

REPROVISION OF FRAIL ELDERLY CONTINUING CARE SERVICES, INVERCLYDE

Policy Context and Drivers

There are a number of key policy influences that have shaped the ongoing and wider review of the balance of care of older people's services across Inverclyde.

These include All our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an ageing Population (Scottish Executive 2007), Better Outcomes for Older People: Framework for Joint Services (Scottish Executive 2005) and Delivering for Health (Scottish Executive 2005).

A key element of NHS guidance on which we have based our proposals relates to the provision of continuing care, this states that:

Continuing care is where the complexity, nature or intensity of the person's health needs (i.e., medical, nursing and other clinical needs) or the need for frequent, not easily predictable clinical interventions, requires the regular specialist clinical supervision of a consultant, specialist nurse or other NHS member of the multi-disciplinary team the NHS should provide continuing care. (CEL 2008) 6.

Through these policy documents, there are a number of principles, which have shaped our work. These include:

- providing services as close to peoples homes as possible;
- supporting more people at home via an improved range of community based services as an alternative to institutional care, where appropriate;
- ensuring specialist service provisions focused on those with most complex needs;
- delivering better use of existing capacity;
- delivering a better network of linked services between Health and Local Authority;
- reducing inappropriate admissions to hospital where possible and enabling supported discharge through step down and effective rehabilitation services;
- ensuring older people receive an improved quality of care and faster access to a wider range of services;
- more effectively involving and supporting service users and carers;
- providing NHS continuing care with ready access to specialist clinical input when required.

Delayed Discharge

In recent years delayed discharges have been tackled effectively by partnership working across Inverclyde and we have recorded significant and sustained reductions.

While we are confident we will achieve the new target of zero by April 2008, maintaining this - particularly in the context of a growing elderly population - will be challenging. Further improvements will be achieved by continuing to implement our joint strategy for older people as well as streamlining joint operational processes and systems for recording, referral and care planning. This work is underway.

As these improvements continue and are sustained, it is clear that we must review how resources previously needed for patients awaiting discharge can be redirected.

Future Proposal

Currently in Inverclyde we have 51 frail elderly Continuing Care beds provided on the Ravenscraig Hospital site. In recent years we have seen a significant number of patients awaiting discharge occupy these beds whilst at the same time there has been a reduced number of Continuing Care patients who have stayed for a shorter period of time.

Ongoing analysis has led to the conclusion that with the reduction in the numbers of patients waiting for discharge and a reduction in the length of time people stay in Continuing Care beds fewer beds are required. In line with previous proposals agreed with Partnership colleagues in Inverclyde the number of Continuing Care beds will reduce to in the region of 20 beds. It is proposed that these beds will be located in a ward within the Larkfield Unit adjacent to Inverclyde Royal Hospital. This will enable Continuing Care patients to be accommodated in modern surroundings appropriate to their needs whilst also facilitating access to the more complex medical and other interventions that patients require.

This will also provide an opportunity for existing resources to be released to support investment in the further development of services for older people. A range of multi-agency developments have already been progressed, jointly with Inverclyde CHP, Acute Services and Inverclyde Council designed to promote maximum independence for older people.