Scottish Care

Social care that works for Scotland

Issue 104
Autumn 2026

BULLETIN



NATIONAL CARE HOME CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION 2026

Scottish Care
Social care that works for Scotland

CARE CREATES



Explore the story of #CareHome26

VISIBLE · VIABLE · VALUED · VISIONARY

Throughout the day, we'll hear different voices, explore new ideas and share conversations about what it takes to create a care home that truly feels like home.



Friday 13th November 2026

Hilton Hotel, 1 William Street, Glasgow

Be part of the story
Share your thoughts, photos and highlights from the day and join the conversation online with *#CareCreates #CareHome26*

SCAN

Scan the QR codes

for speaker info, insight session info and the full programme.

Speaker info

Sessions info

Programme

Exhibitor Floor Plan

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Cover image courtesy of Perth and Kinross HSCP from the 2026 Go4Gold Games

EDITORIAL

BY PROFESSOR DONALD MACASKILL, CHIEF EXECUTIVE



The Foundation of Reform

I am writing this as we are entering another period of discussion and debate around reform of social care. Over the years I have participated in more social care reform discussions than I can readily count. There have been commissions, reviews, consultations and strategies. Some have led to significant change. Others have faded from memory. Yet one lesson has remained constant throughout them all.

Successful reform is never really about structures.

Structures matter, of course. Questions of governance, accountability and funding are all crucial. But these are the scaffolding rather than the building itself. The true foundation of reform is relationship.

Social care is, at its heart, a profoundly relational endeavour. Every day it is expressed in the bond between a member of staff and the person they support, in the trust a family places in a service, and in the connections that enable individuals to live lives of meaning and belonging within their communities.

Because care is relational, reform must be too.

Whatever changes Scotland may choose to pursue in the years ahead, success will ultimately depend upon the quality of the relationships we build and sustain.

Relationships between government and providers. Between commissioners and those delivering support. Between professionals and communities. Between policymakers and people with lived experience.

Where trust is absent, reform struggles. Where people feel unheard, reform fragments. Where partnership is replaced by suspicion, progress slows and opportunities are lost.

The challenges facing social care are considerable. We need greater sustainability, stronger workforce support and parity of respect and treatment, improved access and a renewed confidence in the future. None of these ambitions will be achieved by organisational design alone. They require collaboration, honesty and a willingness to listen to experiences that may differ from our own.

Perhaps that is why the question we should continually ask ourselves is not simply what kind of system we wish to create, but what sort of relationships we wish to foster.

If we can nurture relationships characterised by respect, trust and shared purpose, then much becomes possible. If we fail to do so, even the most carefully designed structures will struggle to deliver the change we seek.

The future of social care will undoubtedly be shaped by policy and legislation. But it will be sustained by something far more human. In the end, reform begins, and succeeds, through relationship.

@DrDMacaskill

DEPUTY CEO UPDATE



Karen Hedge
Deputy CEO
Scottish Care

Autumn reflections: sustaining care, strengthening voice, shaping reform

Autumn is always a moment of movement in social care: winter planning begins, policy conversations sharpen and the reality facing providers becomes more visible. This year, that moment comes alongside the Scottish Government's Programme for Government.

For people unable to access the right support where and when they need it, and for families carrying the strain when the system cannot respond, these commitments matter deeply. The ambition to shift more care out of hospitals and into communities, reduce unnecessary hospital stays and support more people to be cared for at home is welcome but it will only be realised if the independent social care sector is sustainable, valued and properly resourced.

Reform must be real, not abstract

The language of reform must now translate into practical change. Governance changes alone will not deliver better outcomes unless matched by investment in workforce, commissioning, prevention, digital infrastructure and fair funding. Social care is not simply a pressure valve for the NHS. It is a human rights service, a community anchor, a major employer and a contributor to Scotland's wellbeing and resilience. It must be an equal partner from the beginning, and Scottish Care is ready to fulfil this role on behalf of our members.

The value of our members

Across the sector, Scottish Care members continue to show resilience, creativity and courage. They are responding to complexity, supporting staff, strengthening partnerships and keeping people at the centre in circumstances that remain deeply challenging.

As a membership organisation and innovation hub, our role is to make that work visible: turning operational experience into evidence, influencing policy, supporting ethical innovation and ensuring reform is shaped by those who understand care delivery every day. This is a moment for realism, but also confidence. Social care already creates value for people, families, communities and Scotland's economy. Our task is to ensure that value is recognised, sustained and built into the next chapter of reform.

Stay connected

This autumn, our member survey programme is a central part of that work. Members have told us where pressures are being felt most clearly, from hospital transitions and Care Inspectorate experience to international recruitment, technology and digital innovation, workforce and financial sustainability. We are now asking members to help turn individual experience into robust collective evidence.

We know survey requests take time, so our commitment is clear: we will report back on what we hear, how the evidence is used, and what influence or change follows. Members do not need to respond to every survey, but where a topic reflects your organisation's experience, your voice strengthens our national picture and helps move insight into action.

Autumn reminds us that change is inevitable, but it can also be purposeful. Together, we can ensure reform is shaped not only by pressure, but by partnership, courage and the enduring belief that care creates value for us all.

@hegeit

MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT UPDATE



Stefanie Callaghan
Membership Support Manager
Scottish Care

A Membership Shaped by Members

Hello everyone,

As we move into autumn, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on some of the progress we've made together over recent months and share a little of what's still to come.

Throughout this year, Scottish Care has been focused on one key question: **how can we deliver even more value for our members?**

Since launching our new website and CRM platform back in March, we've continued to invest in improving the ways members connect with us, access support, influence our work and engage with one another. We've developed new resources, strengthened support for our Branch Chairs, created member video guides, refreshed our membership materials, expanded opportunities for engagement and, most recently, launched our Season of Surveys.

Everything we've been doing has been driven by the same goal: making sure your membership delivers the support, information, connections and influence you need.

Making the Most of the Members Area

Many of you will already have explored our website and Members Area since it launched earlier this year. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to log in, update their details and begin using the platform.

As we continue to develop and enhance the site, we'd encourage members to make it their first stop for all things Scottish Care.

Whether you're looking for resources, events, news, consultations, surveys, member-only information or opportunities to get involved, the Members Area is increasingly becoming the central hub for your membership.

We know that new ways of working take time, which is why we've also developed a super quick but clear members video guide to help you navigate the platform and make the most of everything available.

And if you've not logged in recently, now is the perfect time. We're currently offering a £100 prize draw for members who check and update their organisational details.

Your Voice, Your Priorities

Last month we launched our **Season of Surveys**, that will run through the next month or so. We created these surveys following feedback from members who told us they wanted more opportunities to share their experiences and influence our work.

We listened.

Over the coming weeks we'll continue gathering evidence on the issues that matter most to providers across Scotland. Every response helps us build a stronger picture of the challenges, opportunities and priorities facing the sector, giving us robust evidence to take into conversations with government, regulators and partners.

The topics we're exploring have come directly from you as our members. This is your opportunity to help shape Scottish Care's work and ensure your voice is heard where it matters most.

Strengthening Local Connections

One area we're particularly passionate about is strengthening local engagement through our Branch Chair network.

This year we've invested in new support materials, expanded our Meet the Team profiles and continued to develop opportunities for members to connect at local branch meetings.

Branch Chairs play a vital role in helping us understand what's happening on the ground and ensuring local issues inform national conversations.

If you haven't attended a branch meeting recently, I'd encourage you to do so.

Get to know your Branch Chair.

Connect with fellow members.

Share what's happening in your organisation.

Ask questions.

Get involved.

The members who get the most value from Scottish Care are often those who build strong local connections and actively participate in the wider membership community.

More Resources, More Opportunities

You may also have noticed a range of new membership resources and materials launched over recent months along with our brand new annual report.

These have been developed to better showcase the breadth of support available through Scottish Care and to help members make the most of every aspect of their membership.

Whether it's events, webinars, resources, guidance, networking opportunities, learning programmes, branch meetings, consultations or national influencing work, we want members to feel informed, connected and supported.

One Question for You

As we continue to develop new resources, opportunities and ways to engage, I'd love to hear your thoughts.

What else do you need from us?

What would make your membership even more valuable?

What information, support or opportunities would help you most?

Many of the developments we've introduced this year have come directly from member feedback, and we want that to continue.

Looking Ahead

There is no doubt that the sector continues to face significant challenges, but what continues to inspire me is the commitment, innovation and resilience shown by our members every single day.

Over the past year, we've invested in new systems, new resources, stronger local networks, new opportunities to engage, and new ways for your voice to shape our work. We'll continue to build on that because supporting members is, and always will be, at the heart of everything we do.

But Scottish Care is at its strongest when it is shaped by its members.

We can only truly understand the challenges you face if you share them with us. We can only influence change if we have the evidence. We can only strengthen our collective voice when members engage, participate and help guide our priorities.

So as we move into the months ahead, please stay connected.

Visit the Members Area. Take part in our surveys. Join your local branch meetings. Get to know your Branch Chair. Share your experiences, challenges and ideas with us.

And perhaps most importantly, tell us what you need.

Because this is your organisation as much as it is ours.

Everything we do is strengthened by your insight, your experience and your willingness to work alongside us.

Together, we can ensure Scottish Care continues to be a strong voice, a trusted source of support and a community that delivers real value for members across Scotland.

Thank you, as always, for everything you do and for the trust you place in us.

We look forward to continuing that journey together.

Stefanie

@scottieabroad

CARE CREATES: A FRAMEWORK FOR THE REFORM OF SOCIAL

What should the future of social care in Scotland look like, and how do we make sure reform delivers meaningful change for people?

Scottish Care has published *Care Creates: A Framework for the Reform of Social Care* in Scotland, a new collection designed to contribute to the ongoing discussion about the future of social care.

At its heart is a simple idea: social care is about much more than services and structures. It enables people to live independently, maintain relationships, participate in their communities and exercise choice and control over their lives.

The collection therefore starts not with who should run social care, but with what we want social care to achieve.

Care Creates asks two connected questions: what must improve under any model, and where should responsibility sit?

It considers issues including funding, workforce, commissioning, unmet need and people's influence over decisions, alongside the question of where authority, funding and accountability should sit.

The collection explores three possible approaches: a **Scottish Local Care Compact, One System, Shared Responsibility**, and a **National Care Trust for Scotland**. It also draws on learning from Ireland.

Importantly, these are not Scottish Care's endorsed models or recommendations. They are presented to encourage discussion, test different ideas and help consider what different approaches could mean in practice

A central message throughout Care Creates is that changing structures alone will not resolve the challenges facing social care.

Whatever approach is taken, reform needs to create the conditions for good care and support to flourish. That means addressing areas such as sustainable funding, workforce, provider sustainability, prevention, rights, local responsiveness and meaningful involvement in decision-making.

Ultimately, reform should be judged by the difference it makes to people's lives and whether social care can create more possibility, independence, connection and participation.

We hope the *Care Creates: A Framework for the Reform of Social Care in Scotland* encourages further discussion about what should be protected, what needs to change and what any future approach to social care reform must deliver.

Read the full paper on https://scottishcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/Care-Creates-Reform-Paper-Web-Ver.pdf

FOR THE ATTENTION OF
SCOTLAND'S CARE HOME MANAGERS

A CONFESSION.

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POLICY & RESEARCH: TURNING EVIDENCE INTO INFLUENCE



Becca Young
Policy & Research Manager
Scottish Care

It has been a busy autumn for Scottish Care's Policy & Research team. Against continued pressure across social care and a changing national policy landscape, our focus has been on connecting policy with members' experiences and turning those experiences into credible evidence for change.

Building the evidence around what matters

Our autumn research programme has focused on issues consistently raised by members, helping us understand both individual experiences and the wider challenges facing independent social care.

However, gathering evidence is only the starting point. The next step is ensuring that evidence informs policy discussions, parliamentary engagement and opportunities to influence practice.

Keeping social care visible as policy changes

Alongside our research, the team continues to monitor and respond to consultations, parliamentary scrutiny and emerging policy affecting independent social care.

Recent activity has included public service reform, Scotland's future spending priorities, proposed changes to SSSC registration requirements, economic and pre-Budget scrutiny, and work around food, fluid and nutritional care standards.

Social care is shaped by decisions far beyond policies explicitly labelled 'social care'. Workforce regulation, public finances, employment and wider public service reform can all affect the sustainability and delivery of support.

Our role is to join those dots, identify where developments matter for the sector and ensure the experience of independent social care is represented within wider policy discussions.

From evidence to influence

Research, consultation responses and political engagement are closely connected.

Members hold vital knowledge about what is changing, what is working and where policy or systems are colliding with the realities of delivering care and support.

Our autumn research programme captures this approach: **Your voice. Our evidence. Collective action.**

Over the coming months, we will continue to share what the evidence is telling us, how it is informing Scottish Care's policy and influencing work, and where members can help strengthen the collective case for change.

Please keep an eye on the Members Area of the Scottish Care website for further updates, and contact the Policy team if you would like to be involved in ongoing or future work.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS: TAKE PART IN SCOTTISH CARE'S AUTUMN SURVEY PROGRAMME



Help turn members' experiences into evidence, influence and action.

Scottish Care is launching a short autumn survey programme shaped by the issues members have raised with us. Your responses will help build a clearer picture of what is happening across Scotland and strengthen our collective voice. This programme will help bring those experiences together so they can inform policy, research, improvement and engagement with decision-makers.

We know your time is precious. In return, we will share what we hear, how the evidence is used, and what action follows.

You said. We listened.

What's coming up

Hospital transitions - Closed

Care Inspectorate experience - Closed

AI in Social Care - Now open

Workforce and financial sustainability - Open (November)

International recruitment, sponsorship and racial equality - Coming soon (November/December)

AI in Social Care: Where is the sector now? Survey Now Open

Our AI in Social Care Member Survey is gathering insight into current and future use of AI across the independent care sector.

Whether you're already using AI extensively or are just beginning to explore opportunities, we'd welcome your views.

Your responses will help shape Scottish Care's work to support the safe and responsible use of AI across the sector

Take part in the AI in Social Care survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GBRSV3M

How to take part

Each survey will usually be open for two to three weeks. Please respond where the topic reflects your experience, or share it with the colleague best placed to contribute.

Thank you for helping turn experience into evidence - and evidence into action.

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PARTNERS FOR INTEGRATION – CONNECTING THROUGH ACTIVITY

Partners for Integration are working alongside care providers and local partners to create opportunities that support wellbeing, connection and meaningful participation across Scotland.

From sporting challenges and creative activities to local networks bringing care services together, this work demonstrates that meaningful activity is about much more than filling a programme. It can help people build relationships, discover new interests, connect with their communities and enjoy experiences beyond their own care setting.

Recent activity across Perth and Kinross, Dundee, Falkirk, Edinburgh, North Highland and Argyll and Bute shows how local collaboration can help make that happen.

Go4Gold brings care homes together in Perth and Kinross



In Perth and Kinross, care homes and day centres have once again come together through **Go4Gold**, a long-running initiative promoting wellbeing, creativity and social connection through shared activities and friendly competition.

This year's *Under the Sea* theme inspired residents, service users and staff to get involved in a wide range of activities, including creative artwork, costumes, games and team challenges.

Alongside activities taking place within individual homes and day centres, the programme included opportunities for people from different care homes and day centres to come together in person, enjoy shared experiences and celebrate their achievements.

The programme culminated in the **Go4Gold 2026 Awards Ceremony**, which premiered on 1 October to coincide with the International Day of Older Persons. The ceremony recognised the creativity and involvement of residents, staff and volunteers throughout this year's programme.

Watch the Go4Gold 2026 Awards Ceremony: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdvnOSHr1Yw





Going for Gold in Dundee



The same focus on connection and participation can be seen in Dundee, where the **Dundee Activity Network (DAN)** recently held its seventh annual Going for Gold event at the Regional Performance Centre.

Held on 25 September to mark International Older Persons Day, celebrated annually on 1 October, the event brings together care homes and day care services from across Dundee for a day of activity, teamwork and celebration.

This year's theme was the Football World Cup, with each participating care home and day care service representing a different country. Participants created flags and team badges, dressed in their country's colours and took part in activities and friendly competition.



Everyone taking part received a medal and certificate in recognition of their involvement, with additional prizes awarded across the different categories.

Going for Gold is just one part of the wider work of Dundee Activity Network. The network brings wellbeing and activity coordinators together every six weeks to share ideas, build relationships and co-produce local initiatives, alongside larger quarterly events shaped around the interests and feedback of participants.

One of the most significant outcomes has been the relationships that have developed between services. Staff now regularly visit other homes to exchange ideas and good practice, while organisations are increasingly partnering on community activities and joint events.

For residents and people attending day services, this means more opportunities to meet people outside their own service, develop friendships and become involved in their local communities.



Widening opportunities in Falkirk

This collaborative approach is also developing through the **Falkirk Care Home Activity Forum**, where the focus extends beyond simply sharing activity ideas.

The forum is bringing care homes together to explore how they can share programmes, resources, transport and costs, opening up opportunities that might be difficult for an individual service to provide on its own.

Importantly, the group is also looking more closely at what meaningful activity achieves for people.

Rather than measuring success only through the

number of activities taking place, there is a focus on understanding whether residents enjoy and benefit from the opportunities available, whether the same people participate each time, and what can be done to include people who might not normally choose to take part.

There is real potential in care homes opening activities to one another. Whether it is a shared lunch, an interest-based group, a day out or simply an opportunity to meet someone new, collaboration can give people access to experiences their own home may not normally be able to offer.

It can also help services build a richer picture of the difference activity makes, including its impact on choice, connection, participation and wellbeing.

Supporting Strength and Independence in Edinburgh



In Edinburgh, our Independent Sector Lead, Rene Rigby has been involved in the **Strength and Balance Test of Change,** working alongside Edinburgh Leisure and Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership to support the physical health and wellbeing of people living in care homes.

The three-month pilot aimed to improve mobility and reduce falls, with participants showing improvements in physical function and a 100% reduction in falls among those taking part at Glencairn Care Home.

Rene said: *"In addition to the physical benefits, there is strong evidence of improved wellbeing. Feedback from residents, relatives and care home staff consistently highlighted increased confidence, improved mood, greater independence and enhanced quality of life."*

The project is another example of how Partners for Integration can help bring the independent care sector and local partners together to test approaches that support prevention, wellbeing and better outcomes for people.



World Cup Games across North Highland and Argyll and Bute



Sport also provided the inspiration for the **Care Home World Cup Games 2026**, delivered across North Highland and Argyll and Bute through the Highland and Argyll & Bute Meaningful Activity Network.

The programme involved **25 care homes across the two areas**, with the **final report recording a 56% participation rate among residents**.

Homes were encouraged to make the World Cup theme their own, with activities ranging from football

games and competitions to international food, arts and crafts, quizzes, sweepstakes and cultural activities.



The programme created opportunities for participation at different levels and the evaluation captured examples of residents who would not usually take part in organised activities choosing to get involved.

The report highlighted outcomes including increased confidence and participation, stronger family and community relationships, greater social and intergenerational connection and a strengthened sense of belonging.

Read the report here: https://scottishcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/Care-Home-World-Cup-Games-2026-final-report.pdf



More than an activity

What all of these examples show is the difference that meaningful activity can make to people's everyday lives.

It can be a chance to try something new, meet people, rediscover an interest or simply enjoy being part of something with others. Just as importantly, bringing care services together means ideas and opportunities can be shared, giving people access to experiences that might not otherwise be available to them.

The work taking place across the Partners for Integration team shows what can happen when services work together and keep the interests and choices of the people they support at the centre. Through local networks, partnerships and shared initiatives, more opportunities are being created for people to get involved, make connections and enjoy activities that are meaningful to them.



SCOTTISH CARE WINS WORKFORCE NORTH AWARD





Scottish Care is delighted to have won the Workforce North Award for Innovative Approaches to Talent Attraction and Development at the 2026 Prosper Highlands & Islands Business Excellence Awards.

The award was presented at the ceremony in Inverness and recognises the work led by Laura Dobinson, Scottish Care's Independent Sector Career & Attraction Lead in Highland, to promote careers in social care and develop stronger pathways into the sector.

At the heart of this work is Laura Dobinson, Scottish Care's Independent Sector Career & Attraction Lead in Highland. Laura has been working alongside care providers and partners to raise the profile of careers in social care, create stronger connections with people considering a career in the sector and help make local opportunities more visible

Recent activity has included careers events, engagement with students and jobseekers, and collaboration with care providers, education and employability partners. This has provided opportunities for people to learn more about the variety of roles available and hear first-hand what a career in social care can offer

More recently, Laura led a Social Service Careers event in partnership with UHI Inverness, bringing together 26 stands from care providers and education partners. She has also supported NHS Highland Career Inspiration Weeks, helping young people explore careers in health and social care, and worked with local employment partners to connect jobseekers with vacancies.

But for Laura, the award is very much a shared achievement. Reflecting on being shortlisted, she highlighted the contribution of care providers across the Highlands who have opened their doors to students, attended careers events, offered work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, shared their stories and championed careers in care.

It is this collaborative approach that continues to help create stronger pathways into social care and showcase the rewarding careers available across the sector.

Laura was joined on the night by local care providers and Gwen Harrison, Scottish Care's Independent Sector Lead for North Highland, making the award a chance to celebrate the collective effort taking place across the area.

The Prosper Highlands & Islands Business Excellence Awards received a record number of nominations this year, recognising organisations and individuals demonstrating leadership, innovation and positive impact across the region.

For Scottish Care, the award is an important recognition of what can be achieved when providers, education, employability services and other local partners work together to promote social care as a rewarding career and strengthen the workforce for the future.

A huge congratulations to Laura Dobinson, and to all the care providers and partners who have played a part in this achievement.





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HELP SHAPE SCOTTISH CARE'S CLIMATE, NET ZERO AND RESILIENCE WORK

Climate change is increasingly becoming a care issue.

Over the last few years, Scottish Care has seen growing policy interest in climate change, net zero, sustainability and resilience. Through work such as Care Creates and our wider engagement with government, partners and stakeholders, we have sought to ensure that the voice of social care is heard in these important discussions.

As the impact of climate change becomes more visible, we know that providers are facing practical challenges and opportunities. More frequent adverse weather events can affect continuity of care, staffing and travel, while rising temperatures raise important questions about overheating in care settings and the wellbeing of those we support.

To help shape Scottish Care's future policy and influencing work, we are looking to establish a Climate, Net Zero and Resilience Working Group for members.

The group will provide an opportunity to:

- Share examples of innovation and best practice
- Identify barriers to progress
- Influence policy and advocacy priorities
- Explore practical approaches to improving resilience and sustainability across the sector

We know that meaningful change requires the right conditions. For example, providers have highlighted the value of grants, interest-free loans and other investment mechanisms to support energy transition and reduce long-term costs. There may also be opportunities to consider workforce travel support during periods of adverse weather, as well as practical measures to help services adapt to increasingly warm summers.

Whether you are already leading sustainability initiatives, developing resilience plans, or simply interested in helping shape future policy, we would love to hear from you.

To express your interest in joining the group, please contact Tracy Doyle at tracy.doyle@scottishcare.org.

Together, we can help ensure social care is both sustainable for the future and resilient in the face of a changing climate.

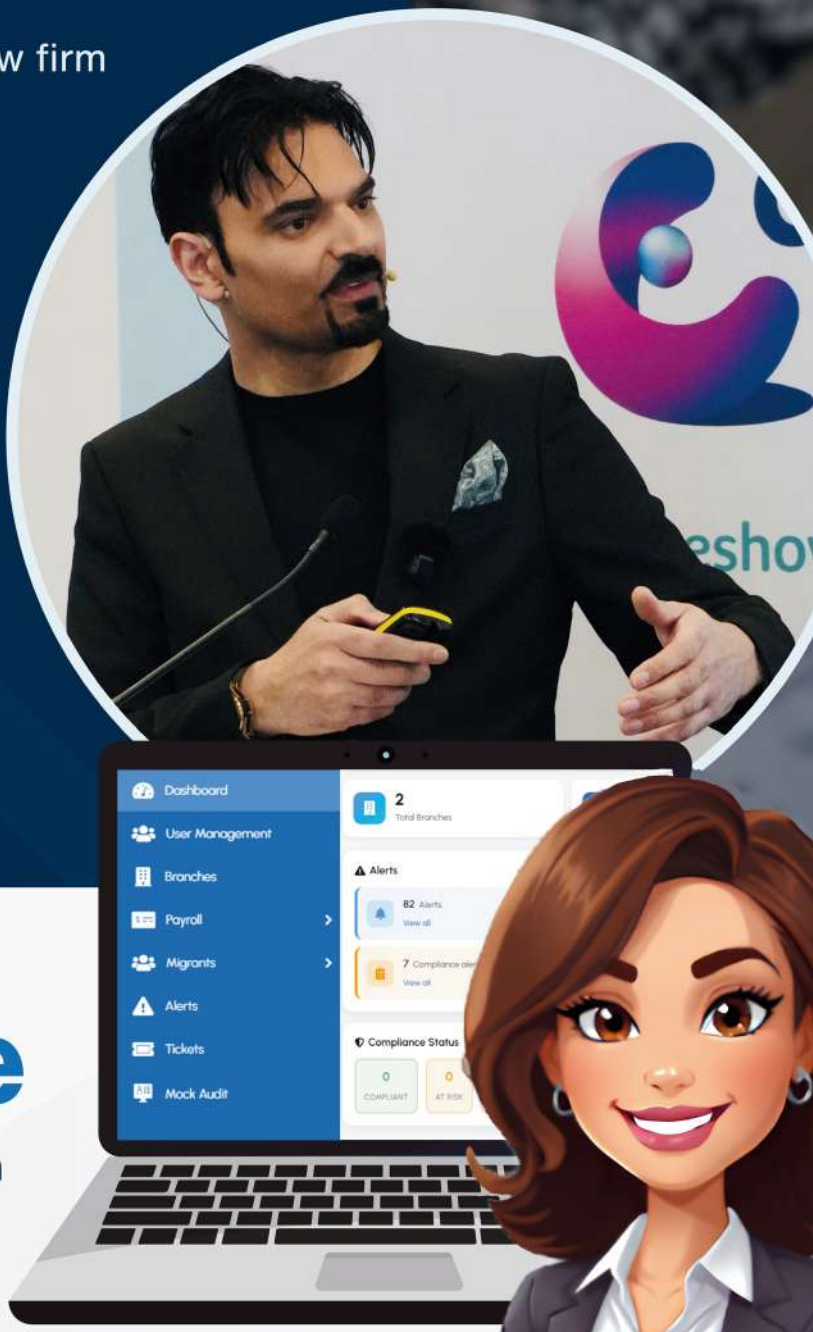


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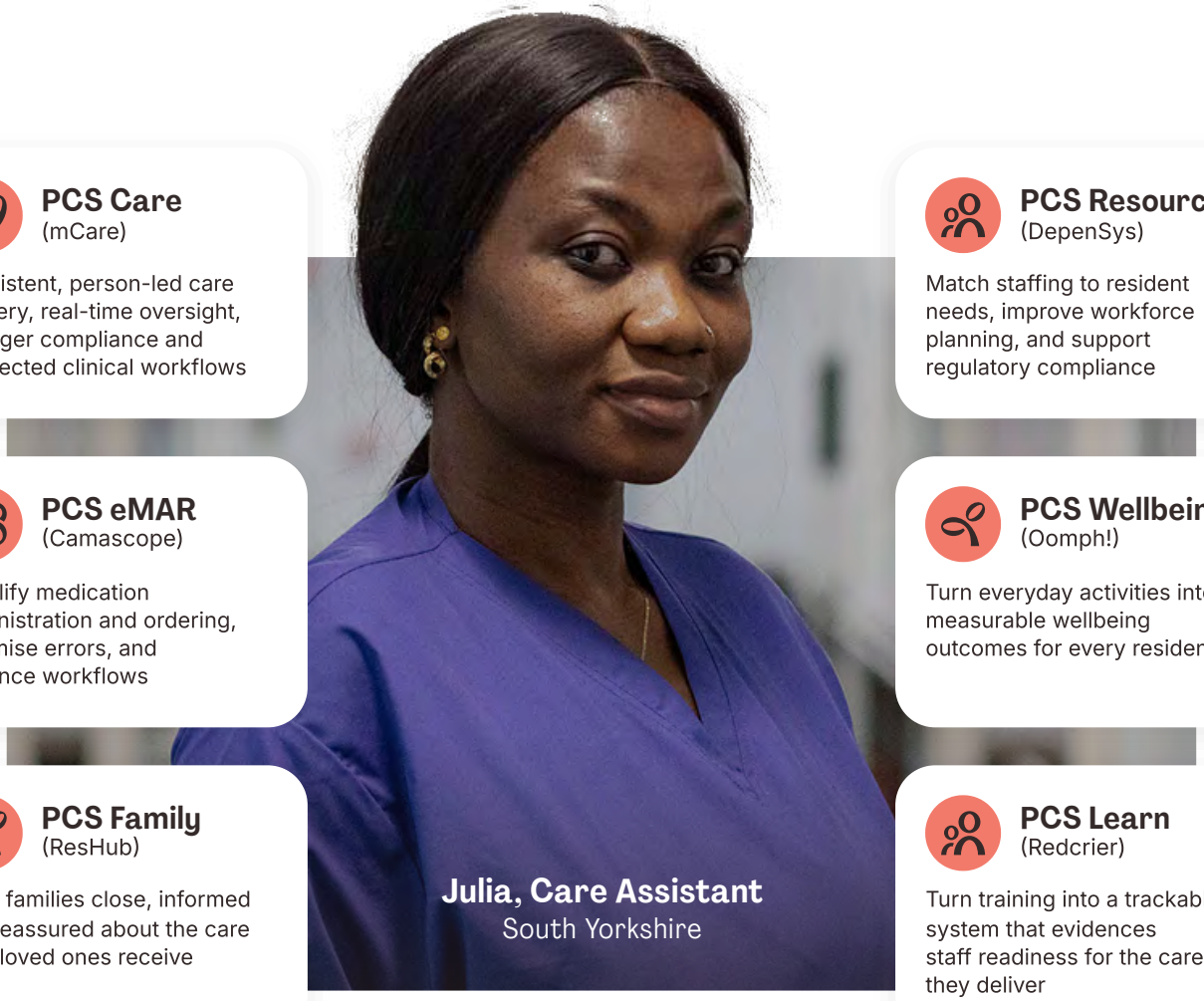
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CARE INSPECTORATE



Katy Jenks
Senior Improvement Adviser
Mental Health/Learning Disabilities
Care Inspectorate

We're helping care homes reduce restrictive practice

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Scottish Care members at the Care Home Conference 2026 in Glasgow in November. I will be joined by representatives from Abbotsford Care to deliver an Insight Session on reducing restrictive practice.

Our session will specifically look at how social care services can reduce restrictive practice by understanding the legal and human rights frameworks that underpin safe, ethical and person-centred support. We will also examine current legislation in Scotland and how it applies to capacity, consent, proportionality, necessity, and the duties we all have to uphold people's rights and dignity. I hope that attendees will be impressed with the results from the Care Inspectorate's *Knowledge is Power* programme that has been undertaken in collaboration with Abbotsford Care.

Knowledge is Power aims to reduce the use of restrictive interventions by 30% while empowering staff to better understand, identify and challenge restrictive practices in everyday care. The Care Inspectorate launched the programme in January with services in the east of Scotland.

Firstly, the programme recognises that restrictive practice is used in some care settings, often because staff lack confidence and knowledge about what constitutes a restriction and how legislation in Scotland should be applied. Our inspections and assessments are also finding that restrictive interventions are not always being reviewed, and opportunities to explore less restrictive alternatives are often missed.

Using the Scottish Approach to Change, the project focuses on building staff knowledge, creating psychologically safe environments for reflection and discussion, and introducing practical quality improvement tools.

In the east coast care homes we worked with, staff took part in a series of learning sessions to demystify Scottish legislation and better understand how it relates to human rights and legal frameworks. We also worked with services to develop dynamic risk registers to identify, monitor and review restrictions. Teams were encouraged to take what we call a "think big, start small" approach by reviewing one person's restrictions at a time and testing alternative ways of providing support.

One of the programme's strongest outcomes came from Abbotsford Care in Newburgh, where staff reported significant increases in staff confidence and understanding. As their knowledge grew, teams became more willing to question established practices, distinguish between perceived and actual risk, and explore positive approaches that promoted people's independence and rights.

The results are encouraging. Services reported reductions in both blanket and individual restrictions, with one care home achieving a 90% reduction in

blanket restrictions. Dynamic restrictive-practice registers are now embedded in practice, and people experiencing care have individual plans focused on reducing restrictions wherever possible. Staff feedback also highlighted a lasting cultural shift, with greater confidence in using quality improvement methods, data and reflective practice to drive ongoing change.

Overall, the programme shows that when staff are given the knowledge and support to challenge existing practices, their confidence grows and meaningful and sustainable improvements in people's rights, choices and quality of life can be achieved.

I'll be speaking at 11:50 with three programme participants from Abbotsford Care, where we will go into much more detail about how these results were achieved and can be replicated in other care homes. We are sure attendees will gain a strong and practical understanding of how to reduce restrictive practice while strengthening rights-based care.

Katy Jenks is a Senior Improvement Advisor (Mental Health/Learning Disabilities) at the Care Inspectorate and leads its Knowledge is Power programme to reduce restrictive practice.

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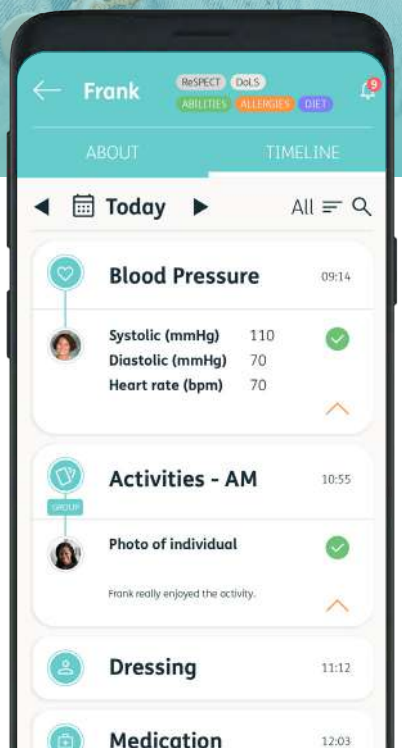
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Covid-19: not yet out the other side...

BRODIES LLP

More than six years on from the Covid-19 pandemic, the "new normal" is now, for most, simply "normal". For many care home operators, however, the impact of that unprecedented time continues to endure.

As many in the sector will be aware, Operation Koper is the Police investigation, overseen by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), into Covid-19 deaths in Scottish care homes. At the time of writing, around 2,500 deaths, spanning more than 300 care homes and 180 operators, remain under active investigation.

The Crown has indicated that it anticipates several Fatal Accident Inquiries (FAIs) and a number of criminal prosecutions to arise from Operation Koper. Care home operators should therefore be aware of the potential implications should they become involved in such proceedings.

Fatal Accident Inquires (FAIs)

An FAI is an inquiry brought by the Procurator Fiscal before a Sheriff, who is to establish the circumstances of a death and consider what steps could be taken to prevent similar deaths in future.

Affected organisations may participate in an inquiry and present evidence. At the conclusion of the process, the Sheriff issues a Determination setting out findings relating to the death and may make recommendations aimed at preventing similar deaths in future.

Although an FAI does not determine criminal or civil liability, adverse findings or recommendations can result in significant reputational damage, increased regulatory scrutiny and commercial disruption. Any findings and recommendations made, together with the organisation's response, are published.

Potential criminal prosecutions

In relation to criminal proceedings, the most likely charges would be under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and related health and safety regulations.

Organisations convicted of health and safety offences face unlimited fines. Directors and senior managers may also face personal prosecution where an offence has been committed with their consent or connivance or has been attributable to their neglect. Convicted individuals can face an unlimited fine and/or imprisonment for up to two years.

How can Brodies help?

Brodies' Health and Safety team, led by Clare Bone, Partner and Criminal Solicitor Advocate, has extensive experience advising organisations facing investigations by Police Scotland and the Health and Safety Executive.

The team is currently supporting a number of care home operators involved in Operation Koper, advising on the investigation process, likely next steps and measures that can be taken now to protect their position as far as possible.

Specialists in investigation, regulation, governance and reputational risk, Brodies' Health and Safety Team provides comprehensive support to organisations operating in one of the UK's most highly regulated and scrutinised sectors.

If your organisation is being investigated as part of Operation Koper, or you would like to understand the potential implications of ongoing investigations, we would be pleased to discuss how we can assist.



Clare Bone, Partner Brodies LLP
+44 (0)141 428 4100
clare.bone@brodies.com

DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND UPDATE

Disclosure Scotland are an executive agency of the Scottish Government. We help organisations make safer decisions when they are recruiting people. Here's what you should know this autumn.

Social care fee waivers:

From 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2027, social care workers in Scotland will benefit from free Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme applications when starting a new role.

We published commonly asked questions and answers, to help people understand the changes for social care workers.

The initiative, funded through the Scottish Government's 2026/27 Budget, reflects the Scottish Government's recognition of the exceptional contribution made by the social care workforce, and its commitment to fairer working conditions for those delivering vital services across Scotland's communities.

To qualify for the fee waiver, applicants must have started a new job or taken up a new position with their existing employer in an eligible role and must have applied for their PVG check from 1 August 2026.

PVG scheme disclosures also remain free for volunteers working with qualifying voluntary organisations, regardless of sector.

Full details of which roles and areas of social care are eligible for the fee waiver are available on the Scottish Government website.

Self-service tool:

Earlier this year we launched a new self-service feature to our online service, making it simpler and more efficient for countersignatories (CSGs) to manage PVG scheme memberships.

This allows CSGs to remove their organisation's interest in PVG scheme members they no longer need to monitor, directly through their Organisation Account. It offers time savings, improved information management, greater control over safeguarding responsibilities, and increased transparency through activity tracking.

CSGs logging into their account will see a notification prompting them to review their PVG scheme member list. A dedicated 'scheme members' section allows users to search for individuals and remove interest either one at a time or in bulk, making it straightforward to keep records accurate and up to date. All changes are recorded in an 'activity history' tab, providing a clear audit trail for organisations.

If you're a countersignatory, we'd encourage you to log in and review your scheme member list soon, keeping your records accurate helps everyone, including your organisation and the people you support.

Providers who are not registered with Disclosure Scotland directly and continue to apply through Scottish Care's own accredited body account with Disclosure Scotland can manage PVG memberships by emailing dsupdate@disclosurescotland.gov.scot with the name, date of birth and PVG membership number of anyone who has left their role.

How we're performing:

We are monitoring our service delivery performance daily and we are undertaking long term application volume forecasts to help us allocate resources. We also recruited more staff to help us through busier periods.

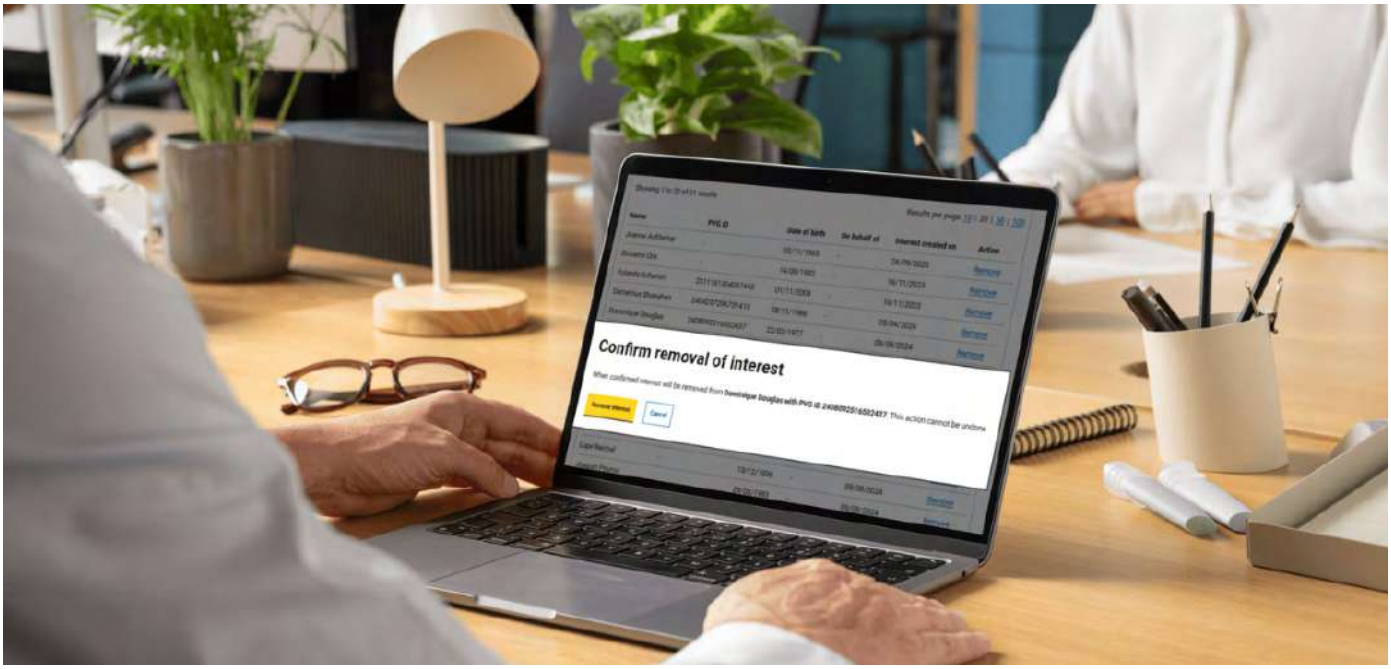
Between 1 June and 31 August 2026, Disclosure Scotland completed 147,724 applications, with an average processing time of 4 days. During this period, 99.8% of applications were completed within 14 days.

The figures also show that 99.4% of applications were

submitted online during the same period, reflecting the continued shift towards digital services as a fast and efficient way to use the PVG scheme.

The 14-day Service Level Agreement measures the time Disclosure Scotland spends processing an application. In some cases, we cannot continue processing until we receive additional information from a customer, countersignatory or other external partner. When this happens, the overall time taken to complete the application may be longer than 14 calendar days, even though the application meets our 14-day processing target.

We publish application volumes and average processing times for each month.



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Lesley Sinclair
Director & Consultant

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DEMENTIA SERVICES DEVELOPMENT CENTRE



David Wilson - Wynne
DSDC Senior Dementia Consultant
University of Stirling

We need to have a more honest and evidence-informed conversation about hospital environments, transitions, and the impact that moving between services can have on people living with a dementia.

At the Dementia Services Development Centre (DSDC), we regularly see how environments can either support a person's confidence and wellbeing or unintentionally increase stress, disorientation, and unmet need. Yet despite growing awareness of dementia, many health and social care environments are still not designed with cognitive change in mind.

For many people living with a dementia, a hospital admission is not simply a change in location. It can represent a significant disruption to familiarity, routine, orientation, and emotional security. The sounds are different. The lighting is different. The pace is different. Faces change frequently. Communication may become more task-focused and less relational. Even navigating to a toilet, understanding signage, or recognising where they are can become increasingly difficult in environments that are busy, clinical, and unfamiliar.

When someone becomes quieter, more withdrawn, changes in their presentation, or increasingly disoriented following a move, we can sometimes view this only through a medical or "behavioural" lens. But we must also ask what role the environment itself is playing. Is the person overwhelmed? Are they struggling to process the noise, visual information, movement, or unpredictability around them? Have they lost the familiarity and rhythm that previously supported their confidence and independence?

The environment is never neutral for a person living with a dementia.

This is why dementia-inclusive design matters so deeply across acute care, community services, housing, and long-term support settings. Features such as appropriate lighting, good visual contrast, reduced glare, legible layouts, quieter spaces, clear wayfinding, access to movement, and consistent points of orientation are not simply aesthetic choices. They are evidence-informed approaches that can directly influence confidence, emotional wellbeing, mobility, nutrition, sleep, and engagement.

Importantly, this is not about creating specialist or segregated environments. It is about creating spaces that are more understandable, enabling, and humane for everyone.

Collectively, we need to move beyond awareness alone and begin critically examining the environments and systems people are expected to navigate every day. Because if someone is struggling within a space, we should not immediately assume the problem sits solely within the individual. Sometimes the environment itself is the barrier.

As professionals, organisations, and communities, we must continue asking ourselves difficult but necessary questions. Are our environments reducing pressure or increasing it? Are our transitions coordinated in ways that preserve familiarity and continuity? Are we supporting orientation, independence, and dignity — or unintentionally undermining them?

People living with a dementia deserve environments that work with them, not against them.

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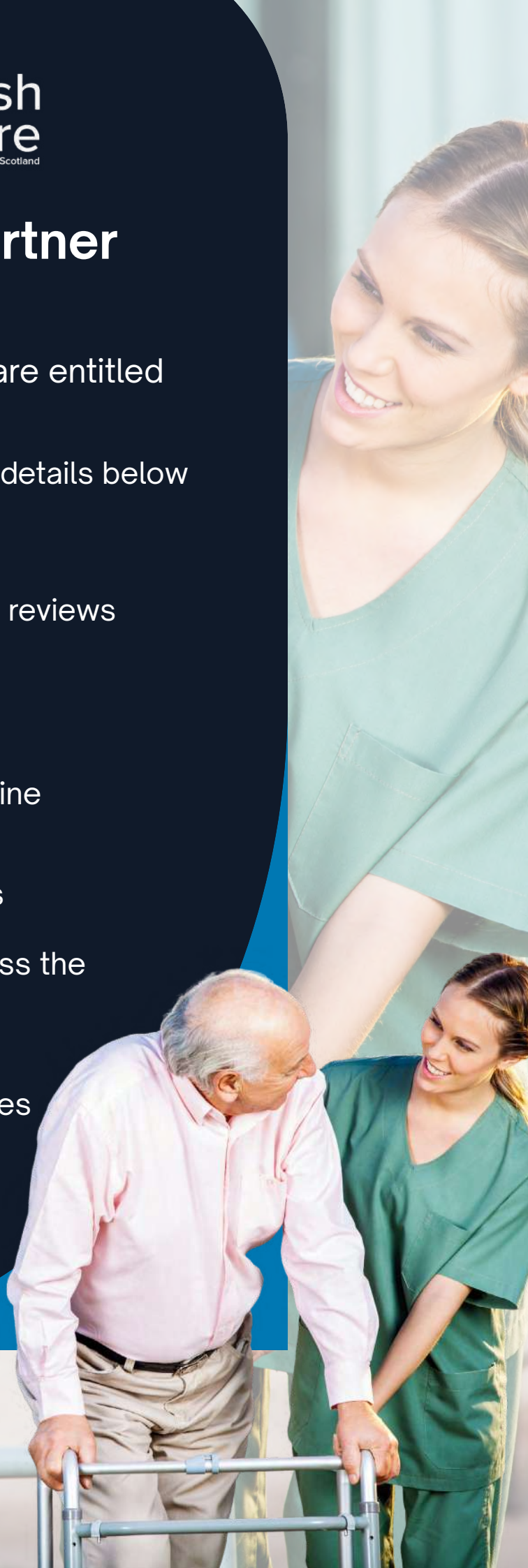
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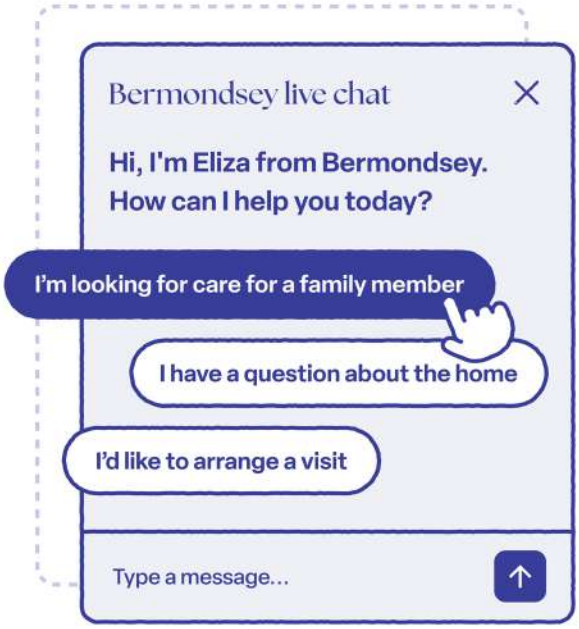
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SSSC UPDATES

Scottish Social Services Council

Our commitment to support learning needs in adult social care

We understand that in adult social care learning never stops. As people's needs change and new approaches to practice emerge, ongoing learning helps support you to stay confident, capable and ready to deliver high quality care and support.

Changes to our CPL website

We've created a new continuous professional learning (CPL) website to sit in our Learning Zone. The site brings together guidance and support for your continuous learning, including a quick guide to meeting your CPL requirements, further detail on the core learning elements and provides access to a wide range of learning resources and tools in one place, helping you find learning that is relevant to your role and stage of your career.

Whether you're new to social services or looking to develop specialist knowledge, the website offers flexible learning opportunities that fit around your work and support your professional development.

New MyLearning badges

The site also includes our MyLearning badges designed to help adult social care workers build practical skills and confidence.

We've recently developed new badges focused on care home activities and meaningful engagement, helping workers create positive experiences for people living in care homes. Another new badge supports learning on palliative care and care around dying, developed to support workers in having compassionate, confident conversations and providing person-centred care at an important time in people's lives.

Working together to support improvement



We're working with the Care Inspectorate and Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSD Scotland) to support improvement in social care.

Using insight from the Care Inspectorate about areas where services and the workforce may need extra support, we've brought together practical learning resources to respond to these needs.

The resources cover a range of topics and are designed to be practical and flexible, helping services reflect on their work, build skills and make improvements in ways that suit their setting.

Our resources are available on the Learning Zone and include:

- Nutrition and Dietetics
- Meaningful Connection
- Leadership in social services

PSD Scotland resources are available on the Social Care Hub on Turas Learn.

By working together, we hope to provide a clearer and more joined-up response to learning needs across the sector, while making it easier for services to access support in one place.

Looking forward

We look forward to continuing to work with Scottish Care members and learning from you what we can do to help you meet your CPL requirements and support you in your professional practice.

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34.8 DEGREES AND THE ROAD UNDER WATER



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Climate risk is already shaping social care in Scotland.

Good social care starts with understanding people: who they are, what matters to them, and how they want to be supported.

Picture someone in her eighties, alone on the top floor of a block where only one small window opens. She has a heart condition, takes medication that makes her more sensitive to heat, and finds the stairs difficult on a good day. Her support is built around all of this: her mobility, her medication, her wish to stay in her own home.

Then the conditions around her change. A warm spell settles in and the flat stops cooling at night, so she sleeps badly and wakes already tired. The power goes out, taking the lift and her equipment with it. A road floods, and the person due at tea-time cannot get through. Nobody has been able to let her know.

Nothing about who she is has changed. What has changed are the conditions around her care, and whether the plan built around her still holds.

None of this is hypothetical. On 19 July 2022, the temperature at Charterhall in the Scottish Borders reached 34.8 degrees, the hottest ever recorded in Scotland, breaking a record that had stood since 2003. Our buildings, including the places people are cared for, were designed for a colder country. They hold heat in.

Flooding is the more widespread risk. SEPA's latest assessment puts around 400,000 properties - nearly one in eight - at medium (or greater?) risk, up from 284,000 in 2018 and projected to reach 634,000 by 2100. SEPA calls it Scotland's most severe climate-related risk.

For people working across social care, climate change can still feel distant or specialist. In practice, it arrives in familiar forms: someone struggling in extreme heat, a carer unable to reach someone because a road has flooded, a power cut, or a small change at home that affects someone's ability to stay safe and well.

The challenge is not to build a new system for any of this. It is to see where climate considerations can strengthen the systems already used to plan and deliver care.

That was the heart of a recent webinar to launch Building Climate-Resilient Social Care: Guidance for Practitioners, developed through the Adaptation Scotland programme with people working across the sector. It drew people from health, social care, local government and related organisations, a reminder of how broad the term 'social care' is, from care homes and care at home to social work teams, personal assistants and the family members who carry the largest share of it.

Climate resilience is not about adding another layer of work to a pressured sector. It is about asking whether the way we plan and deliver care is ready for

the conditions people increasingly face. The simplest place to begin is the care planning process itself.

A 'personalised support plan' already starts with understanding the person: their needs, their preferences, how they want to be supported. Climate considerations sit naturally within that. Could extreme heat affect this person's health or wellbeing? Is their home at risk of flooding, or hard to reach when roads close? What might happen if the usual arrangements for their care were disrupted?

This is not about becoming a climate expert. It is simply about considering how changing weather may affect the person and their care.

Resilience cannot sit within social care alone. The homes people live in, the transport they use and the services around them all shape their ability to stay safe.

The webinar also highlighted connections with work already under way across housing, planning and health. This included Local Development Planning guidance for Scottish local authorities, population-level indicators in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and guidance on retrofitting social housing. Underneath it all sat funding, and what the sector needs as climate impacts grow.

People do not experience services in isolation. For the woman on the top floor, housing, health, transport and care are not separate systems. They are one lived experience.

Awareness that climate change poses risks for social care is no longer the problem. Turning it into practice is. The real test will be whether these conversations continue after the webinar, in care planning meetings, service reviews and decisions about how services are designed.

Climate resilience does not have to be a separate piece of work. It can be part of good care so that when the next hot week, power cut or flooded road arrives, the plan around someone still holds.

ENERGY SUPPORT FOR SCOTTISH CARE MEMBERS

Scottish Care has introduced a new, bespoke partnership with Focus Energy Services to support members with energy and water costs.

We know that energy costs, contracts, and billing continue to be a real concern for many providers. The current energy climate remains challenging, and for some services it has become increasingly difficult to know whether contracts are right, bills are accurate, or when it is best to review arrangements.

Focus Energy Services offers independent advice, including reviews of current contracts, historic bill checks, procurement support, and ongoing contract and billing guidance - specifically tailored to the care sector.

FOCUS energyservices

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Should you wish to know more about our Commercial Partners, or indeed find out more about our application process, please contact fiona.white@scottishcare.org

For more information about our Commercial Partners, including contact details and latest offers for Scottish Care members, please visit the Scottish Care website - https://scottishcare.org/our-commercial-partners/

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Booker offers a broad range of food, drink, cleaning and catering supplies, including fresh, chilled, frozen and ambient products. It offers cost-effective own-brand ranges, hygiene solutions (CleanPro+), delivery and click-and-collect services, plus tailored support such as allergen guidance, menu planning and budget management.

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Phone (Account Manager): 07912 261124

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Glasgow Clyde College is one of Scotland's largest further education providers, delivering high-quality training and workforce development across a range of sectors, including health and social care. The College has extensive experience in supporting the care sector, delivering SVQs, Modern Apprenticeships and CPD programmes to employers, NHS partners and care organisations across Scotland.

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Mac Research and Consultancy Limited is a specialist social care consultancy operating across Scotland and England, .With over 20 years of frontline and strategic experience spanning the Scottish social care sector — from community and homelessness services through local authority care home management, national sector leadership, and UKAS-accredited quality assurance.

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PARTNERS FOR INTEGRATION CONTACT LIST

Name	Designation	Location	Email
Gillian Currie	Joint National Lead	Partners for Integration	gillian.currie@scottishcare.org
James Carle	Joint National Lead	Partners for Integration	james.carle@scottishcare.org
Tracy Doyle	Project Administrator	Partners for Integration	tracy.doyle@scottishcare.org
Carole Brunton	Independent Sector Lead	Dundee	carole.brunton@scottishcare.org
Rene Rigby	Independent Sector Lead	Edinburgh	rene.rigby@scottishcare.org
Margaret McGowan	Independent Sector Lead	Falkirk	margaret.mcgowan@scottishcare.org
Paul Dundas	Independent Sector Lead	Fife	paul.dundas@scottishcare.org
Gwen Harrison	Independent Sector Lead	Highland (Care Homes)	gwen.harrison@scottishcare.org
Laura Dobinson	Independent Sector Career & Attraction Lead (Care Homes)	Highland (Care Homes)	laura.dobinson@scottishcare.org
Lynda Wright	Independent Sector Lead	North Lanarkshire	lynda.wright@scottishcare.org
Dave Henderson	Independent Sector Lead	Perth & Kinross	dave.henderson@scottishcare.org
Lynsey Allan	Independent Sector Lead	South Lanarkshire	lynsey.allan@scottishcare.org

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