



# **OUR SCOTTISH CARE MANIFESTO**

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# Opening Statement

The Scottish Care Manifesto, under the moniker ‘Care creates....’ sets out a vision for the future of social care in Scotland, through a lens of opportunity. Social care support creates the foundation for Scotland to lead with dignity, innovation, and sustainability. This manifesto calls for decisive action, it advocates for bold investment, sustainable support, and the protection of human rights for all who access social care support services to ensure that every challenge becomes an opportunity to make social care work for Scotland. It champions innovation in technology, digital and data, fair funding models which invest in people, our economy and our communities, ethical commissioning practices, and climate-conscious initiatives, while emphasising the opportunity in strengthening the social care workforce and fostering greater collaboration across sectors. By placing the dignity, independence, and wellbeing of individuals at the heart of policy and practice, the Scottish Care Manifesto seeks to shape a care system that truly matters. This is not simply about meeting immediate needs -it’s about actively shaping a future where care is valued, visible, viable and visionary, actively contributing positively both for people and for the planet.

# Rights at the Heart of Social Care Support

A Foundation for Transformation

## OPPORTUNITY

Building on Scotland's robust groundwork for embedding human rights within social care, we champion a bold vision for innovation and transformation. Through approaches such as ethical commissioning and rights-based budgeting, we are ensuring that decision-making is genuinely shaped by the voices and experiences of those who draw on support. With a refreshed call for the Human Rights Bill to embed UN treaties into Scots law, Scotland is uniquely positioned to set a global standard for rights-based, person-led care. By driving forward the implementation of mandatory impact assessments, comprehensive care statements, and establishing an Older Persons Commissioner, the campaign commits to securing dignity, equity, and independence for every older person - laying the foundation for a care system that truly values and uplifts all.



Rights-based care as not just a legal obligation, it's a chance to create a system that empowers choice and strengthens communities. It's a transformative environment where human rights are at the heart of every decision, empowering individuals and fostering communities built on dignity, equity, and meaningful choice.

# Rights at the Heart of Social Care Support

A Foundation for Transformation

## ACTIONS



- Advance the embedding of human rights within social care through ethical commissioning and rights-based budgeting.
- Ensure decision-making is informed by the lived experiences and voices of those who draw on support services.
- Advocate for the Human Rights Bill to incorporate UN treaties into Scots law, setting a global benchmark for rights-based, person-led care.
- For the Scottish Government to continue to engage with and advocate for the development and adoption of a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older People.
- Implement mandatory impact assessments to evaluate the effects of policies and interventions on individuals' rights and wellbeing.
- Develop and require comprehensive care statements to clarify entitlements and responsibilities.
- Establish an Older Persons Commissioner to champion the dignity, equity, and independence of older people.
- Promote a rights-based approach as an opportunity to empower choice and strengthen communities, not just as a legal requirement.



# Fair Pay, Fair Work, Fair Care

Workforce Matters now and, in  
the future

## OPPORTUNITY

Scotland's social care workforce is the sector's greatest asset. Leadership programmes such as Leading to Change and new career pathways are paving the way for professional growth and recognition. By prioritising fair pay, wellbeing, and sustainable recruitment - including robust international partnerships - we can create a workforce that is valued, supported, and future-ready.



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Quality care by investing in people. Committing to a long-term workforce strategy that values fair and competitive pay, professional development, and recognition secures a skilled pipeline and positions social care as a respected and rewarding career of choice. This approach empowers individuals, sustains communities, and builds a resilient future for all.

# Fair Pay, Fair Work, Fair Care

Workforce Matters now and, in  
the future



## ACTIONS

- Develop and promote clear, accessible career pathways within social care, supporting ongoing professional development and recognition.
- Accredite the national induction framework.
- Prioritise fair and competitive pay across the sector, benchmarking against equivalent roles to attract and retain talent.
- Enhance workforce wellbeing through robust support systems, mental health initiatives, and flexible working arrangements.
- Establish sustainable recruitment strategies, including fostering strong international partnerships and ethical recruitment practices.
- For the Scottish Government to continue to advocate for devolved decision-making powers on immigration matters.
- Co-produce a long-term workforce strategy with input from those drawing on care, front-line workers, and sector leaders to ensure the pipeline of skilled professionals meets future needs.
- Promote social care as a valued and rewarding career choice through targeted public campaigns and engagement with schools and colleges.
- Monitor and review recruitment, retention, and workforce satisfaction data to inform continuous improvement and ensure the sector is equipped to deliver high-quality, rights-based care.
- Give care providers access to the apprenticeship levy (or remove their requirement to pay into it so they can invest the money into local staff).

# Integration

## Collaboration as a Catalyst



### OPPORTUNITY

Strong shared accountability and collaboration across sectors are key drivers of effective social care delivery. Increasingly, organisations are breaking down traditional silos, enabling ethical commissioning and facilitating the implementation of statutory guidance. Positive outcomes from initiatives such as the Fife International Employers Network, Fife Care Collaborative, and Perth & Kinross Trusted Assessor programmes highlight the significant impact of independent sector representation in fostering improvement and building trust among stakeholders. Originating at the local level, these collaborative efforts are successfully shared nationally and embraced by Health and Social Care Partnerships wherever there is enthusiasm, setting a standard for best practice across the sector.



Collaboration and Trust. By creating the conditions for collaboration such as mandating independent sector representation on Integration Joint Boards, we ensure that decisions are informed by a wealth of expertise and experience, building trust across the sector. Breaking down barriers between partners fosters innovation and efficiency, delivering a care system that works seamlessly for both individuals and communities.

# Integration

## Collaboration as a Catalyst

### ACTIONS

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- Mandate and facilitate independent sector representation on all Integration Joint Boards to enhance decision-making and build sector-wide trust.
- Develop and implement formal mechanisms for regular cross-sector dialogue and knowledge exchange between statutory, independent, and third sector partners.
- Encourage co-production of care strategies by engaging front-line staff, people with lived experience, and community groups in the design and evaluation of integrated services.
- Promote joint training and leadership development programmes to build mutual understanding and collaborative skills across sectors.
- Establish shared accountability frameworks with clear roles, responsibilities, and transparent reporting to drive collective ownership of outcomes.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of collaborative initiatives such as the Granite Care Consortium and Fife Care Collaborative, sharing best practice and scaling successful models.
- Invest in digital platforms and data-sharing agreements that support seamless coordination and real-time information flow across health and social care organisations.





# Future-Ready Care

Harnessing Technology for  
Good

## OPPORTUNITY

Digital innovation is transforming care delivery. Programmes such as Care Technologist and the Digital Support Hub demonstrate significant social value and cost savings. With targeted investment in research, evaluation, and workforce digital capability, Scotland can lead in responsible AI and predictive analytics to anticipate needs and personalise support.



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Empowerment Through Technology, digital and data - By embracing technology as a tool within care, we create the conditions for greater human rights, individual choice, and long-term sustainability. Technology, thoughtfully integrated, enhances - not replaces - the compassionate connections at the heart of social care, enabling people to have greater autonomy, live more independently and with dignity.

# Future-Ready Care

Harnessing Technology for  
Good



## ACTIONS

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- Increase targeted investment in digital research for independent social care support, evaluation, and upskilling programmes for the social care workforce to strengthen digital capability and confidence.
- Expand and scale successful initiatives such as the Care Technologist programme and the Digital Support Hub, ensuring their accessibility across all regions.
- Develop and implement ethical frameworks for responsible AI and predictive analytics within social care, prioritising transparency, equity, and safeguarding human rights.
- Foster partnerships between statutory, independent, and third sector organisations to co-design digital solutions that anticipate care needs and deliver personalised support.
- Regularly evaluate the social value and cost-effectiveness of new digital tools, sharing best practice and lessons learned to inform future innovation.
- Promote digital inclusion by providing training, equipment, and support to individuals who draw on care and their families, ensuring technology enhances rather than replaces human connection.
- Embed ethical technology, digital and data as an enabler of choice, independence, and sustainability within all strategic planning and delivery, for Scotland's health and social care system.

# Funding – Investing in Care like it Matters

Because It Does

## OPPORTUNITY



Alongside its role in meeting the needs of those who access social care support, social care represents a significant economic driver in Scotland.

The sector is distinguished by its higher proportion of women and family-owned businesses compared to other Scottish industries, and it operates across diverse communities. Social care support not only provides stability for those accessing care and their families but also creates a variety of local employment and investment opportunities.

SSSC research shows that for every £1 invested, £2.35 in socioeconomic benefits are generated. This means that addressing the current £320 million funding gap for the commissioning and procurement of social care support would realise £752 millions of socioeconomic benefit into Scotland. Enhancing transparency and ensuring full funding for the true cost of care in contracts would encourage greater investment, helping to stabilise the sector. This approach would also support future needs, benefiting both individuals and public finances.



Value Through Investment. By funding care like it truly matters we recognise its profound importance to individuals, families, and society, through the innate benefits of upholding dignity and strength across our communities.

# Funding – Investing in Care like it Matters

Because It Does



## ACTIONS

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- Implement ring-fenced funding for social care to ensure financial stability and consistent support for individuals and families
- Update mechanisms for transparency and collaboration in commissioning, procurement and negotiation, drawing upon learning from ethical commissioning.
- Establish multiyear budgeting arrangements, including capital investment, to promote long-term planning, develop innovative care solutions and achieve parity across the health and social care system.
- Prohibit the commissioning of 15-minute care at home and housing support visits (reflecting long-standing guidance from the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#)) to support the delivery of true person-led care and further its socio-economic benefit.
- Regularly review and evaluate funding strategies, in collaboration with individuals who draw on care, their families and care professionals, to ensure investment in social care reflects its social and economic value and meets everchanging care needs of local communities.

# Care that cares for the People and Planet

## OPPORTUNITY



Embracing sustainability is key to ensuring future care support thrives, helping those who access, deliver and work in the sector to flourish as we positively respond to climate change. By prioritising sustainable practices and investing in climate initiatives, the social care sector can not only minimise its environmental footprint but also contribute to the growth of green employment, thereby supporting Scotland's transition toward a low-carbon economy. Proactive action not only reduces the mental health impact of climate change on individuals, by creating resilient, supportive environments, but also equips care providers to assist people experiencing climate-related mental health concerns and those physically affected, for example, by severe weather that disrupts mobility, access to care, or the safety of their homes.

Taking proactive steps helps foster positive mental wellbeing in the face of climate change by building resilient and supportive environments. This enables care providers to empower individuals to manage climate-related mental health challenges and support those physically impacted, such as during severe weather events, ensuring continued access to care and the safety of their homes.

The allocation of dedicated funding for climate-related initiatives will assist providers in reducing emissions and enhancing infrastructure, ensuring that social care services remain consistent with Scotland's net-zero objectives.

# Care that cares for the People and Planet



A Greener Sector for Healthier Communities and a Stronger Planet. By embedding sustainability in care, we nurture both people and the environment, ensuring a thriving future for all.



## ACTIONS

- Allocate ring-fenced funding specifically for climate-related projects within the social care sector.
- Develop and implement a sustainability strategy for all care providers, focusing on reducing carbon emissions and environmental impact.
- Include social care providers in local resilience planning.
- Upgrade care facilities with energy-efficient infrastructure - such as improved insulation, renewable energy sources, and low-emission transport options.
- Provide training and support for care staff on sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.
- Incorporate environmental sustainability criteria into commissioning and procurement processes for social care services.
- Establish regular monitoring and reporting on sustainability progress, ensuring alignment with Scotland's net-zero targets.
- Engage with people who access care support, families, and the wider community to promote awareness and participation in climate-friendly initiatives within social care.
- Collaborate with the sector to share best practice and maximise impact.



## ABOUT US

Scottish Care is a membership body, thinktank and social care futures designer. We are an organisation driven by social values. We aim to ensure that social care in Scotland is not only sustainable but also exemplary, reflecting the high standards and compassionate care that our communities deserve. We operate with respect, transparency, and accountability. Our strength lies in partnership working and bringing together people from all over the health and social care system to collaborate effectively. We like to celebrate and share success, we understand political and policy environments, are good at research and design, and we are innovators. We use this knowledge and expertise to influence and create the conditions for change. We are a respected representative trade body and the voice of the independent social care and support sector. We provide support to independent sector care and support providers in Scotland. Scottish Care has been working with Matter of Focus to do a better job at telling our story and to focus on evidencing the impact we have.

Our goal is social care that works for the people of Scotland.

# HELPFUL RESOURCES FROM SCOTTISH CARE

**Overcoming Qualification Barriers in Scottish Social Care 2025** - This Qualifications Report seeks to address the critical challenges faced by the independent social care sector in Scotland regarding mandatory qualifications for the workforce.

**Myth Busting Compassion in Crisis 2025**- This report evidences the financial contribution of the social care sector to the Scottish economy.

**Scottish Care Nursing Workforce report 2025**- This briefing report presents findings from Scottish Care's 2025 Nursing Survey, the first since 2021, capturing the lived realities of nurses and providers across Scotland's independent social care sector.

**Ethical Commissioning for the Independent Sector: Rights Respect and Redistribution 2024** - Scottish Care's research report outlines our position on the implementation of ethical commissioning and procurement.

**International Recruitment Survey Findings**- 2024 This report highlights current challenges facing social care international recruitment through members reporting concerns.





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