

PE1480/F

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing

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18 July 2014

Dear David

PE 1480 by Amanda Kopel on Alzheimer's and Dementia Awareness

Thank you for letter of 18 June 2014 regarding this petition. You asked for an update on scope and timescales for The Scottish Government's review of personal care services for those under 65. I hope it is also useful to the Committee if I also set this information in the wider context.

As you know, I informed the Parliament in May that I was committed to examining the current provision carefully. I have tasked officials to take forward work with those stakeholders involved in the residential care Task Force to extend their work to examine the provision of care at home, including personal care services provided to people under 65 who have complex needs and to examine whether those people are receiving effective support.

I have asked that the group taking this forward should consider in particular 3 areas: the prevalence and use of short care at home visits; implementation of the Living Wage across the care sector; and the support of those under 65s with complex needs. As part of this process, officials will engage with people with lived experience to inform the review. We are currently working with partners on a detailed work plan and timescales and that information will be available when it is finalised.

Specifically on free personal care, in May we published the latest figures on Free Personal and Nursing Care. Over 77,000 older and vulnerable people in Scotland benefit from this distinctly Scottish policy. Now 94% of people receiving home care services receive personal care as part of their package, which is up from 57% in 2003-04. The Scottish Government is proud to continue its commitment to Free Personal and Nursing Care now and in the future.

More broadly, as you know my statement in May updated Parliament on key next steps in a number of policy areas where we have devolved power and that are designed to improve people's lives and the outcomes for people who use health and social care services. This includes health and social care integration; consultation on new care standards which will underpin a new model of integrated inspection by The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland; enhancement of

intermediate care services; the review of NHS Continuing Care; and support and legislation for carers.

Specifically on dementia, we continue to implement Scotland's National Dementia Strategy 2013-16 which includes a guarantee that everyone newly diagnosed with dementia, irrespective of their age, will receive a minimum of a year's worth of dedicated post-diagnostic support from a named Link Worker. This helps people with dementia and their loved ones adjust to the diagnosis, connect better to services and plan for future care options. There are specific issues for people under 65 and the benefit of this guarantee is that it adopts a person-centred and holistic approach to post-diagnostic support. This helps younger people with a new diagnosis in areas such as employment and helping to maintain their existing social networks and connecting to appropriate local and national peer support.

ALEX NEIL