

# Today's Challenge, Tomorrow's Hope

## A call to action for the next Scottish Government

**One in six people in Scotland lives with a neurological condition.** Some are born with their condition, others will develop one during their lifetime; for many, their condition will be life-limiting or terminal. Neurological conditions can be complex, unpredictable, and profoundly life-changing for people living with them and their families – but, with the right, timely support, people can live well.

Too often, however, that is not the picture in Scotland. For people living with neurological conditions, inequality prevails everywhere – where you live, what condition you have, and even whether you own a smartphone can determine the care you receive. Scotland's health and care system is fragmented: health and social care do not work seamlessly together, mental health and physical health are often treated in isolation, and the system is not integrated with social security, education, housing or our local communities.

The result is people living with these conditions routinely falling between the cracks in a broken system, left to fend for themselves with no specialists, pathways, treatment or services available to them.

**The latest findings of *My Neuro Survey*, the largest survey of people affected by neurological conditions in Scotland, shows:**



**Over half** of adults with neurological conditions feel **unsupported by the healthcare system.**



**Over half** of carers **cannot access mental health support.**



**Two-thirds** of adults with neurological conditions are **not coping with their condition.**



**Four-fifths** of children with neurological conditions **experience frustration and anger due to symptoms**, with many poorly supported at school.

**This stark reality is not inevitable; it is the result of policy failure.** The Neurological Framework for Action ended in 2025 with progress in pockets, but no long-term replacement plan and uncertainty over how neurological conditions will be prioritised in the Long Term Conditions framework. The collapse of the National Care Service policy has left social care reform adrift and no closer to the vital integration with healthcare services. Waiting lists continue to be high, mental health services remain overstretched, and budgets continue to shrink with resources ever more tightly stretched.

# The Neurological Alliance of Scotland 2026 Election Manifesto



**Successive governments have failed to plan for the long term.** There is no more time for quick fixes. The next Scottish Government must deliver a health and care system that works for the 1 in 6 – one that tackles inequality, supports carers, and plans for the future.

## Our Principles

The next Scottish Government must commit to building a health and care system that supports people with neurological conditions through:

### 1. Integration

- Seamless working between health and social care, primary, secondary and tertiary care, and across social security, education, and housing.
- Embedding of mental health support through all parts of the neurological journey for both adults and children.
- Multi-disciplinary care as the standard, with a shift from crisis response to prevention and early intervention.

### 2. Sustainable funding

- Long-term funding settlements that enable services, including third sector services, to plan and innovate.
- Recognition and support for the neurological third sector as a key partner in service delivery.
- Increased investment in neurological research.

### 3. Workforce readiness

- Addressing recruitment and retention gaps across all relevant professions.
- Better education and training on neurological conditions for all health and care professionals.
- More coordinated care between professionals and stronger support for unpaid carers.

### 4. Supporting a full life

- Provision of consistent and fair support for children with neurological conditions.
- Education that meets the needs of children with neurological conditions.
- Fair, efficient disability benefits and assessments that enable financial security.
- Support for carers to protect their health and remain economically active.

## The Case for Change – Key Facts

From *My Neuro Survey 2024*:

- 64% of adults are not coping well; 87% say their condition impacts their mental health.
- Waiting times for diagnosis and treatment regularly exceed two years for some services.
- 69% of carers say mental health services do not meet their child's needs.
- 53% of carers cannot access mental health support for themselves.
- The cost to the UK economy of neurological conditions is £96 billion annually – 4.3% of GDP. The amenable economic burden for just 10 conditions is estimated to be £30.8bn.
- Unpaid carers save Scotland billions but are burning out without adequate respite or support.

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## Our Calls to the Next Scottish Government

### 1. Targeted Investment in Neurology Services

- Expand the neurology workforce – consultants, nurses, allied health professionals.
- Increase diagnostic capacity (MRI, CT, specialist testing).
- Support the neurological third sector to deliver both specialist clinical services and vital social support.
- ***This will deliver faster diagnoses, earlier access to treatment, timely access to support and advice, and savings resulting from fewer emergency hospital admissions.***

### 2. Universal Access to Care Coordinators

- Ensure care coordinators are appointed for those with co-morbidities, complex conditions and for children transitioning to adult services.
- Provide a single point of contact for navigating health, social care, and mental health services.
- ***This will deliver integrated care planning, reduce inequalities in access to support, and a single point of contact for patients.***

### 3. Strengthen Social Care and Awareness of Neurological Needs

- Train social care, education, housing, and benefits staff in the complexities of neurological conditions to provide consistency in support.
- ***This will deliver stronger carer support, faster access to housing adaptations and improved access to financial support.***

**Scotland cannot afford – economically, socially, or morally – to ignore the needs of the 1 in 6 who live with neurological conditions.**

The next Scottish Government must act decisively to end inequality, support families, and invest in the future of neurological care.

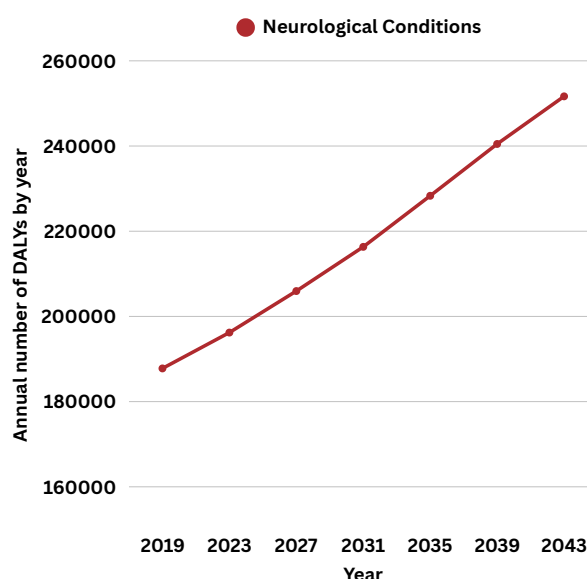
**The time for short-term fixes is over.  
If not now, when?**

#### Call to action:

Become a **#NeuroChampion2026**  
this election.

**[Support our principles here.](#)**

**Scottish Burden of Disease**  
forecast of annual disability-adjusted life  
years (DALYs) 2019 - 2043<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> My Neuro Survey policy report. 'Today's Challenge, Tomorrow's Hope: An Observation of Neurology Patient Experience in Scotland'. The Neurological Alliance of Scotland. 2025. [Click here to access published report.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Burden of Disease study. 'Forecasting the future burden of disease: Incorporating the impact of demographic transition over the next 20 years'. Scottish Public Health Observatory, Public Health Scotland. 2022. [Click here to access published report](#)