

21 February 2019

Dear Editor,

As we discover more about dementia and develop a better understanding of the disease processes which cause dementia, it is crucial that we reflect on how we respond to the needs of people living with this progressive terminal illness. Our improving understanding is not reflected in current policy and practice; the increasing health care needs of people with advanced dementia are too often not recognised or met.

Every day, people living with advanced dementia, their carers and their families are dealing with a complexity of physical, emotional and psychological challenges, and ever-changing health care needs. However, people with advanced dementia do not receive the health care they should be entitled and instead face significant social care charges.

By recognising and identifying advanced dementia we can work towards ensuring that people living and dying with advanced dementia can have equity of access to the health care they need on an equal basis to those who have other progressive terminal illnesses, and which is free at the point of delivery.

Alzheimer Scotland's Fair Dementia Care campaign calls for a number of reforms, including equal access to free health care for people living with advanced dementia and is leading the way to highlight the unfair inequalities that are a reality for so many families. Whilst we understand that it will require significant effort and dedication to fully transform our health care system, we ask that the Scottish Government lead the way by delivering fair dementia care for those with advanced dementia without delay.

To join the campaign to help transform Scotland's dementia care visit www.alzscot.org/fairdementiacare. We would also encourage anyone who has experienced issues in accessing the care they need for advanced dementia, to email publicpolicy@alzscot.org. Only by sharing your experiences can we show why we need change, to make sure that Scotland delivers Fair Dementia Care.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Pearson
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