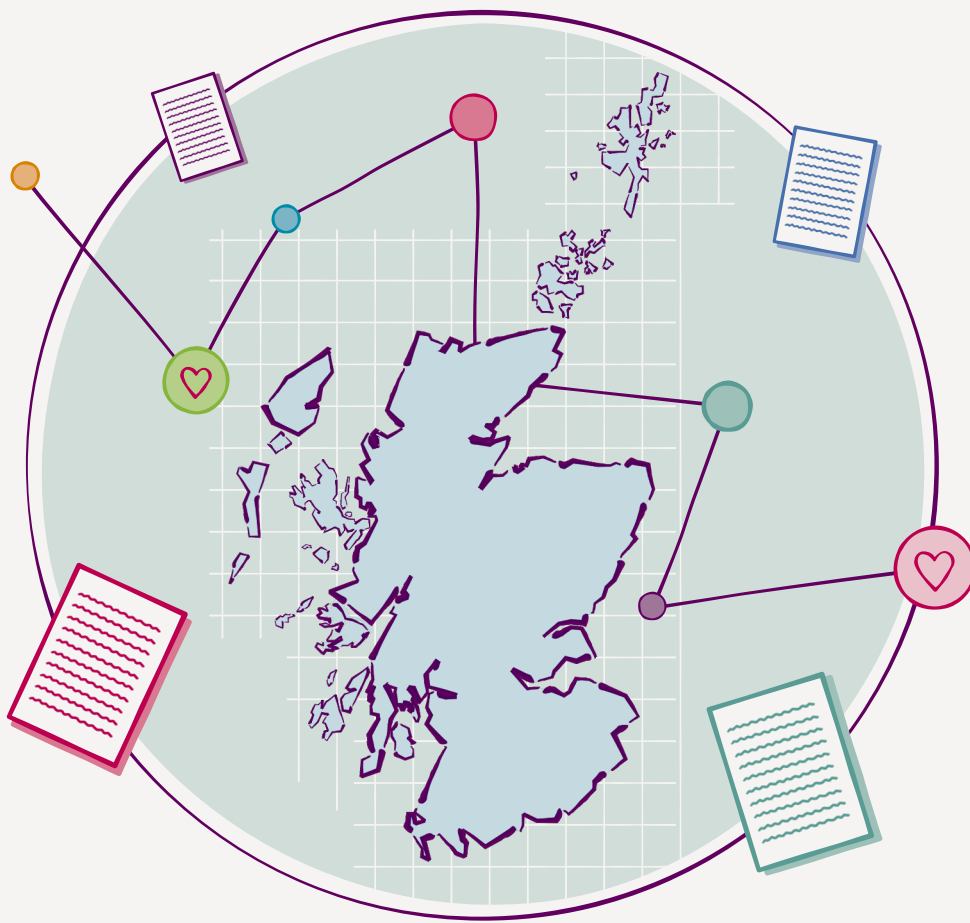


Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)

Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland

Meeting with the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care



21 June 2021

The Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland

Derek Feeley, with the support of a panel of independent experts, produced the [Independent Review of Adult Social Care](#) report making 53 recommendations to improve adult social care in Scotland.

The review took place from September 2020 to January 2021, with a broad remit from the Scottish Government to recommend improvements to adult social care in Scotland. Over five months, the review panel met with more than 1,000 people, held 128 meetings, 13 engagement events and received 228 written submissions.

This report captures a summary of the discussions from a meeting reflecting on the Independent Review of Adult Social Care held by the ALLIANCE on Monday 21 June 2021. Those who engaged with the review process and shared their experiences of accessing and receiving support, and offered suggestions for service improvement, were welcomed back to hear directly from the Scottish Government around their plans for the recommendations.

'I am committed to implementing the recommendations in the Independent Review of Adult Social Care and staying true to the spirit of that report. That means building a system that has human rights at its heart.'

Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care, Kevin Stewart MSP



Opening statement from Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care, Kevin Stewart MSP

During his opening statement Kevin Stewart MSP shared his sense of honour at being appointed Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care. He highlighted that the creation of this new role was one of the recommendations called for in the Independent Review of Adult Social Care, and a demonstration of the importance that the Scottish Government are placing on social care.

Kevin Stewart MSP thanked all those who contributed to the Independent Review, highlighting that the insight and experiences were without doubt an invaluable part of the process. Special thanks were given to the third sector for the invaluable support they have provided during the pandemic, acknowledging that through adversity we have found new ways of working, providing learning and an opportunity to build on, and hold on to, progress that has been made.

The Minister shared that building a social care system with human rights at its very heart will involve listening to people and delivering the care they want to enable them to live a happy and fulfilled life. He stressed the importance of social care, stating that if we get social care delivery right then people's lives can be transformed. He also outlined that unpaid carers can be better supported, rewarded and valued. Social care should no longer be a service that deals with crisis intervention but a service that helps people at the earliest stage.

Kevin Stewart MSP recognised that we have to look at social care as an investment and not a burden, ensuring that we put in place a social care system that drives consistency and quality of care. To support this, within its first 100 days the Scottish Government will start to consult on the legislation that will help shape the National Care Service. He shared that this is a necessary part of the legislative process and that the Scottish Government want to hear from as many people as possible as they move forward with the consultation. The Minister reassured attendees that the consultation process will not distract from the work to improve the support people receive.

In addition, within this 100-day period the Scottish Government will establish a Social Covenant Steering Group which will include people with lived experience of social care. The Social Covenant is intended to create a bond of trust with the people of Scotland and set out values that will guide how social care will be delivered.

Finally, the Minister shared that the new system will prioritise people over process. He highlighted that public bodies, providers and Government do not need to wait for the implementation of the National Care Service to start improving people's lives. They can start now, by listening to people and improving practice.

Discussion on Recommendations

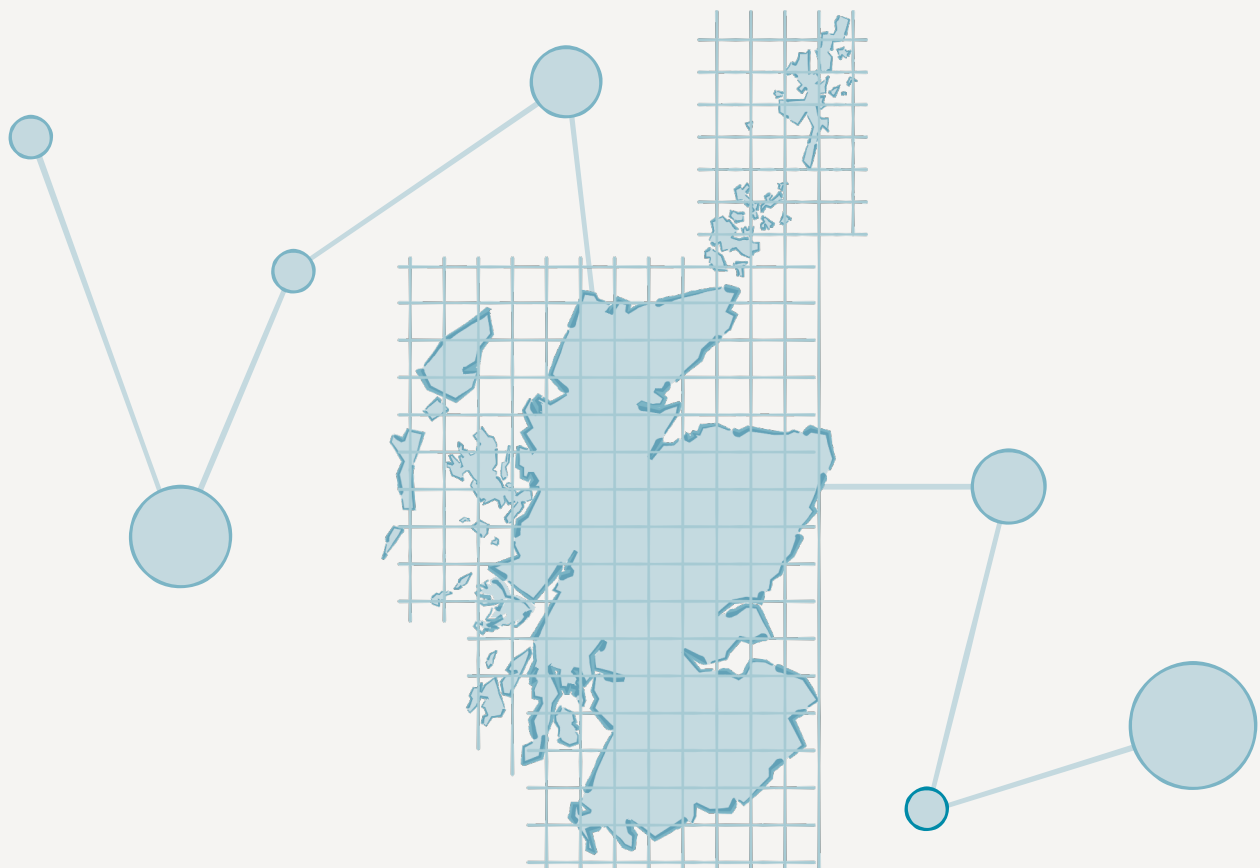
Working Collaboratively

Following the Minister's opening statement, he responded to a range of questions and discussion points from attendees.

Participants welcomed the commitment in the report for a greater role for the third sector, however, it was stressed that there is a need to ensure that they are a prominent voice in the integration process and design of services. In the review there is an impressive commitment to improving approaches around collaboration, planning, commissioning and procurement of social care services with the third sector. This is something the sector has struggled with previously. It often feels excluded, brought in at the last point or not fully included in decision making and can be left to try to come up with something that fits.

Attendees and the Minister highlighted third sector expertise. Participants stated that the third sector need to be brought into strategic service redesign processes early, to improve outcomes at no additional cost. In addition, the third sector should also be provided with sustainable, long-term funding.

To support this, participants shared that we need a fairer, more equitable approach to practice and commissioning. There are different systems in different parts of the country, and we often do not see exporting of good practice. This needs to change, with more collaboration and the creation of a national framework suggested.



Establishing Trust

People with lived experience are currently describing themselves as survivors of a system that has oppressed them. Participants shared that disabled people are referring to “truth and reconciliation” when reflecting on their experiences and the need for restorative justice as well as change. The levels of distrust, especially towards local authorities, are extremely high. Some participants shared that this lack of trust has been a problem for years now, with nothing done to improve people’s lives in this sector.

As part of the implementation of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care we need to ensure that trust is being built and recommendations are actioned within a timely period. For example, care charging is due to be abolished as part of this review and Scottish Government manifesto commitments. If this change is only part of the consultation of the Bill, but not actioned sooner, by the time care charging is abolished it will be too late for many disabled people already living in poverty.

Participants shared reflections on the social care covenant and steering group, highlighting the need for independent support to be available (as with the People Led Policy Panel). Participants asked if we can start to think together about how to help local authorities acknowledge and accept lived experience in relation to all that has gone wrong with social care and shared within the review.

‘If we are going to have voices of lived experience around the table, which we must, we have to make sure they are supported and supported by people they trust without a doubt.’

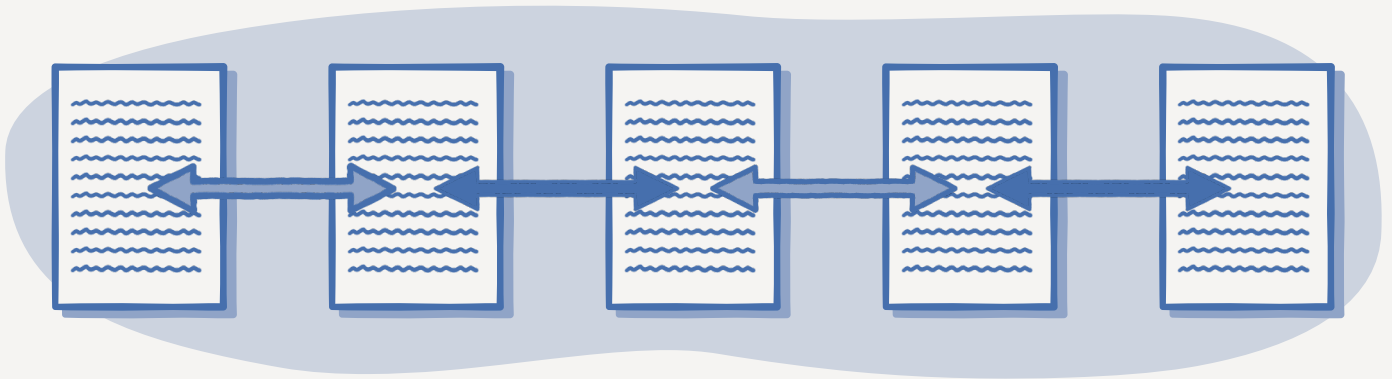
Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care, Kevin Stewart MSP



National Standardisation

Legislation exists but depending on local authority area the criteria for that assessment varies. It was pointed out that you can have two people with the same needs, but what they receive varies by local authority. In the context of a National Care Service, there needs to be commitment to look at standardising assessment processes.

There was a commitment made that early on the agenda, before the National Care Service stage, that we look very closely at what needs to change regarding standardising assessment processes. The Minister and participants acknowledged that there is currently an unfair system, and that this unfairness causes real stress and often heartache for disabled people, people living with long term conditions, and unpaid carers.



Workforce Development

The development of the social care workforce was a welcome contribution to the review. Participants highlighted that staff are asked to care for people with some of the most complex needs in our communities with very limited support and development. Attendees stated that the third sector is committed to this agenda but having to charge for what should be core and essential training is a barrier. Funding for the third sector's contributions will be a crucial aspect of this workforce development.

Participants highlighted that it is critical to involve the third sector in the creation of a social care staff development framework. The move towards generalising staff roles within recent tenders is a worrying trend as it takes little account of very specialised and skilled staff.

Attendees also raised the fact that 64% of our population will be of retirement age in 20 years' time. The impact on migration because of Brexit and the pandemic raise questions and concerns as to who will provide care in the future, with widespread recruitment issues already causing significant difficulties for many providers and people who access support and services.

Early Intervention, Prevention and Independence

Attendees welcomed the review's focus on early intervention and prevention. The new social care system needs to address the interface with wider services and support including rehab and recovery, incorporating the new commitment to a Right to Rehab.

The Minister shared that one of the greatest insights during the COVID-19 pandemic was the huge contribution local assets such as local staff, volunteers and others in the communities played in keeping people living independently in their homes. Attendees highlighted that we need to mobilise resources before social care is required to build on this notion of independence and living within our own communities.

In addition, we need to consider the need for belonging and connection, thinking about how we can ensure we get a balance between the focus on independence and the importance of belonging as it has a huge impact on wellbeing and prevention in relation to mental health.

'Independent living doesn't mean doing things for yourself but having the support to live a meaningful life and meet other rights, have choice, control, dignity, and respect.'

Participant in the meeting

Third Sector

Participants shared that many small and medium sized charities are not part of the commissioning frameworks but provide lifeline support to many families and many individuals with lived experience. Most of these charities have strongly embedded community links and many truly involve people with lived experience. All of them stepped up and stepped in during the pandemic when others stepped down or withdrew their support. There needs to be a commitment from the Scottish Government, local authorities, and Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) to listening deeply to the experience of these smaller organisations who, in terms of value for money and authentic participation, often lead the way.



Equality Focus

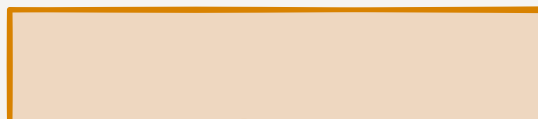
Attendees highlighted that there is a huge gap in the Review of Adult Social Care as to how we meet the needs of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people who require social care support. Participants spoke eloquently about the need to ensure that the voices of these people are heard and communicated with effectively. Scotland already has legislation in place for providers and public bodies to be inclusive, such as the Carers Act and the Equality Act. The duty is on local authorities and HSCPs to provide inclusive communication. Participants highlighted that this is not happening, and that local authorities are not held to account. They asked what we – and the Scottish Government – can do to improve this situation prior to the implementation of the National Care Service.

Attendees stressed that we need to get to a point where we are engaging, listening, and delivering for people.

The Minister made a commitment to make sure that there are no gaps when it comes to the consultation itself, and we hear from all communities across Scotland. However, consideration must be given to the engagement process including providing the consultation in a range of community languages, with that commitment in mind. Participants highlighted that when voices are not heard, the issues of the most marginalised and those experiencing the worst inequalities are not represented and a cycle of exclusion is perpetuated.

Attendees shared that we need to make sure we are not putting the onus for change and communication on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, and that policymakers and third sector organisations have capacity to create the relationships and provide support through accessible and inclusive projects.

A range of participants committed to support the consultation process. They requested that the Minister and his team ensure that the consultation uses accessible language and imagery, and allows enough time for people to absorb, understand and respond to it meaningfully.



Other Areas of Focus

Participants highlighted that the Independent Review of Adult Social Care Report did not place enough focus on the value that technology can play in people's lives. We need to increase ways in which technology can support people to live well and make sure no one is left out. The Minister acknowledged that technology as it advances has a part to play in supporting people to live well.

In addition, attendees highlighted the importance of food and nutrition, which they thought could have been discussed in more detail in the report. People shared that 12% of older adults are at risk of malnutrition, but as soon as people are accessing social care that jumps to 30%. People are being provided with microwave meals or sandwiches as their only option. We need to support choice, control and dignity, and as part of that we need to prioritise food for people's health and wellbeing.

'There are many things that are not in Feeley but there are things we need to look at closely and make sure we integrate into the system.'

Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care, Kevin Stewart MSP



About the ALLIANCE

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) is the national third sector intermediary for a range of health and social care organisations. We have a growing membership of over 3,000 national and local third sector organisations, associates in the statutory and private sectors, disabled people, people living with long term conditions and unpaid carers. Many NHS Boards, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Medical Practices, Third Sector Interfaces, Libraries and Access Panels are also members.

The ALLIANCE is a strategic partner of the Scottish Government and has close working relationships, several of which are underpinned by Memorandum of Understanding, with many national NHS Boards, academic institutions and key organisations spanning health, social care, housing and digital technology.

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.

The ALLIANCE has three core aims; we seek to:

- Ensure people are at the centre, that their voices, expertise and rights drive policy and sit at the heart of design, delivery and improvement of support and services.
- Support transformational change, towards approaches that work with individual and community assets, helping people to stay well, supporting human rights, self management, co-production and independent living.
- Champion and support the third sector as a vital strategic and delivery partner and foster better cross-sector understanding and partnership.



ALLIANCE
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE
ALLIANCE SCOTLAND
people at the centre



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