

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL**REPORT**

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: Management and Funding of Nursing Home and Residential Placements for Older People
FROM: Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 21st November, 2000.	
REPORT AUTHOR: Jim Nisbet, Principal Officer, Community Care	
REF: JN/HS	

1. PURPOSE AND CONTENT 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 and Community Care Act, 1990 in 1993 charged local authorities with a wide range of new responsibilities. Amongst these responsibilities was the requirement to assess the community care needs of people and arrange services to meet those needs. For many frail older people and others with complex care needs 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 homes and residential care lay with the department of Social Security (DSS), subject to means testing but no assessment of care needs. The new legislation transferred this responsibility to the local authority social work departments and there followed a progressive transfer of resources from the DSS to local authorities, known as Care Element Transfer (CET).
- 2.3 CET is required to fund the direct care costs 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 homes.
- 2.4 Critically, the sums of money received by local authorities from the DSS in Care Element Transfer 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, 1996 there were 550 funded placements in nursing home and residential care at a cost of over £5 million per annum. By April, 2000 the department had used Care Element Transfer monies to increase this to 1,092 placements at a cost of £10.5 million per annum. In addition, the department directly 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. Funding to increase the number of placements which can be made this year has been made available through Resource Transfer monies from Health. In addition, the Scottish Executive has provided funding to assist with winter bed pressures in acute hospitals

4. ISSUES

- 4.1 At present, the Social Work Department has placed everyone who has been assessed, where the assessment identifies a need for nursing or residential care, and where there is a vacancy in the establishment of their choice. However, at present, there are a number of people who are awaiting the placement of their choice, even although there are a small but significant number of vacancies in other establishments and funding is available to make 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 and 1996) with further increases projected; changes in patterns of in-patient health care with reductions in long stay provision and shorter periods of in-patient stay; and changes in family life with more frail older people living alone.
- 4.3 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 individual clients. This is proving extremely problematic. Of 932 nursing home places in North Lanarkshire, the number of vacancies at any one time is approximately 40. These vacancies are often not in the preferred area or establishment of choice for people awaiting placement.
- 4.4 In line with Scottish Office Action Plan "Modernising Community Care" - already reported to Committee, the department is working to develop alternatives to institutional care for people with complex care needs who wish to remain at home. An intensive home care project, recently implemented as a joint venture with

Lanarkshire Health Board and the Primary Care NHS Trust, is expected to make a significant impact albeit on a relatively small number of complex care cases.

- 4.5 Many of these clients who are awaiting placements of their choice are presently located in hospitals, often in acute beds. A Scottish executive initiative, supported by funding, is being taken forward by Health and Social Care Partners across Lanarkshire. This initiative is seeking to reduce pressure on hospital beds by providing a number of measures to assist people to be placed in community resources including residential and nursing home places. Further detail on the response to the Scottish Executive initiative will be tabled to Committee in the next cycle.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The number of people awaiting placement in nursing homes and independent sector residential homes has fallen compared with the same period last year. Numbers will, however, continue to grow and major issues face the Council with regard to the management of placements for vulnerable community care clients.
- 5.2 In pursuit of the aims of "Modernising Community Care" the department requires to develop alternative models of care in order to be able to offer non-institutional models of care for those with complex care needs.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Committee is asked to -
- (i) note the issues concerning nursing and residential home placements
 - (ii) request the Director of Social Work to update the position regarding the Scottish Executive initiative on winter bed pressures
 - (iii) note the contents of this report.



**JIM DICKIE,
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK
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(For further information contact Jim Nisbet, Principal Officer, Community Care - Telephone 01698 332031)