SAFE HAVEN FOUNDATION

POLICY BRIEF No. 3

November 2, 2026

Nigeria's National Care Policy

What FEC approval means and what must happen next

THE CENTRAL POINT

Nigeria has approved a national framework that treats care as essential social and economic infrastructure. Its impact will depend on whether governments fund and deliver safe, affordable services, protect care workers, and share care responsibilities more fairly.

What has been approved

On 29 October 2026, the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation announced that the Federal Executive Council had approved the National Care Policy and Implementation Plan, 2026–2030.[1] The Ministry's summary says the policy recognises unpaid care work; promotes regulated childcare and elder-care services and professional care employment; sets minimum standards for care centres; strengthens safeguards in child adoption; provides for a National Care Fund; and anticipates an enabling Act of the National Assembly.

The policy's broad direction is to organise responsibilities and services that are currently spread across households, communities, businesses and government. The approved document describes a life-course approach, including childcare,

[1] Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, "FG Strengthens Women's Leadership In Peace Building, Approves Landmark Social Protection Policies," 29 October 2026. https://fmino.gov.ng/fg-strengthens-womens-leadership-in-peace-building-approves-landmark-social-protection-policies-imaan-sulaiman-ibrahim/

maternal and newborn care, support for older people and persons with disabilities, care workers' conditions, and the infrastructure that affects the time and cost of care.[2]

Why the policy matters

Care sustains families, communities and the economy. Yet unpaid care and domestic work is often unrecognised and unevenly shared, while many paid care workers lack formal recognition and protection. Limited access to trusted, affordable care can restrict women's and girls' opportunities in education, employment and public life. Children, older people and persons with disabilities also need services that respect their safety, dignity and choices.

The policy offers a national framework for addressing these connected concerns. The policy applies the "5R" approach: recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work; reward paid care work; and represent care workers. It also points to regulated services, standards for care settings, professional development, financing and stronger coordination across levels of government.

What could change in practice

Care settings may face clearer standards. The policy proposes tiered licensing and minimum requirements for childcare, including safe premises, staffing, health and hygiene, nutrition and safeguarding. The FEC announcement also refers to minimum standards for care centres and stronger adoption safeguards. The final rules and inspection arrangements remain to be published.

Care work may become more visible and supported. The policy proposes recognition and professionalisation of care workers, alongside measures to address unpaid care and improve the infrastructure that saves time, such as water, energy and transport. Public financing may expand. The announced National Care Fund and the proposed budget and investment measures could support services

[2] Policy text: National Care Policy and Action Plan, working draft supplied for this brief (Executive Summary; sections 3.6–3.9; childcare and financing pillars; implementation framework).

and care infrastructure. The Fund's establishment, governance, sources, eligibility and disbursement rules are not yet confirmed in the public announcement.

Government responsibilities may become more coordinated. The policy proposes national coordination and a costed implementation plan, with state and local participation. This matters because service delivery and regulation will require action beyond federal policy approval.

What must happen next

Federal government: Publish and disseminate the final approved policy and implementation plan, identify responsible institutions, set measurable milestones, and show how annual budgets will finance delivery. Establish transparent governance and public reporting for any National Care Fund.

State and local governments: Adapt the framework to local needs, identify existing providers and service gaps, fund care services, and build workable inspection and referral systems. Phased licensing and practical support can help informal and community providers meet standards without pushing needed services out of reach.

Care providers and employers: Prepare for clear quality, safeguarding and workforce expectations. Good standards should protect people receiving care and support decent conditions for the people providing it.

Civil society and professional bodies: Bring evidence from families, care workers, providers and people who rely on care into implementation. Monitor whether services are safe, affordable, accessible and available across rural and urban communities.

Approval is the beginning of implementation

FEC approval establishes the policy direction; it does not itself enact the future National Care Act, open the National Care Fund, or make detailed licensing requirements operational. Implementation will require published rules, clear institutional roles, adequate budgets, state-level action and public accountability. The test will be whether people can access quality care and whether those who provide it are recognised and protected.