

**PE1628/A**

**Scottish Government submission of 10 March 2017**

Thank you for your letter of 7<sup>th</sup> February seeking the Government's views on a number of issues relevant to those raised by the above petition.

Integration Authorities have a range of duties conferred upon them through the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act), which require a comprehensive approach to engagement and participation with a range of key stakeholders. We have legislated to enable local systems to plan for and make decisions about how to best meet the needs of their local populations, and improve outcomes, using the combined resources available to them (amounting to over £8 billion across Scotland) hitherto planned and spent separately by Health Boards and Local Authorities. This requires working closely with professionals and local communities to deliver sustainable new models of care and support that are focused on improving outcomes.

It is essential that we allow these new arrangements to develop and mature, while moving away from an emphasis on the process for change, to being much more focused on the intended outcomes of change and redesign. Our local health and social care systems are working hard to adopt this new approach and we need to support that endeavour in order that they are able to fully utilise the powers at their disposal to bring about transformational change. It is, of course, crucial that change is planned with local communities and others, and that engagement and participation is not just undertaken on the basis of the latest change proposal but is an on-going feature of how Integration Authorities operate.

To support implementation of the Act, the Scottish Government has published a suite of statutory guidance and advice notes. These give prominence to engagement and participation, especially in relation to strategic commissioning plans, strategic planning groups and locality arrangements. The work of embedding on-going and effective engagement with local communities and professionals is a vitally important aspect of the work of Integration Authorities and my officials continue to work with local systems on this, with specialist improvement support being provided by the Improvement Hub at Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

You asked how we are monitoring effectiveness of guidance on public consultation under integration. One aspect of our monitoring was that the Scottish Government completed a review of all strategic commissioning plans published by Integration Authorities for 2016-19 and shared this with all Integration Authorities, and key national and local organisations in October 2016. The review report highlighted that the reach and quality of engagement in the development of Integration Authorities' strategic commissioning plans was comprehensive and generally of good quality. A key message for Integration Authorities, from the report, was that strong engagement and working on a co-production basis needed to become the norm, not just in agreeing the vision and setting direction and the report noted that this was emerging in a number of local systems.

You also asked for clarification on consideration given to harmonising the guidance and advice relating to public consultation developed to support the Act with the advice and guidance to health boards in the Chief Executive Letter CEL 4. I understand that local systems have largely approached this matter on the pragmatic basis that, if the service is a healthcare service then it would be subject to CEL 4 and if it is a social care service (directly provided or externally procured) it would be subject to the local consultation processes developed by the relevant Local Authority, underpinned by the National Standards for

Community Engagement. Struan Lodge, which is a particular concern of the petitioner, as a care home would not have been subject to the requirements laid out in CEL 4.

As to ensuring that public consultation takes place before a decision is made, I hope my comments above regarding the need for on-going and effective engagement makes my position clear on this matter. Publishing how Integration Authorities plan to engage and consult with local communities has in fact been the approach taken by many Integration Authorities and we would expect such an approach to be adopted by all. Finally, in response to the request for greater guidance on how to engage with vulnerable groups, I am not clear that this is required for Integration Authorities, at this stage. In this regard, this link to the East Ayrshire Integration Authority's Participation and Engagement Strategy may be of interest, which broadly demonstrates the approach we would wish to see develop across the country. <http://docs.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CRPADMMIN/2012%20AGENDAS/TRANSITION%20INTEGRATION%20BOARD/24%20MARCH%202016/Papers%20for%20Information%20Item%202%20-%20Final%20draft%20HSCP%20Participation%20&%20Engagement%20Strategy.pdf>

I trust this information is helpful to the Committee.