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## Press release

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### Need for continuing improvement in planning and commissioning older people's services

A review of community care services for older people concludes that councils and their health partners should redouble their efforts to ensure there are sufficient services to meet the future needs of Scotland's ageing population. An Audit Scotland report, published today, looks at the way in which councils plan, purchase and review their older people's services. It also looks at implementation of national policy by councils and their health partners.

Alastair MacNish, Chairman of the Accounts Commission says:

"Over the next twenty years there will be a huge increase in the number of older people in Scotland and this will impact on the demand for home care services such as help with washing, dressing and shopping. There will also be fewer young people to provide unpaid care for friends and relatives.

"Many councils are planning well and developing services for older people to cope with future need. However, some aspects of planning, including having good information about older people's needs, are not as developed as they should be in all councils."

The report says:

- Eight councils need to make more progress in moving toward providing more care for their older population in their own homes
- More work needs to be done to ensure new policies such as free personal care and rapid response service can be fully evaluated
- In all but one council, older people are waiting for care home places
- In 18 councils there are older people who are waiting for home care services
- Few councils monitor waiting times for *all* community care services, although all councils monitor waiting times for some services.

Deputy Auditor General, Caroline Gardner says:

"National policy encourages councils and their health partners to support older people to live in their own homes where possible and to move towards flexible services tailored to suit individuals.

"The Scottish Executive needs to monitor whether their policies, such as free personal care and the introduction of rapid response services, are being effectively delivered and ensure that information is available and used to plan for the future."

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## **Notes for editors**

1. The Auditor General is responsible for securing the audit of the Scottish Executive and most other public bodies in Scotland, except local authorities. He investigates whether spending bodies achieve the best possible value for money and adhere to the highest standards of financial management. The Auditor General is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Executive or the Scottish Parliament.

2. The Accounts Commission for Scotland was set up in 1975 and is independent of both central and local government. The Commission checks whether local authorities, fire and police boards spend £9 billion of public money properly and effectively.

3. 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 Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland.