

Scottish Government consultation on the National Care Service

Briefing paper for unpaid carers

[The independent review of adult social care \(Feeley report\)](#) was published in February 2021 and set out a bold and ambitious vision that has the potential to transform the lives of people with social care needs and unpaid carers.

Many unpaid carers contributed to the Feeley report by sharing their experiences and views about the current social care system, what its strengths are and what needs to be reformed. They were clear that the whole system needs to change, from the way we view social care support, to the way it is funded, organised and delivered. Alongside this there needs to be specific measures to support unpaid carers, to sustain them in their caring role and ensure they have a fulfilling life outside of caring. As the review recognised, without support unpaid carers cannot access their basic human rights.

A central recommendation of the Feeley report was the establishment of a National Care Service to establish a framework of principles and standards and to oversee adult social care. On the 9th August the Scottish Government published their consultation on the National Care Service which sets out their initial proposals for the implementation of the Feeley report. This consultation is open until the 2nd of November.

This paper summarises the Scottish Government proposals which are most relevant to carers and explains how you can take part in the consultation to have your views heard.

What does the Scottish Government consultation set out to do?

The consultation is asking for people's views on the government's proposals to improve the way social care is delivered in Scotland. In particular it focusses on the areas that will need new laws to be put in place, including the legislation that would be needed to set up a National Care Service. The Government's intention is to use the findings from this consultation in the development of a Bill (new law) to be introduced to parliament in the Summer of 2022. It is likely to take around one year for parliament to scrutinise and pass the Bill.

What does the consultation cover?

In this briefing paper we have identified the parts of the consultation paper which we think are most relevant to carers. Below is a summary of the key areas. [The full consultation paper](#) also includes information on areas such as the regulation of services, using data to support planning and residential care charges.

Improving care for people

The overriding aim of reforming social care is to improve the lives of people with care needs and unpaid carers by improving care for people. The Feeley report talked about the need for a human rights approach in the delivery of social care, with a new focus on people's rights and capabilities.

The Scottish Government in setting out their proposals have described their approach as 'Getting it Right for Everyone'. The consultation sets out a proposed improvement programme through the National Care Service and suggests there should be a single approach to support planning, with a focus on prevention and giving people the support they need to enable them to lead a full life.

But the key element for carers are the proposals around delivering a right to respite. (Respite is also known as short breaks and breaks from caring). The Right to Respite was a recommendation in the Feeley report and here the Scottish Government sets out a range of options for developing and implementing this right. [More information on the right to respite proposals can be found on our Webpage here](#)

National Care Service

In this section the government sets out its proposals for the establishment of a National Care Service. This would operate as a new body to oversee social care, similar to how the National Health Service oversees health, enabling social care to have a more equal footing with health care.

As part of this proposed new structure, responsibilities would shift from local authorities to national government, with a new Minister being appointed to oversee social care. Community Health and Social Care Boards would be formed and would be directly funded by national government. They would be responsible for delivering social care at a local level. The Government also proposes to include children's services in the new structures, so they would have parity with adult social care services. [More information on the National Care Service can be found on our Webpage here](#)

Commissioning of services

Commissioning is supposed to help with the planning and development of services by identifying the needs of people who use social care support and then setting out a plan to meet those needs. The Feeley report recognised that the current system for commissioning services is driven by price and competition, rather than by quality and best outcomes for people. It therefore gets in the way of the development of quality, accessible social care services and needs a radical overhaul.

The Scottish Government proposes that The National Care Service should be responsible for developing and overseeing a structure of Standards and Processes for Ethical Commissioning and that Community Health and Social Care Boards should to be responsible for local commissioning and the management of contracts

Valuing people who work in social care

The Feeley report strongly emphasised that the people who work in the social care sector often do not enjoy good pay and conditions and while there are many very dedicated and experienced people working in the sector, there are big issues with recruiting and retaining staff because of this.

The Scottish Government proposes that a Fair Work Accreditation Scheme should be developed to encourage employers to improve the terms and conditions of the social care workforce. They suggest the National Care Service should establish a national forum with workforce representation to advise it on workforce priorities, terms and conditions and collective bargaining

Further Information on the issues that matter to you

We have developed a range of briefing papers providing more detail on the issues that we think matter most to carers. [You can access the briefing papers here](#) They include further information on the following areas:

- A Right to Respite for carers
- More on the National Care Service
- Young carers and how this affects them

How will this be paid for?

Like the Feeley report, the consultation paper doesn't set out any alternative proposals for funding the social care system in the future, such as through increased taxation. However it states that the Government has committed to increase investment in social care by 25%¹, which equates to approximately £800million².

It then says that 'all proposals will be assessed for value for money, to make sure the maximum impact is achieved from that investment. But in doing so we will look at the overall benefits of improving people's experience of care and the outcomes they achieve, as well as the direct costs or savings of providing that care'

¹ The figure of 25% was included in the Scottish Government consultation paper

² This figure was included in the SNP manifesto

How can you get involved?

The consultation paper is 137 pages long and includes 95 questions. You can read it and [respond directly to the consultation here](#). However we understand that most carers won't have the time to do this and not all of the questions will feel relevant to you.

The National Carer Organisations have planned events where you will have the opportunity to find out more about the Government's proposals and to make your views known. [You can register for events here](#)

We will also be asking for your views on our social media platforms over the coming weeks. If you are interested in participating in our online polls, [you can follow us here](#). This is a good way to have your say if you can only give a few minutes of your time.

About the National Carer Organisations

The National Carer Organisations are Carers Scotland, Carers Trust Scotland, the Coalition of Carers in Scotland, MECOPP, Shared Care Scotland, and the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance.

Together we have a shared vision that all Scotland's unpaid carers will feel valued, included and supported as equal partners in the provision of care. The NCOs aim to achieve this through the representation of unpaid carers and giving them a voice at a national level.

We believe we can deliver more for unpaid carers by working together to share our knowledge and experience, and by focusing our collective efforts on achieving improvements in areas of policy and practice that are of greatest concern to unpaid carers

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