Scottish Government Consultation – Net Zero

Scottish Care Response - 31 March 2021

**Consultation Questions: Our Approach**

**1. Objectives**

a) What are your views on the three objectives underpinning our approach to engagement on climate change?

Scottish Care is in broad agreement of the three objectives, however there is a clear need for more specific mention to be made to the social care sector and how this area is both affected by and affects climate change, including how it can help support sustainability efforts. Currently, there is no disaggregation of health and care data on CO2 emissions which means that we can neither identify nor benchmark the extent to which there is impact. However, Health Care Without Harm estimates that measuring the greenhouse gas emissions solely related to heating and cooling the worlds healthcare providers (using the WHO definition of healthcare providers which includes social care), would make it the fifth-largest contributor in the world.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In order for communities to understand how climate change affects their lives, the knowledge and support of stakeholders with experience in the social care sector needs to be included to assist with the delivery of messages to different audiences. This must be done in a way that is positive and effectual.

In encouraging people to actively participate in shaping fair and inclusive policies that encourage adaption to and mitigation of climate change, we might learn from the Climate Assembly and incorporate learnings into approaches. Having conversations about climate change in our daily lives and an increased use of digital approach to connecting with communities is necessary to facilitate this.

In addition to the groups that have expertise in both sustainability efforts and the social care sector, it is important to consider the role that the social care workforce can play in engagement on climate change. The care workforce is diverse and should be considered a key player in engaging with the sector.

In terms of normalising action on climate changes and encouraging communities to get involved, we would highlight individual behaviours that need to change have yet to be realised – we need to create the necessary conditions for climate literacy, support community climate action and climate chain education which all falls under the umbrella of learning for sustainability.

b) Do you think that any of these objectives should be removed or changed?

Whilst the recommendation for people to actively participate in shaping fair and inclusive policies that encourage adaptation to and mitigation of climate change is laudable, this particular objective overlooks that not everyone will be able to participate either because of systemic or personal circumstances. This objective should not solely be about people participating, but with some onus on the government and debate leaders to create the conditions for participation.

c) Are there any objectives that you think should be included that are currently missing?

We hope that there will be further accountability in meeting climate change objectives. From the standpoint of the social care sector, the creation of a National Care Service (as outlined in the Independent Review for Adult Social Care) [cite] would hold direct ministerial responsibility for sustainability efforts that need to be supported, implemented and evaluated, not least in reference to the environmental impact that the sector has and the changes that need to occur.

There must be specific mention and outreach made to members of the community that may not be as ‘visible’; individuals living with a long-term disability or condition which require care support shouldn’t be excluded from a national conversation and involvement in developing policy to address climate change in Scotland – they should be included in a way that is accommodating to them. Getting the voices of people with experience who can accurately depict what changes are not only needed but are currently working within the care sector and can be expanded/applied is crucial.

It is our responsibility to uphold [international] agreements as it relates to climate change, including the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals, among others.

**2. Principles**

a) What are your views on our seven principles for public engagement set out in Box 1?

We are in general agreement with the principles for public engagement, though note that the Scottish Government must make it must be exceptionally clear how they plan to engage with communities. Scottish Government should adhere to community planning toolkits with respect to engagement and utilise the knowledge of [health] experts who have experience in successfully engaging with the public and making effective and sustainable changes.

Scottish Care promotes a positive perception of the social care sector and encourages others to share their own positive experiences, or ‘feel good’ stories. While the sector has been stigmatised and received a lot of negative reception over the past year as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, we believe it is important to continue to show how the social care sector is diverse, supportive and inclusive. As a rights-based organisation, we want a fairer, more equitable society that supports people to feel incentivized to participate in conversations that foster productive dialogue and can support climate issues. Personal experiences influence risk perception, meaning more relatable and concrete experiences regarding climate change can help people consider their individual impact to the climate conversation. If there is more discussion on the negative effects in areas where sustainability issues haven’t been considered, people may rethink the role that they play in the scheme of things.

Scottish Care is person-centred organisation that places individuals and choice at heart of everything, thereby in agreement with principle number two: all of the community needs to be involved in making decisions. Climate issues must be inclusive of all members of society, not solely younger people. Social care may be perceived to be for older people, though this is 1) not the entire population that receives support, and 2) older people should not be left out of the conversation. People continue to live healthy and meaningful lives beyond retirement, and person-centred must mean all persons.

As an organisation that represents and serves the [independent] care sector, it must be acknowledged that social care landscape is diverse, and any efforts for dialogue and collaborative processes must include all social care providers. We are extremely engaged on a variety of issues (from the wellbeing of the workforce, to integrated commissioning), with specific room for continuous improvement. We are vested in getting people involved and interested in how they can make a difference, not least most recently with the publication of our Collective Care Futures digital landscape project that visualises positive changes that can occur in social care. When considering collaboration, there must be inclusion of all members of society and how we provide supportive space for dialogue and sharing experiences and ideas. For example, there is a stigma around age and the ageing process, and a societal mindset shift to normalise this process and ensure that all stages of life are viewed with equal importance can help get people involved in changing the narrative.

Embracing a commitment to change that is driven from a rights-based, person-centred perspective will pave the way for action and implementation that is meaningful and just. Achieving change is a collective responsibility and just representation of the social care sector must be a part of the priorities of the Scottish Government. Further, we must ensure that those that are most affected by the effects of climate change stand to benefit the most from improvement which can be supported through balancing funding in the sector. This relates back to longstanding inequities in health and social care services.

Further, a key purpose of social care is in supporting people to have choice and control in their lives. This requires a sector who is skilled to provide support to individuals who choose to prioritise a sustainable lifestyle. Fundamentally, we must also address issues of social justice; many of those who access care and support, as well as those who work in social care, experience poverty. This raises questions such as ‘if you are reliant on a food bank to feed your family, how can you have choice over what you eat’? Living moment to moment does not create the safe conditions that people need to be able to act with has a view to longer-term impact.

As an evidence-based organisation, we help develop and provide support toward strong research and data efforts. Evidence must incorporate the voices of those with lived experiences in social care and reinforce the need for disaggregated data to benchmark social care impact to drive sector specific strategy and intervention. In the strategy from Healthcare without Harm, their report ‘Towards Sustainable Healthcare’ outlines 5 areas where change can be made. It covers energy, procurement practices, chemicals, pharma, and food, all of which have implications and opportunity for social care. Whilst we can choose how and where we draw our energy, the chemicals we use and the food we buy, the biggest implication is currently outwith our control. Where external agencies have authority in terms of commissioning and procurement practice, it more often favours cost over quality and sustainability in all definitions.

Transparency is important -not only in regard to financing- but of intention. We support the principle of an open and transparent approach to taking decisive action with assurance that people are placed at the centre of decision-making. This can be measured against the National Performance Framework.

b) Do you think that any of these principles should be removed or changed?

A degree of urgency/immediacy needs to be included in the principles if we want to achieve net zero; climate change is happening now and with timeliness should be a principle specifically in the health and social care sectors as people are living longer and will be affected by climate issues for years to come. This can be supported through providing examples within Scotland of the regional relevance of climate change and where we already see changes occurring.

Additionally, perspective is needed when planning how to get people involved, i.e., framing future losses if no action is taken (negative) to future gains if we take action now (positive).

c) Are there any principles of good public engagement on climate change that you think are missing?

**3. Other comments**

a) Do you have any other comments on our overall approach?

In order for Scotland to adopt a Sustainable Development Strategy as it pertains to health and social care, we need to embed sustainable environment concerns in health and social care service design. Proposals from the ALLIANCE (that we support) include creating a £25m social care climate change innovation fund, investing in clinically and environmentally safe PPE, and developing sustainable and accessible travel for people who access and deliver health and care services. Further, there must be recognition that the independent sector and third sector cannot accomplish sustainable efforts without the financial support of public bodies that commission their support and expertise.

**Consultation Questions: Green Recovery**

4) What are your views on the opportunities and challenges for public engagement in the Green Recovery?

While the Green Recovery provides funding for communities to drive climate change action, there is opportunity to engage with the health and social care sector as this area is currently not addressed by the Scottish Government. This sector must continually prioritise the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of individuals, and responds to the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. They are instrumental in helping with public engagement.

There is room to support the wellbeing approach to prioritise Scottish citizens, specifically the health and social care workforce who have been the backbone of support for Scotland throughout the course of the pandemic. It is integral to enhance personal resilience and self-care in order to have a country that can focus on the other pressing challenges of our time – climate change. Supporting the sector may encourage public engagement if they are recognised for the distinct work that they do.

**Consultation Questions: Communicating Climate Change Policy**

5) What are your views on our approach to communicating climate change policy?

The Scottish Government needs to clearly articulate what Scotland can be responsible for vs. the UK as a whole and how they are working together to identify areas and specific policy and research for improvement. As health and social care is devolved, there is opportunity to truly engage and effect positive change with the support of the sector.

Communicating climate change needs to be framed properly by appealing across government sectors. Policy-focused climate communications must take into account ‘vertical integration’ i.e., harmony or alignment between high-level policies all the way down to local implementation and vice versa. Presently, the policy is not framed to all members of society.

Testimonials (or power of ‘witness’) could be incorporated in strategy with examples of how people have been affected by climate change, the risks associated and the management techniques, so people are aware of the tools and resources available to enact change.

Communicating public ‘goods’ vs. public ‘bads’ is also necessary, i.e., what is the trade-off if we don’t take action in the health and social care sector? Climate change risk assessments should be commissioned in health and social care sectors to help with this, with shareable content (e.g., ‘bite-size’ pieces) to make complex concepts understandable.

We need to think more about how we appeal to people at different levels. More specifically, we are trying to promote health and social care in relation to sustainability and climate issues at an individual level, at a community level and at a population level.

6) Are you aware of any practical examples or case studies of good practice for communicating on climate change that could be useful for informing our approach?

A case study from Kenya highlighted cross-government approaches to inform policy design and approaches, and how to communicate information in a transparent, timely and accurate manner. While this example may not be fully applicable or transferable to the Scottish Government, there might be takeaways that we can learn from: Intersectoral government structures composed of cabinet committees, scrutiny structures, interdepartmental committees or groups, joint/delegated budgets wherein central government and local government budgets work together with public and stakeholder engagement as a mechanism helped facilitate decision-making criteria. [[2]](#footnote-2)

When holding stakeholder workshops, the Government needs to incentivise populations and relevant health determinants, involve people with knowledge, identify the possible impacts and how these will be answered.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) outlines effective communication strategies: set goals and principles (which this consultation does). They summarise activities, including: day-to-day communications, both proactive and reactive; planned activities including: the launch of reports, and participation in major international conferences: rapid responses, which require particular procedures to ensure they are handled in a timely manner that is representative of the whole Panel and; provision of scientific and technical advice and guidelines to relevant UN bodies. They further outline the audiences, government and management, correct spokespeople and resources available that are all part of effective communication on climate change. [[3]](#footnote-3)

**Consultation Questions: Enabling Participation in Policy Design**

7) What are your views on our approach to enabling participation in policy design?

Clear identification of decision-makers that have expertise with timeframes for involvement in workshops. It is important that all members of society feel their voice is accurately included in the development of policy, though we emphasise that policy design incorporates those with expertise in both policy development and in the health and social care field are included. They will be able to ensure policy design is acceptable and relevant to the community, understand the causes of climate change and can act as enablers to ensure the effectiveness of policy.

We need recognition of the dual impact in social care, i.e., that of provider and workforce as well as those who access care and support.

8) Are you aware of any practical examples or case studies of good practice for enabling participation in decision-making that could be useful for informing our approach?

There are different types of planning and decision-making models: rational planning, incremental planning and mixed scanning. In the case of this consultation and developing climate policy, the rational planning theory should be utilised. This was used to set public health priorities in Scotland.

A positive example of public awareness and why policies are successful in Scotland can be seen in tobacco control. The reasons for such success in policy design was that participants included were tobacco control experts, meaning that experts need to be involved in the design of climate policy which that includes health *and* social care professionals. [[4]](#footnote-4)

We acknowledge there will be challenges in gaining community participation with segments of the social care sector, however clear identification of stakeholders and workshops early on in the process can help mitigate some of the anticipated barriers.

**Consultation Questions: Encouraging Action**

9) What are your views on our approach to encouraging action?

There must be a sense of urgency in encouraging action, i.e., what will Scotland look like if we don’t take decisive action now? The sustainability of the social care sector is at a precipitous moment, and the viability of the sector is contingent on making collective change going forward. Encouraging action must involve consideration of the sustainability of models of care for older people, how much waste will build up from care homes, etc.

10) Are you aware of any practical examples or case studies of good practice for encouraging climate change action that could be useful for informing our approach?

There are climate change encouragement tools and resources developed for children and young people by charities such as Save the Children which focus on raising awareness through education in schools.

There have also been combinations of local and national initiatives ranging from community-led clear up campaigns through to achieving strategic buy-in from a business perspective (i.e., good corporate social responsibility). Those businesses who do well on the stock exchange have invested in green policies etc., and the initiatives support a wellbeing led economy which is part of the WEGo partnership in Scotland (<https://wellbeingeconomy.org/scotland>).

Taking a participative design approach to community engagement would also be a worthwhile consideration: designing positive and engaging dialogue with design-experts and a design-led approach can stimulate creative dialogue and explore new ways of addressing societal challenges – see link. <http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/4248/1/Designed_Engagement_cameraready.pdf>

Such approach was used to investigate the future of social care and ended with the creation of new job roles (<https://futurehealthandwellbeing.org/future-of-care-at-home>).

Lastly, the Social Care Institute for Excellence has guides on co-production in social care and details how to develop co-productive approaches to working with people who use services and carers e.g., working with the People led Policy Group at inclusion Scotland on Adult social care reform: <https://www.gov.scot/groups/adult-social-care-reform-people-led-policy-panel/>. It is one of the ways of making sure that the views, experiences and expertise of people who use social care support are at the heart of decisions that are made.

Consultation Questions: COP26

11) How do you think COP26 can help deliver a positive legacy for people of Scotland and climate action?

It is likely there will be a lot of focus at COP26 not solely on climate action, but how Scotland and the UK at large responded to the pandemic and how those decisions have resulted in actions to address and/or continue progress around climate change which could not/cannot afford to have stalled. This might be especially challenging given the high number of deaths and the loss that the UK has experienced. Scotland needs to present a united front in delivering a positive legacy for Scotland, which will hopefully be a priority of the next Government.

12) How can we work with stakeholders and actors across Scotland to deliver our “people” theme for COP26.

As mentioned in previous sections, it is important that stakeholders truly do come from all areas of Scotland. While our interest is in social care, we recognise the role of public, private and third sectors and the sector must be accurately represented and play a role in decision-making processes.

13) Are there other initiatives that the Scottish Government should consider joining or supporting ahead of COP26?

We would like to highlight some of the areas of impact that the Scottish Government should be aware of and consider decisive action on ahead of COP26:

1) The impact of PPE on the environment (long-term) and more largely the effect of single-use plastics

2) How to reduce waste while considering IPC practice and exploring new materials

3) Commissioning and procurement practices: cost is favoured over quality and sustainability

4) Providers have been implementing more sustainable options over the past few years - better insulation, water and lighting efficiencies such as eco taps and aerators, and LED lighting installed where they meet the expectations of creating a homely environment. Natural light-use to reduce electricity usage. Providers should be part of the conversation on sustainable action as they help identify and playing an active role in areas for improvement

5) That areas for improvement are cost-saving in the long-term and environmental sustainability in social care is a relevant issue

6) How can digital and technological tools play a role in care planning and supporting sustainable efforts

Consultation Questions: Monitoring and Evaluation

14) What are your views on how our progress towards our objectives could be most effectively monitored and evaluated?

The monitoring and evaluation of social care inclusion into the objectives would need to be part of the proposed National Care Service, with formal review of progress at government level. This will include accountability of those who commission and procure services.

Objectives could be monitored through a process evaluation, which focuses on the implementation process and attempts to determine how successfully a project followed the proposed strategy. As the objectives are related to issues of public health concern, following the steps in quality intervention development (such as that of 6SQUID) may be useful.

15) How regularly – and in what format – should we report on progress on the strategy?

The strategy progress should be reported on frequently enough to the extent that it becomes a normalised and accepted part of everyday conversation. The government will need to tap into people’s intrinsic behaviours and into long-term environmental policy and behaviour support to achieve this.

1. <https://noharm-global.org/sites/default/files/documents-files/5961/HealthCaresClimateFootprint_092319.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/8737.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://archive.ipcc.ch/meetings/session35/IAC\_CommunicationStrategy.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6696046/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)