

Health and Social Care Committee

HSC(4)-13-11 paper 2

To: Health and Social Care Committee

From: Committee Service

Date: December 2011

INQUIRY INTO RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE: COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Purpose

1. On Thursday 22 September 2011 the Health and Social Care Committee agreed to undertake an inquiry into residential care for older people. The purpose of this paper is to seek the Committee's agreement to a proposed approach for the next stage of this inquiry.

Background

2. The Committee agreed the inquiry's final terms of reference on Thursday 20 October 2011, following a short public consultation on their content. The inquiry's final terms of reference are attached at Annex A to this paper.
3. The Committee's call for written evidence was issued on Monday 24 October 2011. The eight-week consultation period will close on Friday 16 December 2011. An eight-week consultation period was allocated to ensure sufficient time for a large number of stakeholders and the general public to make submissions to the inquiry.
4. Given the wide scope of the inquiry, the Committee agreed that it would be helpful to consider a work plan for its approach to the next stage of the inquiry, which will involve the gathering of oral evidence. A proposed approach is outlined in paragraphs 5 - 12 of this paper.

Proposed approach to oral evidence gathering

5. In order to ensure that the Committee addresses all the issues listed in the inquiry's terms of reference, it is proposed that the gathering of oral evidence is organised in accordance with two principles:
 - (i) Oral evidence sessions to be arranged on the basis of interest groups (see paragraphs 6 - 8 below); and

- (ii) Particular themes, as identified in the inquiry's terms of reference, to be allocated to specific Members to take forward for the duration of the inquiry (see paragraphs 9 –12 below)

(i) Oral evidence sessions based on interest groups

6. In order to ensure that the Committee considers a broad range of perspectives when undertaking this inquiry, it is proposed that witnesses are invited to attend Committee on the basis of the interest group to whom they belong.
7. Individual sessions would be arranged to concentrate on the perspectives of specific sectors / voices, for example:
 - service users, their families and carers;
 - public sector bodies;
 - private sector providers;
 - third sector organisations and providers;
 - professional and staff bodies;
 - regulators and inspectors; and
 - the Welsh Government.
8. Should the Committee wish to proceed on this basis, it is proposed that:
 - a list of suggested witnesses; and
 - an outline timetable for the oral evidence sessions,are compiled once the deadline for written evidence has passed (16 December). This paper could be considered by the Committee shortly after the Christmas recess with a view to beginning oral evidence sessions in early February 2012.¹

(ii) Allocation of key themes to Members

9. In order to ensure that all aspects of the inquiry are addressed comprehensively, it is proposed that each of the bullet points listed in the terms of reference (that is, each key theme) is allocated to a member(s) of the Committee.
10. In practice, this would mean that the Committee would ask Member X and Member Y to concentrate, for the duration of the inquiry, on

¹ The Committee's meeting slots for January 2012 have already been allocated to other Committee business, including: completion of the inquiry into the contribution of community pharmacy to health services in Wales; an evidence session on the public health implications of inadequate provision of public toilets; and a general scrutiny session with the Minister for Health and Social Services.

gleaning information relating to the first bullet point in the terms of reference; Member Z, on the other hand, may be asked to take responsibility for matters covered by bullet point two, etc.

11. The purpose of this approach would be twofold:
 - firstly, to ensure that all aspects of the inquiry are considered in each meeting if the ‘interest group’ approach outlined in paragraphs 6 and 7 is adopted;
 - secondly, to provide the opportunity for Members to develop their expertise in relation to a particular aspect of the Committee’s inquiry.

Such an approach would not in any way prohibit Members from asking questions outside their allocated themes but would ensure protection for all themes to be covered, relative to one another.

12. Should Members wish to proceed on this basis, it is proposed that the Committee considers (and decides) who will lead on each aspect of the inquiry after the Christmas recess, when discussing possible witnesses and the timetable for the inquiry.

Other considerations

13. In order to inform the Committee’s work on this inquiry, Members may also wish to consider employing the following tools:

(i) Expert advice

14. The Committee is permitted by Standing Orders to appoint an expert adviser(s) to assist the Committee in its work, should Members deem it appropriate to do so. The purpose of such advice is to:

- complement, as opposed to duplicate, the in-house expertise contained within the Research Service; and
- add value to the Committee’s consideration of the subject matter in question.

15. Given the breadth of this inquiry, it is proposed that the Committee agree in principle to explore the options for appointing an expert adviser for this inquiry.

16. Should Members agree to the proposal in paragraph 15, possible candidates could be identified for consideration by the Committee shortly after the Christmas recess, when discussing possible witnesses and the timetable for the inquiry.

(ii) Public engagement

17. To ensure that the Committee hears the public's view on the provision of residential care for older people – including the views of current or possible future users of such services – the Committee may wish to undertake some public engagement activity beyond the standard calls for oral and written evidence.

18. Options could include:

- *Establishing a reference group comprising members of the general public*

Such a group could be used to feed into the Committee's consideration of key themes during the inquiry and to test the Committee's findings and recommendations;

- *Undertaking informal visits*

Time allocated to the Committee for its work could be set aside during the inquiry to allow Members to undertake informal visits in their own constituencies or regions. The purpose of such visits would be to allow Members to improve their understanding of relevant issues and inform their formal scrutiny of witnesses;

- *Taking formal oral evidence outside the Senedd*

The Committee may wish to take oral evidence outside Cardiff e.g. for the purpose of considering issues relating to deprivation or remoteness, the Committee may wish to travel outside the capital city. Similarly, should the Committee wish to consider the impact of an older, indigenous population coupled with a migrating older population on services, the Committee may wish to take evidence along the North Wales coast.

19. Working thematically (as proposed in paragraphs 9 – 12 of this paper) could mean that evidence taking outside the Senedd would not necessarily require the whole Committee to attend. Subject to quorum requirements², those Members leading on key themes would be able to lead the evidence gathering sessions taking place outside Cardiff Bay without the whole membership being present.

² In accordance with Standing Order 17.31, four Members must be present to conduct a formal Committee meeting; in accordance with Standing Order 17.32, representatives of more than one political group must also be present.

20. Should the Committee wish to undertake activities as listed in paragraph 18, the Assembly's Outreach Team would be able to assist Members in this work.

Proposal

21. The Committee is invited to:

- consider and agree, in principle, the approach to oral evidence gathering (paragraphs 5 – 12);
- consider the options outlined in relation to:
 - expert advice (paragraphs 14 – 16); and
 - public engagement (paragraphs 17 – 20),and agree the Committee's approach to employing these tools.

ANNEX A**Terms of reference for the inquiry into residential care for older people**

The terms of reference for the inquiry, as agreed by the Committee on 20 October 2011, are as follows:

To examine the provision of residential care in Wales and the ways in which it can meet the current and future needs of older people, including:

- the process by which older people enter residential care and the availability and accessibility of alternative community-based services, including reablement services and domiciliary care.
- the capacity of the residential care sector to meet the demand for services from older people in terms of staffing resources, including the skills mix of staff and their access to training, and the number of places and facilities, and resource levels.
- the quality of residential care services and the experiences of service users and their families; the effectiveness of services at meeting the diversity of need amongst older people; and the management of care home closures.
- the effectiveness of the regulation and inspection arrangements for residential care, including the scope for increased scrutiny of service providers' financial viability.
- new and emerging models of care provision.
- the balance of public and independent sector provision, and alternative funding, management, and ownership models, such as those offered by the cooperative, mutual sector and third sector, and Registered Social Landlords.

The Committee agreed to focus the inquiry on **residential care** only, although nursing care will inevitably be touched upon during discussions.

The Committee also decided to focus its attention on the provision of services for **older people** for the purpose of this inquiry, as opposed to adult care in its entirety.