



Kenneth Gibson MSP
Convener,
Finance and Public Administration Committee
Scottish Parliament

12 February 2024

Dear Convener,

Further to our letter of 23 January 2024, we write with further comments on the costings within the revised National Care Service Bill Finance Memorandum for the new right for unpaid carers to have a break from caring.

As well as being an important extension in human rights for about one in five of Scotland's population, we recognise that improved support to unpaid carers is a key part of reducing or deferring the need for greater volumes of formal care services. Provided the policy is adequately funded, it should make an important contribution to the future sustainability of both the National Care Service and the NHS.

We also acknowledge that the re-costings in the revised Finance Memorandum (FM) have increased the potential funding in real terms to local authorities and integration authorities to implement the legislation if and when it is passed, compared to the original costings in the 2022 FM. However, we have concerns that the potential funding to the third sector to provide additional "easy access breaks" has been reduced.

We believe there are six key areas where the "right to breaks" costings require re-examination:

1. There are anomalies in some of the unit costs, particularly for short breaks, and also in the use of different inflation and demography estimates to those used elsewhere in the revised FM.
2. The continuing absence of any costings for additional carer assessments undertaken by councils in response to increased demand arising from the new carer rights.
3. Reductions and delays in the funding of additional "easy access breaks" are likely to lead to increased demand on councils, and are not compatible with prevention or increasing demand.

4. The long phasing for funding of carers rights to a break does not seem consistent with investment in prevention.
5. The costing relies solely on the Scottish Health Survey for the prevalence estimate of adult carers when this is known from other population surveys to under-count adult carers.
6. There are problems with the estimates for current funding, which are subtracted from the costing model's gross outputs to produce the net costs in the FM for the right to breaks from caring for unpaid carers.

We have attached a detailed evidence paper covering these issues, preceded by a five-page summary, which we hope will assist your Committee's scrutiny work on the revised Financial Memorandum. Social Work Scotland would happy to participate further in discussion of these matters.

Yours sincerely,



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