

time for change

from change mental health

What is required from the Scottish Government to support organisations and public bodies to implement the significant changes to current ways of working proposed by the Bill?

Currently the Financial Memorandum of the National Care Service (NCS) does not account for additional funding for the third sector. If the third sector is to be considered an equal partner in the NCS then this must be demonstrated through funding from the Scottish Government. For example, to implement the suggested new system for health and social care records, which Change Mental Health supports, it will potentially require new IT systems for social care staff to use and specific software to host the records. In order to have access to these records third sector providers under a NCS may be required to update their systems and use new software's which would necessitate suitable funding and resources from the Scottish Government. Change Mental Health are concerned that without the funding or resources smaller third sector organisations may be unable to fully participate as partners in a national care service and would make health and social care records redundant if not all third sector providers can be a part of the process. Furthermore, with new legislation comes new procedures and practices will require staff under the NCS to be trained to ensure services are effective, consistent, and meeting the rights of service users. Therefore, it must be ensured that all organisation and public bodies under a NCS must be supported by the Scottish Government to ensure that staff understand the new system and legislation.

Additionally, to be able to provide a high quality and consistent service organisations under a NCS require long-term funding. Long-term funding will ensure that people experiencing care under a NCS do not experience distress of continually changing providers or worrying that the service may cease to exist.

What would be a realistic timescale for the key provisions in the NCS Bill to be implemented and what should be the order of priority in implementing those provisions?

Change Mental Health know that for people experiencing mental illness a frequent route into social care is through being discharged from in-patient settings or hospital. It must be insured that there is a key priority in ensuring that there is co-ordination between health providers and social care providers from the beginning of implementation. During the oral evidence session, Change Mental Health highlighted the challenges of people in inpatient mental health settings being unable to be discharged into the community. At Change Mental Health we deliver Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) Programme in the Highlands, Argyle and Bute and Dumfries and Galloway. This is a positive example of third sector provider's co-ordinating through inter-agency working. For example, across the Highlands Change Mental Health's DBI team works with statutory and non-statutory partners including Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Primary Care and Accident and Emergency Services, Community Mental Health Assessment Unit, Custody Link Workers, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), as well as third sector agencies involved in various aspects of support and mental health recovery work. This has been achieved through having local implementation groups alongside the DBI central. Therefore, the NSC should learn from DBI and how to achieve this from that start of its implementation.