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## News release

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### Reform of care for Scotland's older people needs to accelerate

**Scotland's programme to improve care for older people has brought together the different bodies involved in services costing £4.5 billion a year. These organisations now need to better target resources at preventing or delaying illness and at helping people to keep living at home.**

An Audit Scotland report published today, *Reshaping care for older people*, reviews progress three years into the [Scottish Government's ten-year project](#) to improve health and social services for people aged 65 or over. It is one of Scotland's biggest and most complex programmes and involves NHS, local government, voluntary and private bodies. The Government is supporting it with a four-year, £300 million [Change Fund](#).

The report says:

- Improving care for older people and joining up services has been a policy focus for several years but progress has been slow, and monitoring of its implementation and impact needs to improve
- The Scottish Government needs to work with its partners to clearly plan how resources will move from institutions such as hospitals into the community. They also need to better understand why activity and spending on services for older people varies across Scotland
- The Change Fund has brought bodies from the different sectors together to develop and agree joint local plans to improve care, and a number of local initiatives are underway
- The information needed to make decisions and assess their impact on older people is not nationally available. Bodies need to improve and maintain data on costs, activity and outcomes for health and care services.

**Auditor General for Scotland, Caroline Gardner, said:**

"Reshaping the care Scotland's older people receive is crucial to helping people live long, healthy and independent lives, and to making sure services can provide the care and support needed. It is a large and complex programme, involving many organisations and significant amounts of public money. While there has been progress, particularly in bringing bodies together, change has been slow.

"The Scottish Government is three years into the ten-year programme. Our report makes recommendations aimed at helping accelerate change, particularly given the growing pressure on services and the integration of health and social care. In particular, we want to see better information for making decisions and assessing impact, and the government and its partners to be clearer about how to move resources from institutions, like hospitals, to community-based services."

**Chair of the Accounts Commission for Scotland, Douglas Sinclair, said:**

"The aim of providing more services in the community has been a clearly-stated goal for at least a decade, but progress in doing it is slow and inconsistent. There are significant variations in the spending and activity in care for older people across Scotland, even though much has been done to build local partnerships and launch initiatives. Councils, the NHS and their voluntary and private sector partners need to understand why this is and how they can improve these important services."

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## **Notes to editors**

1. Our audit aimed to establish how much progress NHS boards and councils have made in improving health and care services for older people, including developments through the RCOP programme. We did not review specific service areas or conditions, nor did we look in detail at broader services such as housing and transport, which play an important role in supporting older people. We did not assess the overall quality of health and care services in local areas, but we have used evidence from other audit and inspection work where it applies.

2. Audit Scotland has prepared this report for the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission for Scotland. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 are available at [www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk)

- The Auditor General appoints auditors to Scotland's central government and NHS bodies; examines how public bodies spend public money; helps them to manage their finances to the highest standards; and checks whether they achieve value for money. The Auditor General is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Government or the Scottish Parliament
- The Accounts Commission is the public spending watchdog for local government. It holds councils and various joint boards and committees in Scotland to account and help them improve. It operates impartially and independently of councils and of the Scottish Government, and meets and reports in public
- Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. It provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission for Scotland.