

To whom it may concern,

We the undersigned are organisations which represent or are led by the many thousands of individuals who use social care supports, their informal carers/ supporters and those who provide social care services. We are all concerned that people are enabled to be citizens, not only within their own local geographical communities but society at large.

The publication of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care (Feeley Report) in February 2021 marked a culmination of an intensive period of engagement and dialogue both with those who use social care support, informal carers and those who provide and work in services. The Report was received very positively across the country with a belief that it contained both an honest description of the failures to implement progressive legislation and a vision of how things might be different, alongside what was needed to change the current systems.

A central plank of the Feeley Report was the development of a National Care Service and a change in accountability and governance arrangements which would make social care the direct responsibility of a Scottish Government. We noted the importance placed by the Report on developing and reforming local governance arrangements to ensure that the voice of those who use supports was central to decision-making and delivery, with **‘a relentless focus on involving people who use services, their families and carers in developing new approaches at both a national and local level’**. We welcome the Report’s suggested enhancement of the role of Integrated Joint Boards and a National Board, both of which would have the voice of those who use social care supports at their heart.

We believe that the vision of a national system but with local accountability is critical and we are deeply concerned that there should be any attempt to water down or diminish the development of a National Care Service. The current system of social care being commissioned and resourced by local authorities has simply not worked especially for those who matter most – those who use care support. The failures and inconsistencies of implementation at local level are well articulated within the Report and elsewhere. We believe that there is an urgent need for reform and that this must be through the development of a National Care Service with an improved system of local accountability and governance. As part of reform there needs to be an independent complaints mechanism to ensure genuine accountability, and this should be strengthened by investment in independent and peer advocacy to support people through the process.

We call upon all political parties not to limit the vision contained in the Feeley Report and to ensure that preserving the status quo of local governance and commissioning is not accepted. We owe it to the thousands who today and into the future will use social care supports and the thousands who work to deliver care both unpaid and paid, that we create a new system with those people at the heart of the re-design.

Signed

Yours faithfully,

Dr Donald Macaskill, CEO, Scottish Care

Dr. Pauline Nolan, Director of Leadership and Civic Participation, Inclusion Scotland

Dr. Jim Elder Woodward, OBE, Chair, Scottish Independent Living Coalition

Janis McDonald, CEO, deafscotland

Tressa Burke, CEO, Glasgow Disability Alliance

Professor Ian Welsh, OBE, Chief Executive, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)

Claire Cairns, Network Coordinator, Coalition of Carers in Scotland

Etienne d'Aboville, Chief Executive, Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living

John Ballantine, Panel Member, Edinburgh Access Panel

Arthur Cowie, Director, Lochaber Disability Access Panel

Adrian Mckill, Deputy Director, Neighbourhood Networks in Scotland Limited

Anne Farrow, Secretary, Dundee Access Panel

Colin Millar, CEO, SPAEN

Jeff Adamson, Convenor, Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living

Melanie Todd, Admin Assistant, Centre for Inclusive Living Perth and Kinross

Helen Glass, Senior Citizen Advocacy Development Worker, Include Me

Lucy MacDonald, Chair, Ise of Harris Access Panel

Maureen Martin, CEO, Edinburgh Development Group (EDG)

Scott Stewart, Manager, Disability Information Scotland

Gregor Rimel, Chair, Badenoch & Strathspey Access Panel

Sam Smith, CEO, C-Change Scotland

Sandy Kerr, Co-Founder and Manager, Pass IT On

Elisabeth Gibson, Executive Artistic Director, Project Ability

Amy Wright, Chair, Inspired Community Enterprise Trust