

24 April 2015

Re: Care Services for Older People

Dear Sir,

Jacky Jones's opinion piece and Cillian Twomey's article on older people in last week's *Health Supplement* echoes the concerns we have with the latest response to the healthcare crisis. While increased funding for for older persons who need care is welcome, the strong bias towards funding extra beds in residential and transition units is disturbing.

Official public policy for decades, including the current *Positive Ageing Strategy*, has been to support older people to live with dignity in their own homes. It is disappointing, therefore, to find that there is no significant funding mentioned for additional home support services, for example, home help or home care packages.

Historically, these services have been inconsistently funded and access has regularly been based on geography rather than need.

We want to see public policy implemented properly rather than in an inconsistent and often incoherent fashion. The emphasis must move to appropriate community based services and away from the almost exclusive focus on residential care.

This would have the dual effect of allowing older persons to return home from hospital, which is what they want, and more making acute beds available. As Jacky Jones suggests, if other countries can do it why can't we?

Yours...

IASW, Age Action