

National Performance Framework: Inquiry into proposed National Outcomes 2024

Response to the call for views from the 'A Scotland that Cares' Campaign

'[A Scotland that Cares](#)' is a unique coalition campaign backed by 70 organisations that has, since 2022, **called for a new, dedicated National Outcome focused on care and carers in Scotland**. People who provide or experience care have written to Scotland's party leaders to back the campaign.

This response to the Finance and Public Administration Committee's call for views as part of the Inquiry into the proposed National Outcomes is written on behalf of the campaign coalition. It is therefore only focussed on the campaign's call to ensure care – and all those who provide it – is clearly visible in the next iteration of the National Outcomes. We therefore structure our response based around this core issue rather than the broader questions set out in the inquiry.

Individual organisations will also submit their own responses to this call for views, and these should be considered independently of this campaign-wide response and may cover a range of other areas covered by the proposed National Outcomes.

Read more: [Invaluable, But Invisible: Why Scotland needs a new National Outcome on Care](#)

Summary

- In the previous iteration of the National Outcomes, care – including those who experience it, as well as those who provide it, whether paid or unpaid – was largely invisible.
- Given the breadth and scale of caring roles carried out by the people of Scotland and the foundational importance of care to individual, family, community, economic and national wellbeing, we warmly welcome the inclusion of a dedicated National Outcome on Care, and its broad extended definition, in the Scottish Government's proposed National Outcomes for the next five years. This represents a significant improvement on the current National Outcomes.
- We welcome the proposed wording but suggest it could better reflect the need for high quality care that is delivered in a way that respects people's right to choose how care is provided to them, as well as to reflect the need to fully invest in all those who provide care.
- Once finalised, the Scottish Government must ensure this new Outcome is delivered meaningfully within an improved National Performance Framework so that, over time, it provides a strong focus for new, and sustained, policy and spending action at national and local levels.
- Critically, the new National Outcome on Care must quickly be accompanied by robust and cross-cutting National Indicators, that enable us to measure progress, meaningfully and transparently, on how we value and invest in all forms of care in Scotland.

Why is a cross-cutting National Outcome on all forms of care needed?

Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF), and the National Outcomes that sit within it, is presented by the Scottish Government as being Scotland's 'wellbeing framework'. We believe that driving national wellbeing is simply not possible without putting care at the centre of all that we do. The breadth of support for this campaign demonstrates that this is increasingly recognised.

Care – whether for adults or children, whether for those with or without additional support needs, and whether paid or unpaid – is the backbone of our society. Not only is it integral to individual, household, community and national wellbeing, but without care, the economy would grind to halt. Yet, globally, as well as across the UK and here in Scotland, care is systemically undervalued and, as a result, it is chronically underfunded, creating significant consequences for those who experience and provide it.

The Scottish Government estimates that there are 700,000 adult unpaid carers and at least 28,000 young carers under the age of 18 in Scotlandⁱ. It would cost an estimated £13.1 billion every year to replace the care they provide.ⁱⁱ However, care needs are predicted to grow as people live longer lives. There are also 138,000 single parents with dependent childrenⁱⁱⁱ who experience additional pressures compared to other parents due to their caring responsibilities; for example, the poverty rate for single mothers is significantly higher than for the population as a whole^{iv}, a situation that is inseparable from the one in four children in poverty.

Care is also critical for delivering jobs in Scotland through both the early years and adult social care sectors. Social care alone already employs more than three times as many workers as agriculture, forestry, and fishing combined, with over 208,000 workers.^v This is only going to increase because of Scotland's ageing population and the corresponding increased care needs that will follow.

Importantly, women are impacted most severely by the undervaluation of care, due to its highly gendered nature. In Scotland, as many as three-quarters (74%) of unpaid carers are female.^{vi} Women also make up 96% of childcare^{vii} and 80% of adult social care staff^{viii} – both sectors are characterised by low pay, poor working conditions, and job insecurity.^{ix} This deeply unequal distribution of care work, when combined with its undervaluation and the lack of recognition for the value of women's principal contribution further perpetuates the gender wage gap and entrenches gender inequality.^x

Finally, while gaps in our understanding exist, the impacts of caring responsibilities can also be more pronounced for people from minoritised ethnic backgrounds^{xi}, who are likely to do more hours of unpaid care work.^{xii} Linked to this, women from minority ethnic backgrounds are also more likely to be economically inactive and in low paid jobs.^{xiii} At UK level, people from minoritised ethnic backgrounds are also over-represented in the child and adult social work workforces.^{xiv}

What could a National Outcome on Care help achieve?

Clearly, there is no one policy solution in tackling the undervaluation of care, and this campaign recognises that fully valuing and investing in care in Scotland will require multiple changes across multiple areas, delivered at the same time.

More broadly, we also recognise that there is a need for a cultural shift in our collective understanding of what we mean by 'work' – by centring the importance of unpaid care within that understanding and better valuing paid care work. Only by doing this, will we achieve the depth and scale of action needed to drive transformative change.

To support that shift, a dedicated National Outcome on Care must, first and foremost, give visibility to the foundational importance of care to Scotland's society and economy. However, a dedicated National Outcome on care can also set a path towards ongoing and transformative change and will make Scotland one of the first countries in the world to make such an explicit commitment.

Over time, if placed within an improved wellbeing framework, it will help provide a strong focus for new, and sustained, policy and spending action at national and local levels. For example, it will reinforce the need for carers – of all types – to be considered more fully by local authorities and public bodies, who are legally required 'to give due regard' to the National Outcomes in carrying out their functions through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.^{xv}

Critically, a National Outcome on Care, using robust and cross-cutting National Indicators, will also enable us to meaningfully and transparently measure the progress achieved over time. Measuring progress is all the more important given the range of actions taken in Scotland in recent years, as well as those planned but not yet delivered, that have the potential to improve how we value and invest in care – such as the delivery of the new Carer Support Payment for unpaid carers, additional investment and reforms to social care, and further expansion of the funded early years childcare system. The creation of a National Outcome on Care is not a substitute for these, nor other immediate actions, which are urgently needed to better support those with caring responsibilities.

Ultimately, with virtually all of us experiencing or providing some form of care at some point in our lives, the creation and subsequent pursuit of a new National Outcome on care will, over time, help us to measure progress against issues that matter to everyone in Scotland. Establishing comprehensive metrics should not only enable us to track improvements, identify key areas which need attention, and ensure that care work receives the recognition and support it deserves – it should also drive substantial progress towards a better provision of care for the people of Scotland.

What should a National Outcome on Care include?

The breadth and diversity of supporters of this campaign demonstrates the necessity for *all* forms of care to be fully considered within the creation of a new National Outcome on care.

This means that both the extended definition of the National Outcome and the indicators that sit underneath it must explicitly cover issues facing all types of carers and those who receive care. This includes parents and guardians of children, paid care workers, and unpaid carers for those with additional support needs. It should therefore encompass the quality of the care experienced by individuals, and the quality of life this provides, as well as the physical, mental and financial wellbeing, including poverty, of those who provide care on a paid or unpaid basis.

Academics at the University of the West of Scotland, conducting research as part of the UWS-Oxfam Partnership^{xvi}, worked with the 'A Scotland that Cares' campaign, to develop a [blueprint](#)^{xvii} for a new National Outcome on care. Published in November 2021, and adopting the format used for the existing set of National Outcomes, this research proposes a new National Outcome on care stating:

'We fully value and invest in those experiencing care and all those providing it'

Crucially, this research identified seven 'Beacon' National Indicators, and a range of sub-indicators, which should be used to monitor progress, in addition to people's lived experience of care. These are:

- 1. The quality of life of unpaid carers, care workers and those experiencing care**
 - E.g. Right to breaks, Access to mental health services, Life chances of young carers, Social connections, Life-care balance, % of unpaid carers accessing respite services
- 2. The quality of care for all**
 - E.g. Access and affordability of social care and childcare, Safety, Adequacy of the quality of care experienced, Support for unpaid carers
- 3. The financial wellbeing of unpaid carers, care workers and those experiencing care**
 - E.g. % of care workers, unpaid carers and those experiencing care in poverty, Cost of care as a % of household income, Lifetime earnings gap, Length and level of paid maternity and paternity leave, % of unpaid carers who feel supported towards and within decent work
- 4. The voice and influence of unpaid carers, care workers and those experiencing care**
 - E.g. Choice over the nature of care and how it is delivered (from those experiencing care), Care sectoral bargaining & worker voice, Policy influence of carers
- 5. Access to education and training**
 - E.g. % of people experiencing care in education, % of care workers in vocational training, % of unpaid carers in education, % of unpaid carers who have received care-based training
- 6. The adequacy of funding for care**
 - E.g. Adequacy of social security, Level of funded childcare, funding for social care, funding for 3rd sector programmes
- 7. The job quality of social care and childcare workers**
 - E.g. Pay and conditions for care and childcare workers, Holiday entitlement, Overtime worked etc

We believe these Indicators should be further tested — particularly with those with direct experience of care — and improved if necessary. Work will also be needed to identify appropriate data sources, and to plug gaps where these exist; this process should involve further consultation.

We provide further headline evidence across our draft indicators in [this briefing](#).

Do we support the proposed changes to the National Outcomes?

Overarchingly, we warmly welcome the inclusion of a new dedicated National Outcome on Care as part of the proposed changes to the National Outcomes.

While the proposed wording for this outcome does not match what this campaign has previously proposed (see above), we are happy that the proposed extended definition reflects the breadth of definition adopted by the campaign, as it covers paid and unpaid care at all stages of life, and – critically – those who experience as well as those who provide care.

That said, we would recommend strengthening the proposed wording to reflect the need for high *quality* care, which is delivered in a way that respects people’s right to choose how care is provided to them, as well as to reflect the need for those who provide care to be *fully* valued and *invested* in.

Furthermore, as we emphasise above, we think it is vital that this new National Outcome on Care is accompanied by robust and cross-cutting National Indicators that enable us to meaningfully and transparently measure progress on how we value and invest in all forms of care in Scotland. Anything short of the range of issues covered in the indicators proposed above would fall short of ensuring the dedicated new National Outcome on Care properly measures progress on how we value and invest in all forms of care in Scotland.

For more information about the campaign and for a full list of organisational supporters, please visit our website: <https://ascotlandthatcares.org/>

ⁱ Scot Gov, Scotland’s Carers Update Release March 2024 (2 April 2024): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-carers-update-release-march-2024/>

ⁱⁱ Scot Gov, National Carers Strategy (21 December 2022): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-carers-strategy/pages/2/>

ⁱⁱⁱ ONS, Households by type of household and family (09 March 2022):

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/datasets/householdsbytypeofhouseholdandfamilyregionsofenglandandukconstituentcountries>

^{iv} Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2020-23, Scottish Government (21 March 2024): <https://data.gov.scot/poverty/>

^v Scottish Social Services Council, The Distribution of the Social Service Workforce (05 February 2024):

<https://data.sssc.uk.com/data-news/15-announcements/348-publication-of-the-distribution-of-the-social-service-workforce-report>

^{vi} Scot Gov, Carers Census, Scotland, 2022-23 (12 Dec 2023): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/carers-census-scotland-2022-23/>

^{vii} Scot Gov, A Blueprint for 2020: Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland Consultation (26 March 2020):

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/blueprint-2020-expansion-early-learning-childcare-scotland-consultation/pages/5/>

^{viii} Scot Gov, adult social care workforce: evidence (21 June 2022): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-care-service-adult-social-care-workforce-scotland/documents/>

^{ix} Scot Gov, Adult social care: independent review (February 2021): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-review-adult-social-care-scotland/pages/3/>

^x Oxfam, Valued: Breaking the link between paid and unpaid care, poverty and inequalities across Britain (14 April 2024): <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/valued-breaking-the-link-between-paid-and-unpaid-care-poverty-and-inequalities-621592/>

^{xi} UWS-Oxfam Partnership, Caring during the crisis: the experiences of ethnic minority communities in Scotland during COVID-19 (Feb 2023):

<https://oxfampartnership.uws.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Report-No-12-Caring-during-crisis-the-experiences-of-ethnic-minority-communities-in-Scotland-during-COVID-19.pdf>

^{xii} Scot Gov, National Care Service - adult social care: equality evidence review (21 June 2022): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-care-service-adult-social-care-scotland-equality-evidence-review/pages/10/>

^{xiii} Fraser of Allander Institute, Economic outcomes for minority ethnic groups in Scotland (17 August 2020): <https://fraserofallander.org/economic-outcomes-for-minority-ethnic-groups-in-scotland/>

^{xiv} What Works for Children’s Social Care, Ethnic Minority social workers in the UK (January 2022): https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WWCSC_Ethnic_Minority_SW_Workforce_Rapid_Review_Jan22.pdf

^{xv} Scot Gov, Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (February 2017): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-scotland-act-summary/>

^{xvi} UWS-Oxfam Partnership: <https://uwsoxfampartnership.org.uk/>

^{xvii} UWS-Oxfam Partnership, Towards a Scotland that cares A new National Outcome on care for the National Performance Framework (November 2021): <https://oxfam.box.com/s/v65fhy5rx7yicfbjuo29ulg5h9qliq5x>