

PE1480/U

Scottish Government letter of 4 August 2016

Thank you for your letter of 4th July to Carole Finnigan, the Committee Liaison Officer within the Scottish Government regarding Petitions PE1480 and PE1533, concerning charges for social care.

The Scottish Government has committed to considering how best to address the charging issue for people with dementia under 65 raised in Amanda Kopel's petition and the "Frank's Law" campaign, and charging for social care more widely as raised by Jeff Adamson in his petition. The Scottish Government remains of the view that any changes to the charges to service users for the care they receive at home must be fair to all users, irrespective of their illness or long-term condition, and affordable in the long-term.

We have already made significant progress in reviewing the fairness of charging in the social care system. Ministers and Scottish Government officials have met with campaigners and listened carefully to the concerns they have raised. We have conducted discussions with COSLA over the charging system, and we have undertaken analytical work to assess the costs and implications of extending free personal care, which the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport set out in her letter of 11 January 2016:

(https://www.parliament.scot/S4_PublicPetitionsCommittee/General%20Documents/20160111_PE1533_R_Scottish_Government.pdf)

As a result, from 1st April 2015, no-one in the last 6 months of a terminal illness should be charged for the social care that they receive at home.

For 2016/17 the Scottish Government provided additional funding of a quarter of a billion pounds for social care. This offer included £6 million to cover the changes in the charging thresholds to local authorities as a first step towards making charging fairer. Local authorities received this additional funding to raise the income threshold at which point people begin to pay charges from 16.5% to 25%, and we will seek to make further progress on this, by taking an anti-poverty approach by prioritising support for those on low incomes first, including around how war pensions and guaranteed income payments for veterans are assessed for calculating social care charges.

The integration of health and social care provides the ideal opportunity to reform how we currently deliver social care for adults. We need to move beyond time and task based care and shift focus to an outcomes based approach creating flexible services and co-ordinated journeys through all health and social care services – bringing together a range of professionals to be able to provide the right care, in the right place at the right time. We have the chance to be more creative, innovative and collaborative with the resources we do have in delivering the very best care outcomes to the people of Scotland. The Scottish Government has provided half a billion pounds of funding to IJBs over three years to support this.

MIKE LIDDLE