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PE1105/V



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16 March 2009

Thank you for your letter of 4 March 2009 regarding Petition 1105 in respect of the St. Margaret of Scotland Hospice, Clydebank.

On the wider issues raised in this Petition and during its consideration, the Scottish Government's position has been confirmed in previous correspondence.

As you know, at their meeting on 24 February 2009, the Board of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde approved the recommendation to cease funding for the 30 continuing care beds at St. Margaret's, sometime in early 2012. At the same time, the Board also agreed to look at three alternative service provision options for St. Margaret's to replace these beds:

- care home with nursing beds
- NHS care for older people with Dementia
- additional palliative care provision

The Board of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde will consider these options fully and in consultation with the Board of St. Margaret's, and other key stakeholders.

Accordingly, there are no plans for an independent review to be set in motion as final decisions are still to be taken and these are a matter for the Health Board.

Turning to the funding arrangements currently in place for the provision of palliative care, as currently outlined in HDL (2003) 18, I have indicated previously that that this remains a matter for discussion through the Scottish Hospices Forum, the representative body of adult hospices in Scotland. I understand that St. Margaret's intend raising this issue with the Scottish Hospices Forum and I would be happy to consider any approach.

You may be aware that the Public Audit Committee has been considering the Auditor General for Scotland's report on palliative and end of life care services. In the Scottish Government's response, it was confirmed that consideration is being given to NHS Board commissioning arrangements with adult hospices, including securing best value for money.

Through their Delivery Plans, relevant NHS Boards have been asked how they intend to address the Auditor General for Scotland's recommendation that 'NHS Boards should work with the voluntary sector to put into place commissioning and monitoring arrangements to ensure value for money is achieved'. All responses will be reviewed following submission at the end of March 2009.

Following the collation of NHS Board Delivery Plans, a review of current guidance will be undertaken with the view to updating HDL (2003)18. Preliminary discussions will be initiated through the Scottish Hospices Forum.

*Best wishes
Nicola*

NICOLA STURGEON