

Exploring a National Care Service – an interview with Derek Feeley, chair of the independent review of adult social care in Scotland

Pennie Taylor, Health Journalist interviews Derek Feeley as part of the ALLIANCE's annual conference. [You can watch the full interview here.](#)

Key points for SDSS members

In response to our members' question about the human rights approach, Mr Feeley suggested that the review will use the PANEL method:

- **Participation** – “to take a human rights-based approach means that we have to ensure participation of the service user.”
- **Accountability** – “the service user has to understand who is accountable and they need to be satisfied that there are arrangements in place for both monitoring the quality of the social care that they receive, and remedies available to them if they don't receive that.”
- **Non-discriminate** – “I think not only should social care not discriminate but it should also ensure equality and equity. I'm going to try and make sure that whatever we recommend will be equity-proofed as far as we possibly can.”
- **Empowerment** – “People should feel empowered. We've got some stuff to build on there in Scotland and that's what self-directed support is about. It is about empowering people to be part of the care that they receive. The design of that, of the producing of it – so I think empowerment will be a really important part of what we try and do. The independent living fund is another example.”
- **Legal** – “We need to recognize the legal rights and also the legal responsibilities of the various players around the system and the



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user ought to be able to see us making sure that their legal rights are protected.”

Feeley, when challenged on tackling two systems that have run in parallel for over 70 years, says they will make recommendations by asking "How do we make [the interdependence of social care and the NHS] an asset in our approach?"

- "I don't think we have a sufficiently robust mechanism for ensuring local improvement in our social care system."

Mr Feeley has shown he has heard some of our concerns already:

- "one of the fears [people] have, is that we will take an over medical approach to social care. I hear that loud and clear, I understand it and we will make sure we do everything we can to make sure that doesn't happen.... most people's social care needs are not best met by the medical model."

Commenting on how to elevate the esteem of the social care system such that it might be valued like the NHS Feeley said:

- "...there is something in people's understanding of what the National Health Service is there to do and if we can elevate people's understanding of what the social care system is there to do it will help with that rebalancing..."

The future of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) appears set for recommendations, including whether it should be reopened in the meantime.

- "I hear people say that the Independent Living Fund can and should be a fundamental part of our future system. If that is so then I think much better to redesign it and improve it and enhance it, in the context of the



other things we are going to try and look at... if you reopened a previous version of the ILF it might stop us being as radical or as innovate as we want to be about the future."

On when we need to take a more national approach on 'quality' Feeley said:

- "It makes no sense to have 32 different approaches when one would do... at the very least we need to make sure there is a national definition of what we mean by high quality social care."

Touching on why this is important he said:

- "It's hard for people to commission for quality if we don't have a kind of operational definition of what is quality of social care."

On how this could work:

- "What I'm thinking about is some kind of national learning system so that there is a forum and a mechanism for ideas to be shared at a national level so that we can make sure that best practice anywhere in Scotland gets identified and scaled up so that it reaches everyone in Scotland."

On how the panel's recommendations might be paid for he said he had a responsibility to make recommendations on funding also, offering preliminary ideas around commissioning by building on people's strengths and community assets.

Discussing how this review would differ from other reviews and how it could ensure change, Mr Feeley said:

- "...well I think there is a responsibility on me and on the rest of the advisory panel to produce a set of recommendations that are



compelling, radical where they need to be, building on Scotland's strengths where they need to be."

- and he reflected that "right now there's appetite for change."

Lastly, he invites everyone to contribute to the review. You can read the review's [Terms of Reference here](#) and contact the Secretariat by email: secretariat.adultsocialcarereview@gov.scot



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