

CCPS Briefing: social care priorities for the Public Service Reform Committee

June 2026

[The Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland](#) (CCPS) represents not-for-profit providers of care and support in Scotland. As a membership organisation we work strategically and collaboratively to Inspire, Influence, Involve and Inform.

[Our members](#) provide support for tens of thousands of people, including adults with disabilities, older people, children and families, and those affected by poverty, homelessness, addiction, poor mental health and involvement in the justice system. They also employ a significant proportion of Scotland's social care workforce.

This briefing is intended to support the Public Service Reform Committee's scrutiny of the Scottish Government's public service reform agenda, highlighting the critical role of social care in achieving meaningful and sustainable reform.

Our Key Messages:

- Public service reform cannot be delivered without a strong social care sector.
- Not-for-profit social care providers are fundamental to the delivery of public services across Scotland.
- Most social services, including social care, are delivered by commissioned providers such as CCPS members – making them core partners in delivering public service reform.
- Investment in social care supports both prevention and effective critical interventions. It is essential to the sustainability of the NHS and wider public services.
- The not-for-profit social care sector is under significant pressure. The Scottish Government must commit to urgent and sustained investment in social care as part of their public service reform agenda.

Social Care Matters

Social care is a cornerstone of Scotland's public services. Around one in 23 people in Scotland require social care support each year¹. These services allow people to thrive, live independently, and enjoy life with connection, dignity and purpose. When resourced well, social care provides:

- **Preventative, community-based support**, keeping people well at home and out of expensive institutional settings, like hospital wards.

¹ CCPS (2026) [Workforce Priorities Report](#)

- **Life-saving interventions** in community settings to people in critical need, such as with people in mental health crisis or older people experiencing frailty.
- **Support to Scotland's estimated 722,000 unpaid carers²** – both adults and children – so they can also live good and fulfilled lives.

Social Care and Public Service Reform

Social care is not a peripheral part of public service reform; it is fundamental to its success. A well-functioning social care sector contributes directly to improved outcomes and better value for public money. Providers in our membership offer critical services for people in acute need as part of a whole system approach alongside our public sector partners. Many others deliver key preventative services and focus on early intervention. By supporting people earlier and in their own homes and communities, social care reduces pressure on hospitals and other acute services. However, these preventative services are among the most vulnerable to funding cuts, threatening the very efficiencies that public service reform seeks to achieve.

Reform efforts must recognise that the majority of care and support services are delivered through commissioned providers rather than provided directly by the public sector. Not-for-profit social care providers are custodians of public funding, system leaders and innovators, and major employers within communities across Scotland. Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) workforce data for 2024 show that 65.5% of staff in registered services are employed by independent providers (41% in the private sector and 24.5% in the voluntary sector)³. Public service reform must therefore engage with commissioned providers as core partners in delivering change.

Social care is under immense pressure

Despite its importance, the social care sector is currently under severe strain. After years of underinvestment, demand for support and rising delivery costs are outstripping any increases in funding that have been made available⁴. Evidence from a recent CCPS member survey⁵ reveals the scale of the risk for commissioned providers. Over 50 responding organisations:

- Estimated that over 8,500 beneficiaries would be negatively impacted by reductions in support over 2025-26, including just under 1,000 under-18s
- Expected to lose nearly 830 posts in 2025-2026. Over half of actual losses at the 6-month point came from the front line.
- Over half of responding organisations were using charitable reserves to reach financial balance by mid-year; a third were using more reserves than expected.

² Scottish Government (2026) [Scotland's Carers update release: June 2026](#)

³ SSSC (2025) [WorkforceDataReport2024_211125.pdf](#), Page 24, Table 9.

⁴ Fraser of Allander (2026) [Setting the scene: Scotland on the eve of the 2026 Election](#)

⁵ Unpublished (November 2025).

Workforce pressures further compound these challenges. Commitments to Fair Work have yet to be fully realised, and there remain stark discrepancies in pay. In 2026, government funding to pay a trained and regulated frontline support worker in a commissioned social care service is still more than £3,000 less than for an unregulated NHS support worker in a comparable role⁶. Sectoral Bargaining offers a potential route to address these disparities – but an agreed approach is still to be finalised.

The consequences of these pressures are increasingly visible in unmet need. In May 2026, over 6,800 people were waiting for a social care needs assessment. Those assessed as qualifying for a care package were awaiting a combined total of nearly 30,000 hours of support each week⁷. As thresholds rise, many individuals no longer receive help until their needs reach a “critical” level. This is not only detrimental to individual wellbeing but also counterproductive to the goals of public service reform.

The financial impact of these pressures on the wider system is also evident. For example, Audit Scotland has estimated that over £440 million was spent on delayed discharges from hospital in 2024-25 alone, with insufficient social care provision a primary driver⁸. Failing to invest in social care does not reduce overall spending. Instead, it shifts costs to more expensive parts of the system while worsening outcomes for people themselves.

The need for investment in social care

Investment in social care is an essential part of public service reform. A properly resourced sector can prevent crisis, support a stable and fairly paid workforce⁹, and enable providers to continue delivering high-quality services within communities. It also ensures that public money is used effectively, aligning with the core objectives of public service reform.

Ultimately, without urgent and sustained investment that reflects the true cost of delivery, the sustainability of social care and by extension the wider public service system remains at serious risk. Failure to act will not only increase pressures on public finances but will disproportionately impact the people who rely most on support.

Key questions for Committee consideration

- How is social care being positioned within the overall public service reform agenda, and is it sufficiently prioritised as a core enabler of system sustainability?
- How can the Committee be assured that the social care sector (commissioned providers, supported people and unpaid carers) is afforded equal value with public sector partners in both the design and delivery of public service reform?

⁶ CCPS (2026) [Workforce Priorities Report](#)

⁷ Public Health Scotland (2026) [People requiring a social care assessment and care at home services 26 May 2026](#)

⁸ Audit Scotland (2026) [Delayed discharges A symptom of the challenges facing health and social care](#)

⁹ CCPS (2025) [Impact of ASC Uplift Report](#)

- Are current commissioning and funding models fit for purpose in supporting long-term sustainability, innovation, and quality of the social care sector?
- What is the timeline for implementing sectoral bargaining, and what outcomes is it expected to deliver?
- What needs to change in this parliamentary term to ensure the allocation and distribution of taxpayers' funds can meet support needs, enable people to thrive at home and in their communities and avoid costly crisis interventions?

A shared opportunity: working together

Drawing on the insight and solutions from our membership, and our long-standing reputation in policy development, CCPS is keen to work constructively with the Committee as it commences work. To speak with us, please contact Alice Tooms-Moore, our Parliamentary Officer. Email: Alice.Tooms-Moore@ccpscotland.org

CCPS, Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh EH75QY
Tel: 0131 475 2676, www.ccpscotland.org

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