

A young woman with dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, is smiling and looking towards an elderly woman. She is holding a clear glass of water. The elderly woman has short, curly white hair and is wearing a light-colored, textured sweater. She is sitting at a wooden table and looking up at the younger woman. The background is a warm, indoor setting with a plaid cushion and a wooden basket on a shelf. The entire image has a soft, reddish-pink tint.

**Time to care
about care**

Consultation Paper

Scottish Labour
scottishlabour.org.uk

IT'S TIME TO CARE ABOUT CARE

Scotland's care service is broken and has been overlooked and undervalued for too long. The deep flaws in the system have been exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic with tragic consequences.

Scottish Labour has a longstanding policy commitment on developing a National Care Service that prioritises quality and puts dignity and respect for those receiving care, their families, and care workers, at the heart of the social care system before profit.

The current system is fragmented and inefficient. Although there are examples in the sector of people giving and receiving excellent care, this is sadly not the consistent experience across the country.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only highlighted why such a reform is needed but offers an opportunity for change. We don't want to just talk about the problems, we want a plan for how things could be better.

That is why Scottish Labour is developing a comprehensive plan that will establish a better way forward for Scotland's care services. We are committed to seeing the benefits of a unified system with set high standards and established levels of support for care in all settings, be that residential care, care at home or proper support for informal carers.

We believe a National Care Service should be built on the four following principles and we are therefore consulting on how these changes can be achieved.

Organisations are invited to submit written submissions addressing the following questions by 9 August to scottishpolicyforum@labour.org.uk.

Principles of a National Care Service

1. Puts people before profit

We want to build a care system that has quality care and not market forces at its heart.

Social care should be about delivering the best service to individuals, not the best profit.

- How can the focus in social care be shifted from cost to quality?
- What additional resources are needed to make this happen?
- What can be done to shift from private to public/not-for-profit ownership?
- How can delivery of care better serve those who need it?
- How can we better ensure that standards are upheld?
- How does the current system of regulation and enforcement need to change?
- What additional powers are needed to make this happen?

2. Provides national direction and consistency

We want agreed standards for delivery and access to care that are consistent across the whole country and are underpinned by fair resourcing.

- What are the benefits to greater standardisation at a national level for both care users, workers and providers?
- How should national oversight of care services be achieved?
- If additional resources are needed for social care, where should this funding come from?
- What should the relationship of care services be with the NHS?

3. Supports local delivery with public control and accountability

We want a care service that can embrace local innovation and is developed and designed by the people who use and deliver it.

There needs to be clear accountability for care services so that public money is invested into the delivery of care, not into private profit.

- Who should be involved and responsible for decisions about care services at a local level?
- How do we achieve greater transparency in how public money is spent on social care?
- In what type of residential setting is care best delivered, i.e. what should the balance be between care home and home care provision, and how can we plan for this into the future?
- What reform is needed to how Integration Authorities operate and how can this be successfully achieved?
- What examples are there of local innovation in care services planning?
- How can we encourage increased and positive team-working between health and social care within communities?

4. Offers good work

We want secure and safe work for a care workforce who are valued and have their skills fairly recognised.

- How can the status and skills of social care workers be better recognised in pay and terms and conditions?
- What can be done to embed good work practices across the social care sector?
- How can social care be better supported as a profession, with regards to training, skills and career options?