From:
Sent: 17 April 2026 21:40
To: complaints westmorland <complaints.westmorland@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Re proposed closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home in Alston

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing regarding the proposed closure of Grisedale Croft care home in Alston, which I understand is due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting on Monday.

My mother is [redacted] years old and has been a resident at the home for almost three years. She suffers from significant memory loss and has very limited mobility. She requires full assistance from staff for daily activities, including being moved using a Sara Stedy to access the toilet, lounge, and dining areas.

The care she receives at the home is not only professional but deeply compassionate. The staff, many of whom are local, know her well and provide the consistency and reassurance that is vital for someone in her condition. A move away from this familiar environment would be extremely distressing and detrimental to her wellbeing.

My mother has strong ties to the Alston community. She has lived in the area for around 25 years and continues to benefit from regular visits from friends. Her church also holds a monthly service at the home, which is an important source of comfort and connection for her.

As a family, we are closely involved in her care. My father visited her daily until recently, when he was admitted to hospital himself. My sister lives in Alston and continues to visit regularly. If the home is closed and my mother is moved to a facility up to an hour away, it will significantly reduce our ability to maintain this level of contact and support, especially given my father's age and health.

Alston has already experienced the loss of vital local services, including its cottage hospital and ambulance provision. Closing this care home would leave the community without essential facilities for elderly residents, forcing vulnerable individuals away from their families, friends, and support networks.

I urge the council to carefully consider the human impact of this decision. Continuity of care, emotional wellbeing, and access to family are all critical factors that must be given proper weight alongside financial considerations.

Please ensure that my concerns are formally recorded and taken into account before any decision is made.

Yours faithfully,

<care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear,

Thank you for writing to us in such a considered way about the future of Grisedale Croft, and to tell us about the care your mother receives and your concerns for the future.

It is gratifying to hear about the professional and compassionate care we provide, and we understand your concerns for your mother and the wider community.

Since you wrote to the council on 17 April via our complaints email address the Cabinet have held their meeting and we contacted the families of all residents on 21 April, informing them of the outcome. I hope you received this information direct or via another family member.

Cabinet agreed to proceed to formal public consultation on options for the future of Grisedale Croft, with a preference that an alternative property be acquired in the area.

No decisions have been made at this stage. The forthcoming consultations will provide an opportunity for residents, families, staff and local people to share their views and ask questions. Our priority remains the wellbeing of residents and the continued support of staff throughout this process.

Further information will be shared with residents and families soon. We are aiming to launch the consultation in mid-May with the consultation running for a 12-week period.

Meetings with residents of Grisedale Croft are planned for the first few days of the consultation and independent advocacy support will be available for residents or families who request it.

We will retain your correspondence but would invite you to make your views known again in the formal consultation process once it opens, to ensure your views are considered in the decision-making process and so you have the opportunity to read the consultation information about the background to this consultation and the options being consulted on before submitting your views.

As well as taking part in the arrangements we are making for residents and families, you and any other family member are also welcome to complete the general public consultation survey.

I hope this provides you with enough information for the time being.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk if you have any further questions or concerns.

Yours faithfully,

Care Homes Consultation Team

From:
Sent: 21 May 2026 16:58
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grizedale Croft Consultation

In the recent communication WMF council have stated that an alternative to GC could be found locally and have asked local people for suggestions.

Without knowing the budget for possible renovations and move costs it is impossible to advise further.

Please forward the budget figure so that local people, who this effects, can research and advise accordingly.

Kind Regards

On Fri, 22 May 2026, 09:34 Care Consultation, <care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk> wrote:

Thanks for your email about Grisedale Croft.

I noticed your Facebook post which referenced an email from Westmorland and Furness Council asking local people for suggestions.

I’m not aware of any email from us on this and wonder if it might be from Alston Moor Parish Council to people who have signed up for their campaign newsletter?

We will be giving answers to questions from the community throughout the process, and I will respond to your question directly as soon as I am able.

Kind regards

From:
Sent: 22 May 2026 10:09

To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Grizedale Croft Consultation

It's mentioned in paragraph 5 in the email from Nickie Phipps ref sourcing an alternative local location within Alston if finances allow. In order for locals to forward suggestions they would need to know the budget.

Call if easier, have a great BH weekend

Kind Regards

On Fri, 22 May 2026, 10:29 Care Consultation, <care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk> wrote:

HI

Would you mind sending me a copy of the email from Nikkie you are talking about?

Best wishes

From:
Sent: 22 May 2026 12:02
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Grizedale Croft Consultation

Hi

Copy and pasted below, para 5:

Overview

This consultation is about the future of Grisedale Croft Care Home in Alston - and includes consideration of an option for the continued provision of care in an alternative building in Alston.

We know the valued place Grisedale Croft has in the community and the longstanding role the home has played in supporting local people for more than 50 years. The home is rated “Good” by the Care Quality Commission and we are proud of the quality of care our current and past staff have continued to provide.

We are looking at the future of Grisedale Croft because the building is costly and not fit for the future of modern care. Permanent resident numbers have declined in recent years to as low as three, currently four, making operating costs per resident very high.

No decisions have been taken about the final outcome. The purpose of the consultation is to gather views, understand impacts, and ensure that any future decision is informed by the experiences and priorities of those most affected.

However, the council’s Cabinet has already recognised that Alston is an isolated community with little alternative provision available, so for this consultation it has indicated from the outset that its preferred option is to provide alternative accommodation in a suitable building in the local area, if one could be acquired, and it is financially viable.

We understand that even the start of a consultation on options for the future may be worrying for residents, families, and staff. These are people’s homes and places of work, not just buildings, and we are approaching this with care, openness and respect.

This consultation is about listening. We want to hear directly from residents, loved ones, staff and local communities so that any decision we make is informed and focussed on people's wellbeing, dignity and safety.

Throughout the consultation period, residents and families will receive individual support, and staff will be kept fully informed, with trade unions engaged as part of the process. The council will ensure that any future changes prioritise safety, continuity of care and quality of life.

Following the consultation period, all feedback will be carefully analysed and the Director of Adult Social Care will make final decisions later in 2026.

Thank you for taking part in this consultation. You will find more details below about the background to this consultation, our wider vision for the future of care, and how to take part in the consultation and find out more at community information events.

Information about the consultation will be updated throughout the consultation period at https://consult.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/adult-social-care/grisedale-croft

If you have any questions or need additional support to take part in the consultation please email care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk or call 0300 373 3301.

Nikkie Phipps, Assistant Director of Care Services
Adult Social Care, Westmorland and Furness Council

On Wed, 27 May 2026, 10:55 Care Consultation, <care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk> wrote:

Thanks

Apologies, I was confused by you saying it was from an email.

I can't give you an answer on the budget figure for alternative provision at this stage other than point out the potential costs of rebuild or refurbishment stated in the consultation pack £2.5-3 million at a minimum, and the operating costs of the current model, are not considered financially viable. Also in the consultation document it is envisaged that alternative provision would be a minimum of 4 beds, compared to the current 13-bed capacity.

For possible alternative provision the acquisition and other costs, and the ongoing operating costs for its service model, would have to stack up together financially, so it is not possible to give a precise budget for a building at this stage.

I will put your question forward to be answered publically in our first set of questions and answers.

I hope this helps.

Kind regards

From:
Sent: 27 May 2026 15:43
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Grizedale Croft Consultation

Thanks

Has a cost analysis been formulated ref the 4 bed model ?

A budgetary figure ref relocation will only assist the local community in their research and hunt for an alternative care facility.

Thanks again for taking the time to reply, hopefully get to meet you at the community drop in.

Kind Regards

From: Care Consultation
Sent: 27 May 2026 16:02
To:

Subject: RE: Grizedale Croft Consultation

Thanks

I appreciate why a figure might assist community members in a positive approach to this option but I don't have such a figure or answer I can give you myself.

I can best help you myself by putting it forward as a formal question to the consultation process for an official response.

Kind regards

From:
Sent: 28 June 2026 13:44
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale Croft

I am writing about the future of Grisedale Croft Care Home in Alston.

I lived on Alston Moor from 1989 until 1994, working as a Speech and Language Therapist at Alston Cottage Hospital, and also in the community. I know how isolated the community is, I was instrumental in developing a local service to adults as previously I worked as a specialist in this area in Essex. Prior to my arrival, any adult who needed Speech and Language Therapy had to travel to the hospital in Carlisle. Grisdale Croft is an important place, providing both residential care in the area and to provide intermediate care now the Cottage Hospital has been closed.

Grisedale Croft is the only residential care home on Alston Moor, one of the most isolated communities in England. It matters that older people here can be cared for close to home, with their family and friends nearby.

My view is that Grisedale Croft should stay as proper residential care in Alston: no downgrade, no move away, no closure.

When the in-patient beds at the Ruth Lancaster James Cottage Hospital were closed in 2018, the NHS committed that residential beds at Grisedale Croft would be used for intermediate care. That commitment is on the public record and should be honoured by the Council and the NHS together.

I ask that no decision to close or reduce Grisedale Croft is taken unless and until an equivalent, fully funded and operational service in Alston is confirmed in advance.

Former resident of Alston Moor

From:
Sent: 29 June 2026 09:41
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grizedale croft

Hi,

I am writing about Grisedale Croft Care Home in Alston.

I grew up on Alston moor, and volunteered at Grisedale Croft as a teenager. Most of my family still lives in Alston.

Grisedale Croft is the only residential care in one of the most isolated communities in England. It matters that people here can be cared for close to home, with their family and friends nearby.

My view is that Grisedale Croft should stay as proper residential care in Alston: no downgrade, no move away, no closure.

When the in-patient beds at the Ruth Lancaster James Cottage Hospital were closed in 2018, the NHS committed that residential beds at Grisedale Croft would be used for intermediate care. That commitment is on the public record and should be honoured by the Council and the NHS together.

I ask that no decision to close or reduce Grisedale Croft is taken unless and until an equivalent, fully funded and operational service in Alston is confirmed in advance.

Best,

From:
Sent: 06 July 2026 15:27
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Alston re old peoples home

Alston hospital in my view would be the best place for Alston nursing home combined with the surgery.

From:
Sent: 21 July 2026 20:49
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>; clerk@alstonmoorparish.gov.uk
Subject: Grisedale Croft, Alston

Hi,

I feel my wife and I need to contribute to the consultation about Grisedale Croft.

We were living in [redacted] up until August 2024. We had moved there in 2020, and found Alston Moor a fabulous place to live, and we planned to see out retirement there.

Sadly in 2023 my wife had an episode, which I believed to be a stroke, and therefore called 999 for an ambulance. I was told that an ambulance was not available, and they were unable to give me a time when one would be available.

The local first responder attended, but he was unable to transport to hospital, as it was not part of his remit. I had to therefore transport my wife myself, for the hour plus journey to Carlisle A&E dept.

My wife was diagnosed with a brain tumour, after several visits to further appointments in both Carlisle and Newcastle hospitals.

Following this episode we had to reconsider where we were going to be best placed to get the help my wife needed moving forward. We therefore came to the conclusion that the isolation and lack of services, particularly emergency services, required us to move to an area where those services were available.

We feel it is such a shame that Alston gave us such a community spirit, indeed I spent many an hour volunteering and making wonderful friends, for us to have to leave.

We feel Alston Moor needs an economic boost, without which the area will degenerate further. There needs to be more there for the younger generation, who have to travel outside the area for education and employment.

Thank you

From:
Sent: 21 July 2026 11:17
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale Croft consultation

Hello,

I attended the drop in session at Alston Town Hall on Monday 20th July and requested information on the guidance applicable to decision making and option appraisals in relation to care homes.

That information was not available that morning but I would now like confirmation on which guidance is being followed and a copy of that guidance if possible.

Thank you

On Tue, Jul 21, 2026, 16:32 Care Consultation <care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk> wrote:

Hi

Thank you for your email.

There is no single standalone piece of guidance that governs decision-making or options appraisals relating to the future of care homes. When considering service change, local authorities are required to have regard to a range of legislation, statutory duties, case law, statutory guidance and recognised sector best practice. This includes obligations under the Care Act 2014, Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, the Local Government Best Value Duty, and the established Gunning Principles for public consultation.

As a result, any options appraisal is not undertaken against a nationally prescribed methodology. Instead, the appraisal framework is developed by the Council to reflect the specific circumstances of the review and the factors that decision-makers need to consider. The appraisal process is informed by relevant legal duties, case law, recognised adult social care good practice guidance, local strategic priorities and the evidence gathered through the consultation process.

The purpose of the options appraisal is to ensure that all reasonable options are assessed objectively and consistently against an agreed set of criteria. Typically, these criteria include matters such as resident wellbeing and outcomes, legal compliance, strategic fit, financial sustainability, workforce sustainability, future demand, market capacity, deliverability, and risk. Consultation responses form an important part of the evidence base and are considered alongside operational, demographic, workforce, financial and equality information before any final decision is made.

In summary, the Council does not rely on a single piece of guidance but instead applies a combination of statutory requirements, case law, recognised good practice and local evidence to ensure that any consultation and subsequent decision-making process is lawful, evidence-based and proportionate.

The model that was mentioned yesterday, and is one of those that we would consider is:

the green book five case model - Search

Hope this answers your question.

KR

From:
Sent: 21 July 2026 21:59
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Grisedale Croft consultation

Hi, thanks for the information.

From:
Sent: 25 July 2026 14:52
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale Croft Consultation

Dear Sir/Madam,

At one of the recent Community information drop-ins held at Alston Town Hall concerning the above subject, I raised an issue concerning the Alston Community Garden which none of the Council Representatives could answer at that meeting and it was recommended that I submit it by email.

I recently took over the position of Co-ordinator for the Community Garden, which is located directly adjacent to the site of Grisedale Croft. For some years the area was an unsightly piece of waste ground but, after a successful campaign led by one of the former residents of the Grisedale Croft flats overlooking the site, Eden Council issued the Alston community with a license to develop the land into a community garden. The garden was formerly opened in the year 2000 and last year celebrated its Silver Jubilee with a garden party attended by over 80 people.

The garden is well-established and is maintained by a set of dedicated volunteers. It's open all year round and offers a welcoming space for anyone to sit and relax in a piece of nature. In particular, it's a favourite spot for friends and relatives to bring residents of Grisedale Croft during visits - it's on the doorstep and so requires no pushing of wheelchairs up and down the slopes of Alston's streets and can take advantage of any short spells of good weather during a visit. (This is one argument in favour of retaining the Grisedale Care Home in its current position.)

The main point I wish to raise here is that there is only one entry and exit point to the garden itself for the general public (and the volunteers), namely through the entrance to the Grisedale car park. Some bordering properties have access via the top of the garden but these are only accessible to residents of those properties.

Should Grisedale Care Home be closed (either temporarily for refurbishment or permanently), it would be necessary to leave open an access corridor from Church Road to the garden itself to allow it to continue in its current form, especially if the building is cordoned off using metal fencing or similar.

A further point concerns the right of way access which runs from Church Road, through the Grisedale car park, around three sides of the building which used to house the Grisedale flats and then out the back of the Grisedale areal, leading eventually to Front Street. This right of way is of long standing and is used by several people every day. Again, provision for keeping this right of way open would have to be made in the event of any closure of the care home.

Could you please provide me with an acknowledgement that these two issues will be taken into account in any future decisions on the future of Grisedale Croft care home and that access will be guaranteed in both cases?

In case you require any further information or wish to discuss the issues raised, please don't hesitate to contact me via email or mobile phone on 07484 375141.

Many thanks and best wishes

From: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Sent: 27 July 2026 10:46
To:
Cc: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Grisedale Croft Consultation

Dear

Thank you for your email about the Community Garden next to Grisedale Croft.

We are aware of course of the garden and its valued place in the whole community, and the use made of it by Grisedale Croft residents and families.

While the future of the garden has not been part of the consultation we have received several responses and queries saying how much it is valued.

I will include your correspondence in the consultation record so that it will give further information and context to other comments about the community garden, and so that the matters you raise about access can be noted and considered in the event of temporary closure for refurbishment or permanent closure.

The council as part of this care home consultation can't guarantee future access but I am sure in either event that standard planning and legal processes would allow for full consideration of representations about rights of access and rights of way.

I hope this answers your questions and serves as the acknowledgment you have requested.

Best wishes

Care Homes Consultation Team

From:
Sent: 08 August 2026 15:05
To: chief.executive@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk; Cath Whalley <cath.whalley@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>; Phipps, Nikkie <Nikkie.Phipps@cumbria.gov.uk>; ALLEN, Sam (NHS NORTH EAST AND NORTH CUMBRIA ICB - 00P) <s.allen24@nhs.net>; MITCHESON, Rachel (NHS NORTH EAST AND NORTH CUMBRIA ICB - 00P) <r.mitcheson@nhs.net>; Patricia Bell <patricia.bell@eden.gov.uk>; Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Cc: markus.campbellsavours.mp@parliament.uk; coopery@parliament.uk
Subject: Grisedale croft consultation

Dear all

I am contacting you regarding the future of Grisedale Croft in Alston, and home care in the area. As a home help and Community first responder for NWAS I have witnessed and experienced many avenues of this over several years.

Grisedale croft is a vital service in the area, it is not just another care home, as the authorities seem to think. It is a lifeline, a security net, a place that allows elderly vulnerable people to remain in their community. It is a place that can allow scared people to maintain contact with their peers, family and friends at a time when they are losing their independence, their stability. It is often family's last choice but also their first choice, few want to go into a care home or put a family member in one but Grisedale croft is where most want to go when they need to.

This isnt about Grisedale croft the building, it is about the service it offers, the only service of its kind in the community, the only respite, the only end of life care, the only security to stay near family and friends when you cant have this in your own home.

So now to the problems... I appreciate that at present Grisedale croft is costing the council a massive amount of money, I understand the regulations change and it needs modernising, and I also understand that numbers are falling. However it would seem to be that at least 2 of these are linked and could be easily addressed if the council was willing to do so, which they appear not to be.

As has been pointed out in drop in sessions and public meeting, and presumably consultation responses, there is issues with getting people admitted/referred to Grisedale Croft. Out of 7 cases I have been directly involved with in the last 2 years only 2 have managed to get in. 1 was a straight forward same day GP referral for respite. The second (just this week) for emergency respite took 4 days; 38 phone calls from myself; ambulance, GP and district nurse safeguarding referrals (even more

phone calls); Grisedale staff going above and beyond to speed up the process; home carers doing extra (can you even begin to imagine if this was an 80 year old lady trying to do this for her very ill husband who she cares for but cant manage with no help, not knowing the system and absolutely exhausted)

All the others have been refused Grisedale for varying reasons. There is no joined up thinking, there are unclear or non existent pathways, there are too many agencies that do not work together in that moment when it is needed. Thus it becomes a self fulfilling prophecy, theres empty beds, which in turn costs more to run

I beg you, please, before any decision is made about the future of residential care on Alston moor stop and look at the real need and talk to the NHS about a clear pathway for the future use of such care. A clear route where physios can help with a broken leg (instead of an 87 year old ending up in Keswick for 4 weeks) where reablement services can be used (instead of an 89 year old having one visitor in 7 weeks when shes stuck in Maryport) where respite care can be organised same day (so an 82 year old man and his 78 year old carer/wife can get respite care when she has a chest infection) where an 80 year old lady can recuperate after bowel surgery and hospital discharge (instead of calling an ambulance and having to be readmitted due to sepsis as she couldn't mobilise effectively)

I have asked this in drop in sessions and I am aware that the parish council is also asking for this, particularly with what was promised when we lost our hospital. We have been told that W and F are in contact with the NHS, but they dont seem to be getting the right data or engaging with the appropriate services. We have also been told that they cannot produce joined up thinking until they know what any future home would look like.

So let's imagine this process as it seems to be heading...

consultation comes out that relocation is the best option

IF they can find a suitable property they look to purchase

IF this model looks financially viable they will then look at consulting with the NHS

IF a joined up thinking approach is agreed with better pathways the number of potential residents increases

The new property is no longer fit for purpose so cant go ahead

Alston is left without a care home

All relevant parties NEED to get around the table NOW before any decisions are made. W and F council, Alston moor parish council, north Cumbria and north east NHS trust, primary care, GPs, Integrated community care team, district nurses, integrated care beds team. We need a fresh approach to make any future care home successful and able to meet as many needs as possible, not just a few.

I am aware that I said at the start of this email that I wanted to also mention home care but I feel that I have said enough for now. But I will say that this is not working here, there are not enough carers and the ones that are being given W and F care packages are poorly trained, uncaring and do not meet the needs.

There is so much more that could be said but to summarise: PLEASE GIVE ALSTON MOOR A GUARANTEE THAT WE WILL NOT LOOSE OUR RESIDENTIAL CARE, AND THAT ALL OPTIONS ARE BEING CONSIDERED AND FULLY DISCUSSED WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS.

Many thanks

From:
Sent: 09 August 2026 13:44
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale croft care home, Alston,

Dear Sirs

I write with some ideas that you may wish or may have considered when considering the outcome of Grisedale Care home.

Last week I was a visitor to Alston and picked up a leaflet about the proposed closure in a shop in the town. I thought an outsiders point of view may be an interesting one and I thank you for reading what I have to say.

I live in Merseyside and have been a carer for 40 years and had dealings with care homes for my family in that time. In my town, St Helens in Merseyside which is well connected for transport and roads, we still have major issues with care homes. We have no council run care homes now, as our council sold them off to private concerns some 20 years ago. That was a big mistake as we are now desperate for respite places for unpaid carers who need to go away or have a break from caring as the majority of beds are taken up by permanent residents.

Could Grisedale be given a makeover and the beds be divided between permanent beds and respite beds? Half way beds for relieving pressure on residents and patients from hospital even?

The lady I spoke to in the shop was saying she doesn't drive and the proposed move would be very difficult for her when currently there is a provision in the town already. Alston is quite a way from other places and factoring in weather, remoteness , age of the population it would be foolish and expensive to move the provision.

Look to link up with say Macmillan, stroke, cancer charities to see if they could fund a bed... would companies fund/donate anything. Soft furnishings, Cushions etc. If you don't ask you don't get. Please don't sell the family silver like St Helens did. The private companies are running the care homes at a profit and in St Helens the cost is £1650 a week even for respite care. If the wider community/towns in your area knew there was a good respite facilty they would use it and then it becomes sustainable.

I am sure a solution can be found, you the authority have the power to make it happen.

Kind regards

From:
Sent: 09 August 2026 10:42
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale Croft consultation

Please find below my own and my father's completed survey concerning the future of Grisedale Croft in Alston, Cumbria.

I hope this finds you in time, on the original correspondence from Westmorland & Furness (note attached photo) the closing date was 19th August, but on some further leaflets it appeared to have been shortened by a couple of weeks, I hope these entries won't be rejected for being late.

Dear all involved,

It's hard not to be cynical about the potential closure, Alston has already seen its fair share of services being removed, from district nurses never being replaced once existing ones retired (which were invaluable to me after being discharged from Hexham spinal unit; which itself has now moved way over

to Middlesbrough), to our local hospital in Alston being shut down. We've managed to hang on to our doctor's surgery for the time being but there's been moments it hasn't looked as secure, despite this it's future is still uncertain. Grisedale would be yet another example of a long history and trajectory of Alston being let down again and again. I understand the argument where smaller services become merged in a more comprehensive establishment with a higher level of care (like Middlesbrough Spinal Unit), but only if it's accessible, not a long distance and commute away.

On the argument about costs as I'm sure it's relevant in some fashion- i e: Grisedale (and services like it) as far as I understand it, is it correct that the North of England, let alone the rural north of England don't receive any additional funding for things like this? I think of things like the Barnett formula which was set up to provide additional funding, ~20% extra per capita (for Scotland, Wales and NI) which takes into account the increased costs of living in more remote areas. The North of England is arguably very similar to these other parts of the UK yet doesn't qualify for something like it, not to mention even more remote rural areas within the north where the issues are more acute. Whether through the Barnett formula or some other relevant mechanism the lack of funding pathways seem like a huge injustice, more over it would help alleviate some of the debate about essential services costing more per capita in places like Alston. It's going to cost more per person if these areas with less people are to receive basic comparable services as is provided throughout the south of England in urban areas. Granted this is a more general point but If I were arguing the case justifying the apparent increased costs of keeping a service like Grisedale going, this seems like a good place to start (Levelling up to coin a phrase). This is likely one of the reasons our services in Alston are diminishing one by one, as on paper they don't look like good value compared to their urban counterparts.

Whatever the solution might be, it has to be local so the community is directly involved in the care of those being looked after in Grisedale (or replacement premises). Long commutes do nothing to help with the familiar contact essential for patient wellbeing, let alone the cost of travel if the service were shipped off to god knows where.

I appreciate your consideration.

My late wife and I moved to Alston 37 years ago. I am now in my 90th year and my wife after critical heart surgery and subsequent treatment followed by convalescence had every reason to be grateful for the excellent adult social care here on Alston Moor. Regrettably the in-patient beds were taken from the Cottage Hospital and now it appears the NHS provision at Grisedale Croft is not reliably available. This lack of NHS provision affected me earlier this year after a short spell in Carlisle Hospital.

I fully endorse what our son [redacted] emphasizes in his comments and appraisal of the matter concerning Grisedale Croft. After his spinal injury accident 30 years or so ago he benefitted immensely from the support structure in place here in Alston. Without this provision he would have struggled with dealing with his new life confined to a wheelchair. Even the local ambulance was a huge advantage in getting him to the nearest hospital quickly after his accident. He may not be alive today if it weren't for the emergency services on hand in Alston to attend to his immediate needs, compared with the nearest today coming from Carlisle or Penrith over 20miles away.

After all these years as a resident of Alston along with countless others, I find it incomprehensible that the CQC, the NHS and the private sector such as Grisedale Croft are unable to work together to ensure a way forward in this vital matter of Adult Social Care in an isolated rural area such as Alston Moor.

With the present government's commission on Adult Social Care in mind (launched in spring 2025), it is obviously an opportune moment to consider the bigger picture of care of the elderly in rural areas such as Alston Moor.

One is prompted to consider the closure and future development of Grisedale Croft with the reinstatement of the in-patient beds in the cottage hospital. Although fully aware the funding of the hospital and Grisedale Croft are separately financed leading to a lack of joined up thinking, this is

detrimental to social cohesion and wellbeing of the individual and the community in rural places like Alston Moor. Therefore conversation between the two must surely take place and be a priority.

The CQC with emphasis on Care will I hope consider any solution that brings care close to the patient, which is conducive to wellbeing and paramount in the healing process and overall community cohesion.

Thank you, yours sincerely

PS: Alston Cottage Hospital refurbished some years ago and currently cleaned and heated regularly would be an ideal site for a new Grisedale Croft where there are already doctor's surgeries and clinics on site.

From: customerservicesASC.westmorland@cumbria.gov.uk <customerservicesASC.westmorland@cumbria.gov.uk>
Sent: 19 August 2026 12:11
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: Website enquiry: Adult Social Care from

Re Grisedale Court, Alston.

Thank you for your letter of the 6th of August. The planned closure of Grisedale Court gives me considerable concern. My elderly sister, [redacted], has dementia but she is being cared for at her home in Alston by friends and family and her care is excellent. The plan with the local GPs is to continue with home care but if this became impossible then admission to Grisedale Court would be the next move.

If Grisedale Court is to temporally closed for two years what will happen to the present residents and people such as my sister who may need institutional care in the near future. You make no mention where the alternative care will be. We have made enquiries about possible care homes but we are talking about care homes in Penrith (20 miles away) or Hexham (over 30 miles away). For many this would mean few if any visits by relatives and friends. Public transport is very limited.

The old hospital in Alston is virtually empty. This could easily be updated to receive those in need of residential care. It is all on one floor so expensive lifts would not be required and the present staff at Grisedale Court could retain their jobs and redundancy payments would not be needed. Grisedale Court could then be sold and the money could fund the necessary upgrade at the hospital.

Another idea is setting up a system of carers who could go to people in their own homes for as long as possible. A strategy that Andy Burnham has suggested.

In the past Alston has cared for my Father, [redacted], and my Uncle and Aunt, [redacted] in their final months. Alston should be proud of the care available in the past and strive to continue in the future.

Thank you so much for all the hard work you are putting into finding a solution.

Yours Sincerely

From:
Sent: 19 August 2026 17:56
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale Croft

Having been a resident of Alston Moor for the past 43 years my wife and myself have seen the decline in services that this remote community have had to suffer.

At our age, 76 and 74 we are deeply concerned about provision of care on the Moor.

There is no way we should be left without good local provision of a care home for this very remote community

Winters up here can be extremely challenging and travelling to visit someone in care home 20, 30, mile away is just not fair.

The loss of the Cottage Hospital has made things really difficult for the community, we were promised at least 2 beds on condition of the Hospital closing.

Please consider your thinking with great care concerning Grisedale Croft, Alston is a very different place to live than most places because of its remoteness.

Kind Regards

To Westmorland & Furness Council

6th August 2026

Grisedale Croft Consultation

Dear Sirs / Madam of the Council,

I am most daunted at your recent proposals regarding the future of Grisedale Croft, our local residential care home, with 13 beds, including 2 'health beds' which were agreed to be available with full 'wraparound' care when the local hospital was closed in 2017 / 2018. The choices being offered lack any realistic figures, costings, refurbishment or rebuilding plans, and show no survey has been carried out to date.

Recently my dear friend has been living in Grisedale Croft, where she settled well and was given excellent care. Many friends and family would call to see her frequently. Just a short time ago she was moved to a nursing home in Keswick, 40 miles away. The journey there takes over an hour by car and there are no bus or train services to accommodate travelling to visit my friend. She will suffer from lack of interaction with, and affection from, people who have known her well, during her time of living on Alston Moor since 1980. She is a special lady, over 80 years of age, who has contributed to Alston in many ways over the years, and at one time provided WRVS visits to the care home.

Another friend, a farmer, ended her days in the home where other residents, knew her, the staff were familiar to her, and her family and friends could see her regularly until the end of her days.

Alston Moor is a close community where we wish to look after our more frail residents and care for them in a local setting. It is traumatic to know that people are taken so very far away from their friends and families.

This home is for our local residents and families and is essential for our town in the North Pennines for many reasons:

1. Persons in hospital, care homes, nursing homes all thrive better with visits from persons of importance to them.

2. Those needing this sheltered care have partners and friends of similar ages who may be unable to drive or travel far, often being frail themselves.

3. Winter conditions make the roads impassable on many routes.

4. It is 20 miles from Alston to the nearest towns in every direction, and even further for the outlying residents of Alston Moor.

5. There is no daily public transport available to any town from Alston Moor.

6. Grisedale Croft has provided excellent care for many years to residents of Alston Moor, to my friends and neighbours.

7. It provides employment for local persons.

8. It is part of the community.

9. Many local groups have provided entertainment and companionship for the residents of Grisedale Croft.

10. Local people have over many years, developed a splendid garden adjacent to Grisedale Croft, for the use of residents and friends and families visiting.

11. In the past a meals on wheels service for the community was run from Grisedale Croft, supplying hot nutritious food to outlying residents.

12. Originally there were flats attached to the home, which could be rented out to the more needy. These have not been kept in repair and need further maintenance to put them into use again.

13. It is ideally located, being central to the town, easily accessible and within walking distance for most of us.

I have lived here since 1976 and have benefitted from the local community in many ways. I would like to think that in the future there would be an option for Grisedale Croft to accommodate me should the need arise.

Please repair Grisedale Croft.

Your faithfully,

From:
Sent: 04 August 2026 10:23
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale Croft Consultation

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my growing concern regarding the current threats facing Grisedale Croft Care Home in Alston.

Grisedale Croft is a highly valued service within Alston Moor. I write not only as a local resident, but also as an Adult Social Care Practitioner who understands the importance of accessible, community-based care services. I believe I speak for many members of our community when I say that once a service like this is lost, it is unlikely to ever be replaced.

Over the years, Alston Moor has seen a steady reduction in local services. As a small, rural community, it has often been vulnerable to cuts, but the cumulative impact has been considerable. Each lost service makes it harder for residents to access the support and resources they rely on.

Many residents of Alston Moor do not have access to reliable transport. If Grisedale Croft were to close, families and loved ones would be required to travel considerable distances to visit relatives in residential care. This would inevitably lead to greater isolation for some of our most vulnerable residents and would have a detrimental effect on family relationships and emotional wellbeing.

When the inpatient beds at Alston Community Hospital were closed, there was widespread outrage across the community. The hospital had been a vital local resource, and its loss was deeply felt. The possibility of losing our local care home feels equally sensitive and risks being perceived as another cost-saving measure at the expense of a rural community.

This issue is particularly personal to me. When my mother received end-of-life care at Alston Community Hospital, I was incredibly grateful that she could remain close to home. As I commuted to work daily in Hexham, I was able to visit her regularly on my way home. Those visits were invaluable to both of us during an extremely difficult time. Families of residents at Grisedale Croft benefit in a very

similar way. Many people already travel significant distances for work due to Alston's rural location, and having loved ones placed even further afield would make regular visits much more difficult, increasing loneliness and isolation for care home residents.

In discussions with colleagues and peers, I have questioned why such a valued service is now under threat. One reason suggested was that Grisedale Croft had not been accepting referrals. However, I do not believe this reflects the true potential of the service. Rather, it may indicate operational issues that could be addressed, rather than providing justification for closure.

I have also spoken with many members of the Alston community and have been struck by the level of concern and upset regarding the potential closure. People are genuinely devastated at the prospect of losing Grisedale Croft and see it as a huge loss to the area. There is a strong feeling that local voices should be properly heard before any decision is made about the future of this valued service.

I am concerned that the responses gathered through the consultation process so far may not fully reflect the views of local residents. Many people in the area lead busy lives, commuting to places such as Hexham, Newcastle, Carlisle and Penrith for work while also managing family commitments and caring responsibilities. As a result, finding the time to complete consultation forms can be difficult. I also found that when I was trying to complete the online survey, my online link did not work.

From an Adult Social Care perspective, our practice is grounded in principles of human rights, wellbeing and person-centred care. It would feel fundamentally unfair for residents of Alston Moor to be placed in care homes far away, which has an emotional and practical impact on individuals and their families. Removing people from their communities and support networks would not align with the person-centred values that Adult Social Care strives to uphold.

I therefore strongly urge decision-makers to consider the wider social, emotional, practical and community impact that any reduction or closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home would have on the people of Alston Moor. This service is far more than a building it is a vital part of the community, an essential local resource and a lifeline for many residents and families. Once lost, a service of this nature is unlikely ever to be replaced.

I appreciate these decisions are not easy ones to make and really hope the outcome for Grisedale Croft is positive, whatever that may look like.

Kind regards,

From:
Sent: 15 August 2026 23:11
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale Croft - Alston

Subject: Grisedale Croft Consultation Response

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing following the telephone call I received after submitting my consultation response regarding the future of Grisedale Croft Care Home.

To be clear, **I stand by my response and the option I selected. I chose Option 2, refurbishment of Grisedale Croft, after careful consideration.** In my view, refurbishment should be the minimum level of investment being considered, not merely one option amongst others.

Grisedale Croft is already located in the most suitable position possible, in the centre of Alston, close to the surgery, has good access and parking. It is an established and valued part of our community and

provides an essential service in one of the most remote parts of the North of England. The facility has the potential to support not only residents requiring residential care but also broader health, wellbeing and community care needs for local people who wish to remain close to their families, friends and support networks.

I was extremely disappointed to receive a telephone call on the day before the consultation period closed, questioning whether I had selected the "correct" option on the consultation questionnaire. The timing and nature of this contact were not only surprising and inappropriate but gave the process a distinctly cynical appearance. I completed the consultation thoughtfully and independently, and I stand by the choice I made. I do not appreciate being contacted at the eleventh hour in a manner that could reasonably be interpreted as an attempt to persuade me to reconsider my response, particularly where it did not align with the Council's preferred option. A genuine consultation should seek, respect and record the views of residents impartially. It should not create any impression that respondents are being checked, challenged or steered towards a predetermined outcome (potentially making the consultation meaningless) I ask the Council to explain why this call was made so close to the deadline, whether other respondents were contacted in the same way, and how it will ensure that every original response is recorded accurately and without alteration or undue influence. I am particularly concerned by the suggestion that residents could be accommodated elsewhere should a suitable alternative become available. The reality is that there are no equivalent facilities anywhere near Alston. Grisedale Croft is the only council-operated 24-hour residential care home located within the town itself. The nearest local authority, charity or not-for-profit alternatives are approximately 26 to 31 miles away in places such as Corbridge, Appleby, Longtown and Carlisle. For many residents and families, these distances are significant, particularly during the winter months when travel conditions on rural roads can be challenging.

Removing care provision from Alston and expecting vulnerable older people to relocate many miles away is not a reasonable substitute for retaining a local facility. It would separate residents from their community, make visiting more difficult for families and reduce the social connections that are vital to people's wellbeing and quality of life. The Council's preferred option appears to place greater weight on administrative convenience and financial efficiency than on the needs of the people who depend upon these services.

Alston Moor is a rural community of approximately 2,000 people and the population has been steadily declining, as evidenced across successive censuses. At a time when rural communities are already struggling to retain services and attract families, the loss of local care provision would be another damaging blow. Once facilities such as care homes are removed, they are rarely replaced.

Many residents feel that this proposal is part of a wider pattern in which services are progressively withdrawn from rural areas and centralised elsewhere in the name of efficiency and cost reduction. Whilst such policies may appear attractive on a spreadsheet, the cumulative effect is to weaken and ultimately undermine the viability of rural communities. Every service that is removed forces people to travel further (environmental damage), isolates those without transport, reduces local employment opportunities and makes places such as Alston Moor less sustainable for current and future generations.

The suggestion that residents could be relocated to an alternative facility "if one can be found" provides little reassurance. It is difficult to ignore the possibility that this approach could ultimately result in Grisedale Croft being closed without a genuine local replacement ever being delivered. Given the financial pressures facing local authorities, many residents are understandably concerned that closure would become permanent, leaving Alston Moor without any locally based residential care provision.

I therefore strongly urge the Council to listen carefully to the views of residents without pressuring people to choose the Councils preferred option, and therefore invest in the refurbishment and long-term future of Grisedale Croft. Refurbishment is not only the most sensible option; it is the option that best serves the people of Alston Moor. The community deserves a clear commitment to maintaining and improving local services rather than continuing a process of centralisation that risks hollowing out rural communities and leaving vulnerable residents further isolated from the support they need.

Yours faithfully,

From: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Sent: 17 August 2026 10:57
To:
Cc: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Grisedale Croft - Alston

Dear

Thank you for your letter, which will be included in the consultation response for Grisedale Croft.

With regard to the phone contact, this was done as we are legally obliged to inform all consultation respondents that there has been a significant change to the consultation information during the consultation period. This is so we can be confident everyone had the same complete information and nobody can say they submitted a response based on out-of-date information.

Most of the 78 Grisedale Croft respondents we have recontacted supplied an email address with their response. They received the comprehensive information and reasoning by email, which I have supplied for your information below. A few respondents who only supplied a home address have received letters. We have contacted all respondents for all options.

You were contacted by telephone because you returned the first version of the form, which you were not to know was out of date, and only supplied a contact phone number. If you got the wrong impression from our colleague then please accept our apologies and understand it is more difficult to explain on the phone all the detailed reasoning contained in the email below. We are also sorry the call was close to the consultation deadline – we are working through all the responses as quickly as we can. I do not have a record of when the form was received, only when it was processed onto our system which was in the last week.

I hope this answers your concerns about the consultation process. I repeat the point that we were legally obliged in order to ensure a fair process by contacting every respondent who responded before the 26 June change, plus any submissions received after this date on the older form.

If you have any remaining questions and concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Care Home Consultations Team

From:
Sent: 17 August 2026 13:24
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale Croft

Dear

Thank you for your response to my letter.

I have not received any updated information about the future of Grisedale Croft so had not thought to look for any so soon.

My response to the options has not changed. I think refurbishment is the best long term solution. As many responders are of this opinion I think the council should be putting more energy into how best to do this instead of finding more reasons to persuade us to change our minds. It is possible and without resorting to the measures you are suggesting.

Yours sincerely

From:
Sent: 09 July 2026 14:12
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale Croft Care Home

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in response to the consultation on the future of Grisedale Croft Care Home in Alston.

I strongly oppose any proposal that would lead to the loss of this vital service in our community. Grisedale Croft has provided outstanding care to local people and means a great deal to many families, including my own.

My sister's husband and my aunt both received exceptional care at Grisedale Croft before they passed away. The compassion, dignity and professionalism shown by the staff during such difficult times will never be forgotten. Knowing they were cared for close to family, friends and the community they knew made an enormous difference to all of us. My sister does not have a driving licence, so being in Alston meant she was able to visit her husband every day.

Alston is a rural and isolated area, and moving elderly or vulnerable residents away from their loved ones would have a significant impact on their wellbeing. People deserve to receive care close to home, where family and friends can visit regularly and continue to support them.

I understand there are financial and building challenges, but I urge the council to do everything possible to retain care provision in Alston. Whether that means investing in the existing home or securing a suitable alternative building, it is essential that this service remains available for future generations.

Please give careful consideration to the views of local residents, families, staff and everyone who has seen first-hand the difference Grisedale Croft makes.

I also ask the Council to give full consideration to its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998. Article 8 protects the right to respect for private and family life, and any decision that results in residents being moved away from their families and local community must be carefully justified. For many people in a rural community like Alston, regular family visits are only possible because care is provided locally. My sister was able to visit her husband every day because Grisedale Croft was in Alston. Had he been moved many miles away, this would simply not have been possible. I believe the impact on residents' wellbeing, dignity and family life should be a central consideration in this consultation.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments.

Yours faithfully,

On 9 Jul 2026, at 2:12 pm, Care Consultation <care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk> wrote:

Thank you for your email to the Care Home Consultation Team at Westmorland and Furness Council.

Please take this automated reply as acknowledgement of receipt of your correspondence. If your email is a comment on what you think should happen to Grisedale Croft Care Home in Alston or Applethwaite Green Care Home in Windermere, your email will be considered as part of the consultation feedback, and you will not usually receive a further reply. If you have not seen all the consultation information and would like to complete the full consulatation survey then please visit the Westmorland and Furness Council website and search for Care Home consultation.

If your email is asking a question, or any correspondence seeking a reply, we are receiving a very high volume of emails and queries and we will respond to you as soon as we are able.

Thank you for taking the time to contact us about the care home consultations, and thank you for your patience.

From:
Sent: 09 July 2026 18:37
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale Croft Care Home

I strongly oppose the proposed closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home.

I acknowledge receipt of your automatic response.

I appreciate that you are receiving a significant number of responses regarding the proposed closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home. However, I want to make it clear that this issue is of immense importance to me, my family, and many others in the Alston community.

Grisedale Croft provided outstanding care to my sister's husband and to my aunt during the final stages of their lives. The kindness, dignity, compassion and professionalism shown by the staff gave our family great comfort at an incredibly difficult time. This is not simply a building—it is a home where vulnerable people receive exceptional care from staff who know them personally.

I am deeply concerned that closing the home would have a devastating impact on residents, many of whom are elderly, frail, or living with dementia. Being forced to leave the place they know as home can cause severe distress, deterioration in health, and a loss of dignity. These are not abstract concerns; they are well documented and must be taken seriously.

I urge the Council to ensure that its decision-making process fully complies with its legal duties under the Care Act 2014, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. The rights of residents to dignity, family life, wellbeing and appropriate care must be at the heart of any decision. Financial pressures alone cannot justify decisions that place vulnerable people at unnecessary risk.

I also ask the Council to give proper weight to the impact this closure would have on the wider Alston community. Grisedale Croft is an essential local service, and its loss would affect not only residents but also their families, dedicated staff, and future generations who may need care close to home.

Please confirm that my representation will be included in the official consultation record, fully considered by those making the final decision, and presented to elected members before any determination is made.

The people who live at Grisedale Croft deserve more than a financial calculation. They deserve dignity, stability, and the opportunity to remain in the place they call home.

Yours faithfully,

From:

Sent: 10 July 2026 08:25

To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>

Subject: Re: Automatic reply: Grisedale Croft Care Home

Thank you for your automatic acknowledgement.

I understand that comments submitted as part of the consultation may not receive an individual reply. However, my email also raises questions that I believe require a response rather than simply being recorded as consultation feedback.

Please could you confirm:

1. That my representation has been logged in full as part of the official consultation.

2. That it will be made available to those responsible for making the final decision, including elected members.

3. Whether the Council has completed a Human Rights Impact Assessment relating to the proposed closure and relocation of residents.

4. What assessment has been made of the impact that moving vulnerable residents may have on their health, wellbeing and dignity.

5. How the Council considers this proposal complies with its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

Given the seriousness of this proposal and its impact on vulnerable residents and the Alston community, I would appreciate a substantive response to these questions rather than a further automated acknowledgement.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

From:
Sent: 03 August 2026 10:54
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale Croft Care Home

Dear Care Home Consultation Team,

I am writing to follow up on my previous email, as I have not received a response to the questions I raised.

I appreciate that the consultation generated a large volume of correspondence. However, my email did not simply express an opinion; it also asked specific questions about the Council's decision-making process and its legal obligations.

I would therefore be grateful if you could respond to the following:

1. Can you confirm that my previous email and representation were received and included in the official consultation?

2. Has the Council completed the necessary assessments relating to the impact on residents, including consideration of their wellbeing and human rights?

3. How were my questions considered, and where can I find the Council's responses if they have already been published?

If the consultation has now concluded and individual replies are no longer being provided, I would appreciate being directed to the report or decision documents that address these matters.

I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

On 4 Aug 2026, at 12:25 pm, Care Consultation <care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear

Thanks for your email, and please accept our apologies for the delay in responding.

Your kind words about the care shown by the Grisedale Croft staff to your family members is much appreciated.

In answer to your questions in your latest email:

Can you confirm that my previous email and representation were received and included in the official consultation?

Yes, this will be included in the official consultation, which will detail survey form responses and "direct" responses received by email or in writing.

Has the Council completed the necessary assessments relating to the impact on residents, including consideration of their wellbeing and human rights?

Our latest Equality Impact Assessment was published on the Grisedale Croft consultation website: eqia-future-of-grisedale-croft-formal-consultation-2-july-2026pdf.

Individual assessments and care plans about residents' future care would not take place until a decision is made on the way forward – in the event that the decision would have an impact on their care.

How were my questions considered, and where can I find the Council's responses if they have already been published?

Your points will be included in full in the consultation report appendix (with identifying details redacted) and will support the creation of a summary report outlining the common themes and concerns raised by respondents.

If the consultation has now concluded and individual replies are no longer being provided, I would appreciate being directed to the report or decision documents that address these matters.

The consultation concludes on 19 August. Reports are expected to be produced in September/October.

I hope this answers your questions.

Yours faithfully

Care Homes Consultation Team

On 5 Aug 2026, at 7:56 am

Dear

Thank you for your reply and for answering my questions. I appreciate you taking the time to respond.

I am pleased to know that my representation will be included in full within the official consultation report.

However, I remain deeply concerned by your statement that individual assessments and care plans for residents will not take place until after a decision has been made, should that decision affect their care.

It seems difficult to understand how an informed decision about the future of Grisedale Croft can be made without first understanding the likely impact on each resident. Every resident has different

medical, emotional and social needs, and the consequences of moving elderly and vulnerable people can vary significantly.

I will read the published Equality Impact Assessment carefully. However, I hope the Council will ensure that any final decision is based not only on strategic or financial considerations, but also on robust evidence about the likely effects on the wellbeing, dignity and quality of life of the people who currently call Grisedale Croft their home.

Thank you again for confirming that my comments will form part of the consultation. I look forward to reading the consultation report and the Council's reasoning when it is published.

Yours sincerely,

From:

Sent: 12 August 2026 08:04
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Grisedale Croft consultation – outstanding questions and further information

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to follow up my previous email concerning the future of Grisedale Croft, to which I have not yet received a response.

I appreciate that the Council will be dealing with a large number of consultation responses. However, with the consultation due to close on 19 August, I would be grateful if the important questions I have raised could be properly considered before any final decision is made.

Since my previous correspondence, I have read the information circulated to households by the Alston Moor Parish Council Working Group. This raises several matters which I believe require clear answers from Westmorland and Furness Council.

Firstly, the two health beds. The Working Group states that documents have been found showing that, when the beds at Alston Community Hospital were closed in 2017–18, an agreement was made for two health beds at Grisedale Croft, with wraparound care, for people who no longer needed to be in hospital but were not yet ready to return home.

Does the Council accept that this commitment exists? If Grisedale Croft were to close, how would these two health beds and the associated care continue to be provided on Alston Moor?

Secondly, the refurbishment costs. The Working Group states that no condition survey or other professional assessment of Grisedale Croft has been undertaken to establish exactly what work is required and what that work would actually cost.

If this is correct, I would like to understand how refurbishment can fairly be compared with closure, rebuilding or replacement without a site-specific survey and properly costed refurbishment plan.

Thirdly, occupancy and the quoted cost of £4,072 per resident per week. The Working Group argues that this very high figure results from the unusually low occupancy of the home and that opportunities to use Grisedale Croft for hospital discharge, respite, emergency and palliative care have not been fully developed.

Has the Council calculated what the cost per resident would be at a more normal level of occupancy? And has it fully considered increasing the use of Grisedale Croft for these other forms of care before considering closure?

I am particularly concerned that decisions of such importance to Alston Moor should not be based on low occupancy or estimated refurbishment costs without first establishing why occupancy is low and obtaining reliable figures for the actual cost of refurbishing the home.

As I have said previously, Grisedale Croft is more than a building. My sister's husband and my aunt both received excellent care there before they passed away, so I know personally what this home and its staff have meant to local families.

Alston Moor is a remote community. Losing residential care locally would have consequences not only for future residents, but also for husbands, wives and families who may otherwise have to travel considerable distances to visit someone they love.

I therefore ask that my previous correspondence and the additional points raised in this email are included as part of my consultation representation, and that the Council provides clear answers to these questions before a final decision on Grisedale Croft is taken.

I would also be grateful for confirmation that this email has been received and included in the consultation.

Kind regards,

On 13 Aug 2026, at 1:08 pm, Care Consultation <care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear

Thank you for your email.

I can confirm that both your previous correspondence and the additional points raised in this email will be included as part of your consultation response and will be considered alongside all other feedback received before the consultation closes on 19 August 2026.

As previously explained, comments and representations submitted during the consultation process are being collated and analysed to inform the final consultation report and subsequent decision-making process. The matters you have raised regarding the health beds, refurbishment costs, occupancy levels, and future use of the service will therefore be captured as part of that process.

In response to the specific points raised in your latest email:

Firstly, the two health beds

The Council is aware of representations regarding the provision of two health beds at Grisedale Croft following the closure of beds at Alston Community Hospital.

The former Cumbria County Council entered into an Agreement with Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust for the provision of residential care and beds for the period **1 May 2017 to 31 December 2017**. The Agreement, dated **30 June 2017**, described these as **interim care beds**, with an expectation that each admission would be for no longer than six weeks, and included a range of eligibility criteria and other conditions relating to admissions.

As the Agreement was expressly time-limited and expired on **31 December 2017**, the Council does not consider itself to be bound by that Agreement. The Council has been unable to identify any subsequent agreement that places an equivalent obligation on the Council. However, notwithstanding the expiry of the agreement, Grisedale Croft has continued to make beds available for this type of interim care provision where appropriate.

Should any decision be made that affects services at Grisedale Croft, consideration would be given to the implications for existing service provision and the needs of people requiring care and support in the Alston Moor area. However, no decision has yet been made and the consultation remains ongoing.

Further information on the NHS beds can be found in our Question and Answer document published on the Grisedale Croft consultation website, this is the link:

grisedale-croft-questions-and-answers-no-1-15-junepdf

Secondly, the refurbishment costs

The options presented as part of the consultation were developed using information available to the Council regarding the condition, suitability and long-term sustainability of the building, together with wider strategic, operational and financial considerations.

The consultation has been established to gather views on these proposals, including whether alternative approaches should be considered. All representations received, including comments regarding building condition surveys and refurbishment costs, will be considered as part of the review of the proposals before any final decision is taken.

Thirdly, occupancy and the quoted cost of £4,072 per resident per week

The quoted cost reflects the current operating costs of the service and the number of residents occupying the home during the period assessed. Occupancy levels are one factor that influences the overall cost per resident, although they are not the only factor taken into account.

The Council has considered the role of Grisedale Croft within the wider care and support system, including how services are currently used and future demand. The views expressed regarding alternative uses of the home, including step-down, respite, emergency and palliative care provision, have been noted and will form part of the consultation feedback considered before any decision is made.

I would also note that your email of 5 August 2026 did not contain any specific questions requiring a response. Rather, it expressed your concerns regarding the future of Grisedale Croft and the potential impact on residents. These comments have been acknowledged and, as previously confirmed, will be included within the consultation feedback.

At this stage, there is no further information available beyond that already published as part of the consultation documentation. Any themes, issues and representations received during the consultation period will be reflected in the reports produced following the close of the consultation.

Thank you for taking the time to submit your views and experiences. I can confirm that this email has been received and will be included as part of your consultation representation.

Yours faithfully, Care Homes Consultation Team

From:

Sent: 15 August 2026 17:29
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Grisedale Croft consultation – outstanding questions and further information

Dear

Thank you for your detailed response and for confirming that my correspondence and additional points will form part of my consultation representation.

I appreciate the clarification regarding the 2017 agreement for the interim care beds, including the Council's position that the agreement itself expired on 31 December 2017.

I do, however, note that you confirm Grisedale Croft has continued to make beds available for this type of interim care provision since that agreement expired. I therefore hope that, when the consultation is assessed, consideration will be given not simply to whether the original agreement remains legally binding, but to whether the need that led to this provision still exists on Alston Moor and how that need would be met locally if Grisedale Croft were no longer available.

There are also two points from my previous email which I do not believe have yet been directly answered.

Refurbishment

I asked whether a full professional condition survey of Grisedale Croft has been undertaken and whether a site-specific, costed refurbishment plan has been produced.

Your response refers to “information available to the Council regarding the condition, suitability and long-term sustainability of the building”, but does not confirm whether such a survey and costed plan actually exist.

Could you therefore please confirm simply whether:

1. a professional condition survey of Grisedale Croft has been undertaken; and

2. a site-specific, costed refurbishment assessment has been produced.

If neither has been undertaken, I would be grateful if this could also be confirmed.

Occupancy and the £4,072 per resident per week figure

I appreciate your confirmation that occupancy is one factor influencing the quoted cost. However, my question was whether the Council has calculated what the cost per resident would be if Grisedale Croft were operating at a more normal or higher level of occupancy.

Could you please confirm whether the Council has carried out such a calculation and, if it has, what that figure is?

I am not seeking to prolong correspondence unnecessarily. I am simply trying to understand the evidence on which such an important decision for Alston Moor may ultimately be based.

Given that the consultation closes on 19 August, I would be grateful if these outstanding points could either be answered or formally recorded as matters requiring consideration in the consultation report.

Thank you again for confirming that my representations will be included.

Yours sincerely,

On 17 Aug 2026, at 4:15 pm, Care Consultation <care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear

Thank you for your email.

I note your comments regarding the continued provision of interim care beds at Grisedale Croft and your view that consideration should be given to how any continuing need for such provision would be met in the future. These comments will be included as part of your consultation response.

Meanwhile, I can direct you to the Grisedale Croft consultation document which states: “as well as providing residential care for current residents of Grisedale Croft, the council’s proposal is that the new provision would develop as a flexible service offering ‘intermediate’ or ‘step-down’ short-term care and rehabilitation for residents coming out of hospital, as well as long-term residential care.”

With regard to the two specific points you have raised:

Refurbishment

The Council has not commissioned a full professional condition survey of Grisedale Croft for the purposes of producing a detailed, site-specific refurbishment scheme, nor has it produced a fully costed refurbishment plan setting out the precise works that would be required to bring the building up to modern standards.

The information used to inform the consultation proposals has been drawn from the Council's existing knowledge of the building, including its condition, suitability, age, layout, compliance requirements and long-term sustainability, together with operational, strategic and financial considerations.

In considering potential capital investment requirements, the Council has utilised industry-standard cost modelling methodologies, including benchmark data from the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS), which is widely used across the construction and property sectors to inform cost estimates and option appraisals. The figures used within the consultation information have also been developed and reviewed by senior officers within the Council's Property Service, whose professional expertise and extensive experience in both the property sector and local government asset management have informed the assumptions and estimates presented.

Whilst a detailed, site-specific refurbishment scheme has not been commissioned, the Council considers that the information available provided a reasonable basis on which to develop the options presented for consultation.

Your comments regarding the absence of a site-specific condition survey and fully costed refurbishment plan will be included as part of the consultation feedback and considered alongside other responses received.

Occupancy and the £4,072 per resident per week figure

The figure quoted within the consultation documentation reflects the actual operating costs of the service relative to occupancy levels during the period assessed.

In response to your question, the Council has considered what the cost per resident would be if the home were operating at its maximum registered capacity. Grisedale Croft is registered for 13 beds and, based on full occupancy of those registered beds, the cost would be approximately £1,566 per resident per week.

However, in practice, achieving and sustaining full occupancy is not straightforward. A number of factors affect occupancy levels, including the size and layout of some rooms, referral patterns, and the fact that the home is only able to meet certain types of care needs. For example, Grisedale Croft is a residential care home and is not registered to provide nursing care, meaning some individuals referred for care have needs that cannot be appropriately met by the service.

For these reasons, a theoretical calculation based on full occupancy should be viewed in context and does not necessarily reflect an achievable or sustainable operating position.

Your point regarding whether costs would differ at higher occupancy levels, and whether opportunities for additional use of the home should be explored before any decision is made, will be recorded as part of your consultation response and considered through the consultation process.

As previously confirmed, all of your correspondence, including the points raised in this email, will be included within the consultation record and considered before any decision is taken.

Yours faithfully,

Care Homes Consultation Team

From:

Sent: 20 August 2026 09:04
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Grisedale Croft consultation – outstanding questions and further information

Dear

Thank you for your response and for providing clear answers to the two outstanding questions I raised.

I appreciate your confirmation that the Council has not commissioned a full professional condition survey of Grisedale Croft for the purpose of producing a detailed, site-specific refurbishment scheme, and that no fully costed refurbishment plan setting out the precise works required has been produced.

I also note the Council's explanation that its estimates have instead been based upon existing knowledge of the building, BCIS benchmark data and the professional judgement of officers within the Property Service.

I understand why such information can be useful when developing initial options. However, I remain concerned that a decision with potentially permanent consequences for residential care on Alston Moor could ultimately be made without first establishing, through a detailed professional assessment of the actual building, precisely what work Grisedale Croft requires and what that work would cost.

I therefore respectfully ask that the absence of a full condition survey and site-specific costed refurbishment plan is made clear in the final consultation report and to those responsible for making the eventual decision.

I am also grateful for the Council's confirmation that, at Grisedale Croft's registered capacity of 13 residents, the estimated cost would be approximately **£1,566 per resident per week**, rather than the **£4,072 per resident per week** figure quoted within the consultation documentation.

I fully accept the Council's point that 100% occupancy may not necessarily be achievable or sustainable. Nevertheless, the substantial difference between these figures demonstrates how significantly occupancy affects the headline cost per resident.

For that reason, I hope the final assessment will consider whether there are realistic ways of improving occupancy and making greater use of Grisedale Croft — including residential care, intermediate or step-down care, respite and other appropriate forms of short-term care — before concluding that the existing service is financially unsustainable.

I also note the Council's proposal that any new provision would itself offer intermediate or step-down care. This appears to recognise that there is an important role for this type of provision on Alston Moor. I therefore believe it is reasonable to ask whether greater use could first be made of the existing Grisedale Croft service for these purposes.

Now that the consultation has closed, I do not wish to prolong the correspondence unnecessarily. My main concern is that when the final consultation report and recommendations are prepared, decision-makers are presented with the fullest possible picture — including the limitations of the refurbishment estimates, the effect of occupancy on the cost-per-resident figure, and the potential for wider use of the existing home.

Grisedale Croft is an extremely important service for Alston Moor, and I sincerely hope that every reasonable option for retaining and making better use of it will be properly examined before an irreversible decision is taken.

Thank you again for responding to my questions and for confirming that my correspondence will form part of the consultation record.

Yours sincerely,

From: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Sent: 20 August 2026 11:04
To: [redacted]
Cc: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Grisedale Croft consultation – outstanding questions and further information

Dear

Thanks for your email. [redacted] is on annual leave for a bit now.

All your points, and similar points, questions and concerns raised by many others will be highlighted and considered as part of the consultation report and decision report, and your correspondence will form part of the full consultation record.

Best wishes

Subject: Westmorland & Furness Council's consultation on closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home, ALSTON, Cumbria - arguments against it and the topic of INTEGRATED CARE

Date: Tue, 26 May 2026 15:55:00 +0100

From:

To: care.consultation@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

CC: s.allen@nhs.net, natalie.riddle@nhs.net, marcus.campbellsavours.mp@parliament.uk, Mary Robinson <Mary.Robinson@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>, AMPC <clerk@alstonmoorparish.gov.uk>, cath.whalley@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Good afternoon Westmorland & Furness Council Consultation Team

RE YOUR PROPOSED CLOSURE OF GRISEDALE CROFT CARE HOME, ALSTON, CUMBRIA CA9

Having tried to complete your Westmorland & Furness on-line Consultation Survey document on the proposed closure of Grisedale Croft care home in Alston, I attempted to select two out of your five options. Clearly more than one option cannot be selected and so I could not continue completing your form. Therefore, instead I hope you will accept this email instead please with my additional comments/testimony/request for relevant documents.

Your FIVE options are as follows of course:

1	Do nothing
2	Refurbish Grisedale Croft
3	Rebuild at Grisedale Croft
4	Close Grisedale Croft with no alternative provided
5	Provide an alternative to Grisedale Croft in Alston

My TWO preferences are Option 2 and Option 5 please.

One of your main arguments for the closure of Grisedale Croft is that numbers of service users accessing or being allowed to use Grisedale Croft are (and have been) low . I have to disagree with this argument. On the contrary, if your policies had allowed the use of Grisedale Croft to be more flexible historically (with some appropriate investment) - rather than simply just allowing service users with less complex needs to use this home, then undoubtedly numbers of local people in need who could have used this facility would have definitely made these numbers higher – and therefore this would have made GC more economical to run….. and a huge community benefit of this would have been less angst and hardship for the people and the families who needed access to such a local service, but who were forced, extremely frustratingly, to go elsewhere (far away) to find the services they so desperately needed. Rooms too small in GC that it could not accommodate wheelchair users etc! and this was allowed to continue without change nor investment for years! Unfortunately, the pain for all local people affected who could not access care at Grisedale Croft has been great. I am one of those carers whose mother (who lived with us because of her severe dementia and who was also bedbound) could not readily access Grisedale Croft (rooms not available? or too small) for the

occasional respite break - and we then had the most horrendous difficulty trying to find occasional respite care in a care home facility miles away - in another county indeed - hardly ever in the wider Cumbria area! This created so many long journeys and expense, and angst in trying to locate a bed somewhere else and too many times for me personally it only ended in failure! Cumbrian authorities should be ashamed of themselves – local authorities here have failed everyone when it comes to social care solutions – Cumbria has excelled at this neglect for too long. Please read on.

Therefore, the fact that you are stating the obvious in your consultation report - that numbers are now low - is therefore more than annoying. My experience is not unique here (other residents have been in dismay at how they have had to find respite care for example in Northumberland or County Durham or even further afield!) - you have clearly neglected those residents with more complex physical needs and/or severe dementia, as well as their families. Other areas in England do much better. It is particularly telling as well when the staff at Grisedale Croft have been excellent and their care standards have been consistently good - another strong reason to retain this facility rather than closing it down.

In addition, the Government is trying to pursue integrated care systems to have MORE JOINED UP services LOCALLY. And, contrary to this policy, you now want to close this home down rather than invest in it? (or else you would not be having this consultation exercise at all!) - OR if you are unable to refurbish Grisedale Croft, alternatively you could possibly use our lovely local hospital building?, which has been standing empty for years now - also closed down after a consultation. If this could be utilised that would be fantastic - particularly with the push to integrated health and social care services, one would think!. The people of Cumbria - and <u>particularly</u> the people of Alston Moor - deserve better.

You also mention recruiting issues and the use of expensive agency staff as another reason for closure. Surely you can look at why you are having to do this – perhaps change rotas to be more staff-friendly, perhaps look at rates of pay to be possibly more attractive – and perhaps market these jobs much better – 'be creative'. To be part of a prestige integrated care team for Alston - name them 'Alston Angels' and market it everywhere and hopefully an attractive package will appeal to more local people – and treat them well after that. Good people do not give up decent jobs easily – jobs are needed here so success could be better achieved here, don't you think?

Therefore, more positively going forward, provision of a real and practical local care centre is essential, which is INCLUSIVE to cover the real and various needs of the community – PARTICULARLY when that community is rural and remote. Success in this regard is to create a centre where people can also transition from hospital to home – rehabilitation. A centre where you can provide respite care for vulnerable people to be able to book the odd week from time to time, in order to give their desperate loved ones (who care for them 24/7) a well needed break from their caring role. A centre where you can provide full-time residential care for those who unfortunately need it – when that care cannot be successfully provided in their home environment. A centre which does not exclude certain categories because a room for example is too small for a wheelchair??!! ..or too small for other care equipment! Why has this been left for years unchanged?? Cumbria Authorities let this happen and have let Grisedale Croft WITHER! – and now you say it is not up to scratch for modern standards – of course it is not – and that has been the case for a long time. I repeat IF Grisedale Croft had been able to receive a more variety of local people in need (and those with various issues including being bedbound/wheelchair bound and severe dementia service users etc) then perhaps this situation of closure because of lack of use would have been avoided.

The neglect shown over the years by the relevant local authorities is real – and hopefully the existing Westmorland and Furness LA chiefs will not be short-sighted here; will not neglect the people of Alston Moor and will be able to link up - as Government policies dictate - healthcare and social care in a more meaningful way – whether it be to appropriately refurbish Grisedale Croft or re-use possibly for example our lovely hospital building with this forward-looking new approach in a setting which <u>remains in Alston</u>. I hope so.

In addition, key Alston Moor demographics must be mentioned also. Briefly, from recent census information it is reported that Alston Moor features an older demographic with an aging population – older than the national average, many of which live alone. Clearly, from this information alone, a decision to take away (rather than enhance/create an improved LOCAL care centre) would be extremely detrimental to future needs…….. and a responsible local authority would need surely to plan accordingly.

If somehow you fail to either refurbish Grisedale Croft or fail to find and create an improved all inclusive integrated care centre in Alston itself, it could be argued that you are operating an unlawful consultation due to failing to offer genuine alternative meaningful LOCAL options for a care facility in Alston. This would mean that your proposed closure disproportionately affects protected groups (eg elderly residents, those with dementia etc) under the Equality Act 2020 – never mind the Breach of Human Rights – failing to meet local residents needs – NOW AND IN THE FUTURE - and forcing people to possibly live elsewhere in a care home setting, and sadly not be located near their family.

Could you provide please copies of your care impact assessments and exact business case that has led to your closure decision, thank you.

I could go on but I will stop there. Clearly, Westmorland & Furness LA need to improve upon their social care/integrated care offering here in Alston – to properly provide a meaningful fully inclusive small care centre that all types of vulnerable people can access and rely on - at Grisedale Croft's current location or elsewhere here in Alston. This is more than overdue – this is a chance for people in charge to get it right for your residents who pay your salaries – and indeed not forgetting that the Council Tax charge for Alston Moor is one of the highest in Cumbria. This is your chance to do some good please rather than the opposite. Hopefully you and your partners will do the right thing for everyone involved going forward, thank you.

From: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Sent: 27 May 2026 08:58
To:
Cc: s.allen@nhs.net; natalie.riddle@nhs.net; marcus.campbellsavours.mp@parliament.uk; Mary.Robinson <Mary.Robinson@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>; AMPC <clerk@alstonmoorparish.gov.uk>; Cath Whalley <cath.whalley@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Westmorland & Furness Council's consultation on closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home, ALSTON, Cumbria - arguments against it and the topic of INTEGRATED CARE

Good morning

Thank you for your email, I've read with interest all the points you make, thank you again.

I can assure you that these, along with all the points raised through this process will be included in any decision being made.

You ask for a copy of the "care impact assessments and exact business case that has led to your closure decision". Just for clarification there hasn't been any decision made, other than to conduct this Consultation, and certainly a "closure decision" hasn't been made.

If there are any other points that you would like to feed into the process, can I encourage you to send those into this email address.

Thanks again for the time you have taken, the personal experiences that you have shared and the suggestions made.

Kind regards

From:
Sent: 27 May 2026 10:21
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>

Subject: Re: Westmorland & Furness Council's consultation on closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home, ALSTON, Cumbria - arguments against it and the topic of INTEGRATED CARE

Good morning

Thank you so much for your speedy response to my email to your Consultation team yesterday - much appreciated.

It is reassuring to hear that you confirm that a "closure decision" has not been made and I and the vast majority of people I understand (including our local Nentsberry Community Group) hope that it will not. However, we equally hope that your duty of care to residents here in Alston will actually be improved upon - now that there is focus on this issue (as per my comments made to you yesterday, which I am glad you have read - thank you for your time in reading my email).

As an ex Social Worker (in another part of England) but now retired, I do have a little insight into the care industry and the challenges that persist for local authorities and service users alike. Rest assured many people (not just here in Alston Moor) will be keeping a keen eye on how Westmorland and Furness LA responds to improving upon the care offering (and joining up with health) in the Alston area and the actions that you take in due course.

Thanks again

Kind regards

From:
Sent: 28 May 2026 09:48
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>; Cath Whalley <cath.whalley@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>; chief.executive@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
Cc: markus.campbellsavours.mp@parliament.uk; Mary.Robinson <Mary.Robinson@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>; clerk@alstonmoor.org; natalie.riddle@nhs.net; corporate.governance@ncic.nhs.uk; Alix Martin <[redacted]>
Subject: Re: Westmorland & Furness Council's consultation on closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home, ALSTON, Cumbria - arguments against it and the topic of INTEGRATED CARE

Good morning [redacted], Cath and Chief Executive

Thank you again for your email [redacted] of yesterday (below) which was your reply to my email reporting my thoughts and testimony on Westmorland & Furness LA's proposed closure of Grisedale Croft. You have, of course, invited members of the public and community groups for their comments as you have now launched a statutory public consultation to gather information.

I also requested in my email copies of the relevant impact assessment and also the business case documents which I know must be carried out PRIOR to any consultation being launched. In your reply email below you have unfortunately avoided this request. May I ask again could you please provide the relevant pre-consultation assessments and reports that Westmorland & Furness must have prepared in relation to a proposed closure of Grisedale Croft care home prior to this consultation exercise. May I emphasise to you and your chiefs that BY LAW you have to compile appropriate evidence, prepare and publish clear documents (impact assessments etc as detailed) in order that all participants in this consultation CAN MAKE INFORMED RESPONSES, of course. If you have failed to do this, then Westmorland & Furness Council have failed to be legally compliant in this matter.

I ask again, could you forward to me please your relevant impact assessments (Equality Impact Assessment) and all other related documents, financial or otherwise, which have led you to be ale to launch this consultation. Thank you. It has to be reported, that you have clearly swerved this request below, which has caused much dismay. If Westmorland and Furness Council HAVE NOT prepared such documentation - and I emphasise here that it cannot, in a court of law's eyes, simply be a ticky box exercise with N/A written in many boxes - then W&F have failed to ensure full legal compliance and a judicial review may arise as a result.

Look forward to receiving copies of the appropriate pre-consultation documentation that you, as a responsible local authority, must have prepared.

Thank you

From:
Sent: 28 May 2026 10:35
To: Cllr Patricia Bell <patricia.bell@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>; Cllr Jonathan Brook <Jonathan.Brook@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>
Subject: Fwd: Westmorland & Furness Council's consultation on closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home, ALSTON, Cumbria - arguments against it and the topic of INTEGRATED CARE

Good morning Patricia and Jonathan

Hope you don't mind my sending you a very recent exchange of emails with your Care Consultation Team [redacted] Below you will see my initial main email supplying my pertinent comments and testimony re my arguments against the proposed Closure of Grisedale Croft care home in Alston and my suggestions particularly with reference to Government policy of 'Integrated Care' as well.

Because Jonathan you are 'Leader' and because Patricia this is your area, I now send you this exchange of emails for your information. Do hope you are able to read them. We cannot allow Westmorland and Furness council to not do the right thing here, both lawfully and morally. This is a chance now for good people who lead this W&F LA to do the right thing for residents going forward (well overdue here).

Thank you for your time

On 28/05/2026 11:48, Cllr Patricia Bell wrote:

Thank you very much for your email and your concern for the future of Grisedale Croft.

I am sorry but I am going to repeat more or less what [redacted] had to say, but I hope the extra detail will be helpful.

The council is following very strict guidelines which set out how a council should consider a consultation on the future of a care home, and potentially a major service change.

The 2014 Care Act deals with this as do the Social Care Institute for Excellence guidelines , which are nationally recognised as good practice.

As good practice requires, the council was very aware of the extreme sensitivities around a decision to go out for consultation on the future of care at two of its care homes.

The care and well being of residents, family, friends and staff is the councils top priority through our this difficult consultation period.

The whole point of such a long consultation is to give residents, family, friends and the community, every opportunity to have a conversation and share their thoughts and concerns. It is also an opportunity for the council to fill in any gaps it may have in its knowledge, so that when the time comes the council is in the best possible position to take a decision.

No decision on the future of Grisedale Croft has been taken, so the law does not require and equality impact assessment.

Thank you again for getting in touch and for responding to the consultation.

Best wishes

Patricia Bell | Cabinet Member for Adult Care

Subject: Re: Westmorland & Furness Council's consultation on closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home, ALSTON, Cumbria - arguments against it and the topic of INTEGRATED CARE

Date: Thu, 28 May 2026 12:28:33 +0100

From:

To: Cllr Patricia Bell <patricia.bell@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>

CC: Cllr Jonathan Brook <Jonathan.Brook@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>, markus.campbellsavours.mp@parliament.uk, chief.executive@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk <chief.executive@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>, cath.whalley@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk, AMPC <clerk@alstonmoorparish.gov.uk>, Alix Martin, corporate.governance@ncic.nhs.uk

Good afternoon Patricia

Thank you for your email below in response to my brief email to you and Jonathan Brook this morning, which has puzzled us.

I shall try to be brief.

1. Your response is extremely disappointing because the majority of your comments are simply stating the obvious about consultations!- of course this is the right thing to do to gather public opinion and for the council to learn better from service users and local people about many things that you, as a council, may be ignorant of. You must take on board everyone's comments, clearly. However, it is essential that those comments and opinions made are **INFORMED**.

2. Your reply seems to indicate that you are unaware of the law in this matter? about documents that local authorities MUST prepare and publish PRIOR TO ANY STATUTORY CONSULTATION - in order that they are available to all members of the public DURING that consultation, in order of course to provide you with informed comments and data. Please see below re the law:

"Local authorities in England are legally required to carry out impact assessments **before a care home closure consultation** primarily under **Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010** (which establishes the **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**) and **Section 1 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012**

Long-standing case law requires public consultations to be lawful and fair. Under these principles, consultation must occur at a **formative stage** and provide **reasons and adequate information**. Case law dictates that local authorities must have a completed, open-minded impact assessment available during the consultation so that consultees and affected residents can provide informed feedback".

3. Thirdly, this is exactly what I detailed in my email to Tom Burden - and it seems, like Tom, you either have misinterpreted what I have requested or just want to swerve supplying the public with the relevant copies of these essential lawful documents.....unless they do not exist??!

I now ask, due to receipt of your puzzling response, has Westmorland and Furness Council actually carried out the essential impact assessments etc lawfully needed for this consultation on Grisedale Croft? If so, I repeat could you please supply me with copies of these documents - this is not a difficult request - thank you.

Kind regards

From:
Sent: 29 May 2026 16:23
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Fwd: Westmorland & Furness Council's consultation on closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home, ALSTON, Cumbria - arguments against it and the topic of INTEGRATED CARE

Good afternoon Grisedale Croft Consultation Team

Further to the very recent exchange of emails regarding your Equality Impact Assessment and other documents requested in relation to your proposed closure of Grisedale Croft care home, could you advise please whether you are able to provide copies to me - requested several times now? I am still awaiting this information. Please advise.

Thank you again for your time and look forward to hearing back from you shortly.

From: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Sent: 09 June 2026 17:04
To:
Cc: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Westmorland & Furness Council's consultation on closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home, ALSTON, Cumbria - arguments against it and the topic of INTEGRATED CARE

Hello

Thank you for your emails, and also thank you for reaching out with your call on Friday, thank you.

Firstly to acknowledge that there has been a delay in our reply, apologies for this, the volume of responses that we have received in both Care Home Consultations has been great, but time challenging to get through providing detailed replies.

An initial Equality Impact Assessment was prepared for the Cabinet paper, and is currently being updated with information gained through feedback and consultation, we are hoping that this will be available by the end of the week. The final Equality Impact Assessment for each option will not be produced until the end of the Consultation when we have all relevant information.

Before the decision was taken by Cabinet to go out to Consultation there was a Cabinet paper produced business on the options available. The detailed case will be worked up at the end of the Consultation period.

On our Consultation homepage at the foot of the page is a link to all the relevant documents and replies that have come through and been replied to as FOI requests.

Here is the link:

Consultation on the future of Grisedale Croft Care Home in Alston - Westmorland and Furness Council - Citizen Space

As soon as the EIA has been updated this will also be available on the this page with the other documents.

Kind regards

From:
Sent: 10 June 2026 09:28
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Westmorland & Furness Council's consultation on closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home, ALSTON, Cumbria - arguments against it and the topic of INTEGRATED CARE

Good morning

Thank you for your email of yesterday (below) and for your time.

It is good to now hear that an 'initial' EIA was prepared for the Cabinet and that you now report that this is currently being updated and, more crucially, that this will be available - hopefully to the public and all consultees therefore - as you state by the end of the week. The law is clear that consultees must have this document prior to or during a statutory consultation (contrary to what Patricia Bell said in her email?), in order that consultees are properly informed of your proposals and for consultees to understand of course why you are putting forward these proposals. There is no doubt here. We are glad that you are now sharing at least your 'draft/initial' documents with the public.

Having now looked at this 'initial' Cabinet document, it is clear from your reported figures and comments that you have no doubt that a refurbishment of Grisedale Croft is too expensive etc. You go on at lengths at all angles of course to explain this. Your recommendation for Option 5 - that an alternative building is found in Alston - is most welcome. The outstanding candidate (as many people have voiced) is the lovely (now unused as a hospital) hospital building which is surely available to accommodate this service? - PARTICULARLY WITH THE PUSH TO ACHIEVE INTEGRATED SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE - with all the benefits that the NHS will also get out of having such a facility here etc - ie the transition from hospital to home - alleviating people dwelling in hospital beds unnecessarily of course (as mentioned in my email/report to you previously). Therefore with your recommendation of Option 5 as the only option to move forward with, hopefully you can share with us whether or not you are now pursuing this obvious choice with Health or, if not, could you share with us please your proposals for perhaps using some other building in Alston.

Thank you

From:

Sent: 26 June 2026 12:04
To: Phipps, Nikkie <Nikkie.Phipps@cumbria.gov.uk>
Subject: Drop in at The Hive - Grisedale Croft, Alston

Hi again Nikki

Just would like to say thank you very much for your time this morning at The Hive in Nenthead (re your proposed closure of Grisedale Croft care home).

I would simply like to reiterate please the point made (by more than me of course) that it is essential and right that your option of finding an alternative venue in Alston IS pursued - understanding how costly a refurbishment of Grisedale Croft would be. In this regard, it is imperative that you partner up correctly and formally with the NHS (as Government protocols dictate) to create the appropriate integrated care facility in Alston which is essential and overdue - and that the burden of funding does not fall totally on W&F. The benefits of such a facility are enormous - reaching a much larger variety of service users locally (and their familites) and benefiting the NHS also - as well as W&F LA complying with its duty of care (to this long neglected township community and its surrounding areas).

Kind regards

From:
Sent: 17 July 2026 09:21
To: Phipps, Nikkie J <Nikkie.phipps@cumbria.gov.uk>; Cllr Patricia Bell <patricia.bell@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>; Michael.Robinson <Michael.Robinson@WestmorlandandFurness.gov.uk>
Cc: markus.campbellsavours.mp@parliament.uk <markus.campbellsavours.mp@parliament.uk>; AMPC <clerk@alstonmoorparish.gov.uk>; MITCHESON, Rachel (NHS NORTH EAST AND NORTH

CUMBRIA ICB - 00P) <r.mitcheson@nhs.net>; ALLEN, Sam (NHS NORTH EAST AND NORTH CUMBRIA ICB - 00P) <s.allen24@nhs.net>; Alix Martin [redacted]; Cllr Mary Robinson <Mary.Robinson@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>; Raymond Miller [redacted]; Cath Whalley <Cath.Whalley@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>; Cllr Michael Hanley <Michael.Hanley@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>
Subject: Proposed Closure of Grisedale Croft Care Home, Alston, Cumbria - Town Hall Meeting 16 Jul 26

Good morning Nikki, Patricia and Michael (sorry - could not find email addresses for other W&F officials who were present)

Thank you very much for your time last night when you did a brief presentation regarding your proposed closure of Grisedale Croft care home here in Alston.

Clearly, as you have reported verbally and in writing, it seems Westmorland and Furness are reporting that it will take around £2.5m to reconfigure/rebuild GC into an up to date care facility. Grisedale Croft has served the people of Alston Moor for some time and unfortunately over more recent years it has been underused (for various reasons) due to MANY local people in need NOT BEING ABLE TO ACCESS ITS SERVICES. Although Grisedale Croft has been managed and run well, it has however been a limited service here. The pain of many local people trying to find long term care or respite care or palliative care for their loved ones elsewhere has been horrendous – spending hours of phoning around care homes outwith Cumbria etc and many times failing. In addition, we understand that in 2018 the NHS contracted/committed to using 2 beds in Grisedale Croft for step-down/intermediate care (this being due to the woeful closure of our lovely Alston Hospital in 2018). Unfortunately, we now understand that the NHS has failed to use these beds effectively since the hospital closed – further under-utilising Grisedale Croft.

Last night at Alston Town Hall – many pertinent questions were put to you but many of these questions were sadly unanswered. Last night's performance made me personally believe, rightly or wrongly, that you are trying to swerve providing any care beds AT ALL in this so neglected community – and that you are trying to sell us the “care in the home” scenario. THIS WILL NOT DO! Care in the home is basic stuff – existing of course all over England and also integrated care units and special care facilities exist all over England too – but NOT IN CUMBRIA.

The authorities within Cumbria have neglected the people of Cumbria for too long and particularly, sadly, the people of Alston Moor. This current 13 bed care facility here in Alston (GC) is outdated – yes we know – you have let it WITHER over many years, excluding so many people from receiving appropriate standard levels of care here. Your current proposal to close Grisedale Croft has brought focus now on this historic and ongoing neglect (so painfully felt by so many residents here). Therefore you have an opportunity now to do better – more importantly you have a huge duty of care to either:

1. Reconfigure Grisedale Croft to create a meaningful care facility providing the up to date facilities (so standard provsions in other regions yet bereft here in Cumbria) providing beds for long term care (for those people who unfortunately cannot be cared for in their homes); beds for intermediate care (to aid swifter hospital discharges); beds for respite care (for vulnerable people whose family/unpaid carers are exhausted from their 24/7 caring role and desperately need a break from same); and beds for palliative care (especially now that our local hospital is closed of course) – and so forth. These are just some of the pressing needs for care BEDS that need to be at last provided here– and soon please. This is basic stuff – I know.

Or

2. As you seem to indicate, find another suitable venue within Alston which can appropriately address the above described care needs – with far more than “a minimum of 4 beds' (you indicate a “minimum of 4 beds' in your recent leaflet sent to all householders here).

I have to comment too that why on earth you spent time last night (Patricia Bell) referring to HOUSING and talking about the recent Housing Survey which W&F sent to all households on Alston Moor – I have no idea. There is a place for this and you have an aim for that survey of course – you have to plan for the future with regard to such housing matters etc. **HOWEVER**, no matter how much you refer to or want to refer to housing or perhaps "care in the home", I must emphasise that care in the home IS NOT a 'care bed' solution – so overdue here – in my book. You wasted everyone's time last night with that topic.

Going forward, Westmorland and Furness Council must join up with the NHS Integrated Care Board immediately and AT PACE. This normal collaboration occurs elsewhere very successfully in England and it should be no different here. So get on with it speedily and create the appropriately sized INTEGRATED CARE CENTRE so badly needed here for all – whether it be a rebuild of Grisedale Croft– or whether it will be a SUITABLY SIZED care centre in Alston – make your decisions speedily please. I understand Cath Whalley (W&F Director of Adult Care Services) is prioritising this, as she should, and that Rachel Matheson (Director of Commissioning Neighbourhood North (NHS Integrated Care Board) is awaiting further communications from you to also prioritise this collaboration and speedily get this appropriate facility up and running here in Alston.

This is a great opportunity for you to do the correct thing going forward for all - and fast please.

Thank you

From:
Sent: 19 August 2026 10:23
To: Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Cc: markus.campbellsavours.mp@parliament.uk; coopery@parliament.uk
Subject: Critical Shortage of Nursing/Care Homes and Short Break Beds/Respite Beds - (ref the future of GRISEDALE CROFT CARE HOME, ASLTON)

Good morning Care Consultation Team - RE THE FUTURE OF GRISEDALE CROFT CARE HOME

I would be grateful if you would include the following comments please as part of your consultation deliberations:

TOPIC BEING THE CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF CARE BEDS IN CUMBRIA - DUE TO SO FEW LA CARE HOMES AND, IN ADDITION, THE LOW NUMBER OF PRIVATE CARE HOMES IN CUMBRIA AND PARTICULARLY EDEN

Unfortunately, compared to other regions in England, Cumbria is a "care home desert". The fact that W&F are considering the future of this local authority care home in a county where care homes are sparse (particularly nursing care homes) makes the notion of possibly losing Grisedale or having a much reduced care bed offering in Alston, as ridiculous. A responsible local authority should not be pursuing this at all. This consideration should not be happening - because due to there being so very few care homes that W&F own and due to the poor number of private care homes in Cumbria (all mainly in the South and west and Carlisle area), this means that Westmorland and Furness Council are ALREADY UNABLE to dynamically commission appropriate care beds hardly anywhere (when the need arises) - and this, sadly, has been the case for years. **THEREFORE, if we lose Grisedale Croft's 13 bed facility or have a much reduced care bed facility instead here, this would create EVEN LESS care bed capacity and would clearly cause more stress in the community as a result - for people who do desperately need beds.** Going forward, briefly what is needed here is actually an enhanced care bed facility (giving proper access now to those with severe dementia and complex needs) integrated, as Government policies dictate, with the NHS - in relation to intermediate care beds and of course palliative care beds too - not a reduced care bed affair (or none at all here!).

As a testament to how Grisedale Croft has indeed excluded certain people from accessing its beds (and there are others) please see below, for the record, a string of 2016 emails - just some sent during

the years of not being able to access Grisedale Croft for respite breaks and having to try (and often failing) to find care beds far away in other counties - it was hellish . Ten years ago both the LAs and NHS were "working on making things better for communities by aiming to IMPROVE SERVICES going forward" - eg Success Regime etc! Nothing has changed since - in fact since then, more care homes have closed down in the last decade in Cumbria and we, of course, even lost our local hospital in 2018 - the effects of which are still painfully felt here too - with connected issues with Grisedale - well documented already.

The Government direction is now, AS YOU WILL KNOW, to move healthcare from hospital to the heart of communities. For example - The Minister for Secondary Care - Karin Smyth - said on 8 July 2026 in the House of Commons regarding the Health and Social Care 10 year Capital Plan .....

"We will enable the shift from hospital to community by reconfiguring the estate so that patients see the **appropriate staff in the right place**, and we have already invested £102 million in the primary care utilisation and modernisation fund, with a further £200 million over four years to 2030. **In addition, we will support the development of neighbourhood health centres, as well as ensuring the secondary *care estate can deliver the the highest quality healthcare for the most complex and specialist cases*.** *Maintenance of the estate will extend beyond the current spending review via an investment of £6.75 billion over nine years to target the most critical building repairs through the estates safety fund".*

Please could you therefore ensure that W&F Council pursue all funding streams (particularly with the NHS) in order to assist you with for example the refurbishment of and the upgrade of services to Grisedale Croft (so overdue) - including gaining access to the above funding as announced last month by the The Minister for Secondary Care - Karin Smith.

Thank you

-------- Forwarded Message --------

Subject: Cumbria - Critical Shortage of Nursing/Care Homes and Short Break Beds

Date: Fri, 7 Oct 2016 17:23:13 +0100

From:

To: Lynn.Finlay@nhs.net

Dear Lynn

UTTER LACK OF NURSING BEDS/NURSING HOMES/CARE HOMES IN CUMBRIA - NEAR NON EXISTANT SHORT BREAK BEDS

Thank you for your time just a couple of minutes ago when I asked to speak to Stephen Childs. I confirm my enquiry relates to a decision made by CCG Cumbria evidently in a meeting last Thursday 29th September (I have been informed by Kym Graham of CHC office Carlisle) which states "any funding of CHC packages in residential homes will now cease". Is this true? Could Stephen please advise what the motivation/rationale is behind such a sweeping decision - which according to the second phone call received later this afternoon from Kym Graham - is immovable even regardless of individual's circumstances and the harsh realities of what is happening in communities (or rather not happening) as a result of the critical shortage of nursing homes/care homes and the near non-existance of short break beds in Cumbria. Please see email of today below to Brenda Smith and Colin Cox of Cumbria County Council. This CCG decision is an utter utter travesity - and we are told of it on the very day when we have been given a green light (after much effort and professional assessments etc) for my mum to actually have a short break in the local well-run care home in Alston - (mum is CHC status) - this was more than good news today - only to be utterly dashed by the news from Kym Graham about

the CCG decision. So the torture in the community continues - when a solution had in fact been achieved - why?

Look forward to hearing from Stephen.

Thank you

-------- Forwarded Message --------

Subject: Desperate Search for a Short Break Bed

Date: Fri, 7 Oct 2016 10:37:49 +0100

From:

To: Brenda.smith@cumbria.gov.uk, Cox, Colin <Colin.cox@cumbria.gov.uk>

Good morning Brenda and Colin

We just wanted to share some good news with you - having regard to recent emails sent to you both.

1. After 3 years of struggling to find a nursing bed for short breaks for our 90 year old severe dementia mum - the last year of which has been impossible - we can confirm that over the last three weeks of liaising with Alston hospital staff , Adult Social Services in Penrith and the manager of the Alston care home Grisedale Croft itself (who carried out an assessment of mum on Monday 3rd October this week), Grisedale Croft have now confirmed that they are able to take mum for her future short breaks - halleluyah. We are overjoyed at this outcome, as exhausted 24/7 carers. Grisedale Croft are able to take mum with the support of the closeby district nurses. This is the best news.

2. After requesting the usual authorisation for a rarely found short break with the CHC team in Carlisle, Kym Graham has just regretfully burst this bubble. Evidently - regardless of the critical shortage of nursing/care homes in Cumbria and therefore the near non-existant provision of short break beds anywhere now - Kym has advised a few minutes ago that the CCG had a meeting three days ago where a decision has been made that "any funding of CHC packages in residential homes will now cease". Is this true? even when local district nurses can support our mum in Grisedale Croft during a simple short break that we are desperate for and that all the local professionals have worked hard on these last few weeks to pull together?

Can you explain the motivation/rationale that has brought about this decision - just another huge disappointment in the whole saga of Cumbria's poor adult social care services and wellbeing of the infirm and of their carers in the community. We have avoided being a burden on the public purse and on resources in the community at our expense - financially, physically and emotionally. Please help us on this one.

Look forward to hearing from you soonest thank you.

-------- Forwarded Message --------

Subject:RE: SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION - What is being done NOW -the Dementia Challenge

Date: Thu, 22 Sep 2016 14:22:32 +0000

From: Cox, Colin <Colin.Cox@cumbria.gov.uk>

To: , Smith, Brenda <Brenda.Smith@cumbria.gov.uk>

Hello

I have just discussed this with Brenda, who is now back from leave. She's keen to follow this up personally so will be responding to you directly.

Brenda – the full email trail can be found below for background.

Colin

Colin Cox

Assistant Director, Public Health and Communities/Director of Public Health

Cumbria County Council

From:
Sent: 19 September 2016 16:58
To: Cox, Colin; Smith, Brenda
Subject: Re: SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION - What is being done NOW -the Dementia Challenge

Good afternoon Colin and Brenda

I refer to our exchange of emails (initially starting from our email to Brenda Smith on 31st August). And thank you again Colin for your responses as deputy to Brenda (wherein you explained what you hope will happen going forward etc etc).

We would just like to chase up the questions put to you in the small email reply to you of last week please about things that can be done now (reference to the well-run care home in Alston - Grisedale Croft) and look forward to hearing from you soonest please (as our search for a short break bed is still unsuccessful and exhausting in itself).

(- particulalry in light of obviously like-minded people across Cumbria who are unfortunately motivated to write to the CW Herald - eg in last Saturday's Herald "Case for more care homes is overwhelming".

- and particularly in light of the article on the front page of last Saturday's Herald about your recommendation now for the actual closure of the Edenside care home in Appleby)

Thank you

-------- Forwarded Message --------

Subject: Re: SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION

Date: Mon, 12 Sep 2016 17:49:32 +0100

From:

To: Cox, Colin <Colin.Cox@cumbria.gov.uk>

CC: Kym.Graham@cumbria.NECSU.nhs.uk

Hello Colin

Thank you for your response to my original email to Brenda Smith on 31st August. It is more than appreciated that you have provided a lengthy reply and thank you for detailing what you aim to do in the future - however long-term this means.

Can we just ask what local services are being improved now? Ie any plans for example to upgrade Grisedale Croft care home in Alston to enable local vulnerable people with severe dementia and/or physical frailty to go there for short breaks - ie to simply provide a short break room large enough for a

wheelchair to access it! (other larger rooms exist there). And to at least provide care for those with severe dementia too? Is this too much to ask? We asked this question years ago and as previously said nothing changes - isn't the aforementioned for example, in the huge scheme of things to do with this dementia challenge, quite an easy fix? Is anyone motivated to do something urgently now to help people (as we asked a couple of years ago)?

Look forward to hearing from you.

On 12-Sep-16 5:13 PM, Cox, Colin wrote:

Hello

Thank you for your email and for describing the challenges you face as a carer. Carers such as yourselves do an enormously important job, and I recognise how crucial it is for you to get a break from it from time to time. I am therefore sorry to hear that you are finding it increasingly difficult to identify short break provision in your area.

Health and social care services are currently facing unprecedented challenges. The population is getting older, with increasing need for services, at a time when budgets are reducing. A number of residential care homes do not meet the necessary standards for people with dementia or high levels of physical frailty. In addition, health and care providers are facing challenges in recruiting skilled staff. All these factors can reduce the availability of residential beds for short breaks, and I acknowledge that services are stretched at the moment.

Addressing these challenges will require significant changes to the whole of our care services. This will include:

Preventing people from needing care services, or reducing the level of support they require, enabling them to be supported in their own home where possible;

1. Significantly increasing the provision of Extra Care Housing schemes, again enabling many people to live more independently than they would in a residential setting;
2. Significantly improving residential and nursing care facilities in the County to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of people with dementia and high levels of frailty.

These three things are all important in increasing the availability of respite care. Keeping people out of permanent residential care frees up beds that can then be available for short breaks; and improving facilities means that there will be more appropriate beds available.

We are currently planning for this within Cumbria County Council's own services, and are working with the nursing homes across Cumbria to explore innovative solutions to their environment and recruitment challenges and to encourage them to develop additional capacity for people with dementia and complex needs.

We work very closely with NHS partners, including the Success Regime, to take forward these plans. However the Council is not responsible for proposals on the future of community hospitals so at this stage I cannot comment directly on these.

Short breaks are of course only one part of the support that carers need. Carers' assessments – which are now required by law, and have to be funded by the Council – are in Cumbria mostly carried out by voluntary organisations not social workers. A new national carers' strategy is expected by the end of the year, following which we will be updating our local plans to ensure that we are doing all we can to meet the needs of carers in Cumbria.

I hope this goes some way to answering your questions and to assuring you that the County Council remains committed to supporting carers in the essential role that you play.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Cox

Assistant Director, Public Health and Communities/Director of Public Health

Cumbria County Council

From:
Sent: 05 September 2016 17:15
To: Cox, Colin
Subject: Re: SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION

Thanks Colin for your speedy acknowledgement and for your assistance and time on this one - more than appreciated.

Look forward to hearing from you in due course.

On 05-Sep-16 5:05 PM, Cox, Colin wrote:

Hello

Thanks for your email. As Jenny has said I am deputising for Brenda this week while she is on leave. This reply is just to acknowledge receipt of your email and to let you know that I am following up your queries with colleagues. I will endeavour to get you a fuller response by the end of the week.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Cox

Director of Public Health

Cumbria County Council

From:

Sent: 05 September 2016 16:33
To: Cox, Colin
Subject: Fwd: SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION

Good afternoon Mr Cox

Sorry to bother you but I am forwarding you an email sent to Brenda Smith last week, to which there has been no acknowledgement nor any out of office automated reply. Having telephoned Brenda's office this afternoon, Jenny (temporary secretary) advised that Brenda is actually on holiday. I asked her to check to see if my email of last Wednesday had been received and Jenny confirmed it had. Because of the lack of a response/basic acknowledgement, I asked who was Brenda's deputy and Jenny informed me it was your goodself. Can you enlighten us please on any of the points raised within my email. Many thanks and look forward to hearing from you.

-------- Forwarded Message --------

Subject:SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION

Date: Wed, 31 Aug 2016 20:27:13 +0100

From:

To: Brenda.smith@cumbria.gov.uk

CC: rory@rorystewart.co.uk

Dear Ms Smith

RE: ADULT SOCIAL CARE - THE ONGOING CHALLENGE

It is with regret that I write to you regarding the utter lack of services for the elderly - particularly severe dementia elderly people who live with their hard-pushed but well-meaning relatives/carers in the community - and the continued lack over the years of any intelligent long-term strategy to address the appalling lack of care/nursing homes/beds in Cumbria for permanent residents - and it is impossible now to even find appropriate short break beds for the most vulnerable people providing essential breaks for their 'on their knees' relatives who look after them.

1. Years have gone by when we first flagged this situation up with Rory Stewart and Beth Furneaux at the time. Beth's response to our email then was at best limp and all the money at that time budgeted for, for example, special 'Carers Assessments' should have been spent in a far more practical way. Instead it just gave stressed out Social Workers more paperwork to complete and simply to 'signpost' the majority of carers to voluntary organisations which most could do for themselves anyway. What is being done now to actually spend money more wisely and create proper and meaningful services where it matters - near where people live? - particularly now that Council Tax payers are paying extra on top of the norm towards Adult Social Care funding?

2. On 5th July 2016 we believe you created a document for the Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Board regarding social care transformation plans for north and south Cumbria. What does this transformation actually involve? Will it actually impact on people's lives and provide some tangible service - local to people. I say this in a time of the terribly entitled "Success Regime" which is actually taking beds away from local people - beds where elderly people have palliative assistance - where currently, when ill, they are cared for or where they die close to their home and the people they love. Why close these hospitals down

when THERE IS SO FEW NURSING/CARE HOMES IN CUMBRIA? This is a traversity - how do you account for this?

3. You State "1.5 The primary intentions of the BCF are as follows. · To develop preventative services that enable people to live independently in their own communities for as long as possible (BUT WHAT SERVICES WILL SUPPPORT THIS AS WELL AS SUPPORTING EXHAUSTED CARERS OTHER THAN DISTRICT NURSES POPPING IN TO DO THEIR NURSING JOBS?). · To better support people with health and social care needs in their communities and their own homes (BUT WHAT SERVICES WILL SUPPORT THIS AND THEIR CARERS). · To integrate commissioning and the delivery of care in Cumbria to ensure that services are 'joined up' and easy for people to navigate (HOW WILL THIS PROVIDE A BREAK FOR EXHAUSTED CARERS?). · To reduce unnecessary reliance on high-level acute sector services wherever possible (BUT HOW WILL THIS PROVIDE A BREAK FOR CARERS?). · To make the system of health and social care services more efficient and financially viable."

4. By now you will understand we are carers (24/7 to a bedbound mum with very severe dementia etc etc -eg feeding her takes at least half an hour - never mind the rest, hoisting toileting, cleaning etc etc). We try our best to keep this lovely lady safe and well 24 hours a day but we and many people like us need our breaks. It is getting harder not easier to find these short breaks. We have a local authority care home in Alston but for years it has needed an upgrade (as mentioned to Beth Furneaux) and still nothing has happened seemingly and so anyone who has severe dementia cannot go there and indeed although they have a short break room, evidently it is so small it cannot accommodate anyone in a wheelchair. I believe this has been the case for a number of years now and continues to this day. What is being done to address such things and make life better for everyone in Cumbria - to provide them with decent local services? Hopefully something is now being planned. Is it?

Thank you so much for your time and hope to hear from you at your convenience.

From:
Sent: 08 August 2026 14:53
To: chief.executive@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk; Cath Whalley <cath.whalley@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk>; Phipps, Nikkie <Nikkie.Phipps@cumbria.gov.uk>; ALLEN, Sam (NHS NORTH EAST AND NORTH CUMBRIA ICB - 00P) <s.allen24@nhs.net>; MITCHESON, Rachel (NHS NORTH EAST AND NORTH CUMBRIA ICB - 00P) <r.mitcheson@nhs.net>; Patricia Bell <patricia.bell@eden.gov.uk>; Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Cc: markus.campbellsavours.mp@parliament.uk; coopery@parliament.uk
Subject: CREATION OF INCLUSIVE INTEGRATED CARE BED FACILITY IN ALSTON, CUMBRIA - BORNE OUT OF PROPOSED CLOSURE OF GRISEDALE CROFT CARE HOME BY WESTMORLAND AND FURNESS COUNCIL

Dear Recipients

There is a further serious need to write to you. I refer to the possibility of hopefully a new look care bed facility being created in Alston, Cumbria - borne out of Westmorland and Furness Council's proposed closure of Grisedale Croft care home (which has brought focus on how this region has been deprived of basic essential bed care services for years - for our most vulnerable residents with complex needs).

I refer to both the efforts (of the local NHS ICB and Westmorland Furness Council) to improve the health and welfare of all residents in all our communities, and the importance attached, of course, to people in hospital being timeously discharged home – but who linger in hospital beds due to a variety of social care reasons now allowing them to be discharged. This latter issue has been an eternal problem and is an acute problem now – so much so that the Government/NHS has (for years now) created the INTEGRATED CARE MODEL – forcing/mandating NHS bodies and Local Authorities to collaborate going forward to primarily it seems address the problems re discharge – and to create also a foundation for health and wellness in communities to prevent hospital admissions in the first place.

After more research and further understanding (and from my former working background in social care – not Cumbria), it is clear to me that, of course, everything you do regarding the above is admirable. **However** – and this is a huge however – I have to report that having read much relevant material, including funding pathways and all the aims you want to reach, that there is sadly and neglectfully a huge missing piece of the jigsaw in this whole scenario of social care and preventative hospital admissions (within Cumbria), which is never written about or mentioned or readily referred to either – in this region.....

Both Westmorland & Furness and the NHS ICB/HWB seem to basically ignore the huge work that non-paid carers do in the community – either family members or friends caring (many 24/7) for their elderly loved ones. It is felt therefore that these people are **INVISIBLE SERVICE USERS** who suffer with severe dementia or other complex conditions – and their carers/relatives or friends are equally INVISIBLE (some giving up their jobs to care for their loved ones 24/7) - regardless of paper exercise carers' assessments. No report nor minutes of meetings seem to refer to any such people and, yet, these carers are absolutely key at preventing elderly vulnerable people from being another hospital statistic. So respite care beds should always be factored in as a basic service to provide carers with an essential PLANNED break from their caring role of course (and it is a win/win for LAs and ICBs also).

Your funding pathways (eg the Better Care Fund etc) need to reflect this essential respite care bed provision. Your reports and aims, however, are very much INTERMEDIATE CARE-CENTRIC – naturally wanting more speedily hospital discharges – and all the pathways and discussions, and funding seems to be directed to this one aim - with "intermediate care beds in the community being more actively sought now" but no mention of any other reasons for care beds in the community? Therefore, Westmorland and Furness Council need to be far more aware of the INVISIBLE NEEDS in their communities and prioritise and include for example this essential respite care bed provision, particularly in a large and remote region as Alston Moor of course.

Not only is there a need for respite care beds, but the most vulnerable people in our communities, with dementia/complex needs, also require - MORE THAN ANYONE - access also to:

a) Permanent care beds

b) Emergency short break beds, and

c) Palliative care beds (this latter situation, sadly and particularly painfully, arising because of the closure in 2018 of our local Alston hospital)

d) of course, the more obvious need as you discuss mostly, for community intermediate care/step-down beds too.

The important point here please is that is it no use planning a new care bed facility which continues to EXCLUDES service users who have severe dementia or other complex needs - that not only would be nonsense but also damning (these people and their carers have suffered enough for years in this region).

If you do not provide for this type of service user, then the horrendous situation endured in this region for too many years now, would remain – that carers of these complex needs people will have to continue, torturously, to try and find respite beds or indeed permanent care beds or indeed palliative care beds far away in other counties (which frequently ends in failure - as pointed our previously there are so few private care homes either in Cumbria). This CANNOT, morally or lawfully, be allowed to continue – this has to change. So whilst both the LA here and the local NHS ICB at last get together to create (speedily hopefully) the essential multi-use care bed facility here in Alston, I believe the above issue about complex needs vulnerable people cannot be overstated. It has to be pointed out to you very clearly indeed.

The failure in providing care beds in the community for the most vulnerable service users with complex needs cannot continue.

So, please hear what I am trying to say. YOU MUST INCLUDE complex needs/dementia service users when you are planning your care bed facility here in Alston or anywhere in Cumbria for that matter. Failure to do this is not an option for any responsible local authority or any responsible ICB going forward.

Thank you for your time

Kind regards

-----Original Message-----
From:
Sent: 22 August 2026 21:33
To: Phipps, Nikkie <Nikkie.Phipps@cumbria.gov.uk>; Care Consultation <care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Cc: MITCHESON, Rachel (NHS NORTH EAST AND NORTH CUMBRIA ICB - 00P) <r.mitcheson@nhs.net>
Subject: OPTION 2 - REFURBISHMENT OF GRISEDALE CROFT - DOCUMENT OF 21 Aug 26

Hello Nikkie and Consultation Team (Grisedale Croft)

It was so very good to have that meeting with you Nikkie on Grisedale Croft in Grisedale Croft yesterday. Thank you so much for allowing this to happen and it was so very good of Rachel Mitcheson to take time out of her busy schedule to also attend.

I refer to the single page document which I had quickly written that day and handed to you during that meeting, which was a request from me that Westmorland & Furness council please consider Option 2 (of your five
options) - to refurbish Grisedale Croft. I highlighted one of the main reasons for this - which is due to

there being so few private care homes that you can turn to, to commission care beds for various reasons for
assessed service users in need. I have now found that there is
actually ONLY ONE NURSING HOME in the whole Eden District, and this is worse than I had initially thought - which has a very serious effect on people with complex needs (and their carers) when trying to find the right care bed of course. It truly is, sadly, a Care Home Desert in this region - particularly for this category of service user (who need care the most).

You kindly said at the meeting that you would include this 21 August small document into the consultation, for which I am extremely grateful. I attach the main narrative of that document/my Option 2 request so that you have it electronically.

Could I ask that your Consultation Team send a quick email back to me confirming receipt of same please.

Thank you once again.

Kind regards

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From:
Sent: 22 August 2026 21:33
To: Phipps, Nikkie<Nikkie.Phipps@cumbria.gov.uk>; Care Consultation<care.consultation@cumbria.gov.uk>
Cc: MITCHESON, Rachel (NHS NORTH EAST AND NORTH CUMBRIA ICB - 00P)<r.mitcheson@nhs.net>
Subject: OPTION 2 - REFURBISHMENT OF GRISEDALE CROFT - DOCUMENT OF 21 Aug 26

OPTION 2: REFURBISHMENT OF GRISEDALE CROFT , ALSTON - Care Home Desert

Clearly this region needs this good (and rare) care bed facility to remain but it needs an enhanced service (to also include care beds for most vulnerable people with complex needs) and one which is properly integrated with the needs of the NHS too – with all pathways clearly established in order that it provides the right care in the right place at the right time. This building can do that given the right **refurbishment** and with the services and their pathways properly defined. So the low occupancy situation which exists now is sadly a one created out of suppressed demand. Frustratingly, this public asset has been allowed to wither and the effect on the communities both in the Alston Moor region and other communities beyond its boundaries, has been painful.

So with appropriate changes and investment this care home could have been much fuller – and it actually should have been much fuller. W&F has a need to retain this care bed facility because Cumbria is a CARE HOME DESERT – you have so few owned care homes and the number of private care homes in the W&F area is so low that this has a very serious effect. Apart from the handful of care homes W&F own, you have only 33 OTHERS which you can turn to in order to commission the odd care bed (W&F admit this in your own report – your ADULT SOCIAL CARE MARKET POSITION STATEMENT 25-27. This is a desperate situation – where the acute lack of care beds makes you ALREADY UNABLE TO easily commission beds so badly needed. In such a climate as this, how can a responsible LA consider the closure, or reduction, of this 13 bed facility. W&F has also an above average aging population as you know too well. Obviously, if there IS a reduction in care beds or the loss of them here, this will result in far less care bed capacity in your whole region – giving you EVEN LESS SCOPE TO COMMISSION CARE BEDS going forward - causing more stress and pain to communities who have endured enough of this over the years – particularly in this region (having to find care beds far distant from the Alston Moor region and hardly ever in Cumbria).

Therefore you must seriously consider OPTION 2 of refurbishing GC please; you must enhance its services to include the more complex needs services users; you must access the necessary funding streams which the Government is now boosting to aid the costs of exactly what is needed here -

'updating services and facilities closer to home'. Your focus on GC with this consultation could not have been timed better. The Govn has set out clearly that health and social care facilities must move from hospital to the community (and an example of their funding boosting was announced in The House of Commons last month by the Minister for Secondary Care – Karin Smyth). You have a duty and a great opportunity to do the right thing here and **refurbish** this GOOD CARE HOME. There is a chance if you do all this, that GC will become the GOLD STANDARD of integrated community care bed facilities – the envy of other regions. **Please pursue this refurbishment** – and this will be better for the people you serve, better for W&F and better also of course for the NHS'.

(21 August 2026)
