

Impact Report

NOVEMBER 2025

#SocialCareFuture



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We believe that we should
all be able to live in the place
we call home, with the people
and things that we love, in
communities where we look
out for one another, doing
the things that matters to us.

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About this report

- #SocialCareFuture (SCF) began in 2018 as an online hashtag, bringing together like-minded individuals and organisations united by a shared goal: to create big change in social care where everyone can live in a place they call home. Following a launch gathering with 300 people, SCF evolved into a broader movement for change, taking driving forward a range of impactful actions.
- Convenors of the Movement worked with wider members to agree a strategy in 2022, built on the foundations laid during the first four years of their collective work, and providing a framework for its continued direction.
- Three years on, the convenors agreed the need for a “light touch exercise” to understand the what #SocialCareFuture has achieved, help inform its next phase and consider the future of the initiative overall.
- This exercise would review the work done to-date and resulting perceived impact, through three elements:
 1. An account of key achievements in relation to the strategic goals set out in ‘A movement for gloriously ordinary lives’, informed by a survey sent to all movement members and shared on Linked In (May/June 2025) with 76 responses received.
 2. Perceptions of a sample of 17 key stakeholders, drawn out through 1-2-1 interviews, focused on the Movement’s approach, actions, achievements, impact and value. They were also asked for their ideas and thoughts on opportunities for the next phase of the movement (April/May 2025). These interviewees were drawn from a range of perspectives, including those in a policy, government, political, statutory, support provider, academic, media or consultancy role, as well as people who draw on care and support.
 3. Further views and opinions shared at a facilitated 24-hour workshop with the #SocialCareFuture ‘actives’ group to discuss emerging findings from the above and to help consider how the movement should respond (June 2025).

The following report shares the results of this work. It has been prepared by Jaimee Lewis, independent freelance consultant (Hoop Pine Communications Ltd).

Executive Summary

This report examines the impact of #SocialCareFuture (SCF), a growing, *“people-powered movement born from frustration but driven by hope”*. SCF unites individuals who draw on care or support, along with their allies, to imagine and build a better future for adult social care. Its core vision is for everyone to *“live in the place we call home, with the people and things we love, in communities where we look out for each other, doing the things that matter to us”*.

The movement’s strategy, *“**A movement for Gloriously Ordinary Lives**”* (2022), focuses on changing the narrative, increasing the power and influence of people who draw on social care, and engaging with key players to foster change in the direction of the vision.

Key activities and achievements:

SCF has undertaken diverse activities across four main areas to achieve the vision set out in its strategy:

1. Influencing national policy and leadership:

SCF has established a significant presence at key events, influenced government discussions (e.g., the Department of Health and Social Care’s starting point for reform discussions), and played an influential role in groups like the Time to Act Reform Group. The SCF vision was recommended by the House of Lords for government adoption and the Movement has also guided specific policy influencing developments such as the national “Proactive Prevention” model and led the “Plumbing and Wiring in Adult Social Care” initiative.

2. Shifting power:

The movement supports “People Power” and “Influencer” groups through training and convening, and has launched a “People Finder” speaker agency to elevate lived experience voices. It also provides practical guides for inclusive events and supports legal and advocacy networks.

3. Fostering local action and co-production:

SCF has supported co-production of adult social care strategies in local areas, and catalysed action for councils and providers including on co-production and early action.

4. Changing narratives and developing resources

SCF launched an animation describing its vision, works with national organisations to reframe social care building on its influential research and guidance, and has contributed to developing communication training for leaders. It has also produced resources like a forthcoming book with Jessica Kingsley Publishers and supported the dissemination of Access Social Care’s Ask Ava legal chatbot.

Impact and key findings:

Established a memorable vision and influenced language (Narrative Power):

- SCF has successfully cultivated good general awareness and a clear impact on changing the conversation around social care within professional and policy spheres.
- Its vision is simple, memorable, effective, and widely adopted in key documents and by major organisations like ADASS and LGA. It is used by government and policy makers as a starting point for reform discussions.
- There has been a noticeable shift in language, with terms like “people who draw on care and support” widely replacing “service user”. SCF has revitalised concepts like user-led approaches and self-directed support, adapting them for the current policy and political environment.
- Despite this, its impact on broader public attitudes remains less developed, with the “care crisis” narrative often still dominating. The challenge remains to demonstrate that narrative change leads to concrete improvement in people’s lives.

Empowered individuals and elevated lived experience (People Power):

- A majority of survey respondents (74%) and those interviewed for this work say they perceive SCF to have supported many individuals to have a stronger voice and is building grassroots power. Individuals feel more confident in challenging the status quo, equipped with knowledge and language for self-advocacy.

- It has elevated the presence of people who draw on care and support in policy discussions and decision-making spaces, including national leadership groups and sector events. SCF acts as a “grit in the system” by constantly reminding stakeholders to focus on individuals’ lives and ambitions.
- However, it is encouraged to broaden representation within the movement, to address a perceived dominance of “middle class, well educated, affluent, working age” voices, with a need for more older people, younger people, people with more significant needs, self-funders, and those from wider socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Fostered collaboration and a unified movement (Relational Power):

- SCF has successfully brought together key players through various convenings, gatherings, and Communities of Practice, fostering a more collaborative environment for discussing the future of social care.
- It has created a “home” and collective identity for diverse voices within social care, unifying previously disparate efforts around a shared vision.
- The movement’s shift from an initially “bolshy” or “moany” approach to a more collaborative and solutions-oriented style has led to greater engagement with policymakers, bringing more opportunities to be “around the table” on key policy discussions, but with mixed views on whether policy has changed as a result of the engagement .

Challenges and areas for growth:

- While language has shifted, there are mixed views from survey respondents and interviewees about whether national policy reforms could be directly attributable to SCF. Some interviewees suggested that identifiable changes on the ground for people are not yet widely seen, with others pointing to the narrative changing but implementation and peoples’ lived experiencing not yet catching up.
- A significant gap exists in SCF’s engagement with the NHS, despite the interconnectedness of health and social care.
- There is a tension between SCF’s role as a collaborative convenor and the need for a “resistance network” that challenges the status quo more forcefully. The movement is cautioned against becoming too formalised and losing its agility.
- Questions exist regarding leadership sustainability and the need for new individuals and diverse perspectives to carry the vision forward.

Key Recommendations for future focus:

SCF convenors will need to reflect on the findings, feedback and suggestions from the survey respondents, interviewees and workshop participants to prioritise their next steps, as the resulting ideas and recommendations, by the very nature of the different people who suggested them, will require some trade-offs between influencing national policy with key organisations and figures vs being a “resistance movement” that has an activist edge.

Given the government has recently changed, and there are key consultations currently underway, it would be worth considering continuing with the current emphasis on engaging with senior government officials and organisations, but taking stock a year from now on whether a different, more activist approach is required if movement members continue to report a lack of difference in the way implementing policy changes is affecting people’s lives.

Survey respondents, interviewees and workshop participants made suggestions that can be themed as follows:

- **Translate vision into tangible action and policy:** Focus on the “how” by providing practical examples, continuing to influence national policy (possibly in collaboration with organisations like LGA and ADASS), and engaging more with the NHS and digital advancements.
- **Broaden reach and deepen engagement:** Intentionally reach out to marginalised and under-represented groups and organisations outside SCF’s current “bubble”.
- **Direct engagement with the broader social care workforce:** Develop clearer mechanisms for disseminating learning from Communities of Practice and strategically engage frontline staff through accessible formats.
- **Strengthen alliances and collaboration:** Work more collaboratively with other organisations, recognising strength in numbers and carving out distinct but complementary roles.
- **Refine approach and messaging:** Clarify its primary purpose (lobbying/influencing vs. “practical fixing”), cultivate real stories from the frontline, and maintain an “activism edge” to challenge harmful narratives in real-time.
- **Plan for the future:** Develop a succession strategy to bring in new people and fresh perspectives to sustain the Movement.

About #SocialCareFuture

#SocialCareFuture (SCF) is a growing, people-powered movement of like-minded individuals and organisations that was “born of frustration, but powered by hope”. They describe themselves as uniting “those of us who draw on care or support to live our lives and allies to imagine and help to build a better future”.

The vision for the #SocialCareFuture is one where we all “**...live in the place we call home, with the people and things we love, in communities where we look out for each other, doing the things that matter to us**”.

They launched their strategy “**A movement for Gloriously Ordinary Lives**” in 2022, and in it describe the following theory of change for achieving their vision:



Theory of Change – Social Care Future narrative and people power programme

PROGRAMME IMPACT:

Narrative, people and relational power is grown and deployed in a way that begins to shift public debate and mindsets in support of Social Care Future's vision

DESIRED LONG-TERM CHANGE OUTCOME:

A reimagined, reorganized and well resourced system supports everyone to live in the place they call home with the people and things that they love, in communities where people support one another, doing the things that matter to us.

	THREE YEAR OUTCOME 1. GREATER NARRATIVE POWER	THREE YEAR OUTCOME 2. GREATER PEOPLE POWER	THREE YEAR OUTCOME 3. GREATER RELATIONAL POWER
OUTPUTS	A reframed narrative disseminated and shared via multimedia creative content on and offline A spokesperson network, with increased presence in and on print & broadcast media platforms A new digital ecosystem reaching target audiences Two timebound 'campaigns'	A network of leaders who draw on care or support, trained in community organizing, movement building and narrative change are actively and visibly pursuing change locally and nationally	Key players with influence over social care reform have been identified and proactively engaged and gaps in the '<i>influencing ecosystem</i>' are being closed nationally and locally Different actors have been brought together via communities of practice, convenings and exchanges
INPUTS	◆ Strategic communications and media engagement support ◆ Creative expertise, energy and coordination (including ££) ◆ Digital expertise and infrastructure	◆ A community leadership programme including training, mentoring and support ◆ Convening and coordination ◆ Production and dissemination of campaign tools and resources drawing on the reframed narrative	◆ A power map and engagement plan developed and implemented ◆ Organisation and facilitation of a programme of convenings, learning exchanges and communities of practice
THREATS	Other actors with greater resources and reach advance conflicting narratives which continue to dominate public and political discourse; ongoing crisis within the field of health and social care and more widely leave a very narrow space and few opportunities to advance narratives about a future vision, or to orientate community organising and movement building towards those ends; Social Care Future and its supporters fail to secure the resources to achieve critical mass and impact with the methodologies outlined in this plan		

Summary of #SocialCareFuture's activity and achievements

Since 2018, and more recently its post-pandemic relaunch in 2023, #SocialCareFuture has undertaken a wide range of activities to grow a brighter future for adult social care, focusing on changing the narrative to shift mindsets in support of their vision, increasing the power and influence of people who draw on social care and proactively engaging with key players that have influence over social care reform at different levels.

The following are examples of activities where #SocialCareFuture movement members and convenors have attempted to influence national policy and leadership, help grow the power of individuals and groups, fostered local action and co-production and changed narratives through developing resources.

The impact of these activities, and whether they have supported the SCF Movement to achieve its stated goals in support of their vision, is explored in subsequent sections of this report.

Influencing national policy and leadership

The #SocialCareFuture Movement, through its members and convenors, has:

- Established a major influential presence at key events, such as the annual three-day National Children's and Adults Social Care Conference (NCAS), held in various locations around England, helped Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) secure free places for people who draw on support and ensuring their voice was prominent in workshops and plenaries. NCAS organisers have noted the impact of this co-production, leading to shifts in thinking, such as on how "prevention" is framed.
- The narrative and vision are used by government and policy makers in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) as a starting point for reform discussions, resulted in invitations to meet with Minister of State for Care Stephen Kinnock and Baroness Louise Casey and influenced the House of Lords which recommended that the government adopt SCF's vision in its "[Gloriously Ordinary Life](#)" select committee report.
- Developed strong positioning and direct contact with [Baroness Louise Casey's Independent Commission into Adult Social Care](#) – identified as the most important policy development in social care in recent times – with a focus on ensuring people who draw on social care are at the heart of its recommendations and advising on their approach to co-production.
- Become an influential founding member of the [Time to Act Reform Group](#), a board that brings together the leadership of social care bodies with people who draw on care and support, to coordinate and affect change and shape reform. Attendees from SCF regularly shape its agenda and priorities, including engagement with the Casey Commission.
- Had regular engagement with ministers, advisors, and officials, including people who draw on social care attending ministerial and high-level policy meetings and roundtables with the DHSC Permanent Secretary, and being asked to make recommendations for Secretary of State social care visits.
- Significantly influenced the development of a national "Proactive Prevention" model for older people, focussed on ensuring people impacted are involved in design and local co-production, and recommending their "Working Together for Change" approach within the model.
- Progressed the "[Plumbing and Wiring in Adult Social Care](#)" initiative to a national stage, including a major national workshop held in December 2024 with senior policy and regulatory officials, leading to commitment from major national organisations and the setup of four task groups to influence national policy and practice.
- Launched an initiative to ensure that National Care Service Standards reflect what is important to people who draw on social care, developing a plan for its advancement and gaining academic support and some funding for co-production.
- Ensured people from their network influenced the Assessment Toolkit commissioned by DHSC, specifically advocating for the "Outcomes and Support Sequence" approach to ensure individual-level co-production in assessment and planning.

Shifting power to people

The #SocialCareFuture movement and its members and convenors have:

- Won a significant grant from the National Lottery Fund to support members of the People Power and “Influencer” groups - through convening connections, training programmes and regular gatherings - to make an impact at a local level.
- Commissioned and continue to deliver a program of nine online training sessions for 180 people, reflecting the identified needs of people who draw on social care and their allies.
- Launched, via In Control, their “**People Finder**” speaker agency as part of their “**Making Our Voices Heard**” network. This helps events’ organisers, journalists and others to ensure that the voice of social care-experienced people is at the heart of debate and discussion about the present and future of adult social care.
- Supported research on - and developed practical guides to – **making social care and health events more inclusive** (with TLAP) because voices of people who draw on care and support, and carers, are too often missing from events about social care.
- Continued to support and connect to the **North West Partners in Policymaking** project and run online sessions for people co-producing locally.
- Continued to support a “use of the law” network (supported by Access Social Care) with 14 members and the “Making Our Voices Heard” network.
- Helped secure numerous speaking and influencing engagements at various organisations and events, including Skills for Care, Care Quality Commission, Newcastle University, and discussions on the future of the Care Act, social work, prevention, and care charging. They have also contributed articles to prominent social care journals and an article on digitising social care for DHSC.

Fostering local action and co-production

The #SocialCareFuture movement, through its members and convenors, has:

- Helped catalyse local action in Oxfordshire and Salford to co-produce the development of adult social care strategy, working with local citizens and community groups to ensure their voices are powerfully heard. They are also starting similar support to Trafford.
- Delivered a continuing program of sessions for (currently) 60 councils and support providers on co-production and practice, early action, and better support. They host these councils and providers across two communities of support.
- Supported development of the Gloriously Ordinary Lives and When I Get Old initiatives, both led by members of SCF’s influencers group, with the latter making good progress in surveying and analysing preferred support in older age.
- Allied with the **More than a Provider movement**.
- Concluded the local “Plumbing and Wiring” local programmes, and several areas are inspired to use the “Working Together for Change” approach on other local “sticky issues,” benefiting from 70 people trained to facilitate the process.



Changing narratives and developing resources

The **#SocialCareFuture** movement, through its members and convenors, has:

- Influenced the language used in a range of initiatives including the ADASS-commissioned Time to Act roadmap and Partners in Health and Care Future of Prevention programme.
- Launched the **#SocialCareFuture vision animation voiced by Liz Carr**.
- Built on their original research and resources to work with national social care organisations to tell a different story about social care, including developing material and training for senior leaders and elected members.
- Secured support and resources for new research with Frameworks UK on how to frame adult social care, supporting ADASS in the development and roll-out of communications training for senior adult social care leaders.
- Drafted a **#SocialCareFuture** book on commission from **Jessica Kingsley Publishers**, which will centre the experience and concerns of people who draw on social care and will be co-designed with people, including elements of a “graphic novel”.
- Uploaded further materials onto the In Control and **#SocialCareFuture** platforms, and the **Ask Ava legal chatbot** (developed by Access Social Care) has gone live, providing free information and guidance about health and social care, which extends to providing draft template letters that can be personalised and sent to local authorities and Integrated Care Boards.

The impact of #SocialCareFuture's work

Analysis of interviews, survey data and workshop reflections by key themes

This section summarises key points drawn from the 17 stakeholder interviews, 76 survey responses and reflections from the group workshop that took place in June 2025. It is important to note that while not all stakeholders who were interviewed for this work were people involved directly in the SCF movement, all would be familiar with their work, as were many of the survey respondents, who were sourced through a direct mail to SCF's membership database, and as well as posts via social media.

All interviewees, survey respondents and workshop participants were asked to reflect on:

- Their familiarity with the #SocialCareFuture movement
- Perceptions of impact on systems, attitudes, or policy
- Personal experience or connection to the movement
- Influence on thinking or actions
- Ideas and recommendations for future focus.

This insight has been collated with reference to the three stated goals set out in #SocialCareFuture's strategy – that is, how have the Movement's aforementioned activities had an impact on:

- **Creating greater narrative power**, so more people understand social care's value and potential, and that the profile and voice of people who draw on support, and carers, are heard.
- **Creating greater people power**, so people who draw on care and support, and allies, are supported to build and exercise grassroots power locally and nationally.
- **Creating greater relational power**, that cultivates a richer and better-connected system that is working towards SCF's goals, by engaging key players with influence over social care reform to come together in communities of practice, gatherings and places where ideas are exchanged and debated.

Their ideas for future will follow in a subsequent section of this report.

Greater Narrative Power

Summary:

- **Awareness:** #SocialCareFuture (SCF) has good general awareness, a perceived role in - and a clear impact on - pushing for a changed conversation around social care within professional and policy spheres.
- **Language:** There has been success in establishing a clear, positive vision that is simple, memorable, effective and widely adopted in key documents and by key organisations.
- **Policy influence:** While policy language is changing, the impact on broader public attitudes and at the highest levels of government, including ahead of the new government's consultations on national policy reform, is not as developed, with acknowledgement there is more to do.
- **Narrative tension:** There is tension perceived by some between the narrative developed by SCF, which accents possibility and the "crisis" narrative, which some believe is necessary to drive political investment.
- **Concrete change:** There is also the challenge of demonstrating that narrative change and attitudinal shifts can lead to concrete system change and improvement in people's lives.
- **Cross cutting influence:** SCF's work on changing the narrative has also influenced perceptions of success when it comes to SCF's other work around greater people and relational power, which will be reflected in later sections of this report.

General awareness of the movement and its goals:

There is widespread recognition of core ideas from the #SocialCareFuture movement. While the name "#SocialCareFuture" might not be the first thing that comes to mind for everyone, the core vision and principles, such as "a good life, not a service" and "everyone wants to live in a place called home," are recognised and understood within the sector, with some describing them as having "huge resonance".



I don't think the term #SocialCareFuture would be the first thing out of your mouth if you were talking about social care, but I think if you said [those words] to somebody, they would know who you were talking about and what that stood for.

Impact on language:

Findings suggest there has been a noticeable shift in the language used in social care and many acknowledge SCF's role in developing and promoting a clear and simple articulation of its vision:

“ I think one of their great successes has been the ability to articulate that goal so clearly. On a rhetorical level, I've seen more people, even local government bodies, embracing their vision.”²

Specific phrases “**people who draw on care and support**” and “**people who draw on social care**” are now much more widely in use, and are gaining traction in local government and in some national examples, over terms like “service user”.

“ Certainly in local government, most of us now use the terminology draw upon care and support, so there's some shift in the language we use.”³

“ I was at the ADASS spring seminar a couple of weeks back, and people were using the language of #SocialCareFuture, possibly without realising they were doing it. It's becoming part of that common vocabulary, and people love the term 'gloriously ordinary' now.”⁴

Examples were cited of where SCF's work on framing concepts have been influential:

“ As someone who's quite long in the tooth in social care - 30 years working in it - some of those concepts that #SocialCareFuture are using are reinvigorations of previous notions in social work like user-led approaches or self-directed support. I think that's been a very helpful impact - taking [those notions] and almost modernising it or adapting it to the current environment.”⁵

“ Local authorities have generally stopped talking about 'demand management' and other such negative framing of people who require social care.”⁶

“ We do a state of the nation report each year and we thought carefully about some of the stuff that Neil (Crowther, SCF Convenor] put out there around how we were framing our work...”⁷

But there is still some way to go when it comes to changing the public's perceptions of social care:

“ *They focused a lot of energy around that narrative in the film [voiced by Liz Carr]. Has it had any impact on the way that the public perceive social care? I'd like to think so. And anecdotally, I think you can draw some positives from that. But I think quantitative surveys suggest not, which is disappointing. I know that the [think tank] are leading some work around the impact or the perception of social care, generally, so it will be interesting to see how that pans out. But yeah, I personally feel there's a long way to go.*⁸

Influence on policy within the social care sector:

Despite progress in language used, shifting the actual policy and system “on the ground” remains challenging. There is a split in people thinking SCF has influenced national or local social care policy reform. Some, especially those who were interviewed who are more active in the SCF movement, said they believed the influence exists, for example:

“ *Yes, it has influenced the language used and the way in which adult social care is talked about. It has challenged policy makers. This is both nationally and locally.*

“ *It's inspired us to go back to models around citizenship and look again at accountability. I think it's pricked the consciousness of social care leaders at Director level. I still find that they don't exactly get it, but that they would be embarrassed if their local authority isn't at least trying to make changes in regard to representation.*⁹

The vision is frequently quoted in policy documents by organisations like Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Local Government Association (LGA) and some shared examples of local strategic or commissioning documents.

One survey respondent said the vision has been “a cornerstone of various commissions into social care in England”.¹⁰ And the House of Lords also recommended that the government adopt SCF's vision in its “[Gloriously Ordinary Life](#)” [select committee report](#).¹¹

“ *We are now much more progressive in how we talk about social care, how we talk about its value, how we frame it, what we lead with. All my work on that front comes directly from #SocialCareFuture, and I've personally bought into their whole ethos and approach. That is now often reflected in what we put out.*¹²

“ You don’t need to look any further than ADASS’s Care Can’t Wait campaign, which is clearly very influenced by #SocialCareFuture’s work. And I think that’s quite a good case in point because the three vignettes that they’ve put out so far, maybe there’s more to come, are really, really good, really compelling, really persuasive...”¹³

“ ADASS, LGA and others have adapted their narrative to be more positive and optimistic - aligned with SCF - while also calling out for reform.”¹⁴

However, others said they are less certain that the change in language, ideas and policy is translating into practice and peoples’ lived experience.

“ I think they’ve had impact in terms of the debate, how we have it, who is involved and what that debate is about. I think that has definitely been reshaped very significantly by #SocialCareFuture. I think, however, in terms of impact on systems, I think that’s much more patchy. And clearly there’s evidence of impact at local level, where local authorities in particular and care providers have joined the program and started to implement some of what #SocialCareFuture stands for. But that’s pockets. I think the impact on policy, though, is probably the most disappointing area. It hasn’t cut through. Despite it being espoused by select committees and talked about positively by individual politicians and indeed ministers, it actually isn’t, there’s not yet any evidence that it’s had an impact on national policy. While SCF’s ethos may be subconsciously influencing policy thinking, it doesn’t always translate into a tangible difference for the end-user due to the complexities of national politics”¹⁵.

“ Look at the stats, the numbers of people getting self-directed support has fallen from 60% to 30%. So, you know, that’s your measure. You’d say [they’re having influence] on attitudes, yes, on systems to some degree, but on [implementation of] policy, no, not yet.”¹⁶

“ It hasn’t penetrated at that at that very high level of government. It definitely feels like there’s more work for them to do in that space...it feels like we haven’t won the argument definitively that services should be designed with real people at the heart of the design.”¹⁷

 *I think it's interesting that they haven't been more vocal on welfare reform and these other allied bits of the service landscape, so if they were going to live out what they say they want, then they should be vocal on a whole number of policy agendas.¹⁸*

 *SCF seems increasingly recognised nationally but with no concrete reform proposals [from the new government] yet, no one has 'influenced' anything yet¹⁹*

In contrast, at a more local implementation level, the interviewees and survey respondents gave examples of where SCF **has** influenced the thinking and actions of individuals and professionals, as well as shifting attitudes and approaches in teams, particularly those involved in the Communities of Practice.

 *I think the community of practice work is where we've seen an impact on individuals and I think some of that will impact back into organisations. My colleagues that go to those sessions find that it really shifts their perspective, gives them new energy, new ideas.²⁰*

 *When I went to their gathering in Manchester, it was a really eye-opening and heartwarming experience. At a professional level I think they have helped my attitude and way of working. ²¹*

The groups provide an opportunity for local authorities and colleagues across the social care system to “connect, be on the same kind of page, discuss ideas, and challenge respectfully”. One interviewee said it has helped their local authority to “evolve from observing - to actively applying - the movement's principles to practice and policy development.” ²²

Influence on culture within the social care sector:

The prevailing culture in Whitehall was identified by some interviewees as a significant barrier. Change is perceived as “generational” rather than something that can be achieved in the short-term, requiring a sustained effort and a recognition that progress will not be quick or easy. The challenges in implementing individualised funding approaches, such as in the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) system, pose a risk that the underlying principles of personalisation and individual entitlement will be discarded.

 *So [they need to be] finding a way to separate from that, and still big up the successes and find a few of those anecdotes that really land and hit with people, so it doesn't all get thrown out with the bath water, so to speak.²³*

However, interviewees also described various ways that SCF created a voice and a channel of communication for people who already believed in a certain vision for social care²⁴ and that is now used by government and policy makers in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) as a starting point for reform.²⁵

A significant number of respondents observed a noticeable change in culture or attitudes in other parts of the sector, which they attributed to SCF, particularly citing that SCF has helped people who draw on care and support have a stronger voice in decisions and debates, including the increased expectation for the meaningful involvement of people with lived experience in shaping services and policy, including disabled and older people being equal partners at events and discussions. This will be explored more in the Greater People Power section.

“Not least because of #SocialCareFuture and TLAP (Think Local Act Personal) and others’ pressure, it is now expected that of course you will have a lived experience voice on the platform at every conference, every seminar, every discussion”²⁶

Influence on lived experience:

“It still hasn’t led to identifiable changes on the ground for those using services.”²⁷

While SCF’s narrative is arguably having some impact on policy thinking, some survey respondents, workshop participants and interviewees described that it doesn’t always translate into a tangible difference for people living their lives in communities, due in some part, to the complexities of national politics.

“In terms of national government policy making, and the way that decisions are made, it is pretty impossible to achieve [true coproduction] because ultimately decisions are made by the Prime Minister or the Chancellor or ministers.”²⁸

There’s a concern that changing the narrative and including more diverse voices in discussions might not improve people’s experiences if tangible outcomes don’t follow. Some suggest SCF needs to sharpen its focus to ensure that improved language and representation lead to concrete benefits for individuals²⁹.

This also includes a “rising irritation around the obtuseness of some of the language” used by SCF. One interviewee expressed concern that the highly conceptualised language, while aimed at reframing, could potentially alienate the “working class” public and make it difficult for people to understand “what you’re talking about.” This intellectualism is seen as “too far removed from the grassroots.”³⁰

 *It's a bit evangelical...If #SocialCareFuture wants to be that, then it will influence the bubble. It won't go beyond it.*³¹

Influence on the “crisis narrative”

Interviewees and survey respondents also indicate that a national conversation about social care has not changed outside what has been described by some as a “bubble” of people aware of the Movement within the sector, with the “care crisis” narrative often still dominating.

 *You need to present crises to get some politicians to get you money. #SocialCareFuture is saying the whole crisis language is damaging and negative. Actually, it's probably not, because it's probably got eight to 10 billion pounds worth of investment that wouldn't have happened otherwise. For all the positive messages, politicians will avoid that. They need a crisis to work from... this stuff drives change.*³²

Influence on public opinion:

There is recognition that work on changing public opinion is in early days, is challenging to pull off and may be beyond what is achievable in the current, limited resource envelope available to the Movement:

 *Adult social care generally isn't brilliant at turning the tide on public opinion.*³³

 *This is a huge change of approach that is going to take some time to trickle down into day-to-day working. I think some of the messaging is lost on people who have never heard of the Movement before. It can assume people have been on the journey with them for some time and that is not always the case. The press still focuses on vulnerable people and stories about failure and helplessness.*³⁴

 *I think there are wider societal forces which are so strong that it would take something much more powerful than #SocialCareFuture to influence it. I think in the public debate, that'll be a real test for #SocialCareFuture about how much it can beat through. When it comes to the media, I don't think even with a willing partner like the BBC, [they can change the] more traditional view of social care with the withered hands. The 'vulnerable' image of disability, for example, is still very, very prevalent.*³⁵

Greater People Power



There are change makers everywhere. And I think organisations like #SocialCareFuture have emboldened and equipped those change makers to make a difference. So that is a significant contribution.³⁶

Summary:

- **Stronger voice:** #SocialCareFuture is perceived to have increased the power of many individuals so they have a stronger voice. Interviewees and survey respondents agree it is building towards its stated goal of supporting people who draw on care and support to exercise the power of grassroots organising in local communities, and connecting with national initiatives.
- **Elevated presence:** There is wide acknowledgement that SCF has contributed to elevating the presence of people who draw on care support within the sector and at policy discussions, and that they are part of an “ecosystem” that has been working towards this goal for a long time.
- **Increased public profile of people who draw on care and support:** SCF’s work has also contributed to the expectation that people who draw on care and support are on the platform at every conference, every seminar, every discussion and in national leadership groups.
- **Grassroots power:** There is recognition that more collaboration is needed with other organisations advocating for people drawing on care and support to amplify the work on increasing people power.
- **Wider representation:** There is also recognition that #SCF should include and speak for a broader range of perspectives.

Strengthening voice of people drawing on care and support:



If I were to describe #SocialCareFuture, I would say that they are an expert by experience led movement that is driving change at the highest levels to ensure that the voices of people who draw on social care are central to decision making, elevated and respected.³⁷

SCF has increased the presence of people with lived experience in policy discussions and decision-making spaces. Survey respondents shared the view that SCF has helped people who draw on care and support have a stronger voice in decisions and debates and ensuring disabled and older people are equal partners at many sector events and discussions. SCF has also created avenues like a “people agency” to connect those seeking lived experience expertise with those offering it.

“ I think that they’re helping that to happen by bringing more people around the table to make decisions. They’re clearly giving more people who draw on care and support more of a voice and you can point to lots of examples of that at national and local level.”³⁸

There is recognition that, alongside others, SCF has influenced organisations like the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to have people who draw on care and support in meetings and conversations they weren’t before.

“ It makes me insist that people with experience of care are a part of the conversations we have.”³⁹

“ #SocialCareFuture encouraged me to only accept events where I could be joined on stage by someone with lived experience. I am now always thinking about how I can share the position and platform I have with people who draw on care and support.”⁴⁰

But there is also recognition that being “in the room” can still seem tokenistic. The nature of national government policy-making makes achieving the highest level of co-production difficult with reality being that is often more consultative.⁴¹

“ The way that decisions are made means it is pretty impossible that because ultimately decisions are made by the prime minister or the chancellor or ministers.”⁴²

“ We still expect people to beg for seat at the table... I think they should be quite fed up with the sort of, please involve us, we’ve got really helpful things to say, type, approach to, sorry, this is unacceptable. You can’t continue to work in this way.”⁴³

“ None of us have a seat at the table where policy is actually decided as that’s quite small political circle, but nobody’s having to make the case anymore for co-production happening.”⁴⁴

Personal empowerment:

Survey respondents agreed that SCF has supported the building of grassroots power to influence from the ground up. People shared that they felt more confident in challenging the status quo, as SCF has been providing them with knowledge and a language to advocate for themselves and their families.

“ *In personal context, I have asked questions about a Care Act assessment that I may not have had the confidence to do if I hadn't learnt what I have from #SocialCareFuture.*⁴⁵

One of the interviewees suggests this is more important than focusing solely on systems change and Whitehall policy, as “real change happens when people take the power themselves in their own community”.⁴⁶

The survey also found that the vast majority said involvement or exposure to SCF has changed the way they speak or act, and influenced their advocacy and thinking:

“ *...People might not realise it's SCF's influence, but it has done an excellent job of grass roots support. It's made me feel more confident in my Self Advocacy. Given me a language to talk about things that matter about my care and my family's support and most importantly, evidence to back it up. I can talk about examples of what good looks like.*⁴⁷

“ *It has really helped me to challenge myself when I get into an under-siege, being overwhelmed mode of thinking.*⁴⁸

“ *SCF is trying to consolidate the vast army of people who do rely on support for their social care. And if it didn't exist, people would be working in their own little silo. And most people would just [accept] “if that's what's offered to me, that's what I've got to have”.*⁴⁹

Those who identified as social care professionals said SCF had been helping them to think differently, advocating for people with lived experience to be included in conversations and to shape thinking around language and approaches.

“ *I am now always thinking about how I can share the position and platform I have with people who draw on care and support.*⁵⁰

“ *It's a community of people who come together with shared values, shared ambition and intent. We're stronger by sharing and working together and connecting than in isolation. The more learn from each can only be a good thing⁵¹.*

Grassroots power at national levels:

The building of people power, and the subsequent space created for people who draw on care and support at “the top tables” has resulted in SCF being seen as the “grit in the system” that challenges conventional approaches and reminds stakeholders of the importance of focusing on the individual’s life and ambitions, rather than solely on deficits or system metrics.

“ *I think SCF's really big contribution to the world has been the kind of the bringing together of products that have that come from a disabled person's perspective, which feel unfiltered by a funding or service provision imperatives.⁵²*

SCF's representation of people who draw on care and support amongst strategic leaders, including at key national leadership groups, such as the Time to Act Reform Board and the informal local government-focused Social Care Leaders Group, is viewed as “core participant[s]” rather than mere observers.

“ *They're part of an ecosystem of partners that are working together to affect the change... they're not, as it were, just a neutral partner... they are there around the table arguing the toss.⁵³*

Wider representation needed from a variety of groups and backgrounds:

Some survey respondents and interviewees expressed concern that SCF might represent a “small set of voices” and potentially “crowd out wider voices,”⁵⁴ or be perceived as focusing only on “the great and the good”⁵⁵.

Interviewees and workshop participants reference a dominance of “middle class, well educated, affluent, working age” voices over older people, younger people including teenagers, people with more significant needs and people from a wider variety of socio economic and cultural backgrounds.

“ *There is definitely less neglect of the question of whether it would be a good idea to have people with who drawing on care and support in the room. The fact that it's always the same people in the room is a different problem.⁵⁶*

“ *The movement needs to grow bigger, become more diverse, and actively work alongside other movements. This issue is expanding, especially from a racial perspective, and requires long-term support—not just quick fixes—to truly win hearts and minds and change the narrative. To make lasting progress, we need sustained investment, commitment, and an inclusive approach that honours the complexity of the communities affected. Only by growing stronger together and embracing diversity can we shift perceptions, build understanding, and create real, systemic change.*⁵⁷

People power leadership and sustainability:

Interviewees and workshop participants also had questions about leadership sustainability and the need for new iterations of people to carry the vision forward.

“ *In my research on activism and social movements, the issue of leadership, sustainability and longevity is a problem. The danger is often when you occupy a position of leadership and influence, you then become so convinced that what you were doing was right and that you only look for next generation leaders who look like you or talk like you to fill that space. What I think is really important is they establish a foundation where the network or the organisation feeds itself in terms of new ideas coming through, new projects, new directions, but it has the flexibility to move into those new spaces based on who is influencing that... [and] allow that new people will come through and say, ‘we’re going to do things differently’ or ‘we’re going down a different route because these are the skills and resources that we have at our disposal in this current time’... I think a question for #SocialCareFuture is, are you prepared to have new iterations of people coming through, taking it in different directions based on the circumstances you find yourself in at that moment?*⁵⁸

Greater relational power

 *It's hard working in social care to campaign for change. SCF is a platform we can see, contribute to and point our leaders in the direction of.*⁵⁹

- #SocialCareFuture is acknowledged for attempting to influence social care reform by strategically bringing together key players through various convenings, gatherings, and communities of practice. This is creating a more collaborative environment for discussing the future of social care.
- These efforts are a core part of SCF's perceived identity and strategy, which is considered energising and galvanising, providing a "home" for bringing people together.
- Questions were raised about sustainability of the movement's convening power if key personalities are less involved, that personal dynamics sometimes hinders potential alliances and the tension between SCF's roles as a collaborative convenor working within the system, and its role as a resistance network that might need to be more challenging to drive change.

 *They've pulled together with key charities and providers in the sector and representative bodies who want to do things differently. So I think that kind of convening role and the energy that they bring is really helpful in just sustaining people on a really long journey that sometimes you feel like you're actually any further forward than you began.*⁶⁰

 *The conversations that Anna [Severwright, Convenor] and others are having at ministerial level can only be a good thing and it very much raises the profile of adult social care and some of the particular challenges that the sector is facing. I applaud it. I think there's a synergy there that really complements what other organisations are doing. It's brought us together a little more than we were in previous years and it's given a bit of focus.*⁶¹

Supporting a movement for change:

SCF has created a "convening space and an energy" for individuals who share a common vision for social care. Survey respondents described it as a "unique forum that provides a "home" for disparate voices of people who draw on care and support, members of the public interested in the sector, and those who work in it, providing a collective identity and purpose.

“Local places and organisations have their own visions but it’s increasingly recognised that the SCF vision is the guiding star that threads the good ones together. This is very impactful, as it also tells people who draw on support that we have their back.”⁶²

This unified vision is seen as vital for the sector’s aspirations and preventing fragmentation.

“It’s a movement with energy and focus and seems to get the ear of some people who maybe could make a difference. I think that’s probably very galvanising for people.”⁶³

“I think there were voices out there before but quite disparate and disconnected whereas it now feels like there’s a home for those voices who are the people who draw on care and support and members of the public.”⁶⁴

“I think one of the untapped strengths #SocialCareFuture hasn’t yet realised is that when we’re all in local government, particularly as ‘the system’, leaders talk about the #SocialCareFuture vision. I think there’s much more power in that promotion than I think has been thought of. We’ve now got much more strong relationship and more of a sense of allyship.”⁶⁵

“You’ve got 153 local authorities, 16 000 care providers, however many voluntary and community third sector organisations and that’s before you even throw in the health and the NHS angle as well, so creating that unified voice is really important.”⁶⁶

The annual Gatherings in Manchester and regular Communities of Practice have been highlighted as a space where important work is done and ideas are exchanged. The events are described as notably positive, celebratory, and “human,” contrasting with other sector events.

“I went to the SCF Birthday event in Manchester a couple of years ago and when talking to local DASS’s [Directors of Adult Social Services] and commissioners, they all spoke about how what they’re doing at a local level aligns with the #SocialCareFuture vision, so they seem to have done quite a good twin track approach of influencing the top set stakeholders at a national level but also seemingly I at a local level too.”

“ *#SocialCareFuture is really good at bringing us back to just remembering we're all just humans. While other organisations share similar ethos, I'm not sure they offer exactly the same thing, as they're not pushing an approach on you but challenging you to think about it from your own perspective.*⁶⁷

“ *The councils and providers who are part of the community of practice are clearly doing (or trying to do) things differently.*⁶⁸

“ *Locally, #SocialCareFuture did some work with our professional staff, so our social workers and occupational therapists, and probably more importantly, with our commissioners around what it means to help somebody live an ordinary, glorious life. For example, how do you commission that in a way that is going to be meaningful? How do you help somebody through, in my words, an assessment process so that their ambition comes through rather than just talking about the physical or psychological issue, the deficit?*⁶⁹

Links to the NHS and the wider health and care ecosystem:

There is also a perception that there is a significant gap in the engagement of #SocialCareFuture with the NHS, which is crucial given the interconnectedness of health and social care.

“ *There's a fairly strong antibody around health integration with a pretty strong message that health is clinical and therefore it's not a social model of disability that it's working with.*⁷⁰

“ *They've not really, to my knowledge, had an opportunity yet or chosen to go into the implications for the NHS and health of people. I work primarily in the NHS these days and I can see that gap between the work that happens there around personalised care and managing long-term conditions and yeah, it's not joining up just yet.*⁷¹

Style of working

Initially perceived as “moany” or “Twitter warriors,”⁷² interviewees noted that the movement has evolved to adopt a more collaborative and solutions-oriented approach, which is facilitating a perception of greater engagement and “led to an invitation to join the room” with policymakers and government officials⁷³.

“ They could have continued with their early days of being quite bolshy and lobbing hand grenades. But they did adjust that style. I think when #SocialCareFuture genuinely recognised the difficulty that, I’m not going to speak for my bit of the world, but the difficulty that local government faces financially, policy-wise, politically, especially now given local elections and nearly 700 reformed UK councillors. When they recognise that, then it just strengthens the relationship because sometimes before it was, we’re #SocialCareFuture. If you don’t like us, then we’re not going to like you.⁷⁴

“ There’s been a bit of a shift in #SocialCareFuture modus operandi, so less antagonistic, less lobbying and campaigning, more collaborative, and that has sort of led to an invitation to join the room, as it were. I’m not saying that as a negative or positive, I’m just thinking tactical changes.⁷⁵

One interviewee described the “Bomb Throwers and Bridge Builders” dynamic - the concept of needing both those who disrupt and protest and those who work collaboratively for effective change to be introduced. They suggested that the current dynamic, potentially confined to a few individuals within the movement, needs to broaden out because the absence of sufficient “bomb throwers” makes it harder for the “bridge builders” to create space at the table.

“ If not the person chaining themselves to the headquarters, then the person who wants to sit around the table doesn’t have enough room... it makes it harder for them to have the space because nobody’s out there shouting and screaming that this has to change.⁷⁶

There’s room for #SocialCareFuture to improve engagement with some provider organisations who may feel apprehensive due to past public criticism. There is also a need for intentional efforts to broaden the pool of individuals who can represent lived experience beyond key figures well known in the Movement.

“ #SocialCareFuture could be missing a trick because there are people that want to be working and getting alongside them that have felt a bit hit hard by some of the interactions. Some providers feel a little scared to try and engage due to feeling publicly scolded. Building closer relationships with potential allies within the provider sector, including voluntary organisations and members of Care England, could amplify their message.⁷⁷

One interviewee described the movement as “a vital part of a larger ecosystem working for social care change” that includes “your good cops, your bad cops, the shouting people and the quiet influencers.”

They caution against the movement acting “like the rest of the ecosystem is not playing a useful part” as SCF’s impact is “enhanced by the work of others: if you didn’t have people using other forms of power, then [SCF’s] power will be less impactful.”⁷⁸

Finally, a significant caution was given against becoming too formalised or enmeshed in the structures and agendas of other organisations, which can lead to inertia and a loss of agility.

“Organisations do great work but they don’t move the dial, movements do.”⁷⁹



What should #SocialCareFuture do next?

“ *There’s more to do, and that isn’t a slight on the [people in] the movement. I often think to myself, if you’re trying to affect the level of change, it’s of course not going to happen overnight.*”⁸⁰

Insight from survey respondents, interviewees and workshop participants suggests the following key areas to focus on in the future, to maximise the impact that #SocialCareFuture has started to have:

Translate vision into tangible action and policy:

- Move beyond just changing the narrative and focus on the “how” and the “tangibles” of social care reform, for example, provide “practical examples of best practice that can easily be replicated by local authorities with minimal investment (in staff or delivery budgets)”⁸¹.
- Continue work on influencing national policy, potentially through combined efforts with key organisations like the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) “with each playing to their strengths”⁸².
- Find the right contacts in the wider NHS and other systems, where SCF doesn’t have profile, with a specific recommendation to look at digital advancements in social care to ensure they are implemented *with* people, rather than *for* them, and having a dedicated point of contact for these issues.
- Continue the Communities of Support to shape how local authorities and commissioners procure care in a way that truly enables “ordinary, glorious lives” and provide direct support for, or team up with a partner or movement member to support practitioners on the frontline to implement the vision.
- Share practical examples of best practice that can be easily replicated by local authorities with minimal investment, and continuing to produce reports that can be cited in governance papers.

Broaden reach and deepen engagement within the movement:

- Increase the volume, depth, and variety of voices involved in shaping social care through intentional reaching out to marginalised and under-represented groups as well as organisations and groups outside SCF’s existing “community” or “bubble” of interested professionals and activists.

- Specifically, there is a perceived need for better representation of older people, family carers, people that are labelled as “challenging”, and self-funders, ensuring they have an equal voice and platform

Carefully consider public engagement:

- Consider the funding and resource implications required to shift the broader public’s understanding of social care, that move away from the “care crisis” narrative and showcasing the positive, life-enhancing aspects. This would require communicating the vision more widely through various media. But, many interviewees, survey respondents and workshop participants cautioned the need for pragmatism and realism about the challenges and potential return on investment of significant public-facing campaigning efforts aimed at changing public attitudes quickly.

“ *I think the reason the NHS gets all money is because there’s a wide recognition that people are waiting too long for everything. People think it’s broken. That’s why if you look at Wes Streeting and all the narratives about waiting times and getting appointments with GPs, it’s because they know from polling, that’s what’s pissing everybody off. I would worry deeply if we think that we’re going to get that same level of recognition... I don’t think that the public know what social care is. And I don’t think that’s the framing of social care. I think it’s because it is very, very different in different people’s context.* ⁸³

Undertake direct engagement with social care workers:

- Actively work to get the SCF message and its approach directly into the broader social care workforce. This includes developing clearer mechanisms for disseminating learning from the Communities of Practice to a wider workforce within large organisations and strategically targeting and engaging frontline staff through accessible formats (online, webinars, site visits).

“ *People feel valued when they’re spoken to directly, and if they feel valued they engage more. There is a risk of losing the impact of policy and commissioning work by the time it reaches practice, so support for frontline staff would be really interesting.* ⁸⁴

Continue to support people in building grassroots power:

- Maintain support for encouraging individuals to speak up and provide glimpses of the future that offer alternatives to traditional council services:

“ *Not everybody’s got my stubbornness and stropiness... And that’s one of the things that #SocialCareFuture could be very successful at - encouraging people to speak.* ⁸⁵



PHOTO BY SMALL GIANT ON UNSPLASH

Continue strategic collaboration and influence key institutions:

- Strengthen alliances and working more collaboratively with other organisations outside current “bubble”, recognising the strength in numbers and the benefit of carving out distinct but complementary roles.
- Maximise influence on significant national initiatives, particularly the Casey Commission, to actively pushing for greater accountability from social care to the people it supports, possibly by establishing boards of people who draw on care and support to scrutinise and direct local provision.
- Find ways into influencing the NHS, especially regarding the emphasis on “home first” and community-based preventative support.

“How do we form a strategy of coalition where we can bring people together and say, what can we do collectively to do well? Then there’s the question of what can we do to support each other’s work? Map what everyone is doing in this space. How can we offer resources to those organisations to help them? Equally, what can we ask of those other organisations to help what we’re doing?”⁸⁶

Refine approach, messaging and role:

- Consider clarifying SCF's primary purpose, whether it's more of a lobbying/influencing organisation or one focused on "practical fixing the problem". Simply becoming another established organisation would negate its unique value. Consciously consider and clarify the desired role within the social care ecosystem for the future.
- Continue to cultivate a constant flow of real stories from the frontline and showcase fantastic storytelling about positive social care experiences.
- Maintain an "activism edge" and the ability to move people to action, ensuring it is not dismissed as merely "fluffy stuff". This includes actively responding to and challenging harmful narratives in real-time.

 *I thought that was a strength of #SocialCareFuture, that it felt like a movement, it felt like a group of like-minded organisations, [but] if they now put a framework around that a little bit too much, I think they might slow down. They have to have that activism edge. That doesn't mean you can't have hard evidence, it doesn't mean you can't have a great Whitehall lobbying team, but I think credibility comes from a constant flow of stories, from the frontline, and the ability to move people to action through activism.⁸⁷*

 *I'd like to see a stronger approach to responding to current moments ... when you see political or local government doing things [and] being picked either in media stories or when something comes up, which is harmful to the foundation of what #SocialCareFuture is doing, I'd like to see a response to that where they're saying, 'you could have done this differently by doing this...'⁸⁸*

 *I suggest balancing traditional lobbying efforts with a stronger focus on community-led change, activism informed by frontline experience, and maintaining agility to avoid being slowed down by institutional structures.⁸⁹*

Plan for the future:

- Many stressed the need for a succession strategy within the movement. New people and "new life and new blood" are needed to keep the fight going, as those who have been involved for a long time may be exhausted.

Conclusion

Overall impact:

- #SocialCareFuture has successfully cultivated good general awareness and a clear impact on changing the conversation around social care within professional and policy spheres.
- Its vision – to live “in the place we call home, with the people and things we love, in communities where we look out for each other, doing the things that matter to us” – is simple, memorable, effective, and widely adopted in key documents and by major organisations.
- SCF’s narrative and vision are now used by government and policy makers in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) as a starting point for reform discussions. The House of Lords even recommended that the government adopt SCF’s vision.
- There has been a noticeable shift in language, with terms like “people who draw on care and support” becoming widely used over “service user”.
- The movement has revitalised concepts like user-led approaches and self-directed support, adapting them for today’s policy environment.
- SCF is widely perceived to have empowered many individuals to have a stronger voice and is building grassroots power.
- It has elevated the presence of people who draw on care and support in policy discussions and decision-making spaces, including national leadership groups and sector events.
- Individuals feel more confident in challenging the status quo, equipped with knowledge and language for self-advocacy.
- SCF acts as a “grit in the system” by constantly reminding stakeholders to focus on individuals’ lives and ambitions.
- SCF has successfully brought together key players through various convenings, gatherings, and Communities of Practice, fostering a more collaborative environment for discussing the future of social care.
- It has created a “home” and collective identity for diverse voices within the sector, unifying previously disparate efforts around a shared vision.
- The movement’s shift from a “bolshy” or “moany” approach to a more collaborative and solutions-oriented style has led to greater engagement with policymakers.



Challenges and areas that require further work:

- Despite success within the sector, SCF's influence on the general public's perception of social care and at the highest levels of government (beyond rhetorical adoption) is less developed and remains a challenge. The "care crisis" narrative often still dominates.
- While language has shifted, concrete national policy reforms and identifiable changes on the ground for people who draw on care and support are yet to be widely seen. The complexity of national politics makes true co-production at the highest levels difficult.
- There are concerns that SCF may represent a "small set of voices," with a dominance of "middle class, well educated, affluent, working age" individuals.
- There is a recognised need to include older people, younger people (including teenagers), people with more complex needs, self-funders, and those from wider socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.
- A significant gap exists in SCF's engagement outside of its current "tent", and particularly with the NHS, despite the interconnectedness of health and social care.
- There is a tension between SCF's role as a collaborative convenor working with policy-influencing organisations and the need for a "resistance network" that challenges the status quo more forcefully. Some interviewees suggested SCF be aware of the implications of becoming too formalised and losing its agility.
- Questions exist regarding leadership sustainability and the need for new individuals to carry the vision forward, avoiding the trap of only seeking leaders who are similar to current ones.

Key recommendations for future focus:

SCF convenors will need to reflect on the findings, feedback and suggestions from the survey respondents, interviewees and workshop participants to prioritise their next steps, as the resulting ideas and recommendations, by the very nature of the different people and the role they play in the sector, and whether they're actively involved in the movement or outside it, will require some trade offs between influencing national policy with key organisations and figures vs being a "resistance movement" that has an activist edge.

Given the government has recently changed, and there are key consultations currently underway, it would be worth considering continuing with the current emphasis on engaging with senior government officials and organisations, but taking stock a year from now on whether a different, more activist approach is required if movement members continue to report a lack of difference in the way implementing policy changes is affecting people's lives.

Within that context, SCF could:

- Translate vision into tangible action and policy by focusing on the "how" by providing practical examples, continuing to influence national policy (possibly in collaboration with organisations like LGA and ADASS), and engaging with the NHS and digital advancements.
- Intentionally reach out to marginalised and under-represented groups and organisations outside SCF's current "bubble".
- Disseminate learning from Communities of Practice and strategically engage frontline staff through accessible formats.
- Work more collaboratively with other organisations, recognising strength in numbers and carving out distinct but complementary roles.
- Clarify its primary purpose (lobbying/influencing vs. "practical fixing"), cultivate real stories from the frontline, and if appropriate, maintain an "activism edge" to challenge harmful narratives in real-time.
- Develop a succession strategy to bring in new people and fresh perspectives to sustain and grow the movement.

Appendix 1 – Survey results

Responses, mainly drawn from those already involved in the movement, indicate a significant level of awareness and perceived positive impact of the movement, particularly in influencing the narrative and language used around social care.

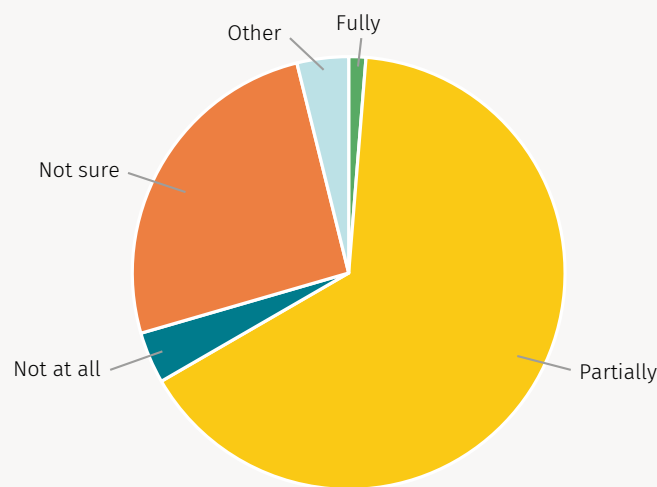
While there is strong agreement that the movement has helped people drawing on care have a stronger voice, views on its influence on national and local policy are more mixed. The responses also indicate a desire for the movement to focus on tangible action and building grassroots power.



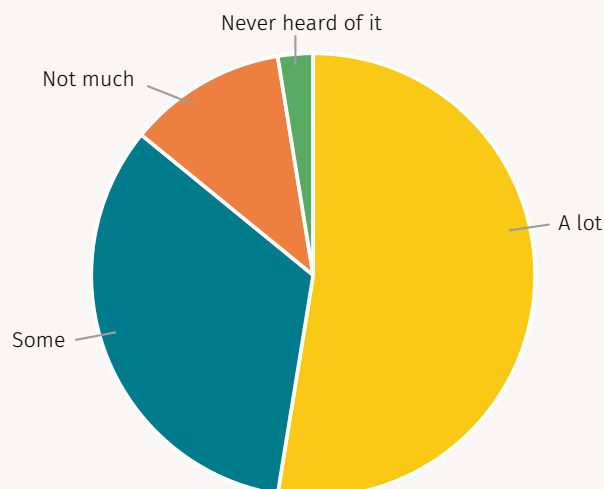
Awareness and perceived achievement of SCF goals: views are varied

- The largest proportion of respondents (42.47%, 31 respondents) believe the goals have been achieved “Fully”.
- A substantial number also believe the goals have been achieved “Partially” (28.77%, 21 respondents).
- A smaller percentage indicated “Not at all” (2.74%, 2 respondents) or “Not sure” (19.18%, 14 respondents).

To what extent do you think #SocialCareFuture has achieved its goals?

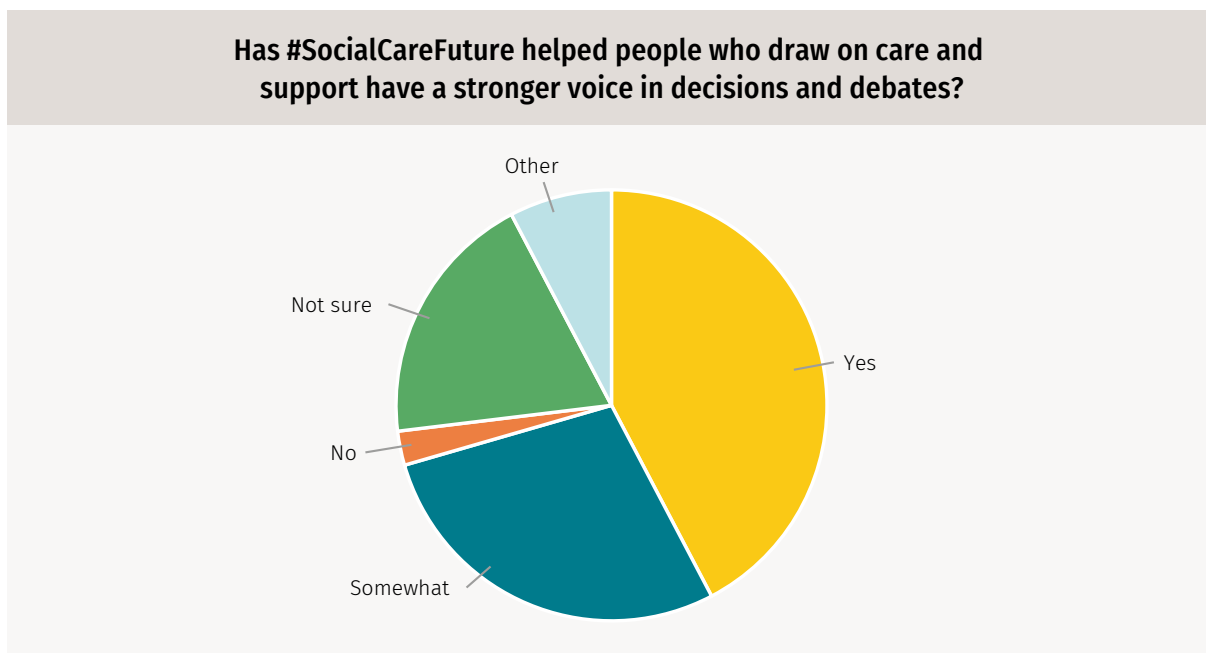


How much have you heard about the #SocialCareFuture movement?



Helping people who draw on care and support have a stronger voice: consensus that it helped (Q5)

- A majority of respondents answered “Yes” (47.22%, 34 respondents) or “Somewhat” (26.39%, 19 respondents) to Q5, “Has #SocialCareFuture helped people who draw on care and support have a stronger voice in decisions and debates?”.
- Only a small minority answered “No” (2.78%, 2 respondents) or “Not sure” (12.50%, 9 respondents).



Influencing policy and reform: present but to lesser extent than impact on voice work (Q6)

- Responses to Q6, “Do you think the work of #SocialCareFuture has influenced national or local social care policy or reform?”, show a split.
- Several respondents believe the influence exists, with one stating, “Yes. It has influenced the language used and the way in which adult social care is talked about. It has challenged policy makers. This is both nationally and locally.”
- Others are less certain, with responses like “I would hope all, but I don’t know” and “Yes, a bit.”
- One respondent commented, “I expect so - but to what extent I do not know.”

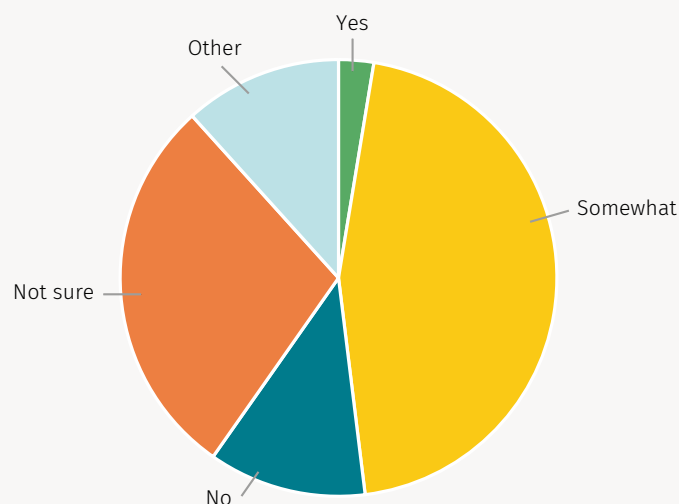
Changing the narrative: a key strength of the SCF movement (Q7)

- Several respondents provided examples in Q7. These include:
 - ◆ *“Lots of people can now quote the initial themes.”*
 - ◆ *“Some of the terminology is being picked up more widely in the social care sector which helps people to think about the offers they provide.”*
 - ◆ *“Local Authorities have generally stopped talking about ‘demand management’ and other such negative framing of people who require social care.”*
 - ◆ *“The framing work you have done has been really useful in that it changes how we look at Social Care - not just as a doomed system, ... i have a problem’ because it really helped encapsulate how we wanted things to move forward”*
 - ◆ *One respondent working in a Local Authority noted, “this message has landed well here — it’s made people think differently and act differently.”*

Changing the culture: more mixed (Q8)

- 36.11% (26 respondents) indicated “Somewhat”, and 26.39% (19 respondents) indicated “Yes”.
- However, 23.61% (17 respondents) were “Not sure”, and 4.17% (3 respondents) answered “No”.

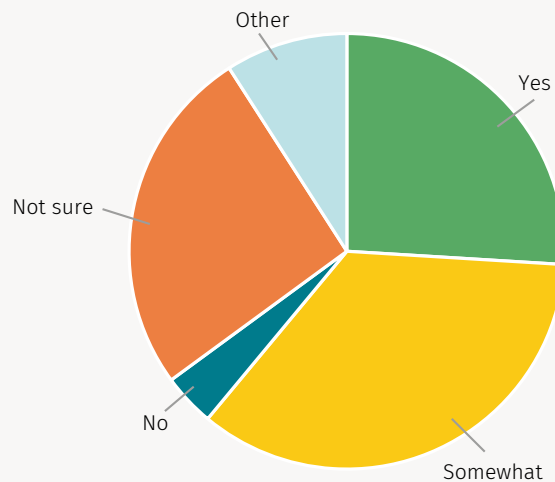
Has there been a noticeable change in culture or attitudes (in media, policy, or communities) due to #SocialCareFuture?



Supporting grassroots power: somewhat (Q9)

- A significant portion answered “Somewhat” (20.83%, 15 respondents) or “Yes” (11.11%, 8 respondents).
- A large number (29.17%, 21 respondents) answered “Not sure”.
- The “No” response was 25.00% (18 respondents), and “Other” was 13.89% (10 respondents).

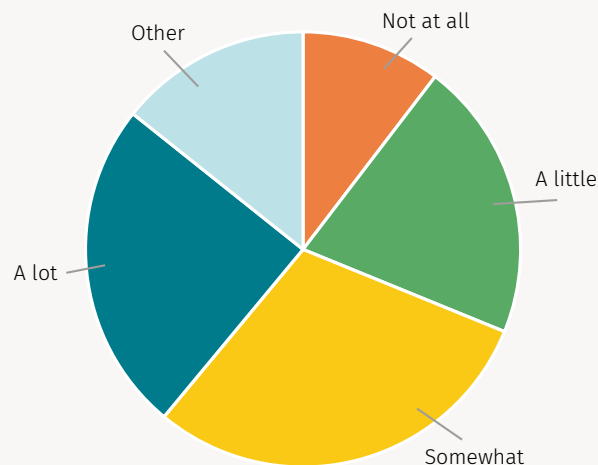
Do you think they have supported people to build grassroots power (i.e., influence from the ground up)?



Personal influence and behaviour change (Q10 & 11): yes

- A combined 70.83% (51 respondents) reported their involvement or exposure has changed the way they speak or act “A little”, “Somewhat”, or “A lot”.

Has your involvement or exposure to #SocialCareFuture changed the way you speak or act?

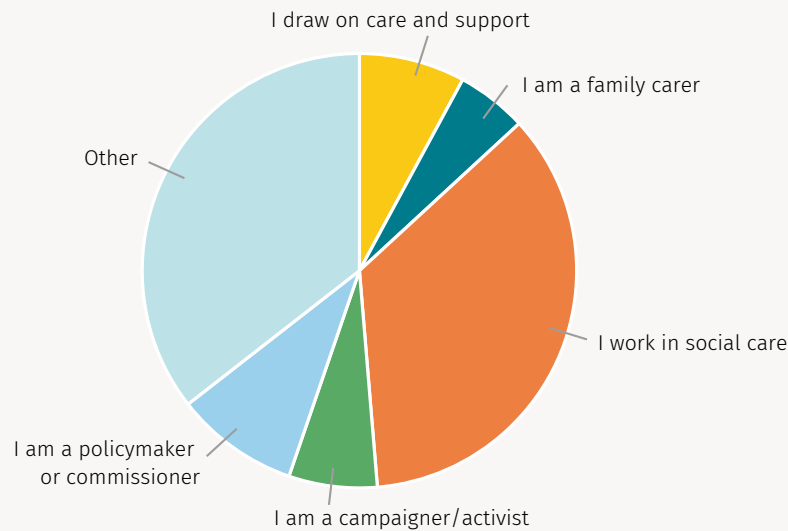


- One respondent shared a personal example: “In personal context, I have asked questions about a Care Act assessment that I may not have had the confidence to do if I hadn’t learnt what I have from #SocialCareFuture.”

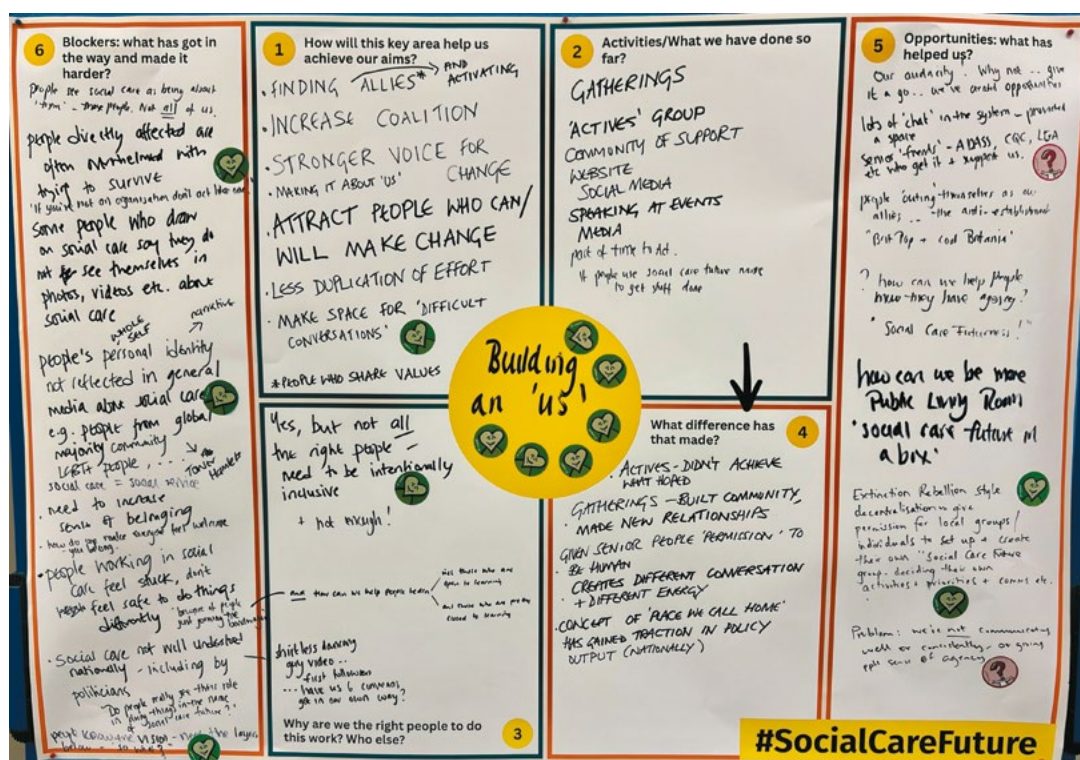
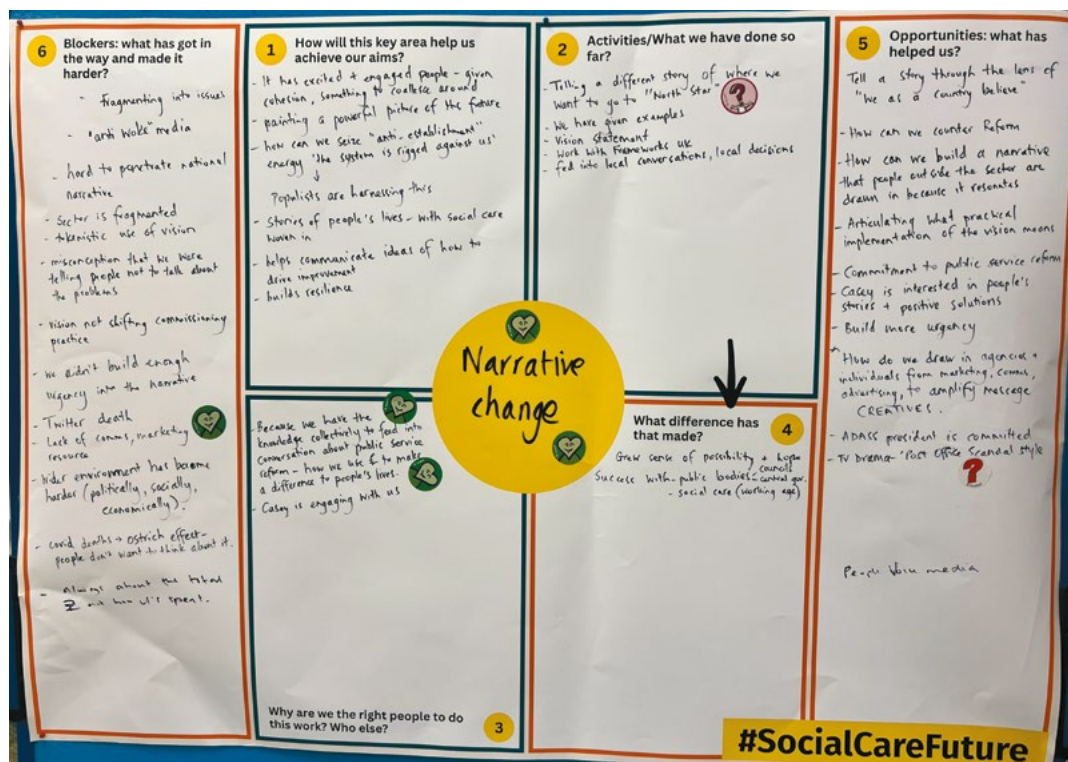
About the respondents:

- I draw on care and support: 7.04% (5 respondents)
- I am a family carer: 5.63% (4 respondents)
- I work in social care: 33.80% (24 respondents)
- I am a campaigner/activist: 7.04% (5 respondents)
- I am a policymaker or commissioner: 9.86% (7 respondents)
- Other (please specify): 36.62% (26 respondents)
- Regions represented include South Yorkshire, Midlands, London, West Midlands, Suffolk, Cumbria, Wales, Leicestershire, South East, East of England, West Yorkshire, Kent, East Anglia, and Oxfordshire.

How do you describe your involvement in social care?



Appendix 2 – photographs from SCF strategy residential





Endnotes

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Interviewee 5 | 30 Interviewee 7 | 60 Interviewee 2 |
| 2 Interviewee 2 | 31 Interviewee 7 | 61 Interviewee 8 |
| 3 Interviewee 14 | 32 Interviewee 7 | 62 Free text response, Survey |
| 4 Interviewee 4 | 33 Interviewee 4 | 63 Interviewee 2 |
| 5 Interviewee 7 | 34 Free text response, Survey | 64 Interviewee 8 |
| 6 Free text response, Survey | 35 Interviewee 7 | 65 Interviewee 14 |
| 7 Interviewee 10 | 36 Interviewee 2 | 66 Interviewee 6 |
| 8 Interviewee 3 | 37 Interviewee 10 | 67 Interviewee 4 |
| 9 Free text response, Survey | 38 Interviewee 10 | 68 Free text response, Survey |
| 10 Free text response, Survey | 39 Free text response, Survey | 69 Interviewee 16 |
| 11 https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5803/ldselect/ldadultsoc/99/9902.htm | 40 Free text response, Survey | 70 Interviewee 7 |
| 12 Interviewee 13 | 41 Interviewee 6 | 71 Interviewee 16 |
| 13 Interviewee 3 | 42 Interviewee 6 | 72 Interviewee 6 |
| 14 Free text survey response | 43 Interviewee 17 | 73 Interviewee 6 |
| 15 Interviewee 3 | 44 Interviewee 14 | 74 Interviewee 13 |
| 16 Interviewee 16 | 45 Free text response, Survey | 75 Interviewee 7 |
| 17 Interviewee 17 | 46 Interviewee 12 | 76 Interviewee 17 |
| 18 Interviewee 17 | 47 Free text response, Survey | 77 Interviewee 10 |
| 19 Free text response, Survey | 48 Free text response, Survey | 78 Interviewee 11 |
| 20 Interviewee 14 | 49 Free text response, Survey | 79 Interviewee 12 |
| 21 Interviewee 6 | 50 Free text response, Survey | 80 Interviewee 13 |
| 22 Interviewee 4 | 51 Free text response, Survey | 81 Free text response, Survey |
| 23 Interviewee 17 | 52 Interviewee 11 | 82 Free text response, Survey |
| 24 Interviewee 2 | 53 Interviewee 7 | 83 Interviewee 5 |
| 25 Interviewee 16 | 54 Free text response, Survey | 84 Interviewee 4 |
| 26 Interviewee 3 | 55 Free text response, Survey | 85 Interviewee 9 |
| 27 Free text response, Survey | 56 Interviewee 11 | 86 Interviewee 15 |
| 28 Interviewee 6 | 57 Free text response, Survey | 87 Interviewee 12 |
| 29 Interviewee 14 | 58 Interviewee 15 | 88 Interviewee 15 |
| | 59 Free text response, Survey | 89 Interviewee 12 |



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