

**PE1568/KK**

## **Health and Social Care Alliance Letter of 21 September 2016**

In recent weeks cuts to frontline NHS services have begun to gain greater media focus and public consideration as NHS Boards and Integrated Joint Boards consider their budgets and appraise options for the future in financially testing times. Meanwhile, the maelstrom of recent political activity this year, not least the Scottish Parliament elections and the referendum on the UK's future relationship with the European Union, often cast the NHS, and most notably service closures, into the mix of discussion and debate on the doorstep.

The Centre for Integrative Care, situated at the site of the Gartnavel Hospitals in Glasgow, is one such example. It offers people who live with long term conditions, many living with chronic pain, a wide range of opportunities to enhance their health and quality of life, by placing the emphasis on reflecting, and focusing on improving self-care and by coaching patients in self management techniques. Indeed, its success is encapsulated in its shortlisted nomination for both Self Management Project of the Year and Best Self Management Resource at the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland's 2016 Self Management Awards, to be announced in the Scottish Parliament on 4 October.

Despite the support the centre offers, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde have proposed that the Centre moves to "an ambulatory model of care" under which all of the current services would continue to be provided on an outpatient or day case basis, but overnight beds currently available Monday to Thursday nights would no longer be available. This overnight service currently provides the opportunity to achieve a holistic assessment of patients with more complex problems. The Health Board plan to make their decision by early December 2016 and implement the proposed changes prior to April 2017.

There has been a strong campaign and concern from across the ALLIANCE membership about the future of the Centre given the role it has had to play in improving lives. Members have told us that it provides both treatments that people find beneficial in their holistic care and self management techniques, supporting and encouraging people living with long term conditions to access information and develop the skills to find out what is right for their condition and, most importantly, for them. By taking a person centred approach, it has allowed for greater time to be spent between the person and a healthcare professional to identify self management strategies and support.

In recent weeks a former Health Secretary has also come to the Centre's aid. Alex Neil MSP wrote to the Scottish Parliament's Public Petitions Committee to highlight his support, noting that "urgent assurance" was needed from both NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and the Scottish Government that the centre would remain open. He said that a number of his own constituents "lives would have been a lot less tolerable" without the Centre.

We believe that a decision on the future of the Centre must be deferred to allow for consideration of a wider range of options. In Mr Neil's letter he suggests that the Scottish Government should consider funding the facility to allow for people who benefit from the service, from across Scotland, to access it as a national centre of excellence. Working with the third sector on such a solution must be an option in finding ways of keeping this excellent resource open and accessible.

Tightening resources shouldn't lead to good services, which people value, being lost. I urge NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Board and the Scottish Government to find the right solution.

**Ian Welsh**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)**