



Argyll and Bute CAB

NewsLetter

Summer 2026

Social Policy

Never before has ABCAB's twin aim to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, locally and nationally, been so important than over this past year.

Through public engagement opportunities, ABCAB raised concerns over the proposed introduction of a Ceiling of Care: Fair Access and a Threshold of Care Policy, a policy driven to achieve £80,000 of budget savings through a reduction in care-at-home services. ABCAB also partnered with The Poverty Alliance and Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface in formally speaking out given the risk that young, old and disabled people would be denied their rights and required to move out of the area due to a shortage of local, suitable care home space.

By winter, ABCAB, the Poverty Alliance, and Argyll and Bute TSI were joined by Community Contacts, who came together to launch Our Voices Matter — a collective campaign to protect preventative services, defend community capacity and promote a sustainable, prevention-focused future for health and social care — all in response to the budget proposals to address a funding shortfall and an opening budget of over £16 million, with additional and emerging cost pressures of £8 million and potentially up to £14-16 million in 2026/27 relating to the acute Service Level Agreement with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Over 40 local community organisations got behind the aims of Our Voices Matter to protect services that provide early intervention and prevention.

Why was this important? Because community-based services make a difference when it comes to reducing hospital admissions, delaying escalation of need, supporting unpaid carers, tackling loneliness and isolation, enabling people to live independently longer, reducing hospital stays when people are medically fit to return home and, taken together, act to lower overall long-term health and social care system costs.

Our Voices Matter certainly caught the attention of the local policy makers with additional funding found to save some services. Sadly, services such as the area's carer centres still had 15% of their budget cut. There's also service funding cuts to community transport and local Alzheimer's services — just some of the organisations people rely on. The cost of services was increased with a combination of new and above-inflation fees and charges made. Council Tax was increased well above inflation, although around one quarter of the money it raises is only available to the HSCP for one year. What of the Threshold of Care? The annual saving was increased to £500,000.

Looking towards this year's round of budget decisions, ABCAB is resolute: another round with projected cuts to essential health and social care is unsustainable, risks building pressure on hospital services and acts to deny local people, including children, of their fundamental right to accessible health care.

Such was the concern over the budget cuts and consultation process used by the HSCP that a challenge over its lawfulness was launched in February 2026 by ABCAB. Matters in that respect of the public consultation remain and ABCAB is working with selected partners locally and nationally aiming to improve local decision-making and avoiding unfair and harmful policy decisions.

Lesley Sweetman
Social Policy Co-Ordinator
30 June 2026



**OUR VOICES
MATTER**

Keep a look out for our exciting new website launch coming this July.

www.abcab.org.uk

Client and advice profiling stats...

**Last quarter we had
1171 new clients,
2727 contacts and
gave 3652 pieces of
advice with client
financial gains of
£242,826**

An increase in demand, coupled with a reduced housing supply, has hit our area hard. In June 2023, a housing emergency was declared by the local authority in Argyll & Bute. New duties were introduced in late 2025 which place a legal responsibility on public bodies to be pro-active in asking people accessing their services about their housing situation, and to act by taking reasonable steps to prevent homelessness if a risk has been identified. Our housing officer Laura has got off to a flying start, supporting over fifty clients since the beginning of the project, with varying issues relating to housing. By the end of the project, we hope to have designed a training package which will inform our statutory agency partners how best to support individuals and families in need of housing interventions.



Carers Money & Welfare Rights Service

Since the project started it has supported carers across A&B in many areas including accessing benefits, support with health and social care contact and navigating the care system, debt & housing support and advice on other support available in the local area. We work closely with the carers centres across A&B to ensure we provide the best support possible according to the area. Louise, our Unpaid Cares adviser attends regular monthly drop ins at the carers centres across Argyll and Bute. Since the project started there has been a client financial gain of £239,667 going directly to the carers.

Patient Advice (PASS)

Our patient adviser Bernadette says: "As part of the PASS service, I keep clients up to date on the progress of their complaint or ombudsman submission, including talking them through timescales and any delays if they happen. I help clients understand their rights and what to expect throughout the complaints process, and I work to manage expectations along the way. I provide ongoing support where needed and liaise with other organisations to gather the information required to prepare complaints.

"At the moment, the SPSO waiting time remains at approximately 28 weeks before a case is assigned a reviewer."

Bernadette Cunningham
Patient Advisor
July 2026



Patient Advice & Support Service

Use your rights
Know your responsibilities
Share your experience
Make a difference

Armed Forces - About Turn Argyll

A little bit about myself, my name is Phil Nilsson a specialist advisor at AB-CAB working on our Armed Services advice project, About Turn Argyll. I'm a former infantry soldier that served with the Worcestershire & Sherwood Foresters Regiment in the early 1990's. Using my experience of military service and experience of later life in the civilian world, I am confident of helping currently serving personnel and veterans and the Armed Forces Community as a whole.

About Turn Argyll helps those that are serving along with families and veterans with the same generalist and holistic advice anyone would expect from Citizens Advice. Where the project differs is in the knowledge of the extra help that can be offered to the Armed Forces Community, along with an advisor with lived experience. I work closely with military charities to provide tailored advice and support to those in need. I also have completed mental health first aid training specifically for the Armed Forces as well as other trauma informed training.

When looking at council areas by local populations, the councils with the most veterans by council area population were Moray (9.0% of the council area population aged 16 and over were veterans), Angus (6.1%), Argyll and Bute (5.9%), Fife (5.6%), Perth and Kinross (5.4%), and Highland (5.3%). As you can see Argyll & Bute has the 3rd highest veteran population in Scotland by council area of 4307, making our service to the Armed Forces Community invaluable.

(figures taken from the 2022 Scotland census)

Phil Nilsson
Armed Services RSO
July 2026



Phil Nilsson