

The ‘Right to Rehab’ is the next major health reform that needs to take place in Scotland.

We know that without the rehabilitation, people are at risk of readmission to hospital, likely to need repeat visits to GPs, need additional care from their family or providers, and may struggle to return to work or retain their independence and live their lives to the full. But too many people are still not able to access the rehabilitation they need to reach their goals.

The ***Coalition for Rehabilitation*** was established in 2019 to promote a ‘right to rehabilitation’ in Scotland. It brings together professional bodies and service user organisations from across health and social care to improve access to rehabilitation to ensure everyone gets the rehabilitation they need, not just to survive their condition – but to really live.

Covid-19 has highlighted more than ever the vital role that rehab can have in enabling people to live life to the full, with greater emphasis and focus on prevention and early intervention. The challenges of the pandemic are faced not only by those suffering longer term effects of COVID, but also those whose conditions have deteriorated over the pandemic, whose needs will be greater and more complex than before.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines rehabilitation as *“appropriate measures, including through peer support, to enable persons with disabilities to attain and maintain their maximum independence, full physical, mental, social and vocational ability, and full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life.”*¹

A right to rehabilitation is an opportunity to rethink the value of health intervention, social care and self-management as a central driving force for a healthier Scotland. The coalition for rehabilitation published three main asks of policy makers:

1. A ‘right to rehab’ policy approach to ensure that everyone has access to rehab when needed, and services no longer exclude individuals on the basis of ‘no rehab potential’.
2. People’s needs to be met locally by having the right workforce and professional leadership in place, one that embraces expertise and service user involvement.
3. A ‘right to rehab’ is incorporated into any new, National Recovery Plan, ensuring it is given strategic priority.

At the recent Scottish parliament elections, the SNP, Scottish Labour and Scottish Liberal Democrat parties pledged manifesto support for a right to rehabilitation. The work now begins to make that right a reality. The Scottish government’s rehabilitation framework offers a route to identify and improve service models, expand provision and invest in healthy communities. It’s an opportunity for a health driven economy that Scotland should grasp with both hands.

¹

We will be attending NHS Scotland Event (22 – 24 June 2021) where representatives from six Allied Health Professionals, see below, will be discussing their profession's role in Right to Rehab

[Chartered Society of Physiotherapy](#)

[Royal College of Occupational Therapists](#)

[Royal College of Podiatrists](#)

[The British Dietetic Association](#)

[Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists](#)

[Society and College of Radiographers](#)