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Date 19th March 2014
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PE1499/H

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Assistant Clerk to the Public Relations Committee

Dear Mr Howlett

Public Petition: PEO 1499

Creating suitable Respite Services for Younger Disabled Adults with Life Limiting conditions

The issues of developing appropriated respite services and for all ages and client groups in any ongoing issue that local authorities have been progressing for a number of years.

Service users within the broad spectrum of disabilities from old age to younger adults with life limiting conditions are living longer with their conditions and have a continued dependence upon their families in the provision of day to day care. The provision of respite and support for the carer and should provide a positive and socially stimulating experience for the disabled person.

Local Authorities have an ongoing commitment to provide client centred and flexible service to the service user whether that is within or out with the family home and over the last decade have moved towards finding more innovative ways of providing respite that it is client specific. Consequently there has been a move away from the traditional form of respite provided in a care home and it is envisaged that the implementation of Self Directed Support will further reinforce the move away from traditional respite within a care home.

The petition clearly presents a case for the provision of the more traditional form of provision of residential respite and specific reference is made to the “breaks may be their only opportunity to socialise with others of a similar age, who also have the same or similar conditions”. This is a key message that requires some scrutiny as it is not consistent with the direction of travel that local authorities have been taking and it is unlikely that individual councils will have financial capacity or service user’s numbers to justify directly providing such a service or commission as a single council form third sector provider.

On the basis that the Scottish Government and local authorities are satisfied that a specialist residential provision is appropriate, some consideration requires to be given as to how the service is to be provided. It may be that the Scottish Government would wish to provide some leadership in taking a national overview in the planning and

funding of respite services for this specific service user group. Whether this would be the provision of one specialist centre that cover specialist regions would have to be considered. Alternatively, the Scottish Government may wish to encourage grouping of Council's to jointly commission such services across the country.

In conclusion, the petition questions the suitability of the move away from specialist residential units for this specific service user group. In doing so it sets the challenge of commissioning specialist respite services that are deemed appropriate and whether the Scottish Government takes the lead in the matter or whether it is delegated to geographical groups of local authorities which can commission the service within a partnership framework.

Yours sincerely

James D M Robb
Head of Service - Adult Care