

Climate Change and Social Care Collective

Hot Report 2



On September 15th 2021, The Health and Social Care Academy (a programme of the ALLIANCE) and Scottish Care held the second event of 'The Climate and Social Care Collective' roundtable series. More information about the development and purpose of the roundtables can be found in the first report.

The second roundtable was focused on innovation and solution, with emphasis on taking a cross-sectoral approach. The event also explored people-centred solutions and a role of the community in supporting sustainable change. Our first speaker was Kenneth Watt, Policy and Public Affairs Manager for the Red Cross, leading work across the devolved nations covering health and independent living, refugee and asylum and emergency response. Kenneth spoke about the 'Feeling the Heat' briefing which discussed the impact of heat waves and climate change in the UK. The report evidences the increasing risk of heatwaves, explores public perceptions, and sets out solutions. The impact of heatwaves will be especially significant in terms of excess deaths, on older and more vulnerable people.

Further, the overall impact on health services will exacerbate underlying health inequities. There is a significant role for community organisers and volunteers to take action as this sector feed into early warnings and getting information out to communities. Government recognition of the human impact of heatwaves, with coordination across sectors and levels. People must have access to targeted information that appropriately meets their needs.

The second speaker was Christine Owen, Senior Manager with the People Powered Results (PPR) team, a Nesta Specialist Enterprise. The PPR team works with organisations and public systems to release the power of people closest to issues to adapt and take action in an increasingly complex world. Christine discussed place-based approaches to change, how to create the conditions for such change and how we might start to think about challenges differently through adapting, maintaining, and sustaining ourselves.

This was demonstrated through a practical action programme ongoing with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) to deliver transformation focused on Covid recovery with community-led action to build a fairer, greener and healthier future as part of this recovery. Christine echoed Similar to our first

speaker and emphasised the importance of collaboration as an instrument to effect change.

The third speaker in the roundtable event was Bev Knight, Head of National Operations, with Redeem Exchange – a circular economy initiative introduced to divert plastic waste from landfill by reusing plastic hand sanitiser and soap bottles through a collect, wash, refill and return service. Bev highlighted the impact that people can have on the climate with simple methods. Potential solutions to a more sustainable future align with green jobs and a circular economy approach and discussed how the changes from this initiative support other vulnerable groups as well as the care sector.

After the Q and A session, participants were split into smaller breakout groups to cover questions around key questions:

- 1) if there was a £25 million social care climate innovation fund, what types of sustainable solutions would you like to see it used for?
- 2) Which key stakeholders need to work together to take climate action? This may involve local authorities, those delivering and receiving care, health and social care partnerships, care providers, the business sector, transport and procurement.
- 3) Do you have any good practice examples (including from other sectors) that you would like to share which you think would be applicable to the social care sector?

The breakout sessions fostered thoughtful conversation on the challenges and shortcomings with placing social care as a top priority alongside and within climate issues. Some of the recurring points that came up were on the biggest carbon emitters in the sector. While there is little data to evaluate the social care sector's carbon footprint in Scotland, we know that the big areas of concern are around transport and energy – specifically heating.

One of the areas that participants pointed out would be most useful would be to centralise information; this would allow people to access or contribute to showcasing measures that can be taken and the effectiveness of this would be useful for providers to understand where they can make a difference. Speakers mentioned there is a collective effort needed to implement change and pooling resources in this space would be helpful.

There was recognition that the social care sector does not sit in isolation. Participants suggested joining up approaches to better understanding the role of regulators and inspectors, commissioning of services, of hospitals and health boards, and potential costs (both from action to inaction). It is important to join up data to understand how different industries connect and play a role in the delivery of care and support (more specifically laundry, food, agriculture, retail, PPE). There is a carbon cost to the delivery of care and these processes and costs must be balanced with a rights-based agenda. Many of the concerns circle back to the long-standing issue of insufficient funding available in the sector and the undervaluing of social care. Changing mindsets to focus on sustainability in the commissioning and procurement processes would be beneficial to implementing long-term change.

We are looking forward to our final roundtable event taking place on **Wednesday 20th October from 10:00- 12:00** which will look at key principles and calls to action

developed as part of the series. We look forward to welcoming our panellists for the session and invite anyone interested in the subject to attend!