

National Care Service Bill

Establishment of Care Boards, Strategic Planning & Ethical Commissioning

The National Care Service (NCS) will consist of local and special care boards. Sections 4 and 5 of the Bill gives Scottish Ministers the power to establish and fund these care boards. They can also abolish them and/or intervene if they are failing.

The local care boards will plan and deliver the NCS locally. They will replace the current Integration Joint Boards. The number of local care boards has not been decided yet, but they will cover all of Scotland. They will be separate public bodies accountable to the Scottish Ministers and have their own legal identity.

The relationship between the Scottish Ministers and the care boards is expected to work in a similar way to the current approach to health boards. It will see a regular cycle of reporting and monitoring of performance and oversight of expenditure. The following details will be established in secondary legislation:

- Geographical areas they will cover
- Membership of the boards
- Duties, functions and services they will provide
- Workforce, employment and contractual arrangements
- Maximising opportunities for collaboration and co-operation between care boards and other bodies

Where a care board does not have a geographic location it will be called a special care board. The purpose of these boards will be to deliver national functions.

Chapter 2 requires care boards to have a strategic plan setting out their vision, objectives and budgets for their care board area.

Scottish Ministers will review and approve strategic plans against statutory guidance, which will be co-designed with stakeholders. They must consult publicly on the draft plans, including with Community Planning Partners, other care boards they share boundaries with and the residents in their area. The period covered by strategic plans must not exceed 3 years and plans must be in succession with no gaps.

Strategic plans must also incorporate an ethical commissioning strategy. This should set out “arrangements for providing services and how those arrangements have been designed to ensure they best reflect the NCS principles”. This includes fair work practices.