



Care Home Sustainability

The Care Inspectorate is the official body responsible for inspecting standards of care in Scotland. That means we regulate and inspect care services to make sure they meet the right standards and help them improve if needed. We also carry out joint inspections with other scrutiny bodies to check how well different organisations in local areas are working to support adults and children. We help ensure social work, including criminal justice social work, meets high standards. Across all our work, we provide independent assurance and protection for people who experience care, their families and carers and the wider public. In addition, we play a significant role in supporting improvements in the quality of care, and reducing health and social inequalities, in Scotland.

What impact does the recent announcement of the closure of 12 residential care homes have on your area?

The Care Inspectorate was informed in advance of Bield's decision to close their care homes. In meeting with their Director of Care, we learned of the factors leading to this decision, their consideration of alternative options, their plan for progressing this decision and the communication and engagement activities they intended to initiate. Given our role in providing scrutiny and assurance to protect the rights and promote the interests of those receiving care and support, this decision had immediate and ongoing implications for our work.

In practical terms of the impact of the recent announcement, when care homes are proposing to close we require a Closure Plan from the service provider with whom we liaise closely, while monitoring the service quality through inspection and visits on an ongoing basis. We expect such a plan to lay out how the service provider will work with representatives of the relevant local authority or Health and Social Care Partnership(s), given their responsibility for commissioning these services, for contracting for individual places and for the care management of residents. In these circumstances, the allocated Social Workers/Care Managers have an important role in assessing service users and in identifying alternative placement options, while supporting service users and their carers during this transition.

There are 849 care homes for older people in Scotland, which must all be registered with the Care Inspectorate. As such, we act as a quality gateway to the market. If any other providers are interesting in purchasing or taking over the Bield homes, we are able to support that seamlessly through our registration process.

Are there concerns regarding the sustainability of residential service provision (in your area)? and, if so, how could they be addressed?

Within the last five years, there have been the following shifts in the number of care homes and beds for older people in Scotland:

- The number of care homes for older people has decreased by 56, from 905 to 849, which represents a 6 per cent drop. The majority of this drop was from health board and local authority care homes which decreased by 28 services, compared to 13 private and 15 voluntary/not for profit care homes.
- The number of places, or beds, in care homes has dropped by 883, from 38,268 to 37,385. Again the majority of the decrease was from health board and local authority care homes, which lost 742 beds, compared to a loss of 270 beds in the voluntary/not for profit care homes, and an increase of 129 places in private care homes.

We are aware of a range of factors that can affect a provider's financial viability and sustainability of the sector in general, for example; the recruitment of staff; the costs of maintaining and upgrading buildings; concerns about the levels of funding leading to a reliance on self-funding residents.

Staffing and recruitment can be a challenge for care homes and their sustainability. Our recent publication '[Staff vacancies in care services 2016](#)' provides a national overview of vacancy levels and recruitment difficulties reported by care services in their Care Inspectorate annual returns. Care homes for older people is the service type with the largest proportion of services reporting vacancies at 59 per cent, and these services also display significant regional differences in vacancy levels between local authority areas. The most common reasons reported by services finding it hard to fill vacancies include too few applicants with experience, too few qualified applicants and too few applicants in general.

With more older people in Scotland being supported to live at home for longer, the care home population is increasingly frail, often with complex care needs and with a greater proportion of residents affected by dementia. This presents further challenges to providers in attracting staff to work in the sector at a time of low unemployment and with competition from other industries and services.

In relation to funding and sustainability of care homes, we understand from the sector that they are experiencing additional pressures through the implementation of the Scottish Living Wage and this will be further compounded by the determination that 'sleepovers' should be paid at an hourly rate.

Over the past five years, 18 care homes for older people have indicated that financial viability and costs were a contributory factor to the voluntary cancellation of their service.

The Care Inspectorate works closely with partner scrutiny and improvement bodies in other parts of the United Kingdom to share intelligence and understand the pressures that care home providers are currently experiencing and which can impact on their viability and sustainability.

Data from 'Voluntary Cancellation of Registration Application' E-forms

E-forms submitted that from services that cancelled between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2017

Care Homes

Care Home Subtype	Year Service Cancelled					Grand Total
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	
Older People	8	3	1	4	2	18
Adults	0	1	2	4	1	8
Total	8	4	3	8	3	26

source data: extract of eforms data taken on 23 Oct 2017

Number of services cancelled each year

source data: Care Inspectorate Service List at 30 September 2017

Care Service	Year Service Cancelled					Grand Total
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	
Care Homes for Older People	40	54	35	48	33	210
Care Homes for Adults	26	34	24	30	22	136
Support Service	48	52	41	43	67	251