30 December 2020

Dear Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Douglas Ross MP, Richard Leonard MSP, Patrick Harvie MSP and Lorna Slater, and Willie Rennie MSP,

2020 will forever be remembered as the year in which COVID-19 created untold suffering and hardship for people across Scotland and the rest of the world. For many families, it will be remembered as a year of unbearable loss, increased financial hardship and emotional pressure.

Yet we approach the New Year with hope, however cautious, of better times ahead. As we do so, we cannot forget the lessons we have learned during a pandemic which has reminded us all of what we value most.

That is why today we are joining together to urge the leaders of the five parties represented in the Scottish Parliament to make a New Year’s resolution to create a new National Outcome on valuing and investing in care and all those who provide it in Scotland.

We believe putting in place this collective goal will help put care at the very heart of the COVID-19 recovery in Scotland, benefitting carers, people who are cared for, as well as society as a whole. It can also provide a much-needed positive legacy from a period of national crisis and grief for so many.

Everyone needs care at some point in their life; as a child, if they have a disability or additional needs, or in older age; yet the nation’s carers have been under-valued and under-rewarded for far too long, with too many facing poverty as a result. COVID-19 didn't create these injustices, but it has exacerbated and exposed them.

In recent months there has been a welcome surge in political and public solidarity with those who provide care, most of whom are women. Despite the additional measures put in place to support those with caring responsibilities in Scotland before and during the pandemic, the experience of carers remain all but invisible in the National Outcomes contained within the National Performance Framework: this is a glaring omission which must now be rectified. As Scotland looks to sustainably recover from COVID-19, and build resilience to future pandemics, we urge you to work together to make Scotland a truly caring country.

As a first step, we ask you to make a generation-defining commitment to care and all those who provide it across the nation by putting in place a dedicated National Outcome. We believe this will help ensure that welcome statements of support for carers lead to meaningful and long-lasting change while ensuring that progress towards better valuing and investing in care is transparently monitored.

Your support for this call is a litmus test of your solidarity with those who provide care, and those who are cared for, across Scotland.

Yours,

Jamie Livingstone, Head of Oxfam Scotland

Fiona Collie, Carers Scotland – on behalf of the National Carer Organisations in Scotland

Dr Donald Macaskill, Chief Executive, Scottish Care

Satwat Rehman, Director of One Parent Families Scotland

Sara Cowan, Coordinator of the Scottish Women’s Budget Group