

The Scottish Budget 2026-27 and Spending Review

Discussions on the 2026-27 Budget and the spending review come at a pivotal time for social care. The 1 in 23ⁱ people in Scotland each year who need social care – and their carers – should be able to access timely services, exercise choice and control in support, and be enabled to flourish in their lives. Sadly, this is the reality for far too few citizens.

Years of underfunding and lack of parity for not-for-profit (NfP) providers have pushed our sector to the brink – at the same time as government policy is advocating an increasing focus on the very community services that are being decimated right now.

In this Scottish Budget and spending review, the government must signal a step change through re-allocating resource to meet its own stated priorities.

A not-for-profit social care snapshot

- Pay disparity is increasing despite commitments to Fair Work. A 2019 £2,400 difference in pay between a NfP social care work and their NHS equivalent increased to a £3,770 disparity by April 2025.ⁱⁱ
- The Scottish Government formula to calculate investment in NfP pay uplifts does not reflect the reality of workforce costs. CCPS members who contributed to a recent report on the government's pay policy demonstrated:
 - Nearly 70% have workforce costs above the government cap.
 - Nearly 80% have seen government policy erode pay differentials between frontline workers and supervisors/managers.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Despite an estimated £30m bill for our members to cover eNICs changes in 2025-26, the Scottish and UK governments excluded NfP commissioned providers from relief offered to the public sector.
- In 2024-25 over 70% of CCPS providers who responded to a survey got no inflationary uplift in their contracts.^{iv}
- In the first half of 2025-26, almost half of CCPS survey respondents told us they'd had to make service reductions, negatively impacting an estimated 4645 beneficiaries.^v
- There was an almost 30% increase in people waiting for a social care assessment in November 2025, compared to November 2024.^{vi}

- An estimated **£440m of taxpayers' money** is being wasted when people cannot be discharged from hospital – largely down to a lack of social care resources.^{vii}
- Halfway through this financial year, **over half of respondents to a CCPS survey were already using reserves to reach financial balance** – with a **third of these using more reserves than expected.**^{viii}

What does CCPS need to see in the 2026-27 Scottish Budget?

- An immediate increase in workforce investment in our sector by raising the **baseline pay award above the Real Living Wage**, and
- A commitment to an **urgent review of the Scottish Government formula** for determining workforce investment in our sector for 2026-27, ensuring it includes **fair resourcing for employee on-costs.**

We note that any decision to only increase the baseline pay award, without addressing unsustainable employment on-costs for providers, will simply compound sector viability risks for NfP public service providers.

And in the spending review, we need evidence of:

- A medium-term plan to see a significant change in investment in our sector, **through a new allocation of available public funds to support aspirations to deliver Christie-inspired social care services.**
- Delivery of Fair Work through sectoral bargaining, as well as commitment to a **new approach to deliver funding to provider organisations**, with clear timescales to support planning.

For further information, please contact Chris Small, CCPS Head of Communications & Engagement: email chris.small@ccpscotland.org

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ⁱ [People supported through Social Care Services; Support provided or funded by health and social care partnerships in Scotland 2023/24 - People supported through Social Care Services - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

ⁱⁱ [Impact-of-ASC-Uplift-Report_October-2025.pdf](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Impact-of-ASC-Uplift-Report_October-2025.pdf](#)

^{iv} [Impact-of-ASC-Uplift-Report_October-2025.pdf](#)

^v Unpublished CCPS member survey Nov 25 (n=55)

^{vi} [People requiring a social care assessment and care at home services 16 December 2025 - People requiring a social care assessment and care at home services - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

^{vii} [Delayed discharges, a sign of wider challenges in health and social care | Audit Scotland](#)

^{viii} Unpublished CCPS member survey Nov 25 (n=54)

Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS) is the voice of not-for-profit social care providers in Scotland.

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