

Mr Frank McAveety
Convener
Public Petitions Committee
TG.01
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

29 December 2009

Dear Mr McAveety,

St Margaret of Scotland Hospice (Petition PE1105)

I refer to the letter sent to the Petitions Committee from the Mr Andrew Macleod of the Scottish Government on 5 November 2009. In providing a response to this letter, I have spoken with the Hospice in order to be able to provide an accurate update.

In his letter, Mr Macleod commented:

“The Scottish Government has previously stated that it would welcome any approach from the Scottish Hospices Forum and that it would be happy to meet with their representatives should they request to do so.”

At the Scottish Hospices Forum meeting on 20 November 2009, the Forum members would not agree at that time to make a representation regarding funding to the Government until the outcome of the short-life working group regarding the current HDL for palliative care funding becomes known.

The short-life working group meeting planned for 4 September was postponed until December, which has now been postponed again until January 2010. The “series of meetings” to which Mr Macleod referred have not taken place and therefore, the recommendations which were expected from this group by end of 2009 have not yet been delivered. In terms of funding, the Hospice continues to be disadvantaged.

Mr Robert Calderwood, Chief Executive of NHS GGC, wrote to Sister Rita, Chief Executive at the Hospice, on 6 November 2009 maintaining the stance on offering the option of Care Home to replace the Continuing Care beds for the elderly with complex medical and nursing needs. In this letter, Mr Calderwood outlined how staffing at the Hospice would be reduced in line with the different type of care they are proposing should be offered at the Hospice. Mr Calderwood wrote again on 26 November 2009 to Professor Leo Martin and Sister Rita to advise that the Health Board and Glasgow City Council’s plans for the development at Blawarthill Hospital are going ahead and this was also issued in a press release by the Health Board on 27 November 2009. Mr Calderwood also advised that the St Margaret’s Board “fully consider the options available to you. I would ask that we have confirmation of your preferred option, should the Board not be in position to expand palliative care provision, as soon as possible.”

The proposal by the Hospice to the Health Board, which was submitted to the Health Board in October 2008, for additional Palliative Care beds at the Hospice following the planned removal of the 30 Continuing Care of the elderly beds, has not yet been decided upon by the Health Board. This proposal would tie in with Mr Macleod’s final comment in his letter:

“In summing up, the Scottish Government remains committed to ensuring that specialist palliative and end of life care is available to anyone who needs it and will continue to work with the voluntary hospice movement and other key stakeholders to ensure that this objective is met.”

In conclusion, the Hospice is already well able to provide this type of care with trained staff and an environment which complies with the standards for the delivery of Palliative and end of life care, to those who need it.

Therefore, the two issues raised in the petition remain unresolved and I would urge the Committee to continue the Petition until a satisfactory conclusion is reached on the question of inequitable funding and the removal of the 30 NHS continuing care beds. I am very grateful to the Committee for allowing this Petition to continue for such a long period of time

Yours sincerely

Marjorie McCance
Campaign Manager