

CCPS Briefing: Fund Social Care Like It Matters

Briefing ahead of Stage 3 Proceedings: Budget (Scotland) (No. 5) Bill

The Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS) represents major not-for-profit providers of care and support across Scotland, who deliver community-based services for adults with disabilities, older people, children and families, people impacted by addictions, homelessness and housing insecurity, poor mental health, poverty and people involved in the justice system.

Key messages:

- CCPS welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to provide £20m of additional funds in the 2026-27 budget to meet Real Living Wage commitments in social care. We thank all MSPs, members and partners who helped effect this crucial change, announced at Stage 1.
- The return of the £20m brings the sector back to its status quo, and social care funding in the Scottish Budget still falls far short of what is needed to stabilise and guarantee the long-term sustainability of the sector.
- We ask MSPs to speak up for social care in recognition of the profound pressures currently facing the sector, and to help ensure that this government and the next know they must fund social care like it matters.

On Wednesday, February 25, MSPs will have the opportunity to vote on the Budget (Scotland) (No. 5) Bill at Stage 3, and CCPS expects the Bill will pass its final stage. Deliberations around this year's budget have been turbulent for our sector, with its initial draft creating an [estimated £19 million funding gap](#) for pay, which social care providers – already in a position of extreme financial jeopardy – would have been expected to fund.

Following [campaigning by CCPS](#) and others in the sector, this funding was reinstated during Stage 1 proceedings of the Budget Bill. We are incredibly grateful to all MSPs who engaged on this important issue and played a part in securing this £20m of additional funding in the budget. Yet, while we welcomed this move from the government, it simply brought us back to our status quo: a sector pushed to the brink after years of underfunding and lack of parity for not-for-profit (NfP) social care providers. As CCPS's CEO Rachel Cackett [said](#) on January 13, there was nothing in the draft budget or spending review that fully acknowledged “the scale of jeopardy Scotland's social care system currently faces.”

[The budget](#) (as published on January 13, 2026) said that “funding for Health and Social Care will increase to a record high” in 2026-27, which the government has [stated fulfils a 2021 manifesto pledge](#) to “increase public investment in social care by 25% over this Parliament”. Yet, as the [Fraser of Allander Institute has identified](#): “more investment has happened, but it has not been enough to outstrip increased costs, and certainly not to deal with increasing demand.”

At a time when demand for the services they offer is rising, a lack of sustainable funding means far too many providers in our membership are needing to scale back the services they can offer. When people can't access social care support, it impacts their independence, health and wellbeing, adding strain to other services, including the NHS.

As we approach tomorrow's final vote on the 2026-27 budget and move closer to a new government being in place after the election on May 7, we are standing at a pivotal moment for our sector. CCPS believes the budget is likely to pass in its current form, which, though a significant improvement compared to its initial draft, still falls far short of what is needed to stabilise and guarantee the long-term sustainability of our sector. The next government and Scottish Parliament must address the sector's underfunding head-on and finally commit to **fund social care like it matters**.

The current context of not-for-profit social care:

- [Pay disparity is increasing](#) despite commitments to Fair Work. A 2019 £2,400 difference in pay between a NfP social care worker and their NHS equivalent increased to a £3,770 disparity by April 2025.
- Despite an estimated £30m bill for our members to cover eNICs changes in 2025-26 alone, the Scottish and UK governments excluded NfP commissioned providers from relief offered to the public sector. This is an ongoing additional cost to our members.
- In 2024-25 over 70% of CCPS providers who [responded to a survey](#) got no inflationary uplift in their public service contracts.
- 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 4,645 beneficiaries. Over 40% were anticipating reducing support in the second half of this year, impacting an estimated 3,858 beneficiaries.ⁱ
- On January 5, 2026, [8,050 people were waiting](#) on a social care assessment for a package of care – an increase of just under 28% at the same point in 2025.
- [An estimated £440m](#)ⁱⁱ of taxpayers' money is being wasted when people cannot be discharged from hospital – largely down to a lack of social care resources.
- 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.

This can be the year that a new government commits to making a rights-based, sustainable system of social care and support a priority in Scotland, but for this vision to be realised, it must change the status quo and commit to **funding social care like it matters**.

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ⁱ Unpublished CCPS member survey Nov 25 (n=55)

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