

A vibrant care sector will shape the future of rural and island Scotland, ensuring residents remain healthier for longer, offering great employment and enterprise prospects and helping to create more inclusive communities. The building blocks are there – a rich diversity of community-led activities, expert third sector organisations and a small & medium enterprise (SME) sector full of potential. As outlined in Scotland’s [Independent Review of Adult Social Care](#), change is needed. Now is the time to bring people from the community and SME sector around the table with carers, care recipients and the statutory and private sectors to co-engineer this change.

Not a crisis, but an opportunity to revitalise and repopulate rural & island Scotland



Care & Wellbeing Workforce

1. Incentivise SMEs, including social enterprises and those self employed, through a programme of free access to skills development, start-up grants, rural relocation grants, business support and simplified procurement processes for statutory contracts.
2. Develop a national equalities & cultural awareness training programme accessible by SME care providers.
3. Test replicability of [Care & Wellbeing CIC](#) model across rural and island Scotland.

Connecting people to care

1. Develop a network of multiple independently-funded hyperlocal advice and advocacy projects, such as [Support Choices](#), in each Health & Social Care Partnership area and resource them to engage with hard-to-reach communities, including communities with protected characteristics.
2. Test replicability of [Island Wellbeing Project](#) in different island clusters.

Digital innovations

1. Invest in digital platforms that enable practitioners to assess care needs and record care journeys. Make these platforms freely available to third sector and SME providers.



Community Wealth Building & Repopulation

1. Fund and evaluate a rural social care demonstration project aligned to community wealth building principles. Monitor impact in relation to repopulation agenda.

Integration & Participation

1. More Joint Integration Boards to be established to cover smaller population areas. Formalise representation from carers, care recipients, SMEs and community providers in their membership.

Supporting carers

1. Rural and island proof the review of support mechanisms for carers including the Carers’ Allowance in consultation with experts by experience.