

Families' fears over shake-up of 'vital' dementia daycare service

By [Daniella Theis](#) 27th August

PREMIUM



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A 'VITAL' dementia daycare service run by a leading charity is ending after over 20 years and could be set to move into the hands of a private provider.

Families of people attending the Alzheimer Scotland centre at Nicol Street in Greenock received a letter saying the organisation was 'unable to continue' delivering

specialist daycare following a review by Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership, who commission and fund the service.

The changes are planned to come into effect by the end of September 30 and have angered families whose loved ones go to the centre.

John Lowe, 74, and Ian Gibbons, 67, whose wives Margaret and Janet both attend daycare regularly, say they and others were 'left in the dark' by HSPC chiefs about the plans.

John fears that 80-year-old Margaret – who was diagnosed with dementia in 2014 and has been going to the service for more than five years – could decline if there is upheaval.

He said: "My concern is based on what I saw happening during the pandemic.

"Margaret's routine was lost and her memory suffered because of it.

"She's been a lot brighter again since the service restarted - a lot more motivated.

"If we lose this, I can see her going downhill very quickly."

Ian is worried that changes could badly affect Janet too.

She was diagnosed five years ago and has been visiting

the centre since before the pandemic.

Ian said: "When I mentioned this letter to Janet the first thing she said was 'What's going to happen to me?'"

"When I received it I felt shocked, angry and extremely worried.

"The centre is the main thing that keeps Janet ticking over.

"The service is important to me as well – it gives me some respite.

"When Janet goes to daycare I know she's in a safe place with people that care about her and look after her."

Both men say the switch came as a bombshell and criticised a 'lack of consultation'.

Ian told the Tele: "We feel totally left in the dark.

"The HSCP are not being open or honest and are not sharing information with us.

"They won't let us see bits of paperwork or give us some form of assurance.

"There are so many unanswered questions - what will the future service be like?

"What will the company running the service be like?

"How have they checked the service is sustainable in future?"

"What will the number of people attending be like - will Janet and Margaret still be able to see their friends?"

"I want the HSCP to put the whole thing on hold and start a consultation process with the care users and their carers."

A 'Prior Information Notice' that Inverclyde Council was undertaking market research on 'provision of daycare and outreach services' was logged on online portal Public Contracts Scotland back in November 2021, the Tele can reveal.

The HSCP said a strategic commissioning process was carried out to ensure there was 'sufficient, appropriate range of provision available at the right price to meet needs and deliver effective outcomes'.

Their spokesperson added: "This is normal procedure as existing contracts come to an end.

"It was expected that existing providers would continue to provide services beyond the end of their current contract but following a decision by an existing provider to withdraw we are now looking at alternative options and engaging directly with service users and their families to assess individual needs.

"The commissioning process undertaken was not aimed at identifying an alternative provider but to establish a service specification that could be delivered by all current providers to best meet the identified needs of individuals accessing these services currently and in the future.

"Alzheimer Scotland was invited to deliver daycare provision under the new service specification in the form of a direct award contract but chose not to.

"There is no cut to the service – the available budget for building-based daycare remains the same.

"Individual assessments are being carried out with all service users to ensure their needs are met."

But Alzheimer Scotland insist they were 'forced to withdraw from the process'.

Fiona Kane, their associate executive lead for localities, said: "As a charity, we have invested significant levels of fundraised income into the Inverclyde area, including £240k to the Dementia Resource Centre in Nicol Street.

"The funding for all daycare services by Inverclyde HSCP has come under review over the last few months, leading to a tender process which set out an untenable funding framework for us as a charity.

"The new tender rate offered for standard daycare is significantly lower per place than we are currently being

paid.

"This would place Alzheimer Scotland in a deficit position financially from the outset of the contract, therefore we were forced to withdraw from the process.

"Our immediate focus is to continue to support and reassure the families and people who attend this service through the transition period."

Alzheimer Scotland say they will continue to provide other services from the centre, including carer support, an activity group, dementia adviser support and post-diagnostic help.

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