

Press release

Social Work Scotland responds to the Audit Scotland Report: Self-directed Support 2017 progress report

24th August 2017

Speaking in reaction to the Audit Scotland Report: Self-directed Support 2017 progress report, Social Work Scotland, Past President, Elaine Torrance said:

“Self-directed Support is good social work. It is an approach that empowers social workers to work with people to identify what matters to them and then work together to put in place the right support for that individual.

“Audit Scotland’s report reflects very well what we, as a profession, know: this approach is starting to make a difference to people’s lives, but there is more to do. People need social care for all manner of reasons: they may have a disability, a mental illness, have had a fall, or be terminally ill, but no matter the reason, people need to be at the centre of decisions about what support they need and how that support is delivered.

“It is particularly useful that Audit Scotland have highlighted the impact of more creative ways of supporting people. Where before a person might have been offered a day a week at a day centre for adults with learning disabilities, now they may choose to take the money that place would have cost and use it to buy a ticket for a football match, or go for a swim and a coffee with friends. These examples can sometimes be difficult for social workers to promote because of the potentially negative public reaction to spending public money in this way. But what Audit Scotland have helpfully demonstrated is that approaches such as these work for the people involved and often save public money too.

“The issue of who gets support is still a difficult one. We know that a personalised approach early on can prevent a person needing more complex care and support later, but at the moment, in many areas only those with higher level complex needs, those with a long term condition or disability will be able to access support. If we are to meet the demands of an aging population and a population living longer with more complex needs we need to find a way to support people earlier so that they can live the life they want to and keep active, fit and well.

“As an organisation, Social Work Scotland will consider this report carefully and use it to guide our members to provide the leadership required for the culture change that this approach requires. It’s in all our interests to do so.

ENDS

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Notes:

1. Elaine Torrance is the Past President of Social Work Scotland and the Chief Social Work Officer in Scottish Borders Council.