

Date: Wednesday 3 March 2004

Venue: Committee Room 1, National Assembly for Wales

Title: Review of the Interface between Health and Social Care Services

Background

1. On 30 January 2004, the South West Wales Regional Committee discussed housing for older people, including the implications for health and social care, at its meeting in Carmarthen. David Melding was invited to attend as Chair of the Health and Social Services Committee.
2. The Committee received evidence from Carmarthenshire County Council; Care and Repair Carmarthenshire; Carmarthenshire Pensioners' Forum; Age Concern Swansea and Mid and West Wales Fire Service.

Issues Raised

3. The main points arising from the presentations and discussion were:
 - There should be increased support and recognition of the enormous burden of responsibility placed upon formal and informal carers and, in addition, the need to encourage as many as possible to become involved in making a better future for older people.
 - Poor and inappropriate housing could contribute to poor health and lead to injury.
 - Easy access to information on services and sources of help is a core need for older people.
 - It is increasingly important to make certain that there is a continuation of partnership working to ensure the most effective targeting of available resources and to avoid the duplication of provision.
 - Joint training is needed so all health, social care and housing staff understand each other's roles. The new unified assessment process would help, but top-down clarity is also needed.
 - There is a need for services that prevent the early onset of dependency, 'moving up the care ladder' or hospital admission.

- When a vulnerable, isolated person has a problem, with no one to ask for help, their situation could quickly deteriorate leading to loss of independence and the need for expensive health and social care intervention.
- House and garden maintenance are serious concerns for older people and contribute to their well being.

4. Age Concern Swansea also highlighted their expanded Hospital Discharge Scheme, and the work they had done as a catalyst for bringing together different agencies in helping to keep people well in their own homes. They now have two senior nurses, a social worker and a welfare benefits officer.

Conclusion

5. The Committee is invited to note the issues raised when considering the evidence received as part of its review of the interface between health and social care services.