



# National Care Forum

## Impact Report 2023-2024



# Welcome to NCF's Impact Report

National Care Forum (NCF) is dedicated to representing not-for-profit social care providers and voicing care sector concerns to policymakers. We ensure not-for-profit social care sector providers' interests are represented at all levels and are in constant contact with government departments, politicians and the media to ensure your message gets across. Together we have a stronger voice!

NCF continued to play a significant role in supporting care and support providers, both those within our membership and in the wider sector, with the challenges that they may face on a day-to-day basis. We worked hard to keep members well briefed and up to date on policy development.

A few key areas of support:

- **Raising the voice of the not-for-profit care sector:**

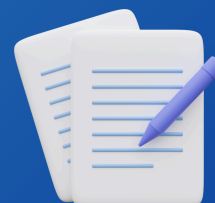
- Running a member election campaign to ensure the social care sector was included in the new government agenda, focusing on strategic messaging, voter outreach, and mobilisation to secure support.
- Representing the voice of the not-for-profit care and support sector at the Labour, Liberal Democrats and Conservative conferences and helping members engage with key politicians
- Responding to consultations and calls for evidence on behalf of our members
- Expanding our digital transformation offering to members with Digital Leadership training and work with Digital Care Hub
- Playing pivotal roles as Chairs, Co-Chairs, and speakers to represent our members at 25+ roundtables, ministerial meetings and advisory groups

- **Supporting the membership:**

- Assisting members in preparing for the CQC's new regulatory approach through the Single Assessment Framework, guiding them through the changes in the assessment process.
- Conducting 65+ informative events, webinars, and sessions that members have been able to benefit from as part of the NCF family
- Increasing learning opportunities through international research trips, enhancing our training credentials and engaging in key conversations around AI ethics and growing our policy voice

2023-24 has been a year of change across the UK. The result of the general election was initially felt as a positive step towards social care reform. Labour had talked about much needed investment for the sector but its actions are not matching the rhetoric. Announcements made since they took office in July seem to indicate a lack of understanding of the urgent action needed to stabilise the care sector. NCF and our members have been striving to ensure that the breadth of social care provision is understood and valued by the new cabinet and ministerial teams. In addition we have supported members to maximise their engagement in key agendas around environmental sustainability, digital transformation, workforce strategy and development and other policy and practice areas. Members' desire to work together for a collective vision and voice for not-for-profit care continues to inspire and drive each and everyone of us in the NCF team.

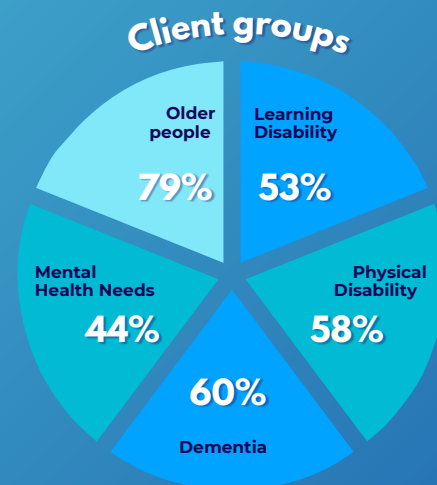
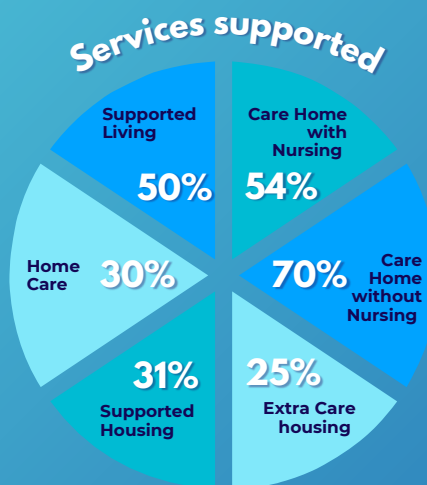
**Vic Rayner, CEO, National Care Forum**



# Membership Engagement

We represent over 176 not-for-profit organisations\* who deliver:

**£3.7** billion of social care support to over  
**268,900** people in  
**8237** care and support settings  
 Our members employ more than  
**145,000** colleagues and  
**20,700** volunteers



\*The majority of NCF members provide multiple services, as well as supporting more than one client group, which is why the membership profile percentages add up to more than 100

- We issued hundreds of real-time updates, including our weekly newsletter and regular Friday policy briefing.
- Over 2,000 people attended over 50+ Members' Communities of Practice Forums with presentations from external stakeholders such as DHSC, CQC and NHS as well as NCF Partners including Anthony Collins, Carterwood, Mediahawk, Marr Procurement and Cohesion.
- An extended thank you to Anthony Collins Solicitors for their continued support at each of our forum groups throughout 2024.
- We also hosted webinars and workshops on topics including:
  - *Employment Rights Bill webinar: Insights and Action Steps for NCF Members*
  - *A programme of webinars on assisted dying - next steps and the plan of the work to support members*
  - *Getting ready for the new CQC world - a focus on feedback evidence*
  - *Caldicott Guardians - what do social care providers need to know?*
  - *HR research webinar on REACH study - salary package and early induction experiences together with a training series on DoLS in partnership with CPA and Skills for Care*
- We shared over 1,200 members' stories on our website

Forum meetings are always so informative and the follow up emails with slideshow and other resources are always in depth

**NCF Member**

## Social Care Reward Survey

This year we again saw fantastic engagement with our Social Care Reward (SCR) Survey with over 90 of our providers registering to take part and 80 submitting data. The SCR Survey is a crucial annual study that helps not-for-profit social care organisations benchmark their pay and benefits packages for 27 front-line roles across nine English regions, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. At the NCF, this is a valuable free member benefit, and we are delighted to offer free participation to members, with it usually costing around £600-900 for non-NCF providers. If you couldn't take advantage of the SCR this year, do look out for it next year!



## Launching NCF CQC Resources Hub

We are excited to have the NCF Member Resources CQC Resources Hub—a dedicated space designed to support our members in navigating the Care Quality Commission framework hosted on the Notion platform.

The hub is packed with easy-to-understand guidance, best practices, and updates shared by our members and partners, making it easier for NCF Members to comply with CQC requirements. It also contains CQC-related webinar recordings.

Explore the NCF Member Resources CQC Resources Hub—a helpful space for NCF members. It's packed with easy-to-understand guidance, best practices, and updates to help your organisation navigate through the CQC framework.

 CQC Resources Hub

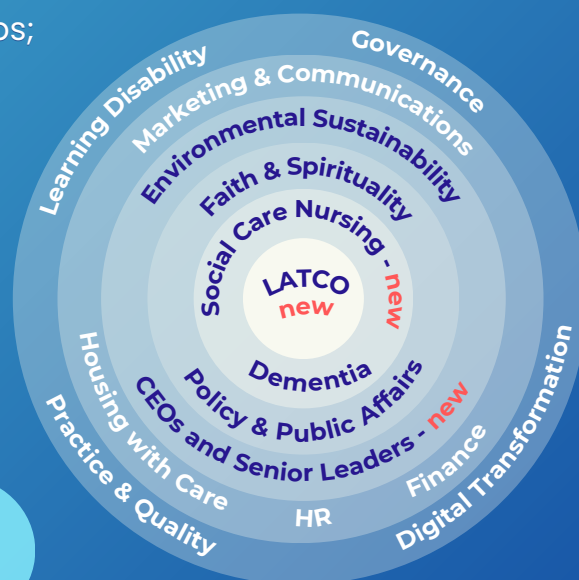
## New Communities of Practice Networks

We continue to support the reshaped approach to our NCF membership support through the evolution of our Communities of Practice. This approach remains effective, offering a clearer way to group the various elements of our current support and providing members with the opportunity to explore areas where they would like more practice-based support, addressing key aspects or specialisms of their work.

We have eight Community of Practice Forum groups; they are :

- HR
- Finance
- Learning Disability
- Digital Transformation
- Housing with Care
- Marketing and Communications
- Practice and Quality
- Governance (for trustees and board members)

2024 has seen us launch three specialist learning networks: Social Care Nursing Network, CEOs & Senior Leaders Network, and LATCO Network.



I learn from the speakers and other members - it has been very useful as I am relatively new to the sector

**NCF Member**

**What are the best things about our Communities of Practice Forum and Network meetings with regards to bringing our members together?**

Our key interest is in using these networks to keep the knowledge, skills and practice of senior leaders and managers up to date so being able to connect with current thinking and best practice is a priority for us.

**NCF Member**

## Membership Satisfaction Survey Report

The Membership Satisfaction Survey Report for 2024 highlights an impressive Net Promoter Score (NPS) of **9**, indicating a high level of satisfaction among our members. The survey reveals that a significant number of respondents are highly likely to recommend joining the National Care Forum (NCF) to other not-for-profit social care providers. This strong endorsement reflects the value and support our members find in being part of the NCF community.



# Policy and Parliamentary Affairs

## Speak Up For Care Campaign

For several months, including during the General Election campaign and its aftermath, we have been running the 'Speak Up For Care Campaign'. This campaign encourages members, their workforce and the people they support, to engage with local politicians and MPs to highlight the importance of social care and encourage visits to social care settings. As part of this, we produced a series of resources, including template letters, guidance on hustings and charity law, as well as other content in order to support providers in their engagement.



We're grateful to all the members who shared our resources on social media, with your team and those you care for. It was great to hear the thoughts and opinions of people drawing on care on what they wanted from the new government and also to shine a light on campaigns like #MyVoteMyVoice

## Open letter to Wes Streeting

In order to more effectively push for reform on behalf of members, NCF has convened a regular information-sharing group with over 30 organisations from across the sector to create a more unified voice and channel to share intelligence, amplify and align campaigns, react quickly to new media and policy developments and engage government. Several members of the group worked together to write an open letter to Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Wes Streeting, sharing concerns with government decisions on social care, to which a reply was received. Please find the letter [here](#).



## Chair of the CPA

In September 2024 Vic Rayner took over as Chair of the Care Provider Alliance, the coalition of national voices of adult social care providers in England, for 2024/2025. In accepting the position Vic listed amongst the priority areas she will be focusing on along with other CPA members workforce issues including fair pay and the implementation of a funded workforce strategy. Commissioning and regulation are also areas of focus as it is working with the new government to develop a National Care Service. Nurturing partnerships and continuing to develop learning opportunities for health and care partners through the Integrated Care Systems Learning Network also remain high priorities.

## Calls for evidence and consultation responses this year

Since our last Impact Report, we have responded to over 12 consultations and calls for evidence on behalf of our members, ensuring their concerns and ideas are heard by policymakers. This includes representations to the Treasury ahead of Spring and Autumn Budgets, local government finance settlement and several consultations related to housing standards and regulations

What are the best things about how we represent the voice of members?

I think there are robust representations on issues that cover not-for-profit providers and you appear to steer a line of being constructive whilst challenging to govt **NCF Member**

## Party conferences

In order to present a more unified voice to parliamentarians and demonstrate the value of social care in empowering people and supporting economic growth, we worked with the Future Social Care Coalition to run fringe events at the Liberal Democrats, Labour and Conservative Party Conferences.

We engaged with key politicians such as Stephen Kinnock, Wes Streeting and Liz Kendall, Ed Davey and Daisy Cooper as well as various local government figures. We have also begun to build connections with many new Liberal Democrats and Labour MPs with experience of or a specific interest in adult social care.



## Covid inquiry

The National Care Forum is a core participant for both Module 2 (looking at UK government decision making) and Module 6 (looking at the care sector) of the UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry. We are working in collaboration with the Home Care Association and Care England. Over the past year we have engaged with the Module 2 public hearings, submitted questions and clarifications, and **written a closing statement**. We are currently preparing for Module 6 and have produced a **preliminary written statement**.

## Ministerial meetings

NCF continues to have regular meetings with senior civil servants and ministers following the General Election, as it did before. We are also one of the co-chairs of the working group of the APPG on adult social care. This group has regular parliamentary engagement and regular meetings with DHSC ministers. As NCF, we are building on our pre-existing relationships with Wes Streeting, Stephen Kinnock, Angela Rayner, Liz Kendall and Jonathan Reynolds and their wider teams, as we look towards cross-government action on social care reform, a fair pay agreement and a National Care Service.

We welcomed Care Minister, Stephen Kinnock MP, to the Wokingham borough. On his visit, the Minister met with people who draw on care and support and their families to hear first-hand about their experiences. He spoke to people about what matters to them and how good support enables them to lead the lives they want to live.

The Minister met with representatives from the NCF, Wokingham Borough Council Adult Services, Optalis and Dimensions, to gain further insight into the social care landscape, reflecting on the importance of social care in healthy communities and how vital it was to hear from those receiving care and support, their families and the care workforce in the formulation of future government priorities.





## Environmental work

NCF has established a leadership role in the areas of Environmental Sustainability & Governance by building knowledge, creating connections, and supporting the sector, becoming a strong advocate for sustainability in care. This progress was recognised with our shortlisting for the Care Talk Social Care Leadership Awards in the ESG category. Our Environmental Sustainability Network draws on external expertise to facilitate peer learning and share insights, enhanced by outcomes of the Environmental Sustainability Survey.

These insights have been essential for responding to consultations on environmental and social policy and collaborating with government departments. We've partnered with researchers, the Social Care Sustainability Alliance, NHS colleagues, the CQC, and UKHSA to inform strategies. NCF continues to advocate for more support and guidance on sustainability and ESG in social care essentials for the new government.



We have contributed resources for the sector and hosted a CMM webinar and live panel at the Care Show. Moving forward, we aim to enhance our influence on national social care and environmental policy while supporting providers with valuable resources and innovations.

## NCF Awards and Recognition

- Great British Care Award – judging

It was a huge honour for NCF to be involved in the judging for this year's Great British Care Awards, judging in the Care Innovator Award category. It was also a pleasure to go along to the awards ceremony together with colleagues from around the sector and celebrate all the fantastic achievements of the evening's winners.

- Sunday Times best place to work

In May 2024 NCF were named as one of the Sunday Times Best Places to Work. The list recognises and celebrates the UK's best employers, based on survey feedback from staff and assesses six key areas including workplace culture, leadership, employee engagement and wellbeing.



- Awards Nominations

NCF has featured highly in the nominations for some of the key sector awards in the year. Both Helen Glasspool, Event and Partnership Lead, and Laurie Monaghan, Policy and Consultancy Officer, were finalists in the **Care Talk Social Care Leadership Awards**, while the **Women Achieving Greatness** in Social Care nominations included Kate Gore, Digital Transformation Officer, and Liz Jones, Policy Director. The Care Innovation Challenge was also a finalist at the **Association Excellence Awards** in the development category demonstrating how the event had grown over the years that NCF have been at the helm.

## Media coverage from November 2023 - November 2024

- 785 pieces of coverage across television, radio and press resulting in 148 million opportunities to see and listen to what we had to say
- Equivalent to an advertising spend of £3.32 million

We have continued to work with our media partner CMM, to deliver a series of educational webinars and podcasts to bring members up to date on key issues affecting our sector. Hosted by Liz and Vic these important discussions have featured members, colleagues from ADASS, Unison & IHSCM amongst others. Topics covered included developing a joint voice ahead of the General Election, environmental sustainability, zero hours contracts and the CQC Single Assessment Framework.

In addition to the webinar series, Vic, Liz and Bev also took part in podcast episodes with CMM. For a discussion around the digitisation of social care records Liz and Bev teamed up with Person Centred Software. For a subsequent episode Martin Rix from Belong, President of ADASS Melanie Williams and Isaac Samuels, who draws on care and support joined Vic for a conversation to consider the implications for social care of a new Labour government.

In addition to being contacted by the usual media outlets for comment on specific stories such as changes to legislation, put in place by the government at the time, relating to international recruitment, Vic received a range of other requests including approaches from Sky News, BBC Politics South, BBC Radio 5 Live and ITV to take part in radio and TV discussions.



In December 2023 Vic was featured on a panel discussion broadcast on Sky News' The UK Tonight which focused on the health of the NHS where Vic contributed the perspectives of social care providers. We had articles published in titles in which we had not been previously including Tomorrow's Care, Health Business and Care Home Magazine where Vic will be contributing a guest column for 6 months.

As well as regular contributions to sector magazines like Care Management Matters, Care Home Environment and The Caring Times we have had articles in titles in which we had not been previously including



Tomorrow's Care, Health Business and Care Home Magazine where Vic will be contributing a guest column for 6 months.

Click on  
the articles  
below to  
open





# Digital Transformation

Our Digital Transformation Team helps NCF members prepare for and shape the future of social care provision. We ensure members are supported to actively engage in the digital agenda by:

- Increasing awareness of data protection obligations and cyber security strategies
- Improving knowledge of new technologies and their potential to improve outcomes for both providers and service users
- Sharing best practices in identifying, co-producing and implementing broad-ranging technology solutions

## Digital Leadership Programme

This online programme, delivered by the NCF Digital Team, consists of four modules spread over four weeks. It is specifically designed for Registered Managers or anyone leading digital transformation within their adult social care organisation. The programme aims to build confidence and the ability to identify and integrate digital technology into care and support services. It is available both as a direct access programme (with bookings managed by Skills for Care) and as an in-house programme. Since our launch in October 2023, we have successfully delivered the programme to 135 participants through four direct access sessions and three in-house sessions. Participant evaluations have been highly positive, and we are planning a further three direct access sessions this financial year.

This training has supported me to sort of facilitate our vision. We want all our staff to have access to the organisation through an individual email system where we can communicate to people straight away, where they have our policies and procedures at the tip of their fingertips.

**Registered manager**

The technology demonstrated in the programme was well led and key for person centred care. The facilitation by the National Care Forum and Skills For Care was great. Almost anybody and everybody should do the programme. It was very enjoyable and great for networking among care providers.

**Registered manager**

## AI work

We have been commissioned by Digital Care Hub to create a guide on the current use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Adult Social Care Providers. We hosted three working groups, comprised of Digital Care Hub and National Care Forum members to listen to participant insights, concerns and experience to shape the guidance. Using the findings from the three working groups, we implemented their ideas. The guide explains what AI is, what AI embedded applications are available and how they are currently being used in the sector. The guide will sit on the Digitising Social Care website and includes top tips, a glossary and cited resources.

## Better Security Better Care Programme

We continue to deliver the Better Security Better Care (BSBC) Regional Co-ordination role for the Northwest and the Southeast regions. This year we supported both regions to deliver successful regional Better Security Better Care (BSBC) summits, bringing together key stakeholders to agree next steps on supporting the adult social care sector with embedding robust data security approaches within their organisations.



## eLearning Oxford Brookes Institute of Public Care

In addition to co-creating and delivering the Digital Leadership Programme with Skills for Care, we have been further supporting the adult social care sector by lending our expertise through our network to support user testing of this free, educational resource. The newly created eLearning modules are pitched at those in who work in Data Protection and/or Information Governance and will sit on the Digital Care Hub website.

## TAPPI2

Through the Housing LIN project, the Digital Team at the National Care Forum coproduced a 'Tech for independent Living' guide with residents and staff of Dairy View, Housing21 in co-ordination with Wiltshire County Council. The guide is an easy read PDF document which can be printed as a threefold leaflet. The content of the guide includes a selection of ways technology can be used to enhance independent living. For example, devices and connectivity, how installing smart home features can help someone adapt their environment to meet their individual needs and preferences.

The format of the guide consists of a large font, easy read, pictures of and quotes from residents, with their explicit permission.

## Digital Care Hub (previously Digital Social Care)



We continue to work with the Digital Care Hub (DCH) and this year delivered a webinar for them on the Analogue to Digital switchover in addition to producing several guides including NHS Mail and the Analogue to Digital switchover. We are currently working on producing a guide on the use of AI in adult social care which is due to be published this autumn.

## Technology Provider Partnerships

At the National Care Forum, we pride ourselves on supporting the sector by providing information with regards to technology that is out there to facilitate the art of the possible. To do this, we have strong partnerships with technology suppliers and offer a variety of partnership opportunities for them to engage with us and our membership.



# Care Innovation Challenge 2024

The NCF team are riding high on the success of the **Care Innovation Challenge 2024**, a 3 month programme that brings together bright minds, experts and people with the lived experience to create a platform for innovation and entrepreneurship. The key vision of the Challenge 'is to create sustainable solutions to key challenges facing the care sector, improving the lives of those who live and work in social care'. The year we have seen increased interest in the Challenge Weekend, which once again took place at Coventry University at the end of June. Applications were received from people with more varied backgrounds, including care workers, nurses, university students, software engineers, marketeers, data analysts and environmentalists. At the end of a bustling weekend of ideation, innovation and collaboration with our fantastic mentors, 5 teams were selected to go forward to the Challenge Final at the Birmingham Care Show.



- 'Carpe' by Anna O'Gara.
- 'Project EVA' from Tim Robinson, Anna Lewkowicz and Kirsty Youngs.
- 'Total Care Manager' from Paul Tomlinson.
- 'Ellyfe' from Keerthi Busanaboyina and Hemanth Kumar Talupula.
- 'Care Coach', created by a group from Affinity Trust and GG Care.



Congratulations to Team Ellyfe who were winners of the Care Innovation Challenge 2024. Team Ellyfe developed a wearable app designed to detect and monitor hydration levels in older people. During the show the Team demonstrated the benefits of their innovation which analyses hydration at cellular level rather than just hydration of the skin. Their aim is to provide better management of hydration, supporting people to stay well hydrated, avoiding health decline due to dehydration.

## Thank you to the sponsors



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# The Managers Conference 2024

This was the third **Managers Conference** NCF hosted in partnership with Skills for Care and in collaboration with ARC England. A sell out event, the conference is open to all managers from across the sector.

As well as enjoying the panel sessions and workshops, managers make the most of this opportunity to network with colleagues, compare experiences, share ideas and most of all, have fun spending time together and recognising their achievements and contributions.



Sessions covered a broad range of topics including; valuing the workforce, person-centred support, digital adoption and co-production, CQC's new regulatory approach and a panel of people who shared the experience of living in care and support settings.

Our panel sessions and workshops covered some of the key issues for care managers including compassionate leadership skills, recruitment and onboarding guidance, and social media tips.

## NCF Member Visit to Norway

In September the NCF team took a group of members for a visit to Oslo for a deep dive into digital technology adoption by Norwegian care home providers. Supported by Sensio the two day visit the group visited **Nesoddtunet** care home also **Lindeberghjemmet** nursing home have dementia or other cognitive impairment. Both settings have truly embraced health care technology, and each visit provided the opportunity to hear from those who work at the settings who have successfully implemented various technologies for both the benefit of their organisations, care workers and those living in the homes.

The visit also included roundtable sessions on Nordic Health Tech with solution discussions and demos from Sensio, Dignio, IKOS, Dignacare, Safemate, Jodacare.



The programme included a mix of plenaries, workshops and panel discussions – some were practice-based, and others encouraged managers to think outside of their daily priorities and expand their horizons.

All very knowledgeable and experienced. A vast of experience in the sector, sharing outstanding practices and ways to improve our services to provide best outcomes for our residents and teams.

**The Managers  
Conference 2024 attendee**






# Partners

NCF develops and invests in relationships with a wide range of commercial companies providing products and services to the care and support sector.

## Annual Partners



**NCF Annual Partners** are acknowledged by NCF as experts in their fields and we work closely with them to support projects, provide insights and support events.

**Click on the logo to find out more information about the partner**

The **NCF Directory** was redesigned this year into categories and alphabetical order, helping our members find more easily the products, services and companies they require.

## Webinars 2024

NCF hosts a range of webinars with partners focussing on key priorities for social care providers. Topics this year included:

- ARC England Research Unit Webinar
- The annual webinar on 'Adult Safeguarding' with Peter Cheer, independent chair of Friends of the Elderly's Safeguarding Adults Sub-committee, and independent chair of the Safeguarding Board at Midland Heart Housing Association.
- 'Help with your staff's retirement planning webinar' with Guide



## Salesforce held a Nonprofit Care and Social Impact Day

Our new partner, Salesforce held a Nonprofit Care and Social Impact Day on the fabulous Ohana floor of their London offices in September.

Vic was invited to give a 'State of the Nation' address to delegates who all represented not-for-profit providers of social care services and charities who all share in common their advocacy for people. AI and data were topics very high on the agenda and Vic joined a panel of Salesforce customers to share her thoughts on the responsibility care providers have to ensure generative AI is used in the correct way to ensure the rights and privacy of the people receiving support are protected.



# Raising the voice of the not-for-profit care sector

## Participating in government and advisory groups

Our CEO, Policy Director, and our entire team are actively engaged in an extensive network of influential organisations, government and advisory groups, exemplifying our commitment to shaping the voices of not-for-profit social care providers. Our participation in these groups, including roles as Chairs, Co-Chairs and speakers, underscores our dedication to staying at the forefront of policy development, innovation and collaboration.

- Member of the Five Nations Care Forum
- Founding member of the Digital Social Care management board
- Co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group Adult Social Care Working Group
- Part of the Community Rehabilitation Alliance
- Part of The National Falls Prevention Coordination Group
- Part of the CQC External Strategic Advisory Group
- Part of the ARC Research Unit Steering Group
- Part of CQC Trade Associations
- Member of the European Ageing Network
- Member of the Care and Support Alliance
- Member of the Cavendish Coalition
- Member of the Advisory Board of the Future Social Care Coalition
- Member of the Provider Data Advisory Group
- Chair of the Care Provider Alliance
- Member of International Recruitment Steering Group
- Chair of the government's Digital Social Care Advisory Group
- Co-Chair of the government's Workforce Advisory Group
- Member of the Workforce Reform Implementation Group
- Member of the Digital Care Hub programme board
- Member of the Better Security Better Care Board
- Member of the National Discharge Task Force
- Members of the Wellbeing Board
- Member of the Socrates Scientific Steering Group
- Honorary Professor of City University – Health Science
- Chair of My Home Life Hallmark Foundation Advisory Group
- Chair of the Global Ageing Network Board of Directors
- Member of Impact consortium
- Member of Time to Act
- Group Member of ASC Resilience Forum

## Five Nations



Participating in the Five Nations Care Forum is a unique opportunity to engage with professionals and stakeholders in the care sector across the UK and Ireland. This year NCF were pleased to host the Forum in Nottingham, where we chaired a meeting focusing on key issues around workforce, research, regulation and shared policy agendas. In addition, we attended a further meeting of the forum in Dublin demonstrating our commitment to collaboration and information sharing within the alliance.

We work in partnership with the CPA and have contributed extensively to shared work over the last 12 months reflecting a dedication to promoting the interests of service recipients, staff, and service providers through joint lobbying and shared learning.



## External Conference Appearances

CEO Vic, Policy Director Liz and other members of the team have continued a busy schedule of speaking opportunities. As well as addressing new audiences these events offer further opportunities to promote NCF as a leading voice for social care as each appearance is promoted on social media. Speaking opportunities have included Surrey Heartland ICB digital event, European Summit on International Workforce, Better Security Better Care South East Summit, the Public Records Standards Body Conference and the King's Fund Annual Conference

## Visiting our members' services

### Yorkshire tour

It is always brilliant to see the breadth and diversity of the care and support services our members across the NCF offer. In the middle of July, Vic, CEO, and Liz, Policy Director, had a little road trip to Yorkshire to visit some NCF members up there. A really great hospitality was offered by the members they visited – the **Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust**, the **Royal British Legion** and the **Camphill Village Trust**.

The tour began at Hartrigg Oaks, a 21-acre continuing care retirement community for over 300 older adults, featuring 152 bungalows and The Oaks Care Home for dementia and nursing care. Their Continuing Care model allows residents to transition between living arrangements as needed.



Next, they have explored Lister House, a Royal British Legion dementia care home in Ripon for the Armed Forces community. It offers 76 ensuite rooms, including a specialist dementia wing, and has strong ties with local Royal British Legion branches for community involvement. Lister House is recognized as Veteran Friendly and boasts an award-winning chef, Brian Preston, named Care Chef of the Year 2023.

The tour was finished with a visit to Croft Community, part of the Camphill Village Trust in Malton, which focuses on sustainability through its 'Greencare' mission. This vibrant supported living community caters to a diverse range of adults with various needs. They offer supported work opportunities, including a market garden, café, and craft workshops.

### Liverpool tour

Liz, our Policy Director, was delighted to be able to spend some time visiting members up in Liverpool in February. She visited **L'Arche** at their Ark day services, offering a range of music, arts, craft and gardening activities supporting people with learning disabilities across the city. Then on to the **Parkhaven Trust** to visit Beechcroft, their state of the art residential and nursing service for people with dementia. It was so exciting to see Beechcroft, as it was part of the Hubble project which we ran during COVID, featuring the journey of 3 NFP care through their digital, tech and innovation journey, but of course all done online. Finally, she spent some time with Sefton **New Directions**, one of our LATCO members and from this meeting, we created the LATCO network!



## NCF Team Day at Belong Village in Newcastle-Under-Lyme

In August, our team day was hosted by **Belong Newcastle-Under-Lyme**, where we received a warm welcome. We had a wonderful time creating clay models, together with some of the village's residents, and learning about their exceptional dementia support services. Additionally, we immersed ourselves in the rich history of Staffordshire, which made the day both enjoyable and insightful.



It was a great opportunity to strengthen our team connections and gain valuable knowledge from our hosts.

## Face to Face Community of Practice meetings

In our efforts to enhance the NCF Communities of Practice, we have successfully hosted several in person networking events featuring Communities of Practice Forum and Network events hosted at our members' services. These events provide valuable opportunities for collaboration and learning among our members.

In April, we started this initiative with a session on marketing and communications. In September, the LATCO Network met to focus on important topics such as defining growth within the TECKAL framework, exploring the benefits of the LATCO model, and developing a shared dataset to measure quality and outcomes.



In November, we held two more events: one on Dementia and Faith and Spirituality, which featured an empathy suit demonstration and discussions on reducing isolation among long-term care residents from Dr Andrew Sommerlad (UCL Division of Psychiatry, Islington Memory Service), presenting findings from the SONNET study, and another on Marketing and Communications, which included a presentation about GenAI in marketing and a panel discussion on improving care home searches.

## DHSC Visits



The Department of Health and Social Care is very keen to visit some of the care settings in Leeds and London, as their offices and many of their staff are located in those cities. NCF has offered to work with members to host monthly visits over the next year, accommodating a small group accompanied by NCF colleagues.

We have successfully completed 10 visits in 2024. Additionally, we have been supporting the Department of Health and Social Care Policy School with visits to NCF members. We will continue this scheduled program each month until the end of spring 2025. These visits feature a variety of services, helping DHSC colleagues understand the breadth of social care. We have received a great response from our members, with almost all the visit dates already booked.



# Using in-house NCF research expertise

As leaders in social care with research expertise, the NCF regularly carries out funded projects, practice-based research, and benchmarking studies on a range of topics. Our work is varied, this year alone we have conducted research for a range of funded projects on topics ranging from the digitisation of social care records for working age adults to cyber-attacks in the charity and not for profit sector.

## Digitisation of social care records for working age adults

In December 2023, the NCF was commissioned to conduct research through Better Security Better Care's Action Research Fund (ARF) – a programme looking to harness cyber-security and data expertise as well as practice-based knowledge from across the social care sector.

Our project called: "Digitisation of social care records for working age adults: exploring access, control, and digital exclusion" aimed to explore digital care planning tools, the cyber-security measures they use to protect personal data, and what impact this might have on data access, control, and digital exclusion among working age adults. The project was incredibly fruitful and produced over 12 findings and recommendations that could improve access to digital social care records for Working Age Adults.



## Charitable Care Organisations and Cyber Threats

The National Care Forum (NCF) and the Voluntary Organisations Disability Group (VODG) were commissioned by Better Security Better Care in December 2023 to conduct our research project Under Attack? Charitable Care Organisations and Cyber Threats.

It was commissioned on the back of a programme that looks to harness cyber-security and data expertise as well as practice-based knowledge from across the social care sector. We set out to explore the ways in which social care charities and not-for-profit organisations are particularly susceptible to cyber-attacks, and whether there are patterns or approaches that could be used to target these organisations.

It found key areas of vulnerability, and interesting insights on the nature of attacks experienced by charitable and not-for-profit care organisations. We also made 4 key recommendations on how we can strengthen or target support for providers as the Better Security Better Care programme moves forward.

# Social Care Research

In 2024, the NCF accelerated our work building external research partnerships to shape the world of social care research. We believe in research that works for the sector is done with the sector and ultimately is jointly owned by the sector. We have been involved in developing and conducting excellent research that provides high-quality evidence to support development and innovation in social care. Examples of research projects conducted this year include:

## • REACH Realist Review

This year also saw completion of the REACH Realist Review. This explored REcruiting and RetAining nurses, and carers in Care Homes (REACH). It looked at what works, for which staff, under what circumstances, and at what cost?

The study was led by NICHE Leeds but the research team comprised the NCF, as well as wider colleagues from Skills for Care, the University of Northumbria, colleagues from the University of Hertfordshire and more. Outputs from the project have included publication in Issue 7 of Oxford University Press's **Innovations in Ageing Journal**.

## • DACHA Study

The past year has also seen the NCF continue its involvement with the heavily influential **DACHA study**.

The £2.2million NIHR funded DACHA study (Developing research resources and minimum data set for care homes' adoption and use) is an ARC East of England supported study being led by the University of Hertfordshire.



The four-year project, which began in November 2019, is divided into five distinct work packages. It is being carried out with the collaboration of 14 partners from a diverse range of organisations, including seven ARCs, nine universities, the National Care Forum, The Health Foundation, and the Alzheimer's Society Research Network. The project involves the following collaborators:

- University of Hertfordshire
- University of Cambridge
- University of East Anglia
- Newcastle University
- University of Nottingham
- University of Glasgow
- University of Leeds
- University of Exeter
- University of Kent
- The Health Foundation
- National Care Forum
- University of York (for DACHA Dom only which was a study within a project (SWAP))
- NIHR ARC East of England

## • Kent Research Partnership

This year we also continued to collaborate with the **Kent Research Partnership**. The Kent Research Partnership is a four-year project which is co-led by University of Kent and Kent County Council and funded by the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR).

It is one of six capacity building, social care partnerships funded by the NIHR Health Services and Delivery (HS&DR) programme in England. The four-year programme of work is developing sustainable Kent-based partnerships to support the delivery of high quality social care research on the topics that matter most in the region but have relevance to national discourse and research.



## • Future Research Projects

This year has also seen us successfully secure funding for a number of soon-to-be announced research projects that will take place over the coming years. These range from large scale programmes of work to smaller scale collaborations with universities. We are so excited to be at the forefront of research in social care and want to connect our fantastic membership with opportunities to inform academia in a constructive and impactful way.

### • MEND Study

In 2024 the NCF (together with a coalition of stakeholders led by the NICHE Leeds) was successful in receiving funding from the NIHR to carry out a vital project looking to increase diversity and representation in the ASC workforce. The project title is 'ProMoting divErsity and uNDeR-represented staff in adult social care; attracting, recruiting and retaining more male care workers' – **The MEND Study**.

NICHE-Leeds along with the National Care Forum and Skills for Care developed the research proposal and secured funding to carry out the project together. The study is now underway and aims to increase the number of male care workers supporting older people living in care home and home care settings.

### • The Long Lies Study

In 2024 the NCF alongside Mid Yorkshire NHS Teaching trust, Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust, and the University of Sheffield was successful in receiving funding from the NIHR to investigate the health, social, and economic consequences of delayed ambulance response times for fall patients.

The **Long Lies Study** could hold the key to improving patient care and reducing healthcare costs. Led by the University of Sheffield, the research project began in April of this year and has a duration of 27 months, finishing up at the end of March 2026.

# Championing Research, Evidence and Innovation

## • Research Space at the 2024 Care Show

Within the Care Innovation Challenge area of the Care Show 2024 we hosted a series of poster sessions and presentations from leading researchers and practitioners from across the country. These presentations had an innovation and practice improvement focus and topics ranged from workforce development to evidence implementation and even Japanese care environments. As ever, we continue to showcase research for the care sector and with the care sector.



## • Research Corner at the Global Ageing Conference 2025 Boston

At the Global Ageing Conference held in Glasgow in 2023, we facilitated a fantastic programme of activities in our research corner. Delegates heard fascinating poster presentations from some of the UK's best researchers on social care and ageing. We also had the privilege of being joined by esteemed researchers from around across the world. This space functioned as an area for networking and collaboration – and hosted a range of exciting stalls, activities, and sector experts.

The NCF is working closely with colleagues from the **Global Ageing Network** to build on this work. The **next biennial conference** will be held in America, in conjunction with the 2025 LeadingAge Annual Meeting from November 2–5, 2025 at the Boston Convention Center.

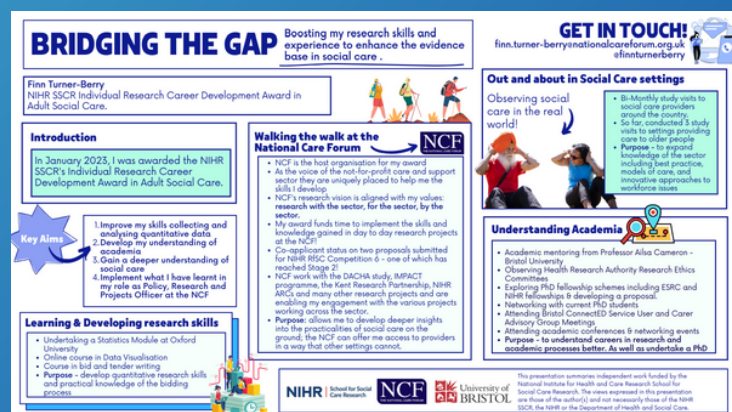
The program will include an education track for proposals featuring skills non-U.S. speakers and multinational panels. At present, are working with our international colleagues to curate the research side of the programme and will be sharing opportunities over the course of the year to come!

## • Global Ageing Conference 2023 Research Posters Published

During the Glasgow Global Ageing Conference 2023 we brought together renowned researchers from across the UK and around the world to present over 20 research posters across two days. This year we published this fantastic range of posters in a poster lookbook.

The document showcases the fantastic range of research posters we saw presented on topics from care provision to sustainable housing and the social care workforce.

Research from countries such as Canada, India, America, and Australia feature in the publication as well as posters from top researchers from across both Scotland and England. Read the publication [here](#).



The National Care Forum is an ever-reliable source of information, advice, best practices and contacts across the care sector, as well as being a powerful representative body. Together it all contributes to the difference we are able to make for those we support.

**NCF Member**



# Future plans

**2025 is shaping up to be an important year. With a new government in place, we are working closely with our members to ensure that not-for-profit social care becomes a key issue on the national agenda. It's time to put it firmly on the doorstep of politicians, the media, and the public. The introduction of a fair pay agreement, alongside efforts to influence policy, will help us shape a framework for a national care service that truly meets the needs of both workers and those who rely on care. Together, we are building momentum for lasting change.**

We are considering how we can best support our members in the coming year. We plan to continue:

- Continuing to enhance practice-based support to empower members, helping them effectively navigate both current and future opportunities and challenges in the sector.
- Focusing NCF activities on digital transformation and identifying ways to better support members as they manage increasingly complex and demanding agendas.
- Advocating for social care reform with the new government, urging political parties to prioritise adult social care and integrate key reform principles
- Keeping members informed with timely sector news and updates, while providing opportunities to connect offline and share experiences and expertise through NCF-led events and forums.
- Strengthening our members' access to international perspectives by continuing chairing GAN Board, offering increased opportunities for members to engage in global activities, including the upcoming GAN conference in Boston.

## Events in 2025

- Save the dates for Boston – November 2-5, 2025 !

UK care and support providers are encouraged to attend the **Global Ageing Network's** biennial conference, for a program that will include an education track for proposals featuring non-U.S. speakers and multinational panels. Check for more here.

- The Managers Conference, 10 – 11 March (more information [here](#)).

For information on all NCF events visit the **event pages** on the NCF website.

# Thank you

Thank you to all our members for your continued support in the 2024 election process. Your collaboration post-election has been invaluable as we work together with a unified voice for the NFP sector. With your commitment, we are driving better outcomes for both the workforce and the people receiving care and support.

...to the NCF team, both current and past Board Members, sector colleagues, members and partners. Whose outstanding dedication in responding, supporting and consistently delivering at a high standard has strengthened the NCF membership, enhancing its resilience for any challenges.

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