Care homes

Introduction
The proportion of people in Wales over the age of 60 is currently 22.7 per cent and is set to increase to 28 per cent of the population over the next 15 years. The number of people over 85 is also set to increase by a third to 82,000. This age group represents the majority of people receiving residential care. The highest concentrations of older people tend to be in the rural parts of Wales.

Across Wales, the rate of older people (65+) helped to live at home is 114 per 1,000 and within the same age group, the number supported in care homes is 28 per 1,000. There are currently 1,218 registered care homes in Wales providing 26,679 places. They provide personal and nursing care for a wide range of service users including mentally and physically disabled people as well as older people. Care home provision in Wales remains largely in the private and voluntary sectors, with 86 per cent provided in independently owned settings and only 14 per cent provided by local authorities.

Charging for care is a complex area. Local authorities are required under the National Assistance Act 1948 to charge for the residential care services they provide, whether directly provided or arranged with an independent home, with the aim of recovering as much as possible of the cost. The contribution a person makes to their residential accommodation costs is assessed by taking account of income, including most benefits and pensions, and capital, such as savings, investments and the value of any property owned. This can include any capital owned jointly with someone else. The capital limits are reviewed regularly.

Most people are expected to pay towards the costs of their accommodation and personal care in a care home from their income and capital and a charge is therefore made for those requiring personal care. However, the NHS is responsible for meeting the cost of care provided by registered nurses to all residents in homes which provide nursing care, whether self funding or local authority assisted. Fully funded continuing NHS health care is a weekly payment made to care homes by Local Health Boards for all residents assessed as requiring registered nursing care and eligibility is determined following an assessment of nursing needs.

Care homes are regulated and inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). The Assembly has produced numerous regulations and national minimum standards which apply to the range of care settings regulated by CSSIW. The regulations and minimum standards exist to ensure that service users receive the services they have a right to receive and in the manner which most suits each individual.

The situation in Scotland is different to that in England and Wales because Scotland funds both personal care and nursing care.

Overview of current statutory powers of the Assembly
Field 15 of Schedule 5 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 is “Social Welfare”. This means that the National Assembly for Wales can seek Measure-making powers over social welfare matters through Legislative Competence Orders.

The following secondary legislation responsibilities of the Second Assembly will transfer to Welsh Ministers in the Third Assembly:

♦ Regulation of private care and nursing homes in Wales.
Potential forthcoming UK primary legislation

In January 2006, the Department of Health published a White Paper, *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services*, which sets a new direction for the whole health and social care system in England.ii

Key Assembly Government strategy documents and action plans from the Second Assembly:

♦ The Assembly Government has issued national minimum standards for care homes for different client groups such as younger adults, adults and older people, as well as regulations covering these areas.iii

♦ The Assembly Government guide on *Charging for Residential Accommodation (CRAG).*iv

Legacy issues from the Second Assembly

♦ On 7 November 2006, the National Assembly agreed in plenary that there should be an independent review of Delayed Transfers of Care (or ‘bed blocking’ as it is sometimes called), which is expected to commence in June 2007. The review will examine the adequacy of capacity within the system e.g. the ways in which acute hospital beds, community and social care services may be used more effectively and whether there are sufficient care places available.

♦ The Health and Social Services Committee’s legacy paper highlighted the protection of the most vulnerable in the population, including elderly adults, as a high level strategic issue for the attention of the Third Assembly.

♦ The Local Government and Public Services Committee legacy paper recommended that any successor Committee be involved in any possible future consultation on the deregulation of services regulated by the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales (which has since been merged with the Social Services Inspectorate to form the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales).

Useful links

4. Age Concern factsheet on finding care home accommodation: [http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/AgeConcern/fs29.asp](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/AgeConcern/fs29.asp)
5. Age Concern factsheet on the treatment of the former home as capital for people in care homes: [http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/AgeConcern/fs38.asp](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/AgeConcern/fs38.asp)

Further information

For further information on any aspect of care homes, please contact:

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The Care Standards Inspectorate and the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales were merged to become the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in April 2007.


iii Available via the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales website: [http://www.csiw.wales.gov.uk/fs/default.asp?n1=7](http://www.csiw.wales.gov.uk/fs/default.asp?n1=7)