

Making sure your voice is heard

Easy Read version



Introduction



The Scottish Government is working to make health and social care support better in Scotland. They are working with people and organisations across the country.



We want everyone to have access to high-quality local services across Scotland. People should get them when they need them.



We held events across Scotland in the summer of 2023 as part of our work to make a National Care Service. These happened in places all over Scotland.



We worked with people in towns and cities. We also worked with people in the countryside and island communities.

What we learned about making your voice heard

Complaints



People can make a complaint when they are unhappy with the service they are receive.

What is working well?



It is good anyone can make a complaint. You can do it without giving your name.



It is good that services try and sort problems quickly.



It is good there is a process.



Some people had good experiences of making a complaint. They felt listened to.



People said it is important to be able to make a complaint to an independent service.



Social care services are more aware of issues like dementia and trauma.

Questions

1. What do you think about it?

Good

Bad

Not sure



People with experience of social care services felt positive about services that asked for feedback.

What is not working well?



Some people said they got no response until they made a formal complaint.



Some said it was difficult to find out how to make a complaint.



Some people need more help and support to make a complaint.



Some people were worried that support might be taken away if they complained. They said complaints did not always make care better.



Information is published in different ways. It can be hard to understand. Words like 'complaints' and 'complaining' can be hard to understand.



Some services do not want complaints and feedback. They see them as negative. However, they should see them as a way to learn and get better.



Services need training and time for staff to have good conversations with people.

How can we make it better?



Make it easier to understand how to complain. Information on how to complain should be accessible.



Make sure people who cannot use or access the internet can make a complaint (e.g. a phone line and post).



Give clear information on the complaints process in simple language. This will include what should happen and when.



It should be possible to speak to someone about the complaint.



Different services need to work together to have the same process.



Sort issues at an early stage.



Services should see that complaints and feedback can help make services better. Have a system for the feedback and train staff to use it.



Make links between the complaints system for the National Care Service and independent advocacy.



Improve information sharing so people do not have to repeat themselves.

Independent advocacy



Independent advocacy is separate from care services. It supports people to speak up for their rights.

What is working well?



Independent advocates help support people to challenge decisions. Advocacy support is important for those who cannot use their voice or have communication needs.



There is good advocacy support for complaining about the NHS. Independent advocacy can help issues get sorted.

What is not working well?



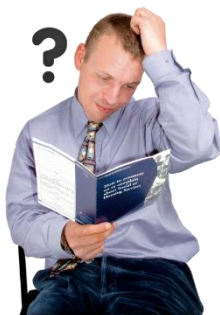
Some people do not know about advocacy services or how they can help them.



Some people said it can be hard to find an advocate if they live outside cities.



People are worried that services are funded by the council. This may make them not independent.



There is not enough accessible information.



People said there are gaps in services. Some were worried about the quality of support provided by services.

How can we make it better?



Understand

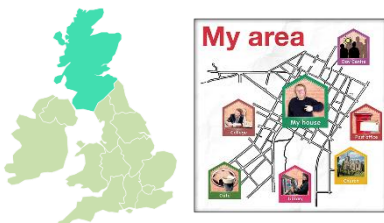
Raise awareness and understanding of independent advocacy and what it can do.



Make information accessible.



Advocates should be independent of the service provider.



Understand there are local differences and needs.



Make sure there are more face-to-face services.



Have services for carers. They may have a different view or needs compared to the person receiving care.



Services should be well funded and there should be funding for issues.



Advocates should be trained.



Make sure people have access to independent advocacy to support making a complaint.



Build on existing services.

Support Planning



Support Planning is making a plan for support from social care services.

What is working well?



Carer centres are important as they provide information. Not all services are the same in all areas.

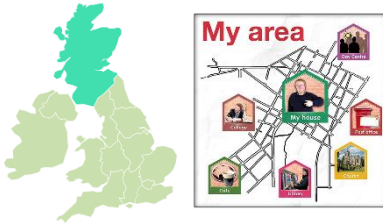


Having a good conversation is important.

What is not working well?



Not everyone knows how to get support.



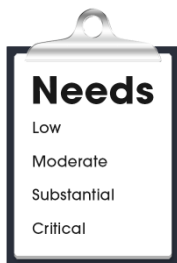
Services telling people about social care support are not the same across Scotland.



Community hubs and community link workers were good services for those who used them.



The support planning process can be stressful. People felt like they were being judged, which made them anxious.



Assessments can happen without speaking to the individual.



Support planning is not always done by qualified staff.



Communication from social workers can be slow.



People can be required to repeat the assessment process if they move to a new area. They cannot take their existing care with them.



Not all staff are aware of the role and needs of unpaid carers.



Most people said the lack of social work services was the main reason for many of the things that are not working well.

How can we make it better?



Change the way people think about social care support. It should not be seen as a bad thing.



Give people clear information.



Make support services available earlier.



Services should signpost to other local support like befriending services or local walking groups.



Make a single contact to help manage the whole process. This could be a central helpline.



Listen to everyone including family, friends, and services. This will let us see earlier if someone needs support.

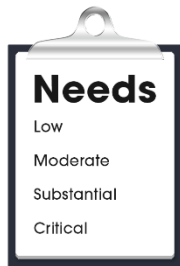


Have community-based supports so people can contact them.



Work with the voluntary organisations as they provide services. This would help the council and NHS get good outcomes for people.

Eligibility criteria



Eligibility criteria is how we decide if someone needs care services or not. If we decide someone should get services, we say they are 'eligible'.

What is working well?



There were no positive comments about the eligibility criteria. People felt strongly that eligibility criteria does not work.

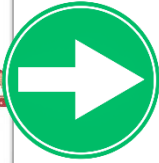
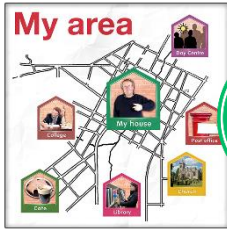
What is not working well?



People are at crisis point before they can get the support they need.



Eligibility is about money and resources rather than need.



Moving care when people move to a different area was an issue.

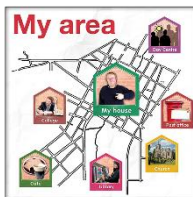
My Care Plan



There is not enough awareness about self-directed support (SDS) options. People are not able to choose the best option for them.



There are long waiting times for services



Eligibility should be the same in all areas.



Support planning should be flexible. People have different needs.



Eligibility criteria does not include everyone that needs services.

How can we make it better?



The system for eligibility criteria needs to change.



There needs to be a standard method across Scotland.



People need to be involved in decisions about their care.



There should be a named and trusted social worker who knows the person. They will be able to re-assess the person's needs when things change.



There should be more accessible information about what will happen. This will help people to be prepared.

What's next for making sure your voice is heard



We will continue to speak to people on these issues. We will record what people have told us about making sure your voice is heard.



We will look for any gaps in what people have told us. We will look to see what is working well or not. We will check what areas we need to know more about.

Questions

1. What do you think about it?

Good

Bad

Not sure

A hand is pointing to the 'Not sure' option with a black pen.

We will now move on to using people's feedback. We will test ideas. We will make sure they work.



We will also continue to work with key organisations. This will help us to find out what is working well and what is not.



It is important that we hear from as many people as possible. We will speak to people from different background and areas.

What is next for the National Care Service



The Scottish Government wants the National Care Service by 2026. We are now working to improve the social care system.



Events will help us to make the National Care System, its policies, and the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill better.



A Bill is a proposed law that needs to be passed by the Parliament before it could become a law. The Scottish Parliament will vote on the National Care Standards (Scotland) Bill in January 2024.



Over the next 18 months we will continue designing the National Care Standards.



We will involve people who have accessed social care support. We will also involve groups of people whose voices currently are not being heard.



We will keep improving the social care sector for the already existing staff and to make it a good profession to work for.

Getting involved



We want to hear from you to as we develop the new National Care Service. If you would like to share your experiences you can join our [Lived Experience Expert Panel](#).



If you join the panel, you will be invited to take part in different things like:

- surveys
- interviews
- discussions

For more information about the National Care Service, visit gov.scot/ncs



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