

# Transformational change: how the ALLIANCE can help

Supporting the change we all want to see requires us to think and act in new and sometimes challenging ways. We know that many local authorities and social work departments are already exploring different ways of working and the ALLIANCE, our members and partners have developed many initiatives to support this. Visit our website [www.alliance-scotland.org.uk](http://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk) or contact us on 0141 404 0231 or at [info@alliance-scotland.org.uk](mailto:info@alliance-scotland.org.uk) to find out more.

- The Health and Social Care Academy's **Five Provocations for the Future of Health and Social Care**<sup>11</sup> can provide context on how to achieve transformational change, placing importance on elements like leadership, power and humanity which are critical to any successful service change.
- Working alongside people who access services and unpaid carers to co-produce models, services and systems is essential to working in a person centred way. The ALLIANCE can support you to find new ways to engage with communities, to understand co-production and how to move to a personal outcomes approach. IRISS's **Pilotlight** programme resources<sup>12</sup> can also support SDS implementation using co-design and power sharing models.
- Redirecting resources and services towards early intervention and prevention in social care will help people self manage, live independently and avoid crises. The ALLIANCE can help work to promote and support **self management** in many different ways<sup>13</sup>.



- A Local Information System for Scotland (**ALISS**) helps people find and share information about local services and resources that support health and wellbeing.
- The ALLIANCE's **SDS programme** can support dialogue and test activity on how Self-directed Support can work effectively as part of an integrated approach to health and social care.
- The ALLIANCE has over 1,900 members, bringing together a large network of national and local third sector organisations, associates in the statutory and private sectors, and individuals. There are **many benefits to joining the ALLIANCE** and becoming a member of a dynamic, cross-sector community working to improve the lives of people who access health and social care services in Scotland.

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# About the ALLIANCE

The ALLIANCE is the national third sector intermediary for a range of health and social care organisations. The ALLIANCE has over 1,900 members including large, national support providers as well as small, local volunteer-led groups and people who are disabled, living with long term conditions or providing unpaid care.

Our vision is for a Scotland where people of all ages who are disabled or living with long term conditions, and unpaid carers, have a strong voice and enjoy their right to live well, as equal and active citizens, free from discrimination, with support and services that put them at the centre.



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# Social Work and Social Care in Scotland

## Working with people to achieve transformational change

Every year, local authority social work departments across Scotland organise, provide and fund a complex range of essential services to individuals, families and communities. This includes the provision of social care to over 200,000 people<sup>1</sup>. Good social care is vital to help mitigate inequalities and realise the rights of disabled people, people living

with long term conditions and unpaid carers. However, as recent reports and personal testimonies have highlighted, social care is struggling to sustain this vital role. The challenges confronting social work may seem huge, but working with people and the third sector can help achieve the transformational change that is so urgently needed.



**ALLIANCE**  
 HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE  
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 people at the centre

## What are the key issues facing social work and social care?

- Implementation of laws and policies that require new ways of working, like Health and Social Care Integration, Self-directed Support (SDS) and the new Carers Act.
- Significant financial difficulties due to reduced revenue spending and insufficient focus on long term financial planning.
- Challenges for workforce recruitment and retention, with low pay, antisocial hours, difficult working conditions and post-Brexit uncertainties.
- Concerns about demographic changes in Scottish society that are expected to lead to unprecedented levels of demand.

## How these issues affect people and families

- There is a stark gap between progressive legal and policy language on the one hand and people's experiences of implementation on the other (the **'implementation gap'**). For example, Inclusion Scotland has identified an "unacceptable contrast between the positive rhetoric of the National Strategy on Self-Directed Support and experience on the ground"<sup>2</sup>. The ALLIANCE's research on people's experiences of SDS supports this assertion<sup>3</sup>.
- Most local authorities have responded to their financial difficulties by concentrating social care services at people assessed as at critical and substantial risk. But this means much-needed resources aren't directed at **early intervention and prevention**. Because people don't get the best support at the right time, they are unable to live the lives they choose, experience worsening conditions and too often end up in crisis.
- When people don't meet the current tight eligibility criteria, often families and friends must step in to provide **unpaid care and support**, whether willing or not. Unpaid carers already provide most social care in Scotland, saving services an estimated £10.8 billion a year according to Audit Scotland<sup>4</sup>. But many unpaid carers – most of them women – are at breaking point and have their own unmet support requirements.
- Most people must make some financial contribution towards the cost of social care and many councils have increased charges for non-residential social care services as part of their regular income<sup>5</sup>. Already struggling with cuts to social security, this **pushes people even further into poverty**. Some people are discouraged from applying for social care in the first place because of charges<sup>6</sup>, which **increases the risk of harm**, further deterioration and potential crisis.
- The shortage of qualified and experienced staff directly affects **the quality and available of services** for people who access social care services and their families.
- Further uncertainty is looming due to **Brexit and its implications**, particularly for the social care workforce if no deal is secured in relation to freedom of movement. In some areas, social care is dependent on EU migration for

recruitment, particularly for specialist posts. Reducing the pool of available workers could lead to further pressure in meeting demand and possible increases in agency costs.

- Charging policies and rates for non-residential social care services differ considerably between local authorities around Scotland. This has created inequity between different regions and created a **postcode lottery** for people who access services. It also means people can't live where they choose or move easily between different local authorities, with confidence that they'll be able to acquire consistent support wherever they go (**'portable care'**)<sup>7</sup>.

Social care is a means to an end – it is supposed to help people live independently and participate equally in society. It is unfair for some people to have to pay more to enjoy the same rights and freedoms as others.



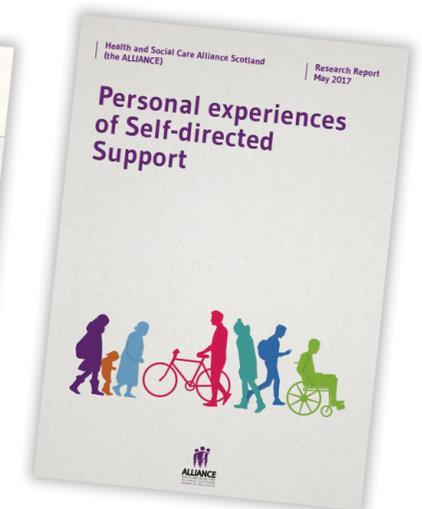
## Recommendations for the Scottish Government, Integration Joint Boards and Local Authorities

Audit Scotland<sup>8</sup>, the Shared Ambition for Social Care partners<sup>9</sup> and the ALLIANCE have made several crucial suggestions:

- Instigate frank and wide-ranging debates with communities about the long-term future for social work and social care, including what we should invest and disinvest in.
- Trust and work with people who access services and unpaid carers to explore and develop new models for funding, designing and delivering social care.
- Develop long-term strategies for those services that are organised, provided and funded by social work departments. Consideration must be taken of all the available resources across the piece and the proportion allocated to social care.
- Work together to make social care universally free, to ensure equality and independent living are fundamental rights enjoyed by everyone.

## ALLIANCE recommendations for Self-directed Support<sup>10</sup>

- Social work departments and social workers should prioritise direct discussions about SDS with people who access services and unpaid carers during any contact about reshaping support.
- Social work departments should introduce regular review processes for everyone in receipt of SDS.
- The Scottish Government and local authorities should substantially increase investment in and promotion of local advice and independent advocacy.
- Integration Joint Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships should instigate greater collaboration between health services and social care colleagues to promote integrated and preventative approaches through SDS.
- Social work departments and social workers must maximise efforts to increase the number of people accessing SDS and exercising more choice and control via Options 1, 2 and 4.



Social care is delivered in a complex and challenging context but there are many ways to help reduce inequalities and help realise the human rights of people who access social care and unpaid carers.