

Climate Change and Social Care Collective

Hot Report 1



On August 11th 2021, The Health and Social Care Academy (a programme of the ALLIANCE) and Scottish Care held the first of a series of roundtables – ‘The Climate and Social Care Collective.’ The roundtable was developed to highlight the role that the social care sector can play in the climate change debate. Social care has been largely absent from climate discussions, and we believe national attention must be urgently given to achieve a sustainable development strategy in social care in Scotland, which embeds sustainable environment concerns and supports inclusive climate action. There is clear need for the social care sector to be involved in the debate, given how the sector is both affected by and contributes to climate change. The first session was focused on understanding what is currently happening in terms of the social and wider policy context. A group of panelists brought their expertise and knowledge to the forum with presentations, followed by a question-and-answer session moderated by Scottish Care National Director, Karen Hedge.

Christine McGregor, unit head with the Directorate for Mental Health and Social care at the Scottish Government, discussed the current priorities of Scottish Government and some of the targets in place to rebuild and recover greener, with focus on equality and wellbeing. There was recognition of the point of shift that we are seeing within the social care sector, and the importance of implementing the recommendations of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care which will feed into the creation of a National Care Service.

Anna Beswick, Programme Manager from Sniffer (a sustainability charity) covered climate resilience, adaptation, and the impact a changing climate has, not least on the more vulnerable people in society. Learning to live with the unavoidable impacts, what some of the barriers to action are and understanding how to empower people to take action are all key elements to embedding climate change action in policy and practice.

Lastly – though certainly not least – Katie Gallogly-Swan, Board Members from the Scottish Women’s Budget Group highlighted the parallels between social care and climate change which has resulted in them both being historically overlooked within policy, with points echoing Christine and Anna on how we have to mitigate, adapt, and support the communities most affected by climate change.

Following presentations, attendees were invited to breakout rooms for further discussions on what people, organisations and the sector can start to do to take action and engage with those who may not yet feel that climate issues are relevant to them. Indeed, there is some way to go – known challenges include social injustice, promoting buy-in to the sector at large, lack of information and awareness, staff capacity, sustainable transport and demonstrating the real work going on behind the scenes.

We are looking forward to the next panel session on **Wednesday 15 September from 10:00 – 12:00** which will be largely innovation and solution focused. We look forward to welcoming our panelists for the session and invite anyone interested in the subject to attend!