

Key Messages



VHS Members Meet Up: National Outcomes Review Wednesday 10 May 2023

This is an anonymised note of the Members Meet Up to ensure attendees felt able to speak openly about the national outcomes. This was an online meeting at which 41 people from a range of third sector organisations participated. Christine Carlin who sits on the board of VHS chaired the members meeting bringing her own expertise having previously worked in the civil service. Lesley Thomson from the Scottish Government consultation team was invited to speak and Lewis Ryder Jones from Oxfam was also invited to give an informal update on the 'Scotland that cares' campaign, which VHS supports.

VHS will use the perspectives gathered from the members meeting and our wider work to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation. Kimberley Somerside, Policy Engagement Lead at VHS, asked members to get in touch with any additional information and encouraged members to write their own response where possible to ensure our sector's voice is heard. The consultation is very open and only includes a hand full of questions.

Lesley Thomson, Engagement Lead, National Performance Framework Unit, Scottish Government.

Voluntary Health Scotland invited Lesley Thomson from the Scottish Government's team undertaking the review of the national outcomes to speak to our members. Lesley explained within the National Performance Framework there are 11 national outcomes and 81 national indicators, which set out the direction and ambition for Scotland along with underpinning values. The outcomes are measured through the indicators primarily using equalities statistics but also SIMD where possible. The Community Empowerment Act 2015 enshrined the national outcomes in legislation and as part of this they are periodically reviewed. After this review the Scottish Ministers will consult the Scottish Parliament, with the Finance and Public Administration Committee leading that scrutiny. The Scottish Government's engagement plan includes undertaking a gender review of the national outcomes. Lesley also confirmed they are building a new National Performance Framework website and they hope to publish more information on the indicators and data. She explained some of the indicators are still "pending" following the pandemic as data collection was impacted.

Engagement Process: Lesley outlined the governance and timelines involved in the review. She explained the government was very aware of consultation fatigue, so they have undertaken significant desk-based research to avoid too much duplication. There were questions about how young people and ethnic minorities will be involved in the review. Lesley confirmed there will be some engagement with the youth parliament and children's parliament. She also explained engagement was limited by the resource of the government's National Performance Framework team, so they won't be able to engage with everyone. However, she re-emphasised that data was being drawn from other consultation processes like the citizen's assembly and climate assembly too. There was a conversation about whether alternative formats and translations of the consultation documents had been

provided. Lesley was unable to confirm the plans for future engagement but provided assurances that the review would also be put to parliament once the responses were analysed.

Implementation Gap: Members discussed the importance of acknowledging the implementation gap with regards to the National Performance Framework. Lesley said the Scottish Parliament was looking at the implementation gap through various inquiries on government policy at the moment. It was felt there was a gap between the ambitions of the national outcomes and the reality on the ground. Lewis Ryder-Jones highlighted that Oxfam were calling for the Scottish Government to produce delivery plans that followed the same five year life cycle and report on progress towards each outcome in accordance with a clear and regular reporting timeline.

Using the Outcomes: It was recognised that the national outcomes were not just the responsibility of government, they are designed to be a vision for the whole of Scotland. Funders use them to hold organisations to account and there was a discussion about how organisations should be using them as part of their work. Some organisations are very diligent about aligning their work programmes with the national outcomes and reporting on the national indicators. We heard the outcomes are supposed to be looked at as a whole but admittedly some have to be prioritised over others. The outcomes also must be achievable, measurable and reasonably dynamic. It was felt that they were in need of a refresh to make them relevant to today's challenges, for example, cost of living and climate change. Lesley made clear that the voluntary sector was central to achieving the national outcomes.

Achieving the Outcomes: There was an important conversation about the reality of resource from government. There was a point raised about needing more resource dedicated to driving the National Performance Framework. It should be imbedded in broader society with the average person, not just policy circles and grant funding.

Accountability: Some attendees felt their organisation put huge amounts of effort every year into reporting on the national indicators, but questioned whether the statutory sector did the same. It was felt there was a danger the outcomes were just another thing that fell to the third sector. There were questions about how the government used all this reported information from the third sector about the indicators, as it can be very labour intensive to report on. Lesley explained that as per the Community Empowerment Act all public authorities had to align their work with the national outcomes, including health boards, local authorities and agencies. However, there's was no one in the Scottish Government monitoring this work, except maybe some sponsorship teams. The government has had some feedback from the Scottish Parliament that this needs to be tightened up. There's been a proposal for further legislation to tackle this. Lesley also confirmed the government uses data beyond that shown on the indicators website. They are looking to improve how this other data, including from the third sector, can be shared, for example through case studies.

Reviewing Indicators: Lesley confirmed the government would be looking at the indicators as part of this review, but also assured that there was a robust process in place for reviewing existing indicators outwith the periodical reviews. Additionally, she explained there was a balance to be found between having too much data and not enough.

Scotland that cares: Lewis Ryder-Jones provided an update on the '[Scotland that cares](#)' campaign which aims to establish a national outcome on care. He noted there had been big legislative changes around care recently and pandemic shone a light on the reality and challenges of care. The campaign has a meeting with the government to talk through their asks as part of the review. The aim is to go beyond carers and unpaid carers to include parents and other forms of care which are often invisible. It was acknowledged by other

members during the meeting that there needs to be a significant change in how we value care in society. Children's Health Scotland has concerns about the status of kinship carers, especially informal kinship carers who have no recognition at present and are often excluded from assessment of needs.

Preventing Injuries: It was highlighted that there is not a lot of data on preventing injuries in the home and improvements could be made in the indicators on this. Data from Public Health Scotland focuses only on hospitalisation and there needs to be accurate data to carry out prevention. ROSPA will be responding to the consultation to highlight the information they would like to see in relation to preventing injuries.

Rural Communities: Huge differences were noted between rural and urban communities' experiences and there were questions about whether this was reflected in the outcomes. Lesley spoke about the need to improve data on rural and remote communities, noting this was part of the government's plan for next year. It was highlighted that the CPG on Poverty was looking into poverty in rural areas.

Just Transition: Members discussed the omission of climate change from the outcomes. It was felt that any potential outcome on climate change would need to include a 'Just Transition' which addresses issues of climate change and poverty. Members said investing in communities was vital to this. They urged government to draw the links between the Community Wealth Building consultation and the outcomes review. Lewis highlighted that Oxfam were also working on the Wellbeing and Sustainability Bill and encouraged members to get in touch about it. There were also calls for include health aspects of physical activity, active travel and access to greenspace.

Older People: It was highlighted that often older people felt like decisions were made for them, not with them. They feel cut off from support and society, not able to ask for help amidst big challenges like the cost of living. There were calls for more indicators on intergenerational work within the 'communities' outcome.

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