



Scottish Government consultation on the National Care Service

Proposals for a National Care Service – A Briefing paper for unpaid carers

One of the most far-reaching and ambitious recommendations made by the Review of Adult Social Care (the Feeley review) was the development of a National Care Service (NCS). The Scottish Government supports this recommendation and has set out proposals on how they think the National Care Service should operate.

Unlike the current system in which local authorities have overall responsibility for social care, the Scottish Government proposes that they should assume responsibility for social care and set up a National Care Service which would report directly to Scottish Ministers. This would be similar to how the National Health Service operates, enabling social care to have a more equal footing with health care.

This does not mean that the National Care Service would deliver local services, instead they would set national standards for social care and oversee their delivery. Social care services would still be commissioned and delivered locally by new bodies called Community Health and Social Care Boards.

Why create a National Care Service? What does it aim to achieve?

In their consultation paper, the government has set out the reasons for establishing a National Care Service as:

- Achieving consistency across the country and driving national improvements
- Making sure health and social care work together at a strategic level and promote preventative care, reducing the need for hospital stays
- Setting clear national standards for the commissioning and delivery of services
- Bringing national oversight and accountability to ensure that people have access to the social care services they need.

What would the National Care Service be Responsible for?

The Feeley review's remit only covered adult social care. However, the Scottish Government has gone beyond this remit and has set out proposals for the National Care Service to be responsible for much more.

This would include having oversight and accountability for the following areas:

1. Adult social care and social work
2. Children's services; children's social work and social care services
3. Alcohol and drug services
4. Some mental health services
5. Community healthcare

In addition it is proposed that the National Care Service should play a role in setting standards to improve services, by being responsible for:

1. A programme of improvement.
2. Regulation and Inspection standards. This means that the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council would be part of National Care Service.
3. Commissioning of services and making sure there is good range of social care services to meet people's needs.
4. Workforce planning and development.
5. Training of social care and nursing staff.
6. A National Social Work Agency to sit within the National Care Service and provide national oversight and leadership for the profession.
7. Research and Data Collection.

As mentioned before, the National Care Service would provide oversight in each of these areas, rather than being responsible for direct provision. However, in relation to services for people whose needs are very complex or highly specialist the government is proposing that the National Care Service should also be responsible for the commissioning of these services.

Community Health and Social Care Boards – replacing Integration Joint Boards

The Feeley review recommended that Integration Joint Boards should be reformed and should be responsible for the local delivery of social care and implementing the standards set out by the National Care Service.

The Scottish Government has broadly agreed with this approach. It has proposed that Integration Joint Boards should become Community Health and Social Care Boards and that they will be the local delivery body for the National Care Service, funded directly by the Scottish Government. This means that they will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of all community health and social care services and support within their local area and making sure that national standards are met.

How would carers be involved in the new structures?

The government consultation states that *'The NCS will involve the people of Scotland in the design, development and delivery of support and services from the outset and on a continual basis'* But how is that likely to work in practice?

- Carers are already represented on the Social Covenant Steering Group which has been set up to guide the development of the National Care Service and it is hoped they will be part of the membership of the National Care Service Board once it is established.
- The government is in agreement with Feeley that carers should be equal members of the new Health and Social Care Boards with voting rights.
- In relation to the commissioning of services the government proposes that the National Care Service should set out the standards required for commissioning and that these should include involving key stakeholders in the co-production process, including unpaid carers.

How can you get involved in the consultation?

Unpaid carers are the cornerstone of social care, providing more care than the health and care workforce combined. It is essential that carers have their views heard and are fully involved in driving forward improvements to structures, systems and services.

1. You can join our engagement 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](#)
2. 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.

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