future Committee and;
 - (iv) otherwise note the contents of this report.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
17th November 1998

For further information on this report please contact Jim Nisbet, Principal Officer (Community Care) (TEL: 01698 332031)