

3 November 2021

Dear Members,

On Tuesday 2nd November, the Scottish Government's consultation on a National Care Service closed. We wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of you who took the time to share your views on the proposals, either through our survey or at the various engagement events we and others held.

In addition to the formal electronic response form to Scottish Government, SASW has also submitted an additional paper pulling together the issues more specific to social work to enable a focussed perspective on and from the profession. Both responses are available on the National Care Service page on our website, [here](#).

The SASW National Standing Committee approved these responses last week. We know that there are many different views about the National Care Service and the future of our profession within our membership and have worked hard to reflect the sometimes-diverse opinions shared with us over the last few months. This has been challenging, and we have tried hard to be balanced and nuanced. I hope that all of you who contributed see a reflection of your views in the SASW response; if not in our agreement or disagreement with particular proposals, then in the caveats, risks and concerns we raise throughout.

We also reached out to some of our key stakeholders; people with experience of services and carers to find out what they need from social work in the future. We found them incredibly supportive and appreciative of the work you do, understanding the difficult circumstances you often work in.

Most of you want change. You told us a lot about the ways in which the status quo is not working, both for yourselves as professionals and for the people you work to support and protect. Most of you support the idea that social work functions should stay together rather than split across two or even three future organisations. If there is a NCS, you believe that all three main specialisms (children, adult, and justice social work) should transfer due to the cross-cutting nature of social work, and the impact of multiple systems on individuals and families. You recognise that great change is coming and that whichever way that happens, existing partnerships and collaborations may be significantly affected.

During the consultation period, many of you have expressed concern that the consultation is looking well beyond the scope of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care so we are recommending to Government that it takes time to ensure options are properly considered. More than anything, we know that you want to feel valued, to have social work ethics and values respected by other professional disciplines and to work in a holistic way based in

relationships. You want to regain our professional identity which has been impacted by austerity, task-driven care management and integration with health. You've been clear that you want to be able to use your full range of skills and experience to be involved in early intervention and prevention with individuals, families, and communities, being accessible and a universal, stigma free support system.

This consultation is a first step to the creation of a National Care Service, and the first of several opportunities for influence. A Government Programme will follow to address necessary changes to legislation, governance, structure and practice. SASW commits to focusing our engagement on improving outcomes for the people who need and use social work services and, at the same time, promoting our skilful and compassionate workforce.

This response has been a mammoth task undertaken by our very small team. We will continue to speak up on behalf of the social work profession and to keep you informed and engaged in the process through our bulletins and events. If you would like to get more involved with this work, we often run short-life focus groups and would really love you to be able to contribute directly. If you're interested, please email the SASW team: <mailto:scotland@basw.co.uk>

Yours faithfully,

Jude Currie, **Chair, Scottish Association of Social Work Committee**