

Health and Social Care Committee

Inquiry into residential care for older people

RC23 – Ceredigion County Council Social Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The National Assembly for Wales Health and Social Care Committee inquiry into residential care for older people

Response from Ceredigion County Council Social Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Social Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a response to the National Assembly for Wales's Health and Social Care Committee inquiry into residential care for older people on 8 December 2011. The Committee gathered evidence from the Assistant Director, project development officer, team manager, and a residential care home manager.

The Committee heard the process by which older people enter residential care. There was emphasis placed that this was not a fast process and that all other options are considered first including keeping people in the community and not losing their independence. The eligibility criteria that individuals are required to meet before they are admitted to a care home was outlined to the Committee. Members highlighted the importance of assistive technology in enabling people to remain in their homes for as long as possible. The Committee had concerns that 'virtual wards' which is part of the joint working proposals between the Social Services department and Hywel Dda Health Board could lead to less people entering residential care.

Emphasis was placed by the Committee on reablement which allows people who may have had a significant change in their lives get established again and enabling them to return to their homes with the support of domiciliary care, which would not have been the case in the past where individuals could have come dependent on residential care.

The Committee raised concerns that the further away we move from residential care the more difficult it becomes to ensure that those that are vulnerable in the community are receiving the support that they need. Officers provided reassurance to the Committee that regular reviews take place and the strength of information sharing that is in place. However there were concerns that the volume would increase and that the resources available would not meet the demand.

Members enquired if the number of voids in the residential care homes was linked with the increase of the availability of reablement. Officers explained that voids are monitored and that there is a tendency for them to fluctuate with no correlation made

with the availability of a reablement service. The Committee felt that communication between hospitals and the council could be improved in relation to the discharge of patients who may need to enter residential care. Members felt that any voids in residential care home could be put to good use in providing respite care where possible.

When examining the quality of residential care services the Committee felt that a skill that should be included when employing staff is an emphasis on the ability to speak Welsh. It is important that care homes are accessible to family members as travelling long distances to visit family members can place excess stress on the family.

When considering the effectiveness of the regulation and inspection arrangements the Committee felt that it was good practice for members to visit residential care homes as had been the practice in the past.

Councillor W.D.L. Lloyd

Chairman of the Social Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee