Name of petitioner
R Maxwell Barr on behalf of Struan Lodge Development Group and Dunoon Community Council

Petition title
Consultation on service delivery for the elderly or vulnerable

Petition summary
Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that all changes to service delivery for elderly and/or vulnerable groups by Integrated Joint Boards responsible for health and social care are underpinned by the principles of openness and accountability and are therefore subject to detailed public consultation and full democratic scrutiny before final decisions are made and those decisions implemented by the Boards.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition
We have contacted our MSP and MP, all GP’s in Cowal and every councillor in Argyll & Bute Council. The Argyll & Bute Council Leader & MSP have contacted the Health Minister and the Chair of our Integrated Joint Board.

Petition background information
While the Guidance for Integrated Joint Boards is clear in its requirement for engagement with communities, it is less specific as to how and when this takes place. If the Guidance stated that all consultation and engagement concerning redesign of services should be carried out prior to approval and implementation by the Boards, then the process would be more acceptable to all concerned. This is important in view of the pressures on Integrated Joint Boards across the country to review adult care services and would lead to a more acceptable process for change.

Recent decision-making about aged care in Argyll and Bute serves as an illustration of this. In January/February 2013, Argyll & Bute Council decided as part of its budget setting process to close Struan Lodge (a 24-hour elderly care facility in Dunoon) within six months. Following a public meeting sponsored by Dunoon Community Council, the Struan Lodge Development Group (SLDG) was formed to fight the Council’s decision. In June 2013, the Council Leader resigned and shortly after a new Council Administration was formed and the earlier closure decision was reversed. The Struan Lodge Development Group then published a long-term strategy document setting out its vision for Struan Lodge, which was submitted to the Council.

Despite efforts to meet with Council staff, no meetings took place and early in 2014 an Interim Joint Board was formed with the responsibility of effecting the integration of the
On 1st April 2016, the Argyll & Bute HSCP assumed responsibility for health and social care in Argyll and Bute. On 22nd June 2016, the Integrated Joint Board of the Argyll and Bute HSCP considered a Quality and Financial Plan, which consisted of 68 cost saving measures, among which were the cessation of 24-hour care at the Struan Lodge facility within six months and a reduction in bed availability at the adjacent Dunoon Community Hospital. The report containing these proposals was made available to IJB members some 2 days before the meeting. The report was approved and within a week the staff were informed and letters were sent to the residents of Struan Lodge causing much heartache and confusion. This was done with no prior discussion with any community groups, the residents’ General Practitioners or any other organisations involved.

In view of the history surrounding Struan Lodge and now the effect on the Community Hospital, there was outrage amongst the Dunoon and Cowal Communities. The Bute and Cowal Area Committee of Argyll and Bute Council passed a motion asking the IJB to reconsider and asking the full Council to consider the same motion at the next Council meeting. This was done and the Council called for a meeting involving the IJB, the Council, the NHS, and the Scottish Government to find a way of reversing the decision to allow proper consultation of the proposals.

Dunoon Community Council called a public meeting, which was attended by representatives of the IJB and our MSP. The meeting was totally unanimous in backing a call for the rescinding of the June 22nd decision to allow meaningful consultation to take place. The matter remains ongoing and the IJB appear intent on the implementation of their proposals with no prior consultation. We have reached the stage where our Community has no confidence in the IJB.

The IJB recently agreed to pause the implementation of their Plan in respect of two facilities, Struan Lodge and Thomson Court, to allow public engagement. While this is welcomed locally, the clients at these facilities have been subjected to unnecessary stress, which could have been better dealt with by earlier consultation prior to approval and implementation and there remain 66 action points which have not been consulted upon.

Unique web address

http://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01628

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament’s website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

25

Closing date for collecting signatures online
Comments to stimulate online discussion

What is the point of consulting on a proposal which has been passed by an Integrated Joint Board?
You are allowed to help in implementing a proposal but not in formulating it. Is this democratic?
You take what you get! And lump it!