

PE1568/DD

Alex Neil MSP Email of 27 June 2016

Dear Catherine

I am writing to ask you to bring my comments to the attention of the Public Petitions Committee regarding the future of the Centre for Integrative Care as proposed by Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board

I write both as the MSP for Airdrie and Shotts and a former Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing in the Scottish Government.

My first concern is regarding the need to guarantee the future of the new residential care facility based at Gartnavel Hospital in Glasgow for people suffering from chronic pain. I am asking the committee to seek an urgent assurance from both the Board and the Scottish Government that this facility will not be affected by any cuts, so that chronic pain sufferers who require residential care are no longer required to go to Bath for such care.

Secondly whilst I recognise that many Health Boards have ceased funding for the Centre for Integrative Care, which I very much regret, the NHS is supposed to be patient-centred. The needs of patients must come first. I believe there is therefore a strong case for the CIC to be funded centrally by the Scottish Government. People who benefit from this service from throughout Scotland should be entitled to continue to receive it. GGCHB cannot be expected to provide the funding for people outside its area to receive services from the CIC. The fairest way to deal with this situation is for the Government to fund the facility directly thus facilitating the treatment of patients who benefit from this service, irrespective of where they live in Scotland. That funding should include the provision of the requisite number of beds needed for residential care. The CIC uses integrated methods, often dealing with patients who have had a bad reaction to traditional drug treatment. These patients can benefit from the residential care provided, using other, non-traditional methods of treatment.

The widespread prejudice against homeopathic medicine cannot be allowed to lead to cutbacks to a service which has clearly benefitted a significant number of people over many years. The patients speak for themselves. I know of people in my own area whose lives would have been a lot less tolerable without the services they have received from the CIC. To run it down now would be a big mistake and would fly in the face of the underlying principle that patients come first.

Yours sincerely

Alex Neil MSP