

National Care Service Consultation Report and Organisational Response

November 2021

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Background

On 01 September 2020, the First Minister announced that there would be an Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland. The Review was chaired by Derek Feeley; a former Scottish Government Director-General for Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland. An Advisory Panel of Scottish and international experts supported this.

The principal aim of the review was to recommend improvements to adult social care in Scotland, primarily in terms of the outcomes achieved by those who use services, their carers and families, and the experience of people who work in adult social care. The Independent Review concluded at the end of January 2021 and the findings were published on 03 February 2021.

The Independent Review recommended a National Care Service. This would mean that the Scottish Government would be responsible for adult social care and support. Following the conclusion of the Independent Review, the Scottish Government launched a national consultation on their proposals including:

- Creating a National Care Service to cover not only adult social care but also a comprehensive community health and social care service that supports people of all ages including unpaid carers.
- Creating Community Health and Social Care Boards, taking on the functions of Integration Joint Boards, but now accountable to the National Care Service.
- The creation of a National Care Record proposes to bring together the health and social care information that different providers hold about an individual.

Responses to the Scottish Government's proposals will help inform the proposed Bill to create a National Care Service. The Bill is expected to be introduced to Parliament in the summer of 2022 and the National Care Service is expected to be operational by the end of the Parliamentary term in 2026.

Lanarkshire Carers provide information, advice and support services to unpaid carers across North and South Lanarkshire local authority areas. In order to submit an organisational response to the Scottish Government's proposals, Lanarkshire Carers held an open consultation with our carers through a survey to seek the views of the proposed National Care Service of carers living in Lanarkshire, as well as with staff to gather their views and opinions, many of whom are carers themselves.

The demographics of carers registered with Lanarkshire Carers as of 31 March 2021:

- ▶ 10,668 carers known to Lanarkshire Carers (5,751 in North Lanarkshire, 4.917 in South Lanarkshire)
- ▶ 8,065 female, 2,595 male, 5 transgender and 3 who prefer not to say
- ▶ 479 carers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities including Pakistani, Polish, Chinese, Indian, African and Arab communities.

Age range:

18-25 years
26-50 years
51-74 years
75+ years
Not Specified
288 carers
4111 carers
4798 carers
1117 carers
135 carers

The survey was publicised through our electronic mailing list to anonymously gather carers' views. Carers were also contacted by members of staff to complete the survey via telephone. Our survey ran from 27 September 2021 - 15 October 2021 and received 77 responses from carers and 17 from staff, many of whom are also carers themselves. We look forward to the next stage of the development of the National Care Service and would welcome the opportunity for future engagement and involvement of carers in its development.

Results of Survey and Consultation Activity

Section 1 - Improving Care for People

Following consultation with carers and staff, Lanarkshire Carers support the Scottish Government's proposals to ensure that best practices in services are shared across Scotland, as we need to improve community health and social care support for those who rely on it, and for unpaid carers. There are national organisations that advise to make services better; however, this does not always mean all services in Scotland improve.

When carers and staff were asked if they thought that the National Care Service would help ensure that best practices in services are shared across Scotland, the majority agreed that there needed to be:

- Joined up communication and working between services and organisations
- High-quality standards adhered to by all
- Accountability
- That carers voices should be heard
- Equal funding between all services
- Better training of staff

Some carers who answered 'No' commented that it would:

- Need an individual tailored approach
- There are concerns regarding adequate funding and that it may not work at local and national levels
- It is too big a task for one body
- There can be a lack of trust in Government

Comments from Consultation Survey

Yes

"It seems like it would be a more joined-up approach with statutory organisations and third sector organisations."

"I think a National Care Service would ensure that high-quality standards of care are set across the board, and adhered to by all care services." "At the moment, services are very much a postcode lottery with different authorities giving different standards of care."

"It allows inspection of standards of care and delivery and allows areas to be addressed if improvements can be made to improve quality of care."

No

"Different services are needed in different areas so it's about tailoring to meet the needs locally."

"I don't think different organisations and departments will work together to help it succeed. My experience is that they protect their own services rather than work together. I found that in particular with social work and those responsible for dispatching patients from hospital."

"Just because it's a National Care Service doesn't guarantee that regulations will be interpreted to suit users locally."

When asked if any risks should be considered, participants highlighted:

- There are limited resources and funding
- More training for professionals is needed
- Decisions are made by those with a lack of knowledge or experience within social care settings
- Concern that people may slip through the net and not receive support that they require
- ► That it may diminish care standards and practices
- There is a concern around data protection and information handling

"Statutory organisations need to see the third sector organisations as their equal; otherwise this approach will struggle to work."

"Individuality may be lost. An overarching group may become too big and lose specific care for individual needs."

"The risks will be manifested in the perception that this centralised approach will remove the ability to react to localised pressures that may require particular responses that can only be determined by those bodies that have local community awareness."

Section 2 - Access to Care and Support

Lanarkshire Carers understands from conversations with carers and staff that access to social care can sometimes be complicated. Carers and staff tell us that there are different professionals and organisations to deal with and they often have to tell their stories repeatedly. We believe that care and support services should focus on giving

people the right level of support they need, whenever they need it, to enable them to lead a quality of life.

The majority of those who took part in the preparation of this response said that if they or the person that they cared for needed to access information, advice or support that they would most likely contact their G.P or another Health professional, and a voluntary sector organisation such as Lanarkshire Carers.

We know how important it is that there should be more services that prioritise early intervention and prevention, which people can access in the community to ensure that they do not reach a crisis point. We also know that assessment is based on local eligibility criteria, and people can only access support if their needs are critical or substantial. We believe that we need to ensure that everyone uses the same language instead of conversations filled with unfriendly jargon and acronyms.

Carers have told us it can be both physically and mentally exhausting repeating their stories to different parts of Health and Social Care and they would prefer one key person to coordinate the services they require. The person using the services and those who are caring for them should also be at the centre of decision-making. Our staff responses also reflected this view.

Lanarkshire Carers proactively develop partnerships to ensure the needs of carers are understood and addressed by working closely and collaboratively with local community and national organisations. Carers and staff who believed that partnership working will improve access to care and support said that:

- ► There needed to be more trained professionals involved
- A collaborative working partnership
- More shared information
- An emphasis on good communication
- Coordination of care and services by one key point of contact

Carers who felt that partnership working would not improve access to care and support believed that:

- More financial support would be needed
- ▶ It takes too long for care and support packages to be implemented

Yes

"If the local authority works with voluntary organisations in partnership, services will definitely improve."

"Less duplication. Not having to explain yourself over and over – it gets lost in translation and becomes frustrating meaning people tend not to engage until crisis point."

"At present local authorities decide what support and budget you receive. Every year it is a fight to retain a very meagre support package."

No

"Not without greatly increased financial support to employ additional staff."

"To some extent, it already exists but the outcomes often take too long to be implemented."

Section 3 - Right to Breaks from Caring

Since June 2020, it has been widely acknowledged that due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that there has been an increase in the number of unpaid carers in Scotland by around 53% (based on the data provided by Carers UK carers week report and the Scottish Health Survey 2012/2013). Carers Scotland estimates that there are now over 1 million unpaid carers in Scotland, a rise of 400,000 since 2015. Lanarkshire Carers has gathered substantial evidence about the importance of breaks from caring, and why they are a vital element of support for carers. We also know that caring roles can vary in nature and intensity.

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 requires the need for a break from caring to be considered as part of carers' wider rights to support to meet their eligible needs. However, we know that only a small number of carers receive statutory support for a break or respite from caring.

Lanarkshire Carers support the proposals to tailor the right to breaks from caring which will ensure equality of access and allow for a personalised package of support to be provided to carers. Carers support the plans to create a single, outcomesfocused approach to care and support.

Overwhelmingly we heard that carers should have the right to respite, with the majority agreeing that everyone should have the same support to take a break from caring and that this should be personalised to their individual needs as carers.

Lanarkshire Carers supports the three groups of options proposed by the Scottish Government in consideration to establishing a tailored right to breaks from caring, such as fairness, personalisation, transparency, and the value of preventative support. The majority of carers and staff told us that they would support a right to standard entitlements with a right to personalised entitlements as their second preference. Hybrid approaches were their least preferred option.

Section 4 - Using Data to Support Care

As an organisation that provides information, advice and support to carers, we know there is lots of information available about people getting care and support. This does not always mean that it is readily available or accessible by those receiving care and those that care for them. The information about an individual is often held in multiple places and different IT databases making it difficult for people providing care and support across health and social care to get up to date and accurate information and for it to be shared with appropriate partners.

We know that carers have to repeat their stories to different parts of health and social care due to a lack of information sharing between services. Lanarkshire Carers support plans to create a health and social care record, which can be accessed by those who provide support, and those receiving care.

The majority of carers told us that they thought that information about their health, care and support needs should be securely shared across the different services that

they use and interact with. Practitioners also agreed with this approach. Both groups suggested:

- This saves time & stress
- Maintains high standards across the board
- More up to date and relevant information can be shared
- Effective communication was paramount
- A high quality of service should be ensured

For those who disagreed:

- There appears to be a lack of trust with current IT systems
- ► There are security concerns

Yes

"It saves time, energy and reduces stress on both sides."

"I am all for this. I personally do not think it helps our mental health to revisit our caring situation and explain it over and over to everyone we come across. It should be detailed in one place and all the concerned people should have access to it."

"It can be distressing to have to explain to several different people. This can delay the correct help and support especially when things change. You do not always have contact with the right people, if it is the first time you require help, you do not know where to go."

No

"Until the Scottish Government improve their antiquated IT services, I would not trust any security."

"A bad relationship with one service may impact other services. ..."

Section 5 - Complaints and Putting Things Right

When things go wrong, people must know where and to whom they can voice their concerns. The procedures to set things right are not always clear. The policies and procedures for handling complaints can vary depending on locality, which can cause confusion.

We asked people to rank the most important changes that a new system of handling complaints would bring. The order of importance that the majority selected is reflected below:

- A Charter of rights and responsibilities that says what people can expect from the service
- ▶ Single point of access for feedback and complaints about all of the system
- Clear information about advocacy services
- The same model for handling complaints for all services
- Addressing complaints initially with the body the complaint is about
- Clear information about next steps if a complainant is not happy

A commissioner to protect the rights of people who receive care and support

Section 6 - Residential Care Charges

Currently, when someone requires or chooses to move into residential care, the local authority will carry out a financial assessment to determine how much they are expected to contribute towards their care home costs.

Most people have everyday costs to pay where they live such as mortgage payments or rent, property maintenance, food and utility bills. The Scottish Government proposals are looking at equality and parity regarding everyday costs between care home residents and those who receive care in their own homes.

These include:

- Rent
- Maintenance
- Furnishings
- Utilities
- Food costs
- Food preparation

- Equipment
- Leisure and entertainment
- Transport
- Laundry
- Cleaning

We received a mixed response from carers and staff regarding the Scottish Government's proposals regarding residential care charges.

Section 7 - National Care Service

There is no national responsibility for social care support as there is for health care. Health and Social Care partnerships work in conjunction with Health Boards and local authority care services to plan the health and social care needed. Whilst there are quality services in many places, this is not the same all over the country and this had led to inequity to, and inequality of, service provision.

Lanarkshire Carers and staff supports the Scottish Government's proposals for the National Care Service to have responsibility for planning services and setting standards. This includes improving services and delivering them accordingly.

When asked if the Scottish Government should be responsible for the delivery of social care, the majority of carers and staff suggested that there should be:

- Reliability of high-quality standards
- Accountability
- A consistent approach by one body
- ► The removal of barriers & disparities between services
- Sufficient funding put in place

Yes

"We need to have a consistent approach across Scotland and not have to move to an area with better systems in place."

"A postcode lottery could describe the current system, with each Council having their own interpretation of the various acts involving Health & Social Care, Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and Self-Directed Support."

No Preference

"Too many local authorities or private bodies are failing the needs of people in their care and profit comes first, not care."

"... There is not much hope of a national care service providing a better system than what already exists."

When asked if the proposed changes should be through the National Care Service, carers and staff told us their concerns included:

- Ensuring there is a baseline of care
- That there is consistency
- ▶ There is currently a lack of knowledge & understanding of those needing care
- A need for high standards across the board

Yes

"A national service would be able to provide consistently high-quality care and monitor services."

No

"I do not agree with another Quango being established. What guarantee is there that the professionals involved have any understanding of the care needs of others?"

Section 8 - Scope of the National Care Service

Lanarkshire Carers agree with the Scottish Government proposals to combine the different services that are planned to be included within the National Care Service, these were listed as:

- Children's services
- Healthcare
- Social work and social care
- Nursing
- Justice Social Work

- Prisons
- ► Alcohol and Drug Services
- Mental Health Services
- National Social Work Agency

When asked if all of the planned services should fall under the scope of the National Care Service, carers and staff told us that they agreed with these proposals and felt that it would have a positive impact on the running of services with only a small minority raising concerns regarding the delivery of the service. The main thoughts raised included:

- The National Care Service will be positive as there will be equality in support
- Budgets and finances should be considered
- Lack of confidence in the feasibility of delivery
- ► A central body overseeing all areas is seen as positive

Yes

"People in all of these settings should have the same care no matter their background or circumstances."

"To combine all agencies and have a national database would maybe stop some people falling through the gaps."

No

"I feel that these services are different in their delivery of care, each being a speciality in its own right."

"To include all these under a National Care Service would create an unworkable level of duplicated bureaucracy. Even if it were workable, where is the money to run it going to come from?"

When asked which parts of mental health care should be delivered in a National Care Service, carers and staff told us that they viewed all of the below services as of equal importance:

- Primary Mental Health Services (GP services)
- ► Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Community Mental Health Teams
- Crisis Services (Acute Mental Health Services)
- Mental Health Officers
- Mental Health Link Workers

Lanarkshire Carers agree with the proposals set out by the Scottish Government to delegate the appropriate elements of mental health services to the National Care Service. Those who agreed with these proposals thought that:

- All Mental Health sectors should be delivered in a National Care Service
- There is a need to ensure consistency of standards in all areas and a joint approach to working
- Mental Health is currently at crisis point
- A key contact would work best to direct Mental Health
- There needs to be early intervention

"We have a mental health crisis on our hands from all sectors of society."

"It would be better for networking and reaching out to communities."

"If all are operational under one umbrella, help & assistance will run efficiently."

"Mental Health has featured greatly during the Pandemic... This should have its own department with best practices being shared throughout Scotland."

Section 9 - Reformed Integration Joint Boards: Community Health and Social Care Boards

The Independent Review suggested that some of the current models regarding Integration Joint Boards (IJB's) were successful; however, it also noted that some areas needed to improve and there was not enough partnership working and long term planning in place. Most IJB's have members that can vote from the NHS and local authority; however, unpaid carers who also sit on the IJB currently do not have voting rights. Lanarkshire Carers support the proposals for IJBs to become Community Health and Social Care Boards (CHSCBs) and that they should be aligned with local authority boundaries. Carers and staff thought that the following local members should be included:

- Unpaid Carers
- Service Users
- Community representatives
- Primary health (GP/Social Work/NHS)
- Elected Members
- Representatives from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities
- Mental Health Professionals
- Third and Voluntary Sector representatives

"Unpaid Carers are essential. For too long our input has been ignored yet we are the unseen and unheard workforce that keeps social care afloat. Without unpaid carers and the voices of those we support then we may as well not bother with the changes."

"Carers including young carers. People with experience of dealing with different services. People who represent the different religions, cultures and sexual orientation within the local area."

"Representatives from all BAME communities and disadvantaged groups."

Section 10 - Planning and Buying Services

Lanarkshire Carers agree with proposals for the National Care Service to be responsible for structuring the standards and processes for collaborative commissioning and procurement. This was supported by those we consulted who noted that this would ensure the planning and buying of services are tailored to individual needs rather than focussing on costs. However, they also noted that any service provided within the National Care Service should meet an agreed set of high-quality standards. Furthermore, the proposals to ensure that complex and specialist services are managed by the National Care Service are welcomed.

Section 11 - Core Principles for Regulation and Scrutiny

The Scottish Government's proposal is for the following core principles to be implemented to ensure consistent and high standard of care and support:

- Make sure we support human rights-based care. This has a positive impact on the quality of health and social care services.
- Activity should be fair and targeted for those that need it. It should be based on research.
- ► The National Care Service should seek to review, update, and improve an organisation and across the care sector on a regular and ongoing basis.
- ➤ There should be a strong link between the rules for the workforce and inspecting the services they work in.
- Checking services should be done in partnership.
- ▶ Checking services is important to make sure staff are qualified and skilled.
- Checking services is key to making sure vulnerable people are safe.
- We aim to reduce inequalities with an emphasis on people.
- People should be involved in the development and delivery of checking services.
- Checking services should take account of the law, Scottish Government policy, standards, and codes of practice.

85 out of 92 respondents said they agreed with this list of principles.

Section 12 - Strengthening Regulation and Scrutiny of Care Services

Lanarkshire Carers agree that changes to the powers of the Care Inspectorate will ensure high standards are upheld. In our survey, we found that the majority of carers agreed with the proposals to strengthen the powers of the Care Inspectorate. We asked for any additional comments and below are some comments made by carers:

- Ensuring standards of all care & support services are maintained
- ► The accountability of the Care Inspectorate would be transparent
- ▶ Some reported experiences of poor standard or practice at present
- ▶ Reported lack of trust in the Care inspectorate was noted
- Care and support services should be regularly reviewed and inspected

"The power of the Care Inspectorate should be stronger to allow them to make decisions regarding complaints and misconduct."

"The services should be better scrutinised for better standards - the authorities should have more powers."

"Care and resources are unevenly distributed."

"National standards are important. People and organisations, public and private, need to be held accountable for the service they provide."

Section 13 - Care Service ("Market") Oversight Function

Lanarkshire Carers agree that giving the Care Inspectorate oversight of the care services across Scotland will help them to better understand the sector allowing strategic and financial planning. The majority of carers and staff who responded agreed that this would be beneficial. Further suggestions were:

- ► The Care Inspectorate should have first-hand knowledge and understanding of services they oversee and inspect
- There is a need for more partnership working
- ► Improved standards within the health and social care sector consistent levels of professionalism, qualifications and practice

Yes

"They should be people who have worked in the system, who understand the trials and tribulations of the area, people and most important the ones who need care and protection."

"The Care Inspectorate should be tasked with not only an oversight role but ensuring interagency cooperation."

Section 14 - Enhanced Powers for Regulating Care Workers and Professional Standards

Lanarkshire Carers support the Scottish Government's consideration to give the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) powers to address professional standards and the enhanced regulation of care workers. Survey responses identified that the following people should be registered with the SSSC:

- All involved in care
- Personal Assistants
- Health Care Workers
- Day Care of Adult Services Staff

"The entire workforce having direct work with residents/ people who require care to ensure that they meet a minimum standard (SSSC), otherwise they could lose their registration to be able to work in the sector. People's dignity and safety are paramount."

"All care workers should perform to the same high and rigorous standards irrespective of who their employers are. The individual in receipt of care has the right to expect that the caregiver is professionally trained."

"Health Care Assistants, Day Care of Adult Services Staff, Personal Assistants, Drivers (including Volunteers) who transport people under social care. All of their employers and supervisors should be registered with the SSSC."

Section 15 - Valuing People Who Work in Social Care: Fair Work

Scotland's health and social care workforce provide important support to people across Scotland every day. Lanarkshire Carers notes support for the proposals to allow the National Care Service to take action to make pay, working conditions, training and development better for social care workers. The overwhelming majority of carers and staff who completed the survey agreed that:

- ► There should be fairness & equality for all social care workers
- Staff are often underpaid and can feel undervalued
- Consistent and better terms and conditions required

► There should be fair working practices to ensure the retention of skilled and qualified professionals

Yes

"There should be fairness and equality across the board otherwise it produces an unbalanced unsatisfactory system."

"Would prevent qualified staff leaving and there being a shortage in some parts of the country."

No

"I think providing care is the most important issue here and pay/working conditions should be addressed by trade unions."

"I think the social care service is terrible and it needs to be broken down and brought up to date."

Section 16 - Personal Assistants

Lanarkshire Carers agree with the Scottish Government's proposal to register all personal assistants in one place so that they can be supported and receive the appropriate and necessary training to carry out their roles effectively. The majority of carers who responded agreed with these plans.

In our survey, carers and staff were further asked to indicate what other support might help personal assistants and people who want to employ them. The list below was ranked in order of importance by carers and staff with the first bullet point being the highest priority:

- All personal assistants would have the same job standards across Scotland
- ▶ Tell more people about the job of a social care personal assistant
- Ways to match employers with personal assistants who want work
- Jobs at different grades for personal assistants
- Recognise personal assistants as part of the social care workforce
- ► A free national phone line about self-directed support advice
- Enough support to make sure there are payroll services

The majority of carers and staff agreed that the most important element of support was for personal assistants to have the same standards across the whole country. The least important to them was ensuring that there was enough support to make sure there are payroll services.

Summary and Conclusion

Lanarkshire Carers was keen to respond to the National Care Service consultation. As well as conducting our own engagement with staff and carers, we have also participated in other local consultation activities through locality and partnership

groups. Lanarkshire Carers would like to extend their thanks to the carers and staff that contributed to this organisational response.

We look forward to the next stage of the National Care Service Consultation and welcome any updates as and when they occur.

Lanarkshire Carers welcomes any future carer engagements and are happy to be involved when these opportunities are announced.

Should you have any questions or queries please contact:

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