Position statement

From Quarriers,
Sense Scotland,
Shared Care Scotland

The Vision

Our vision is to establish a sustainable, innovative, and diverse “marketplace” of short breaks provision in Scotland.

We want to ensure that individuals and their families have easy access to a range of high-quality short break opportunities that promote good health and well-being, and that cater to their unique needs, preferences, and desired outcomes.

To achieve our vision, we recognise the need to work collaboratively and develop effective strategies that can create the right conditions for a diverse range of high-quality short break services to flourish.

Context & Challenges

We know that many carers and those they care for face significant barriers that limit their ability to participate in social, leisure and other life-affirming activities, which can lead to extreme social isolation, poor physical and mental health, and reduced quality of life.

Access to regular and meaningful breaks, as part of a comprehensive care support package, is therefore crucial to promoting health, happiness and well-being, and to sustaining caring relationships.

However, delivering personalised breaks to a diverse population is becoming increasingly challenging for many short break providers due to the rising demand for care, increasing costs, recruitment difficulties, and inflexible regulatory requirements, set against a backdrop of decreasing public budgets. The trend away from local commissioning towards individual spot purchasing of services also presents challenges, posing a serious risk to the viability of services, as does the frequently inadequate funding attached to individual support plans.

To ensure everyone can access the support they need, we believe there is an urgent need to actively work on strategies that will help create the conditions that will support and sustain an improving range of short breaks provision. Without proactive efforts, we believe there is a serious risk to the future availability and quality of services.

We fear the increased use of individual purchasing and further budget reductions will lead to fewer choices for many carers, especially in areas where the market is weak such as remote or rural locations. Additionally, individuals caring for those with more complex needs may face challenges as the higher costs associated with providing more specialist respite care may render it impossible for providers to step in. This will result in carers being unable to access the breaks they need or settling for inadequate services or support

This will require proactive measures that can support and sustain an expanding range of short breaks provision that will enable all carers and the people they care for to enjoy the breaks that work best for them, regardless of where they live or the complexity of their needs.



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that does not meet their specific needs, ultimately affecting the quality of care provided and the well-being of carers and those they care for.

Therefore, we believe immediate action is necessary from all stakeholders, but crucially the Scottish Government, commissioners and providers, to ensure a sustainable, innovative, and diverse marketplace of short breaks provision. This will ensure that carers and those they care for have access to the support they need, regardless of their location or the complexity of their needs, while also promoting high-quality short breaks provision that focuses on personalised outcomes.

> **We believe immediate action is necessary from all stakeholders.**

Recommendations

Short breaks forum

The Scottish Government, **Health and Social Care Partnerships**, and **Providers** should convene a national short breaks forum.

The purpose of this forum is to review current availability and sustainability of short breaks provision and to develop effective strategies to address the burgeoning demand and high levels of unmet need. The Short Breaks Landscape Review by Healthcare Improvement Scotland will serve as a valuable starting point for this undertaking.

The forum should also, as a matter of urgency, investigate current commissioning practices and how these can be reformed to prevent the transfer of risk onto short break providers. Current practice is rapidly undermining the long-term sustainability of services, which poses a significant risk to the government's goal of enhancing carers' access to breaks from caring through a new legal right.

Government collaboration with third sector carer organisations

The Scottish Government and **Health and Social Care Partnerships** should collaborate with third sector carer organisations to explore additional measures to raise carers' awareness of the support available to have a break from caring, and their entitlements in this regard.

Furthermore, measures should be identified that will help address the obstacles that contribute to the frequently stressful experience reported by carers when seeking help for a break - the lack of information, intrusive assessments or having to navigate complex systems, for example.

Assist development of short break brokerage services

The Scottish Government, **Health and Social Care Partnerships** and **Providers** should actively encourage and assist with the development of short break brokerage services. These services will enable and empower carers to have greater control and flexibility when choosing appropriate short break options.

Moreover, the knowledge and expertise possessed by local brokerage teams could play a crucial role in guiding the expansion and improvement of short breaks provision ensuring that it caters to the needs and preferences of both carers and those they care for.

(continued overleaf)

Third sector collaboration with Care Inspectorate

Quarriers, **Sense Scotland** and **Shared Care Scotland** should collaborate with the **Care Inspectorate** to identify and address regulatory barriers that hinder service innovation. The existing inflexibility in regulations and registration processes can impede providers from exploring and implementing new, potentially more sustainable and responsive models of short breaks provision.

Address staffing crisis

The Scottish Government should urgently address the staffing crisis in social care by providing the funding to raise pay to a minimum of £12 per hour – across both adult and children's services.

Such a measure would help attract and retain qualified and dedicated professionals in the field, ensuring that essential care and support are provided to individuals of all ages.

> **The existing inflexibility in regulations and registration processes can impede providers.**





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Sense Scotland is a registered Scottish charity No. SC022097.
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