



19 February 2025

Dear Deputy First Minister,

We write to you as representatives of the longstanding [A Scotland that Cares](#) campaign to make the case once again for a new, dedicated National Outcome on Care and to express our deep disappointment at your decision to U-turn and place its introduction in significant jeopardy. We firmly reject the premise that a broader review of the National Performance Framework (NPF) justifies ignoring your own Government's proposed improvements to Scotland's National Outcomes.

For almost three years, our campaign – which is backed by over 70 organisations and hundreds more individuals across Scotland – has been making the case that the role of care and carers is too often hidden and systemically under-valued in Scotland. This injustice comes despite the foundational importance of care to our society, as well as its huge importance to the Scottish economy.

Damagingly, this invisibility is reinforced by the omission of care and carers from the Scottish Government's National Outcomes. Given this, we were hugely heartened to see, in May last year, that the campaign's call for the Scottish Government to make care visible in the National Outcomes appeared to have been heard following the consultation, which started back in 2023. We [warmly welcomed](#) the Government's proposal to introduce a new National Outcome on Care in Scotland. As you told the [Finance and Public Administration Commission](#) in October, there is "a strong evidence base of the need for change".

As we have together highlighted on many occasions, a dedicated National Outcome isn't a panacea, or a replacement for immediate action to invest in care, but we believe it would help to provide a strong focus for new, and sustained, policy and spending action at national and local levels.

We have, of course, also consistently recognised that a new National Outcome on Care will achieve much more if it sits within a strengthened wellbeing framework for Scotland. Our organisations therefore fully support your decision to undertake a more fundamental review of the NPF to ensure that it functions in a way that better matches ambition with action, making it a "stronger and more strategic and impactful framework for Scotland".

However, it is both deeply disappointing and counterproductive that this additional, wider NPF review has resulted in your decision to halt the introduction of the Government's proposed new, improved National Outcomes. It creates a perverse situation in which the Scottish Government is choosing to retain the old set of National Outcomes despite having already proposed improvements. We therefore urge you to honour the spirit of the Review of the National Outcomes and publish the revised set now.

Crucially, while improvements to the wider NPF could and should have been considered and developed in parallel with the National Outcomes Review, we do not believe publishing the revised National Outcomes would in any way impede the broader review you wish to undertake. However, failing to publish them, will weaken trust ahead of the yet-to-be-determined NPF review and fuel fears that the proposed National Outcome on Care may never be put in place.

Most importantly, blocking the introduction of the Scottish Government's own proposal for a dedicated National Outcome on Care will only extend the invisibility of care and carers in the Scottish Government's vision for the type of country we wish to create. This will send a damaging message to those who look after someone in Scotland. Carers must not be asked to wait any longer to see themselves at the very heart of a Framework which the Scottish Government says represents "a vision for collective wellbeing".

The Scottish Government's own [consultation document](#), laid before Parliament on 1 May 2024, stated that the new National Outcome focused on care would recognise paid and unpaid care "as essential aspects of social and economic wellbeing." Rightly, given that most care is provided by women, the Government also argued that the National Outcome on Care would help to ensure that gender equality is "more effectively represented in the National Outcomes".

By setting a new National Outcome on Care now, the Scottish Government will make Scotland one of the first countries in the world to make such an explicit commitment to better valuing care and to transparently measuring progress towards delivering ongoing and transformative change. This commitment is urgently needed by: all those who care for loved ones – whether adults or children – but face deep consequences to their own financial and personal wellbeing; those who are paid to care but still scrape by on poverty wages; and all those who struggle to access high-quality care.

Failing to introduce this Outcome will only serve to perpetuate the undervaluation of care in Scotland.

We therefore implore you to introduce your revised National Outcomes without delay, including the National Outcome on Care, and then work at speed to place them at the very heart of a strengthened wellbeing framework so that it drives policy and spending decisions, now and in the future.

Carers, and those who experience care, right across Scotland have waited long enough.

Your sincerely,

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