

Coalition of Carers in Scotland – 26th November 2014

Report of Discussion Groups

Devolving Powers to Scotland – What Does it Mean for Carers?

1. What objectives / principles should underpin any new powers devolved to Scotland

- Equality & human rights
- Self-determination
- Quality of care
- Scotland should not just ‘administer’ services but have the power to to determine the allocation of funding
- Carers as equal partners
- Further devolution to communities (not local authorities!)
- Trust should be more bottom up and less top down
- A revolution is on the cards!
- We need to be more radical
- We need to be prepared to take powers on and re-shape them in our own image for our own use
- 32 councils in Scotland. Impact needs to be the same across all of them

2. Where additional powers are devolved to Scotland, what role should citizens, particularly carers, play in shaping how these will work. In other words, where should the balance of power sit in relation to national government, local government and local communities

- ‘carers at every table’ – carers with back-up from the carer organisations, nationally and locally
- Citizens should not just be expected to follow the agenda, but be enabled to set the agenda!
- Devolution to local communities
- Cultural change!!
- An enabling act making a statutory duty on local authorities
- A Carers Union should be formed
- COCIS members need to be represented in groups forming legislation – getting stuck in at all levels
- Key objectives or drivers to make sure carers maximise involvement at all levels
- Government needs to get down to listening at a local level
- We need to hold politicians to promises

3. To what extent should powers relating to welfare be devolved to the Scottish

Parliament? What could be achieved in terms of better outcomes for carers?

- All DWP reform
- Simple safety net
- Housing
- All welfare
- Professional training
- Pensions – in the long term, gradually
- Aim to do better with accountability – compare how different cities do, learn from European partners
- Carers Allowance should be re-considered as an income for full time carers with benefits, pension and social security rights. Recognition that ‘carer’ is an occupation. Carers should be made more aware of their rights
- Throw Carers Allowance in the bin and think of something else

4. Should there be any change to respective powers of the UK and Scottish Parliaments in the following policy areas? What could be achieved for carers if these areas were devolved?

- Taxation – YES!
 - Replace carer allowance with minimum income and better pension credits
 - All income, including VAT, local tax, land taxation
 - Taxation – an increase is inevitable. Council tax should rise to pay for services
- Employment, minimum wage and support in relation to employment– YES!
 - Extend job seeker allowance to former carers
 - Living wage, not just minimum wage
- Equality and Human Rights – YES!
 - Enacting legislation in Scotland, including legislation from Europe