

2025

ROADSHOW

**North
Ayrshire**

April 2025



The Scottish Women's Convention

Introduction

From the 3rd to the 4th of April 2025, the SWC Team hosted multiple roundtables in Largs and Millport with local women to understand issues facing the North Ayrshire region. Multiple key themes arose during these conversations, including **health and social care, transport, housing and amenities**.

While in North Ayrshire, women described a steadily worsening situation in relation to public services. They provided a wealth of personal examples relating to healthcare in the region, explaining that accessing primary care appointments had become increasingly difficult, worsening overall health outcomes. Women also referred to social care availability, focusing on the reduction of localised care provision within the community. For island residents, social care was of significant concern, with telecare systems lacking effective provision for the area's most vulnerable residents. Improving health and social care was identified as a key focus for women in North Ayrshire, to enable positive lifestyles.

Other issues arose, such as public transport provision, with attendees highlighting their disappointment at an expensive, inconsistent service. Price was also recognised as a major issue within the area's housing market, with buying and running costs increasing year on year. Finally, women also pointed to a reduction in local amenities, including bank closures, the lack of public toilets and petrol stations, and poor general upkeep of tourist hotspots. They hoped for considerable investment throughout the region, to maintain the livelihoods and aspirations of residents.

The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC)

The SWC is funded to engage with women across Scotland to ensure that their views are represented in policy and decision-making processes. The SWC uses the views of women to respond to a variety of parliamentary, governmental, and organisational consultation papers at Scottish, UK, and international levels.

The SWC gathers information using different methods, including roadshows, thematic conferences, surveys, and both in-person and online roundtable events. This submission presents the views of a range of women, reflecting their opinions, ideas and lived experience. Working together with many other equalities organisations and community groups, we use our broad network to ensure that women from a range of backgrounds are heard and acknowledged. We are continually reviewing innovative ways of engaging with women and developing our trauma-informed and culturally sensitive practice to support vital contributions from as many women as possible.

Health and Social Care

The key topic of conversation across our time in North Ayrshire, was that of healthcare. Women recounted a range of stories, with most receiving good quality care, commending the dedication of healthcare staff. However, this care was widely inaccessible, due to increased bureaucracy of healthcare systems. Women pointed to the use of triaging by GP reception staff, stating that this could be off-putting for those not willing to disclose personal ailments. Additionally, attendees explained that the provision of on-the-day appointments was not preferred. They expressed significant frustration on this subject, stating that the phone system was often backlogged, preventing them from easily accessing essential healthcare.

- “You shouldn’t have to do that, you know, you shouldn’t have to persuade someone to get an appointment.”
- “...once you get a doctor, you get decent care, but getting access is very difficult, getting through the receptionist is very difficult.”

Ultimately, poor access to primary care will likely worsen the wellbeing of citizens in North Ayrshire. It has been estimated that North Ayrshire has a higher than average mortality rate from preventable illnesses such as heart disease or cerebrovascular disease, compared to the wider Scottish average¹. Also, according to the most recent Scottish Census, 2.1% of the population of North Ayrshire have ‘very bad health’, with only four other council areas rating below this percentage². Therefore, improving access to primary healthcare is vital to increase life expectancy for women in North Ayrshire.

- “I think like, no-one denies that the services are stretched, but it’s people who are unwell who are impacted. They can tell us that the GPs and the hospitals are at crisis point...but people still need care, and they don’t get it at all.”

Women went on to highlight the lack of sufficient dental care in North Ayrshire, again, stating that access remained the key issue. They explained that due to NHS-ran dental practice closures, there were few spaces available, forcing some to utilise private alternatives. It was explained that private care was not available to many, creating a discrepancy in health levels between those on high and low incomes. The reduction in dental practices was identified across SWC work in 2024, being raised as an issue in Dumfries³ and Dundee⁴. This issue has widely been accredited to the Covid-19 pandemic, with surgeries struggling to manage the backlog created. Women believed that the reduction in provision would continue to worsen the dental health of those

¹ Office for National Statistics. (2025). Local Indicators for North Ayrshire. Available at: <https://explore-local-statistics.beta.ons.gov.uk/areas/S12000021-north-ayrshire/indicators#health-and-wellbeing>

² Scotland’s Census. (2024). Census Maps: General Health. Available at: <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/atlas/choropleth/health/general-health/health/very-bad>

³ Scottish Women’s Convention. (2024). Dumfries. Available at: <https://www.scottishwomensconvention.org/resources/dumfries-report.pdf>

⁴ Scottish Women’s Convention. (2024). Dundee. Available at: <https://www.scottishwomensconvention.org/resources/dundee-report.pdf>

residing in North Ayrshire, particularly children's. They stated that participation would likely decline if access remained poor, calling for improved availability across the region.

- “Most people I know in Largs have their dentist in Gourock or Greenock, because there's no NHS dentist available.”
- “...we're building a problem here for our young people. I mean at the moment, if they don't have the money, they can't go to the dentist, so they then don't build that habit of going or they lose the registration...in a few years there's going to be an epidemic of dental health problems, which will then lead to other health problems”

Mental health was also raised as an issue for attendees, with some providing first-hand accounts of low-quality care. Women stated that access remained an issue, with waiting lists preventing access to timely support. However, of those who navigated the system, they were met with poor care options, with an emphasis on light-touch methods, when alternative interventions were needed. It has been estimated that North Ayrshire has a relatively high level of mental health need, with 12.1% of the population having a mental health condition⁵. Therefore, targeted interventions are required to improve the quality of life for North Ayrshire residents. While there is mention of mental health within North Ayrshire Council's 2023-2028 Plan⁶, we would recommend clear commitments to reduce waiting times and improve care options for those seeking medical support.

- “...I don't rate the mental healthcare either. I mean I appreciate that there's a significant demand for it, but the healthcare worker I saw, I felt like they were questioning you like the police! You felt like a criminal!”
- “...the mental health service is something I've had major issues with...I've asked for support...but I keep getting to sent to workshops about breathing techniques”

While healthcare was identified as a major area of concern, women also linked this with social care provision, explaining that the two sectors were closely related. Attendees stated that there had been a reduction in the number of care homes available, resulting in a lack of localised provision. Across North Ayrshire, there are three local authority owned care homes/nursing homes, with an additional three being not-for-profit ran⁷. While this region is projected to experience a reduction of 3.1% in overall population levels by 2028, the number of people over 75 years old is to increase by 27%⁸. This is to be accompanied by a general reduction in working-age peoples, creating a disparity between service need and service provision. We recognise the challenge that this will produce for decision-makers, however, this does not minimise the immediacy of the problem. Moreover, while the economic element is of importance, it is vital to centre

⁵ Scotland's Census. (2024). Census Maps: Mental Health Condition. Available at: <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/atlas/choropleth/health/long-term-health-condition-mental-health-condition/t-cond-mental-health-ind-p/has-a-mental-health-condition>

⁶ North Ayrshire Council. (2022). Our Council Plan 2023-2028. Available at: <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/council-plan.pdf>

⁷ Carehome.co.uk. (2025). Local Authority Care Homes North Ayrshire Area. Available at: https://www.carehome.co.uk/care_search_results.cfm/searchunitary/North-Ayrshire/searchchtype/local-authority

⁸ National Records of Scotland. (2024). North Ayrshire Council Area Profile. Available at: https://webarchive.nrscotland.gov.uk/20241128124659/https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/north-ayrshire-council-profile.html#Population_Projections

the experiences of local people. Families and communities are being torn apart, with elderly people forced to relocate to access their basic right to care. Therefore, we would highly encourage a clear focus on the deteriorating social care situation in North Ayrshire, through a renewed emphasis on increased provision.

- “The big care home just shut down. My mother had to go into care quite suddenly a few weeks ago, and so she is now further down the coast.”
- “There’s poor provision for care for the elderly...Members of my family, we’ve tried to get support for them, and it just wasn’t there”
- “...there was someone who had terrible health problems, his wife was in care, she’s elsewhere because of the lack of care facilities in Largs, but he’s driving down with difficulty, four times a week to see his wife”

An additional issue identified by women residing on the Isle of Cumbrae, was that of telecare services on the island. Currently, North Ayrshire Council provide assistive technology in the homes of residents who may require additional support for a weekly fee - £5.32 per week for those on the mainland and £2.60 per week for islanders⁹. While those who reside on the mainland have 24/7 support, those on Cumbrae only have access to the community alarm responder service between 8am to 12:30pm and 5pm to 9pm.

Roadshow attendees explained that while emergency calls may receive ambulance attendance, issues such as toilet need would be ignored. This has resulted in multiple elderly residents left in uncomfortable and unsanitary conditions for hours. Moreover, social care staff explained that due to poor provision of specialised equipment, falls could not be safely handled by carers, instead emergency services had to be contacted. These services would likely not respond quickly if an issue was not deemed a priority by 999 operators. It was explained to SWC staff that the mainland control centre managed the release of all ambulances, including island vehicles. This led to unnecessary wait times for island residents, worsening the overall health of the individual in need. Ultimately, the situation on the Isle of Cumbrae is untenable, requiring immediate addressing. We would recommend increased investment in the community alert team, improving equipment and staff numbers.

- “So, said person could be sitting in their own pee for hours, which is absolutely unacceptable”
- “I know that there could be equipment that we should have, that we don’t have, it would save an ambulance coming out, but we have to phone an ambulance.”
- “...I’ve been in situations where I’ve had someone on the floors for hours...Then when the paramedics get to me, they’re so frustrated, because they’ve just been sitting around, they weren’t allowed to be released.”
- “Ultimately, an alert team would be able to go out and do simple things, but then if I do need an ambulance, then that’s a separate thing, that’s an emergency.”

⁹ North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership. (2025). Assistive Technology in Your Home. Available at: <https://www.nahscp.org/care-support-community/care-home-options/assistive-technology-in-your-home>

Transport

Women in North Ayrshire highlighted access to public transport, explaining that there were major gaps in provision. Firstly, women stated that while Largs itself had a good small local bus service, providing a lifeline to those with mobility needs, travelling elsewhere was difficult. For example, residents in Largs who do not have access to a car but have to travel to University Hospital Crosshouse for appointments, must take two buses, a journey of approximately an hour and 40 minutes. This same journey can be completed in 40 minutes by car. Alternatively, residents may be referred to University Hospital Ayr, which takes 2 hours and 20 minutes by bus, compared to 55 minutes by car. It was felt that the additional difficulties created by the lack of direct bus routes to healthcare worsened outcomes for residents.

- “If people want to travel to one of the hospitals, they’ve got to take two buses, and a lot of people say that they’ve not got the transport.”
- “My son had to go to Ayr when he had something wrong with his knee, and getting there, you have to go to Kilwinning, then walk a bit, then get the country bus, so I mean if you were very ill or had mobility issues, then you would really struggle.”

When asked about train options, women were equally troubled by the lack of route availability. They stated that there were no direct routes to vital services, such as hospitals; again, using the example of Largs to University Hospital Crosshouse, this requires multiple trains and takes an hour and a half. Attendees were generally disappointed at the lack of service provided to them, and some went on to identify the reduction of staff in train stations and on trains as an additional issue. They explained that this had resulted in a rise in antisocial behaviour on trains late at night, preventing women from actively engaging in social activities.

- “...it’s three trains or something to get to Crosshouse hospital from here”
- “...the lack of staffing is an issue across Scotrail. That’s the same with the unmanned stations, you wouldn’t have to sit outside in the cold and dark if they had someone working inside, you could sit in there and be safe. That security is gone because there’s no staff anymore.”

Ferry use was raised as a key area of concern for women living on the Isle of Cumbrae. While some attendees praised the continued efforts of ferry workers to provide lifeline services for islanders, some women believed improvements could be made. They stated that it may be valuable for islanders to receive priority during busier months, in particular those travelling for health reasons or to access vital social security payments. It was explained that long queues had resulted in missed appointments, worsening the state of health for islanders. Additionally, priority passes would be valuable for those with disabilities and mobility issues. While this is provided in some cases, women stated that accessing priority passes could be a difficult process. With regards to those accessing benefits, they must travel a considerable distance to Saltcoats, using ferries, trains and/or buses. While a priority pass would not reduce the number of transport types used, it could ease the journey considerably.

- “I know someone who had to fight really hard to get priority for their child for coming home from school via the ferry, that was a huge fight, it took ages. That child was sitting with complex needs”
- “The closest job centre is in Saltcoats as well, so if you’re signing on, you have to get there first...the same is true for them on the island, they have to get a boat, a bus, and a train to get their benefits.”

The price of public transport was also raised as an area of concern for women. They explained that the decision to revert back to peak pricing had added cost for commuters, with the train journey at peak times costing approximately £20 per day into Glasgow. This price is common across North Ayrshire, increasing weekly costs for families across the region. High costs were also witnessed on the area’s bus routes. Buses are more commonly used by those on low incomes, as this group are more likely to work close to home¹⁰. Therefore, controlling the price of bus fares and ensuring affordable options for users is key to tackle poverty across Scotland. Similar recommendations were made by the SWC in 2024, when women’s experiences of the transport system were gathered; we highlighted the need for reduced ticket prices and increased number of routes¹¹.

- “...they’ve put the [train] prices back up again, so if you’re going at peak times, it’s £20 a day for a return to Glasgow [from Largs].”
- “...I’ll get the train mostly, because it’s about £4 something [to elsewhere in North Ayrshire], but I missed it, so got the bus. It was like £7.20 for a return! That’s like 10 miles, if that, I mean I was on that bus for 15 minutes.”

Furthermore, women identified ferry prices as a barrier to young people’s social participation. They explained that after 6pm teens must pay to travel back from the mainland, with most age-appropriate activities being provided at Largs Academy. Women therefore believed that the under 22s free bus fare scheme should be extended to include lifeline ferry services. This has been acknowledged by the Scottish Government, with free inter-island ferry travel being introduced for young people living in remote islands. The Scottish Government have stated that “this scheme will give [young people] the same opportunities as free bus travel provides for many...in mainland communities”¹². We echo this statement and therefore strongly recommend that this scheme be extended to include all of Scotland’s inhabited islands.

- “I suppose the other issue is for teens, they’ve got some [afterschool activities], but they’re very limited in what they can access because of the ferries and paying to come home.”
- “They can get only get their free travel during certain hours, so if you’re doing anything past 6pm, you’ll have to pay to get home”

¹⁰ Poverty and Inequality Commission. (2019). Transport and Poverty in Scotland. Available at: <https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Transport-and-Poverty-in-Scotland-Report-of-the-Poverty-and-Inequality-Commission.pdf>

¹¹ Scottish Women’s Convention. (2024). How Can We Make Transport Work for Women and Families in Scotland? Available at: <https://www.scottishwomensconvention.org/resources/report.pdf>

¹² Transport Scotland. (2025). Free Inter-Island Ferry Travel Introduced for Young People in Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides. Available at: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/free-inter-island-ferry-travel-introduced-for-young-people-in-orkney-shetland-and-the-outer-hebrides/>

Housing

While in North Ayrshire, the SWC Team enquired about the availability of housing across the region. Some women explained that there was a significant shortage, particularly in popular tourist destinations. They stated that due to a romantic view of the coast and the recent popularity of working from home methods, many had moved into the area, increasing housing costs. This trend can be seen within net-migration levels; directly after the Covid-19 pandemic, North Ayrshire saw net-migration rates per 1,000 people of 5.1, the highest level since 2008/09¹³. Women went on to provide examples of their experiences within the competitive property market, believing that many of the homes purchased were likely to be privately rented. They also explained that the increase in second homes was concerning, stating that Airbnb had contributed to higher costs for locals. Again, women's experiences can be evidenced by official figures, with the average house price in North Ayrshire rising by 6.6% and monthly rent costs rising by an average of 5.6% from 2024 to 2025¹⁴.

- “...when we were going to look at houses, I mean we were just looking for a one level, two bedrooms or something, when we were going for them, we were getting outbid silly numbers”
- “Oh yes, West Kilbride, they have an issue with second houses and things, lots of perfectly good houses, but they're like £1800 a week.”
- “There are a lot of second homes and Airbnb...it's sad if people can't move into their own area.”
- “...when we were looking for a family home, the rent was about £1500 to £2000 a month, for the three-bedroom ones around Largs. If I had that kind of money, I would just buy something.”

While the cost of purchasing/renting a home was of significant concern for many, women also pointed to the cost of running their home. Women explained that fuel poverty was a key issue in the area; 28% of people in North Ayrshire experience fuel poverty¹⁵. Those living on the Isle of Cumbrae were particularly concerned by the rising cost of power, as residents lack a gas connection from the mainland. Therefore, homes are reliant primarily on electricity to enable household tasks. While investigating women's experiences of poverty in Scotland, the issue of fuel poverty arose, with disabled adults and the elderly being more likely to have high energy bills¹⁶. This is due to these groups remaining in their homes for longer periods and may also have specialist powered equipment.

¹³ National Records of Scotland. (2024). North Ayrshire Council Area Profile. Available at: <https://webarchive.nrscotland.gov.uk/20241128124659/https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/north-ayrshire-council-profile.html#Tables>

¹⁴ Office for National Statistics. (2025). Housing Prices in North Ayrshire. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/housingpriceslocal/S12000021/>

¹⁵ North Ayrshire Council. (2022). Our Council Plan 2023 to 2028. Available at: <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/council-plan.pdf>

¹⁶ Scottish Women's Convention. (2024). The Impact of Poverty on Women. Available at: <https://www.scottishwomensconvention.org/resources/poverty-full-report-2024.pdf>

- “There’s a fuel poverty issue, which will impact other areas, and I mean we’re not very deprived per head as other places, but there are issues here.”

Furthermore, in emergency situations, such as power cuts, islanders have been left without heat and household amenities for prolonged periods of time. As the UK transition from analogue to digital infrastructure continues, power cuts will present additional issues for the island. Digital landlines for example, cannot carry a power connection, meaning that any handsets or routers will not function in a power cut, unless a backup power system is in place. This is particularly problematic for those reliant on the aforementioned telecare devices; North Ayrshire Council has arranged for the implementation of digital-ready telecare services, however in the case of a power cut these new devices will be unreliable¹⁷. Increased consideration is therefore required to mitigate fuel costs for residents, as well as how digital infrastructure changes may directly impact vulnerable adults.

- “...[housing] is not affordable. Also, fuel, we have no gas; using electricity to heat houses is extortionate.”
- “Yeah, we have to rely on storage heaters, so the cost of heating your house is so expensive here. I suppose, we can’t change the weather, but I mean we’ve had three-day power cuts, which means we can’t heat our homes or cook, since there’s no gas”

Alternatively, some women pointed to recent social housing developments, believing there to be an improvement in housing stock. According to North Ayrshire Council, 378 empty homes have been brought back into use during 2023/24 and 384 new build houses have been completed¹⁸. While this will likely improve housing options, residents did raise concerns surrounding a lack of “joined-up thinking”, stating that the population increase will put strain on existing public services. This was related to issues faced when attempting to access GP appointments, as well as high class sizes within North Ayrshire schools. Attendees were concerned about how this may impact the quality of care and education received by residents, stating that they were beginning to witness a reduction in service-levels. They therefore called for more school places and GP availability through investment by the council, to counteract waiting lists and improve general experiences for citizens.

- “There have been quite a few new houses that have been built in Largs to be fair; they have built a fair few.”
- “It’s basic arithmetic, if you increase the number of houses, more people will live here, then you need services for the people.”

¹⁷ UK Government. (2024). UK Transition from Analogue to Digital Landlines. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-transition-from-analogue-to-digital-landlines#what-the-change-means-in-practice-and-how-you-can-prepare>

¹⁸ North Ayrshire Council. (2024). Annual Performance Report 2023-2024. Available at: <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/annual-perf-rpt-2023-24-v3.pdf>

Amenities

Throughout conversations with women, the reduction in available amenities was raised as a cause for concern. Firstly, women pointed to their local high street; high streets across Scotland have experienced significant changes in recent years, as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the rise of online shopping. While this has negatively affected retail and hospitality businesses, there has also been a notable decrease in the number of physical banks. Across the UK, the number of banks and building societies in operation fell by 6,303 since 2015, representing 64% of a reduction since the beginning of that year¹⁹. It has been observed that physical branch closures disproportionately disadvantage vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and those with disabilities. This is likely due to poor access to alternative banking forms and poor digital literacy/access²⁰. Due to the ageing population in North Ayrshire, it is likely that this reduction in banks will be felt strongly by the community, and as such immediate intervention is required. Women went on to highlight the establishment of a credit union in the area²¹, believing that this service may assist in counteracting the potential damage done by banking closures.

- “Another issue is the access to banks here. My bank shut, the other one shut, we now have the RBS, but there are lots of elderly people who don’t do online banking.”
- “The demographics in Largs, it’s an older population, it’s people who are on their own, they can’t do [online banking].”

Additionally, attendees highlighted the poor public toilet provision across popular tourist spots. Tourism makes up 12% of all businesses in North Ayrshire as a whole, acting as a key element of the local economy. This was welcomed by attendees; however, the high numbers can negatively impact local services, including public toilets. Women stated that the public toilets available were poorly maintained, particularly during busy periods. They went on to explain that there is a lack of accessible toilets for those with mobility needs and/or disabilities. North Ayrshire has a relatively high level of disability and long-term health conditions compared to Scotland as a whole, with 13.9% of people stating that they have their day-to-day activities limited by their condition²². Organisations such as Changing Places, have emphasised the need for improved facilities which enable those with access needs or disabilities to live with dignity²³. It can therefore be argued that increased focus is required surrounding the experiences of disabled people, alongside the extension of schemes such as Changing Places to improve outcomes and living standards.

¹⁹ Which?. (2025). Bank Branch Closers: Is Your Local Bank Closing. Available at: <https://www.which.co.uk/money/banking/switching-your-bank/bank-branch-closures-is-your-local-bank-closing-ayYyu4i9RdHy#how-many-bank-branches-have-closed-since-2015>

²⁰ UK Parliament. (2024). Closure of High Street Banks: Impact on Local Communities. Available at: <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/closure-of-high-street-banks-impact-on-local-communities/>

²¹ Scotwest. (2025). About Scotwest. Available at: <https://www.scotwest.co.uk/about/>

²² Scotland’s Census. (2025). Census Maps: Disability. Available at: <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/atlas/choropleth/health/disability/disability/day-to-day-activities-limited-a-lot>

²³ Changing Places. (2021). What Are We Campaigning For? Available at: <https://www.changing-places.org/pages/view/what-are-we-campaigning-for>

- “I was going to say, on toilets...for older women who have disabled children, who maybe need that; you can’t put a nine-year-old on a baby’s changing mat, you end up having to do it on the floor.”
- “...I worked with adults with disabilities, and it was a nightmare [taking them to the toilet], we used to carry a big plastic sheet with us, so we could put that down for them.”

In relation to tourism, women also cited concerns surrounding the general beautification of the area. They stated that while council workers carry out continuous clean-up operations within popular tourist sites, such as Largs, the level of litter remains an issue. This was identified as a major issue during the summer months, when tourist levels increase significantly. Women also stated that there was a high level of dog’s dirt being left on pavements and play areas, contributing to a general level of uncleanliness. Attendees called for an increase in litter and dog waste bins across Largs, including within the town centre.

- “Another wee thing, the bins, see days like this, when the kids are off for the summer months, there will be rows and rows of bins...and the guys come out, and the bins are overflowing.”
- “Yeah, I’m a pedestrian, so I can’t avoid it, it’s everywhere. Every time I leave the house I see dog poo...it’s disgusting.”

Another major amenity which is in short supply is that of petrol stations, specifically the lack of such a facility on the Isle of Cumbrae. Islanders explained that they had been without a petrol station for over 10 years, forcing residents to travel to the mainland whenever they require fuel. This is a major inconvenience for locals, which is then worsened during busy summer months, with ferries being inundated with visiting vehicles. As stated previously, islanders do not receive preferential treatment when using the ferry and must therefore queue for long periods of time to access basic essentials. The additional greenhouse gas emissions created by islanders driving to the mainland for refuelling purposes is a cause for concern and could be subverted through the re-establishment of a petrol station. We would therefore call for improved amenities for the Isle of Cumbrae, as well as general additions made to North Ayrshire at large.

- “We have no petrol in our [work] van, but since there’s no petrol station on the island, we need to get it across on the ferry to get that filled up, but it’s so busy on the ferries in the summer, so that can take hours.”
- “The Scottish Government were subsidising our petrol station before, but they didn’t renew it about 15 years ago, so we’ve been without one that whole time.”

Conclusion

To conclude, regions of North Ayrshire face significant challenges as a result of an increasingly ageing population. Currently, health and social care sectors are under enormous strain, struggling to balance the increase in need with the reduction in staff. This has resulted in inaccessible primary care for local people, and poor provision for specialised sectors, such as mental health. Also, despite this increase in the number of older people, there has been a reduction in care homes, limiting localised care. Overall, elderly island residents face a clear discrepancy in support, with this being attributed to the lack of investment in the sector.

Furthermore, issues such as poor public transport accessibility and a lack of comprehensive amenities illustrates further disadvantage faced by older and disabled women. This has resulted in these groups becoming increasingly isolated, prevented from actively engaging in their local communities. Women in North Ayrshire clearly outlined the hard work they are carrying out to tackle these issues, however, to effectively meet the upcoming challenges facing the region, these efforts must be accompanied by significant investment from governing bodies. To guide this, we have made the below recommendations, which we believe align with the wants and needs of women in North Ayrshire.

8 Key Recommendations

- Significantly invest in primary healthcare provision across North Ayrshire communities, to enable pre-booking of appointments.
- Ensure all healthcare professionals are provided with training surrounding trauma-informed practice, improving the experiences of those with mental healthcare needs.
- Increase funding for the community alarm responder service on the Isle of Cumbrae, so a 24/7 response is provided for service-users.
- Carry out an assessment of 999 ambulance responses across island and rural communities, considering the impact of centralised control rooms.
- Extend the under 22s bus pass scheme to include the use of ferries for all young islanders.
- Assess the impact of new build housing on local public services, making necessary investments based on findings.
- Increase the number of public toilets in tourist hotspots, providing accessible options, such as those advocated for by Changing Places.
- Re-establish the Isle of Cumbrae petrol station, in an effort to increase ease of access and reduce environmental impact.

Thank You!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the women who joined us in Largs and Millport to provide their lived experience, our work would be impossible without the continued support of women.



For further information or to share your views, please contact:

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