

Community
Integrated
Care

UNFAIR TO CARE

2024 Understanding the social care pay gap and how to close it

WHO

CARES

WINS



VOTE



Published March 2024

Community Integrated Care firmly believes in the importance of impartiality and non-partisanship in its work. By adhering to these principles, Community Integrated Care advocates for positive change within the social care sector without allegiance to a specific political ideology or affiliation to a particular party. Throughout the production of this report, Community Integrated Care has remained faithful to these values.

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1. WELCOME TO UNFAIR TO CARE

TERESA EXELBY, CHIEF CORPORATE SERVICES & PEOPLE OFFICER AT COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE



WELCOME TO UNFAIR TO CARE, A UNIQUE REPORT THAT EXPLORES THE DAMAGING IMPACT OF THE SOCIAL CARE PAY GAP AND THE ENORMOUS POTENTIAL TO SUSTAINABLY ADDRESS IT TO TRANSFORM LIVES, SOCIETY, AND THE ECONOMY.

The social care recruitment and retention crisis is one of the greatest challenges facing society today. For too long, we have faced an irreversible trend of people who have a unique gift for changing lives, leaving the careers that they love.

Social care, which should be a **sector that creates foundational stability and transformative opportunity in our communities**, is deteriorating – creating an overwhelming chain of negative impacts that affect people who draw on support, care workers, family carers, public services, and our economy.

At the heart of this is the issue of low and unfair pay. Skills for Care's annual state of the sector report¹ shows that on any given day there are **152,000 vacant roles in social care** – hundreds of thousands of people are facing inconsistent or unavailable support due to a lack of capacity. **390,000 people left their jobs in 2023, with turnover rates remaining stubbornly high at 28.3%**. Why?

One clear answer can be found in the issue of pay. As you will read in this report, **social care roles are provably skilled, complex, and accountable, requiring rare vocational qualities**. Yet, funding for providers has meant that Support Workers' pay has failed to meet their true market value – and has, in fact, been consistently below a living wage for years.

This is **unreasonable, unfair and unacceptable**. It has resulted in a complicated recruitment and retention problem which, to some degree, has a simple cause – **why should people do work that demands a lot of them, for less than they deserve?**

UNDISPUTABLE FACT

In 2021, Community Integrated Care sought to explore and strengthen the case for action by shifting the debate from one of moral subjectivity to objective fact.

Unfair To Care provided the first-ever independent assessment of the frontline Support Worker role and rates of pay. Undertaken by Korn Ferry, the world-leading experts in job evaluation, this in-depth analysis proved that, far from being low-skilled, the Support Worker role is clearly **technically, emotionally, and physically demanding**, and requires the application of a **wide range of innate and developed skills**.

This analysis revealed that the most typical **Support Worker role had parity with the National Health Service's Band 3 position**. It pointed to a wealth of evidence that greater stability and impact could be achieved through introducing **objective pay bandings within social care** – with alignment to the NHS – and the **development of a national workforce strategy**.

Now three years on, the 2024 edition of Unfair To Care presents a juxtaposing message of both crisis and opportunity. Whilst the challenges of recruitment and retention remain, we can also look forward with renewed hope, with a growing consensus across society, the care sector, and policymakers, in the case for change.

As we finalised this report in early 2024, the gap between social care workers and their NHS counterparts remained stark. **The average care worker takes home £7,617 less, on average, than they would do in the same role within the NHS – a 35.6% pay gap**. With an average rate of pay of £10.93², colleagues with enormous accountability and rare skills are paid £1.07 less than the Real Living Wage – the rate of pay that has been independently calculated as the minimum to meet everyday costs of living.

1. 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England', Skills for Care, October 2023
2. Figures used are average rates for Support Worker roles in England (outside London) and are taken from the National Care Forum's national pay benchmarking exercise of the not-for-profit sector, October 2023

The gap is even more stark when compared to everyday commercial roles, which do not mirror the size, complexity, and accountability of care work. Retail assistants working in Aldi earn a minimum £12.95 per hour, with regional and long-service entitlements. The average rate of pay for delivery drivers is £12.85, with many posts offering long-service and localised rates that significantly extend this. The minimum pay at Amazon is £13.20 – with a scale that goes far beyond this entry point.

Of course, this report represents a snapshot in time. Pay rates across sectors – including social care – will change, with rises in the National Living Wage and evolving conditions in the job market. One thing is clear, though – a pay gap between the shared health and social care systems and a lack of connectivity with relatable roles in the wider economy will perpetuate our challenges.

If we cannot keep pace with our peers, or even simpler, readily available roles in other sectors, what hope do we have for stability?

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Yes, social care is an incredibly vocationally rewarding career. **I am privileged to work with thousands of people who live their dream of enabling others to live theirs.** But against the joy is real despair too – people working tirelessly yet still need the support of food banks, friends, or family. People on a tightrope of debt or being one ordinary life shock away from personal disaster. Things must change and the public is behind us.

In **exclusive public polling with YouGov**, we can reveal that **70% of adults in England believe that social care workers should earn the same as their NHS equivalents** and that **87% believe that the shortage of care workers is an important issue for society.** Tragically, 80% of people who have contact with social care, either through drawing on it directly or as a loved one, say that these shortages have impacted them in a negative way.

The endemic nature of these problems means that **the public is aware, engaged, and motivated for change.** More than half of the population – **53%** – say that they will have a **more favourable view of political parties that address the issues of low pay.**

Remarkably, only 2% of people express that they would have a less favourable view if pay is improved. We can see that society recognises the need for change, and, increasingly, the public have formed strong views on this matter.

2024 is, of course, an electoral year. This report not only presents the context and case for fair pay, but also the reality that it can be a determining issue in how the public approaches the ballot box. **There is a potential 2.6 million strong 'social care vote'**, which could have a decisive impact on key marginal constituencies.

Excitingly, we see scope for political change too. In first of its kind polling with YouGov, we can reveal that **the majority of MPs – 77% of the surveyed audience – recognise that the current rate of pay for social care workers is unfair, with 80% believing that the next government should act to improve pay and terms and conditions for social care workers.** This is driven by a strong consensus amongst MPs, with 92% recognising that social care pressures are an important issue for their constituents.

This sentiment has cross-nation support. This report's polling of Members of the Scottish Parliament reveals that 89% feel there should be no difference in pay between an NHS worker or social care worker if they are doing jobs that have equivalent skills, complexity, and responsibilities.

A WIN FOR ALL

The message is clear: who cares wins. The public, social care workers, people who draw on social care, care providers, communities, and organisations of many forms, are united in the view that **all political parties must act.**

Improving social care pay is an investment that will deliver the 'Social Care Triple Win' of:

- ▶ **Better lives for people who deliver and draw on social care**
- ▶ **Cost-effective and sustainable care and health services**
- ▶ **Economic growth and productivity**

This report shares our suggestion of the foundational steps needed to make this a reality. **Change is possible and millions of people are calling for action.** We hope that this report, which has been generously supported by so many of our partners, helps to bring this forward.

Best wishes,

Teresa .

UNITED IN SUPPORT



PHIL HOPE, CO-CHAIR, FSCC

“Community Integrated Care’s valuable report makes clear, low pay is a major driver of the shortages and high turnover of social care staff that are so damaging to those who provide and draw on care. It also highlights the unnecessary costs and inefficiencies in health and social care services that unfair care creates and how that undermines our economy and productivity.

The report’s unique independent evaluation of the role of a frontline care and support worker shows that care pay is much too low when compared to workers in other sectors on similar wages, particularly their counterparts in the NHS where there is a huge wage gap of 36%. Care is a very rewarding job that is very unfairly rewarded.

But the good news in the report is that government investment in fair pay for care workers would bring real returns to the country – not just through better and fairer care, but in substantial financial savings, and economic growth. Fair pay is not a cost but an investment that has multiple social, financial and economic benefits.

The Future Social Care Coalition strongly supports Community Integrated Care’s calls for an immediate pay rise for all frontline care and support workers as a first step towards achieving parity pay with the NHS. We want to see a Social Care People Plan that properly values and rewards care workers as part of a comprehensive care workforce strategy to tackle the high shortage and turnover of care staff.

The report shows there is strong and widespread public, political and sector support for fair pay. It is a real economic opportunity not just a moral imperative. As the 2024 General Election approaches we call on all political parties to make a commitment to better social care for those in need, starting with fair pay for those who provide it.”



DONAGH SMYTH, CEO, SKILLS FOR CARE

“Some of the events from 11 years ago – the birth of Prince George, the death of Nelson Mandela and the Snowden leaks – feel like very recent history.

In another 11 years from now, we expect to need 440,000 more people working in adult social care. That’s 25% more than we had in 2022/23, so getting there will be a challenge, even with a fair wind behind us.

But right now it’s far from plain sailing. While our data shows more filled posts and fewer vacancies over the past couple of years, the adult social care workforce is still a leaky bucket. 390,000 people left their jobs in 2022/23 – with around a third of them leaving the sector altogether. We need to ensure that such vital people feel valued and want to stay.

With those challenges in mind, it’s good to see that this report not only recognises the need for a workforce strategy for adult social care – but also the work by Skills for Care, and a wide range of partners from across the sector, to make one a reality.

The strategy we’re developing will provide the blueprint for the workforce we need to build now and for the future.”



VIC RAYNER, CEO, NATIONAL CARE FORUM

"This year's Unfair To Care report seems more compelling than ever, as we enter a period of potential political change. It shows, sadly, that very little has shifted for care workers in terms of overall pay, recognition and being valued, as well as the knock-on impact this has for those drawing on, or trying to access, care and support. The report's analysis firmly demonstrates what we in the social care sector have long known – that care workers are simply not being properly remunerated for their skilled work and that this is down to a failure by the state, to both value and invest in social care.

However, the report holds a clear set of perspectives gleaned for the first time from both MPs and the public.

The polling focused on MPs holds up in stark contrast, the lack of direct political action to address the issue of pay within the sector, with consistent strength of feeling MPs expressed, 77% acknowledging that the current rate of care worker pay is unfair and 80% believing the next government must act to improve it.

The views of MPs on the unfair situation facing care workers are echoed by the public, whose support for fair pay must not be ignored. Politicians and policymakers should heed this polling extremely seriously, as a failure to engage with the 'social care vote' could determine victory or defeat in 100 key marginal seats with majorities of less than 10%. The public demands change and the action needed is clear.

When the next election comes, we need politicians and the public to come together with one voice and speak up for care."



RACHEL CACKETT, CEO, CCPS

"Last year Unfair To Care made its mark in Scotland and CCPS is delighted to provide a foreword to the 2024 research, which we expect to be similarly influential.

Recently we've shared the voices of support workers, reflecting on the impact a pay rise would have – stories echoed in this report. They told us care work is highly skilled, and that a fairer wage would help not just them, but all those they support. It is often felt that care workers "hold people's lives in their hands" and yet, from April in Scotland, they will be paid just £12 p/h, an 'increase' that does no more than track the updated Real Living Wage.

This report, and those Support Workers' views, make clear the change genuine investment could bring: strengthened communities, more jobs, and better understanding within our public discourse of the need for parity. In that light, we're encouraged by the finding that 70% of the public think social care workers should be paid the same as their NHS equivalents.

This year we will continue efforts alongside our valued members, including Community Integrated Care, to influence the Scottish government to act on Fair Work – and this report will be an important asset in the case we make."



MATT PRICE, INCLUSION ASSISTANT, COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE

"My name is Matt, and I have Autism. I work as an Inclusion Assistant at Community Integrated Care. My life has changed dramatically over the past few years. I've made friends, participated in national events, and gained confidence beyond what I thought possible. But it wasn't always like this.

Before I found Community Integrated Care, I lacked hope and struggled with my well-being and self-esteem. I rarely left the house and didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. But thanks to our charity, everything changed. Their innovative approaches to support and community initiatives have helped me discover my hidden skills and purpose.

Now I see firsthand, people leading amazing lives, thanks to brilliant, committed Support Workers. However, I also see the problems facing our sector. The recruitment crisis threatens our support networks. With skilled care professionals being unable to afford to stay in jobs they love, lives are being disrupted and opportunities lost.

I can't emphasise enough how important this report is. Fair pay isn't just about money; it's about ensuring people's rights and improving people's lives. Paying Support Workers a fair wage and recognising them for the work they do, will undoubtedly have a ripple effect, positively transforming the lives of thousands of people, like me, who access social care."



2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

 **KORN FERRY** – the world’s leading experts in job evaluation.



A 360° VIEW OF THE ROLE OF A FRONTLINE SOCIAL CARE WORKER.



SKILLED, ACCOUNTABLE, AND COMPLEX WITH RARE VOCATIONAL QUALITIES EQUIVALENT TO A BAND 3 NHS WORKER.

> PAY GAP WITH NHS EQUIVALENTS

36% > UP TO 63%

when factoring in 'Total Package' benefits and one-off bonus payments.

£7,617

difference in take-home pay per year.



> THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF LOW AND UNFAIR PAY:

1. Disruption that leads to poor care for those drawing on support
2. Income insecurity for frontline care and support workers
3. Unfairness compared to equivalent staff in the NHS
4. Inefficiency in the delivery of care services
5. Inefficiency in hospital and community health care services
6. A dysfunctional care market
7. Untapped economic development

> FUNDING FAIR PAY IS NOT A COST BUT AN INVESTMENT THAT WILL DELIVER THE 'SOCIAL CARE TRIPLE WIN' OF:



Better lives for people who deliver and draw on social care



Cost-effective and sustainable care and health services



Economic growth and productivity



THERE IS A 2.6 MILLION-STRONG 'SOCIAL CARE VOTE' FOR THE 2024 GENERAL ELECTION

> PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR FAIR PAY

YouGov polling for Unfair To Care reveals:-

- 95%** believe social care workers are important to society
- 87%** say shortage of care workers is an important issue for society
- 70%** believe social care workers should be paid the same as their equivalents in the NHS

53% of adults in England would have a more favourable view of political parties that address the issue of low pay.

> POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR FAIR PAY

YouGov polling for Unfair To Care reveals:-

- 92%** of MPs say social care pressures are an important issue for their constituents
- 77%** of MPs say the current rate of pay for social care workers is unfair
- 75%** of MPs and **89%** of MSPs say there should be no difference in pay with NHS equivalents

8 in 10 MPs agree that the next government must act to improve pay, and terms and conditions for social care workers.

The 'social care vote' could make the key difference in around 100 marginal seats in England with majorities of less than 10% and be a critical factor in determining the outcome of the imminent general election.

FAIR PAY IS AN ELECTION WINNER



> THE CALL FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

THREE STAGE JOURNEY TO FAIR PAY:

STAGE 1 IMMEDIATE ACTION:

An immediate uplift to pay, funded by government, so frontline care and supporter workers receive at least the midpoint of the hourly 'basic pay' level of NHS Band 3 staff in 2024/25.

STAGE 2 WITHIN 12 MONTHS FOLLOWING THE GENERAL ELECTION:

Delivery of a new social care sector-specific minimum pay deal for the care workforce agreed on and funded nationally, working towards 'Total Pay' parity with NHS equivalent staff.

STAGE 3 WITHIN THE LIFETIME OF THE NEXT PARLIAMENT:

A new national social care workplace plan developed through a government-led care partnership forum, with technical and leadership support from Skills for Care.

OUR MESSAGE IS CLEAR:

WHO CARES WINS

3.

INTRODUCTION

UNFAIR TO CARE PRESENTS A UNIQUE EXPLORATION OF THE PERSONAL, SOCIETAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF LOW AND UNFAIR PAY WITHIN THE SOCIAL CARE SECTOR. NOW IN ITS THIRD YEAR, THIS REPORT SERIES BY COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE, HAS BROKEN NEW GROUND – OFFERING THE FIRST-EVER EVIDENCE-BASED ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL CARE PAY RATES, AGAINST EQUIVALENT POSITIONS IN THE NHS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND COMMERCIAL SECTORS.

These reports have explored the escalating challenges of a broken system – bringing to life the damage caused by a pay gap that tragically impacts the quality of life of people who draw on social care, places extreme pressures on family carers, constrains the productivity and viability of care providers, escalates an enduring recruitment and retention crisis, and sees countless frontline care and support workers face devastating financial hardships.

Whilst Unfair To Care has always pointed to the inequalities, injustices, and inefficiencies related to the lack of parity of pay – underpinned by systemic issues in how social care is funded, co-ordinated, and supported – it has also brought to life the real potential for change. **It carries a message of hope and opportunity.**

With political will, there is scope to realise a social care sector that fairly rewards its workforce, provides a sustainable and transformative public service, boosts economic and social prosperity, and ensures that caring can become a viable long-term career.

THE REPORT HIGHLIGHTS GROWING PUBLIC, SECTOR, AND POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR CHANGE, MAKING AN EVIDENCED-BASED CASE FOR INVESTING IN FAIR PAY TO ACHIEVE A NEW

SOCIAL CARE TRIPLE WIN:



BETTER LIVES FOR PEOPLE WHO DELIVER AND DRAW ON SOCIAL CARE



COST-EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES



ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

AS WE ENTER THIS PIVOTAL ELECTION YEAR, WE PRESENT EXCLUSIVE POLLING DATA THAT SOCIAL CARE IS LIKELY TO INFLUENCE THE VOTING INTENTIONS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, INCLUDING **2.6 MILLION VOTERS** WITH DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF DELIVERING OR DRAWING ON SOCIAL CARE SERVICES.

TO SUPPORT PARTIES IN ADDRESSING THESE CONCERNS, UNFAIR TO CARE PRESENTS A **THREE-STAGE JOURNEY** FOR GOVERNMENT TO INVEST IN FAIR PAY FOR FRONTLINE CARE AND SUPPORT WORKERS.

> STAGE 1

IMMEDIATE ACTION:

An immediate uplift to pay funded by government so that all frontline care and support workers receive at least **parity with the midpoint of the hourly 'basic pay' level of NHS Band 3 staff in 2024/25**. One approach to achieving this could be through a **ring-fenced government grant to Local Authorities** to embed this level of pay in their contracts with care providers.

> STAGE 2

WITHIN 12 MONTHS FOLLOWING THE GENERAL ELECTION:

Delivery of a new social care sector-specific minimum pay deal for the care workforce that is agreed upon and supported by funding nationally. This could be implemented within 12 months of the next general election as a new national minimum wage level for frontline care and support workers, based on the principle of **working towards 'Total Pay' parity with NHS equivalent staff.**

Recognising the diversity and size of the social care sector, and the need for independent and objective action, we suggest that one option could be **the Low Pay Commission leading this work, with a fresh mandate as the Fair Pay Commission.** This could support a more timely resolution to these challenges in a structurally complex sector.

> STAGE 3

WITHIN THE LIFETIME OF THE NEXT PARLIAMENT:

A new national social care workforce plan is developed through a government-led care partnership forum, with technical and leadership support by Skills for Care.

This plan should have within its scope the development of a **national social care pay-scale** (with appropriate **job evaluation, benchmarking, and bandings**), a fully-funded **training and qualifications career structure**, and a **five-year plan** that identifies and tackles the **workforce shortages** in all roles, across all social care services, and at every level in the social care workforce.



SCOPE OF THE REPORT

IN THIS SECTION, WE AIM TO SHARE FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES ABOUT THE SCOPE OF THIS REPORT AND KEY SUPPORTING INSIGHTS THAT CAN HELP READERS BETTER UNDERSTAND AND ENGAGE WITH THE UNFAIR TO CARE RESEARCH.

THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE

This report is the third in the Unfair To Care series, launched in 2020. It focuses on the **1.52 million people in the adult social care** paid workforce in England³, whilst also drawing insights from **Scotland's workforce of around 135,000 workers**⁴.

The edition uses average pay data from the National Care Forum's national pay benchmarking exercise of the not-for-profit sector. This demonstrates that the **average rate of pay for social care workers in England (outside of London) is £10.93 per hour**.

This is £1.07 per hour less than the current Real Living Wage of £12⁵, at the time of publication, and only marginally higher (51p) than the National Living Wage – the legal minimum rate of pay for workers aged over 23 in England.

PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

There are estimates of **100,000 people in England employed as Personal Assistants** – representing around 6.5% of the adult social care workforce⁶. These colleagues, who are usually employed directly by the individual and funded through direct payments or personal budgets, rather than employed by a provider of care services, are a vital part of the social care sector.

Whilst this report is built upon an intensive analysis of the skills, capabilities, and accountabilities of frontline Support Workers in professional social care organisations, many of the principles of this report are directly relevant to Personal Assistants too.

Unfair To Care clearly demonstrates that there is a significant pay gap between people who deliver social care and their equivalents in other sectors, such as the NHS. The same turbulence and tragedy created by a lack of pay parity for colleagues working in social care organisations is felt in the lives of Personal Assistants and the people who employ them.

Any future care workforce pay framework and development strategy must address the pay, contribution, and circumstances of Personal Assistants too.

UNPAID CARERS

The 2021 census⁷ shows that **1.4 million people** in England provided **50 or more hours of unpaid care** a week and a total of **5 million people provide unpaid care each year**, 59% of whom are women. This is the **equivalent of a second NHS** and is estimated to have a **value of £162 billion**.

Carers UK⁸ research goes further, suggesting this is an underestimate and that **there may be as many as 10.6 million unpaid carers in the UK**. It is evident that the health and social care system is completely reliant on support provided by unpaid carers. This report highlights, on many occasions, the impact of a lack of social care provision on family carers – including exclusive polling data exploring this theme in detail.

THE FUNDING OF SOCIAL CARE

Support for increasing the pay of frontline care and support staff inevitably raises questions about how this will be funded. This report describes the **multiple benefits and financial returns to be gained from investing in fair pay** – spending in social care cannot be viewed simply as a cost, as there are so many tangible and measurable financial gains to be made. However, the options for raising additional funds to invest in the social care system or to reduce the cost of care to individuals are outside its scope.

Successive governments have considered, implemented, or deferred various alternatives for raising the funds to pay for social care, including income tax, national insurance, wealth tax, council tax, tailored care levies, and thresholds and caps on care costs. The next government will need to resolve the debate on which option to raise more funding for social care after the 2024 General Election.

This report demonstrates that **social care is an economically positive investment that pays off in many areas** – including reducing demands on public services, increasing productivity, and creating significant direct, induced, and indirect value. Unfair To Care highlights the significant scope to offset costs by driving greater innovation, integration, and sustainability.

SCOTLAND

The report includes a comparison with the position in Scotland, where the **Scottish government has developed proposals for, and has made progress towards, a National Care Service**. Scotland has a defined minimum rate of pay for adult social care workers in commissioned services, which is £10.90 per hour. This is set to rise to £12.00 per hour from April 2024 – mirroring the Real Living Wage. In July 2023, the Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS) reported that their average workforce turnover was 25%, an increase of 5.5% in the year prior.⁹

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3. 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England', Skills for Care, October 2023
 4. 'The Adult Social Care Workforce in Scotland', Scottish Government, June 2022
 5. www.livingwage.org.uk
 6. 'Personal assistants in England and the factors associated with absenteeism', Frontiers in Public Health, October 2022
 7. 'Unpaid care, England and Wales: Census 2021', Office for National Statistics, January 2023
 8. 'Make Caring Visible, Valued and Supported: Carers Week 2022 report', Carers Week, June 2022
 9. 'Staffing crisis in social care', Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS), July 2023

**SOCIAL CARE IS AN
ECONOMICALLY POSITIVE
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DEVELOPING THIS REPORT

THIS REPORT BUILDS ON THE EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS OF THE TWO PREVIOUS UNFAIR TO CARE REPORTS¹⁰. OUR THANKS GO TO ALL THOSE WHO SUPPORTED THIS EDITION, AND PAST PUBLICATIONS OF UNFAIR TO CARE, WHICH INCLUDES:

- **Care workers and managers** who participated in a detailed independent analysis of the social care Support Worker role, led by Korn Ferry – a leading global agency for job evaluation.
- **Members of the public** who participated in a specially commissioned, independent public opinion poll with YouGov.
- **Ministers of Parliament and the Scottish Parliament** who participated in a unique YouGov poll exploring their understanding of, and attitude towards, low-pay and workforce challenges in social care.
- This report draws upon analysis, data, and perspectives from **organisations** that represent every section of the health and social care landscape, including those who draw on social care services; workforce representatives and trades unions; employers and care provider bodies in the public, private and charity sectors; and think tanks and advocacy groups, with additional contributions from parliamentary research and inquiries.
- Most importantly of all, **people who have shared their personal experiences of delivering and drawing on social care**. This report series has been commissioned to support positive change in response to the challenges and crises that many people face, and to recognise the invaluable skills and contributions of social care workers. Their voices and stories have inspired, informed, and supported this work.



10. www.unfairtocare.co.uk

THE WIDER LANDSCAPE AND CONTEXT

THE NEED FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN FAIR PAY FOR FRONTLINE CARE AND SUPPORT WORKERS TAKES PLACE IN THE CONTEXT OF SEVERE CHALLENGES FACING THE SOCIAL CARE SECTOR AND ITS WORKFORCE.

SOCIAL CARE FINANCES UNDER SEVERE PRESSURE

Social care is funded and delivered through local authorities, who are largely dependent upon the funding they can generate through local taxation. Central government support for local authorities has declined significantly over the last decade with the **National Audit Office estimating that total government funding for local authorities across England has fallen in real terms by 52.3% between 2010/11 and 2020/21**¹¹.

This decline in government funding for local authorities has contributed to the struggling state of the adult social care system in England. The 2022/23 Care Quality Commission's (CQC) State of Care report¹² spells out, in no uncertain terms, the challenges facing the system, including higher costs, lower quality of care, unsustainability of services, reduced access to care services, and increased inequality.

CQC state that adult social care providers are facing increased running costs including food and electricity, with some struggling to pay their staff wage increases in line with inflation, which affects recruitment and

retention. It says this is likely to have an impact on people, both in the quality of care they receive and in providers' ability to re-invest in care services.

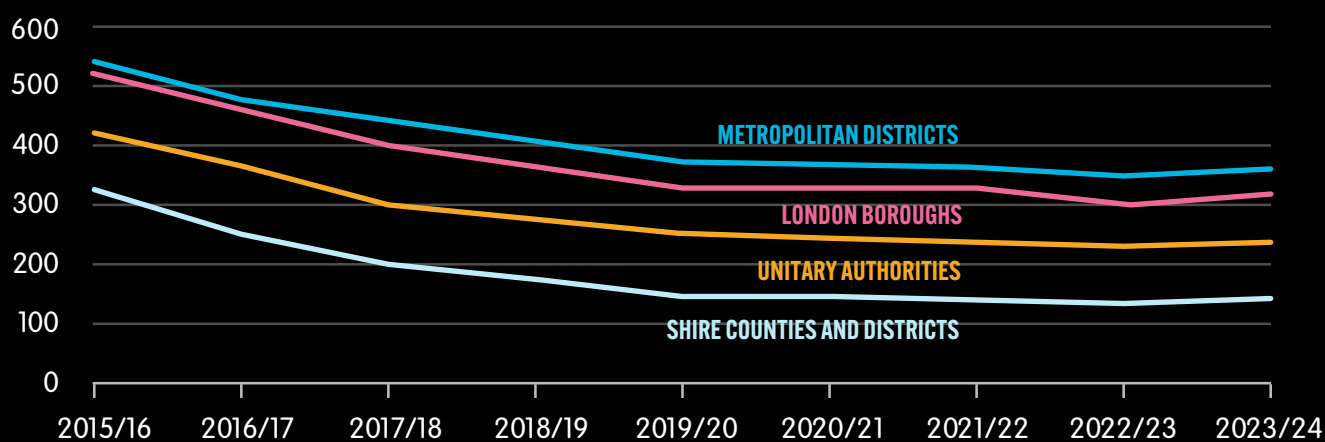
They also raise concerns that **local authority budgets have failed to keep pace with rising costs and the increase in the number of people needing care.**

As adult social care places that are funded by a local authority are often less financially viable, there is the risk that people who live in more deprived communities are more likely to receive local authority-funded care, so may not be able to access the care and support they need.

The report brings attention to some people who pay for their own care at home, who have to cut back on visits to support their basic needs. It cites one homecare provider that has increased their rates due to the cost-of-living crisis and increased fuel prices. Tragically, as a result of this, some people had to reduce their care visits to a minimum, which had an obvious impact upon their quality of life.

DIFFERENT CLASSES OF AUTHORITY RECEIVE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SETTLEMENT FUNDING FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Settlement funding, £ per person, real terms (2022/23 prices)



Source: DLUHC, Final local government finance settlement: England, 2023 to 2024, 6 February 2023; ONS, Population projections – local authority based by single year of age, via Nomis; real-term figures calculated by smoothing the OBR's GDP deflator growth forecast across the years from 2019/20 to 2021/22 to remove the distortions caused by pandemic-related factors.

11. 'Local government finances', House of Commons Library, June 2023

12. 'The state of health care and adult social care in England 2022/23', Care Quality Commission, October 2023

These concerns have also been consistently mirrored by care providers. **The announcement of the increase to the National Living Wage in 2024, whilst welcomed by the care sector, is an unfunded pressure that both council commissioners of care¹³ and care providers¹⁴ have expressed is financially unsustainable¹⁵ without government support to meet the costs.**

The gap between the costs of providing care and the fee levels offered by local authorities has also been highlighted by the Government's Fair Cost of Care¹⁶ process and in independent analysis by different segments of the care market such as homecare¹⁷ and specialist care providers.

The 2024 Sector Pulse Check report¹⁸, delivered by Hft and Care England, reveals that two in five providers of adult social care reported a deficit, 43% closed a part of their organisation or handed back contracts, and almost one in five made staff redundancies and offered care to fewer people in 2023.

It is clear that fair pay for frontline care and support workers will require additional central government funding, as local authorities and providers to state-funded users of social care, do not have the resources to change these conditions directly. This report shows that this support should be seen as an investment that delivers a return in increasing sustainability and a positive impact on the health and social care system.

INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM FOCUS ON IMMEDIATE HEALTH NEEDS

Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) are dual structure partnership bodies **created to break down the silos between health services and social care** to improve people's experience of care and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the system as a whole.

ICSs have made a good start¹⁹ in a challenging environment but the post-Covid legacy of the lengthy backlog of people waiting to be given the health care they need risks pulling system resources and priorities towards clinical, rather than social care, towards hospital-based rather than community-based treatments, and towards cure rather than prevention.

The 2023 independent Hewitt Review²⁰ of ICSs made several recommendations for improving the current system, including that *"given the interdependence of health and social care, the Government should produce a complementary strategy for the social care workforce. More should also be done to enable flexibility for health and care staff, both in moving between roles and in the delegation of some healthcare tasks."*

13. 'Autumn statement 2023: LGA Submission', Local Government Association, October 2023
 14. 'Low Pay Commission consultation on national minimum wage rates', Care England, June 2023
 15. 'Local authority fee rate data and interactive maps', ARC England, November 2022
 16. 'Fair cost of care analysis', Care England, March 2023
 17. 'The Homecare Deficit 2023', Homecare Association, October 2023

BETWEEN 2010/11 AND 2020/21 TOTAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACROSS ENGLAND HAS FALLEN

↓ 52.3%

(According to the National Audit Office)

A NATIONAL SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE PLAN

Released in October 2023, the Skills for Care report on the state of the adult social care workforce in England (referenced earlier in this report) is a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the workforce including its size and structure, employment status, recruitment and retention, demographics, pay, qualifications and training, workforce projections and staff turnover. This has been used to inform several aspects of this report.

Unlike many other public-funded sectors, including the NHS, social care does not have a unified national workforce strategy and pay framework – an issue that is at the core of the disparity between these two interdependent sectors.

The current government has announced their intention to develop a care workforce pathway. However there is, as yet, no government plan to develop a national pay scale for the care workforce, equivalent to the NHS's Agenda for Change²¹ pay framework, nor a long-term workforce development plan equivalent to the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan²². Instead, **Skills for Care has now taken the lead in developing a national care workforce strategy without direct government involvement.**

18. 'Sector Pulse Check: A snapshot of finances and the workforce in the adult social care sector in 2023', Hft and Care England, analysis by CEBR, January 2024
 19. 'The state of integrated care systems 2022/23: Riding the storm', NHS Confederation, August 2023
 20. 'The Hewitt Review: An independent review of integrated care systems', Patricia Hewitt, April 2023
 21. 'Agenda for Change', NHS Employers, December 2004
 22. 'NHS Long term workforce plan', NHSE, January 2024

4.

THE RESEARCH

MEASURING THE TRUE VALUE OF A FRONTLINE CARE AND SUPPORT WORKER – THE KORN FERRY METHODOLOGY

On face value, the variances in pay rates across distinct roles and sectors can feel subjective and confusing. Without a tool or system to understand the size and scope of a role, and compare it objectively to other positions, it is impossible to define what 'fair' pay looks like. For years, this has been the case for social care, as the sector has lacked an objective framework to advocate for fair pay for frontline care and support workers.

Unfair To Care provides a vital solution to this dilemma, drawing upon the insight of **Korn Ferry, the world's experts in job evaluation**. Korn Ferry is a leading global consultancy specialising in organisational management. With an international presence, more than 8,000 employees, and a group turnover in excess of \$2.84bn, it is an exceptionally significant, skilled, and respected organisation. They have developed the world-leading method of job evaluation.

The '**Korn Ferry Hay Guide Chart – Profile Method**' is the world's most widely used and accepted platform for role analysis. It has been used by thousands of organisations across all industry sectors to create effective job evaluation frameworks.

This methodology brings **clarity, objectivity, and consistency to understanding roles**. It enables organisations to accurately compare against other job designs in the market and creates data-driven reward systems that are demonstrably 'fair' – both internally and externally. **The company's analysis is thorough, robust, and nuanced**. With the ability to compare **pay databases of more than 20 million employees from 25,000+ organisations**, it provides an incredible platform to establish the relative value a role.



The themes of Korn Ferry's analysis

- › Practical/Technical Knowledge
- › Planning, Organising and Integrating Knowledge
- › Communicating and Influencing Skills



- › Thinking Environment
- › Thinking Challenge



- › Freedom to Act
- › Impact
- › Magnitude



TOTAL JOB SIZE



IMPLEMENTATION – A DEEP DIVE INTO EVALUATING THE FRONTLINE SUPPORT WORKER ROLE

For the 2021 Unfair To Care report, **Community Integrated Care commissioned Korn Ferry to deliver the first detailed audit of the frontline adult social care and support worker position – the ‘Support Worker’ role.** In this research, Korn Ferry focussed on the Support Worker role within Supported Living services. As a typical role that is directly replicated across the sector, this represents a common core position for most adult social care providers.

Korn Ferry’s analysis not only reviewed the **know-how, problem solving, and accountability factors** which represent the key components of job size in most sectors, but also the **workplace environmental factors** that define the overall experience of work. In doing so, their analysis meant that the **Support Worker role could be robustly compared with thousands of roles across sectors**, drawing upon Korn Ferry’s unparalleled datasets.

Importantly, Korn Ferry has delivered significant scoping of many public sector roles – including working extensively with the NHS.

THE ANALYSIS PROVIDED, FOR THE FIRST TIME, A TRULY 360-VIEW OF FRONTLINE SOCIAL CARE ROLES AND REVEALED THE TRUE FAIR RATE FOR PAY.

Through focus groups and analysis of role responsibilities, Korn Ferry reviewed Support Workers in Supported Living settings within Community Integrated Care, looking at the:

- **Level of knowledge and skill** needed for acceptable performance in the role.
- **Depth of thinking** required in the form of: analysing, reasoning, evaluating, creating, using judgement, forming hypotheses, drawing inferences, and arriving at conclusions.
- Extent to which the role is answerable for actions and their consequences. This assessed the **autonomy and accountability** of the role.
- **Physical, environmental, and emotional elements** of the role and their effects on the individual (rated on a scale from minimal to extreme).

THE FINDINGS – A SKILLED, ACCOUNTABLE, AND COMPLEX ROLE

Korn Ferry's analysis clearly indicated that the Support Worker role in social care is significantly undervalued, when compared to comparable and even less challenging roles in both the public and private sectors. **With a score that surpassed many higher paying roles, the role of Support Worker in adult social care was found to be significantly accountable, complex, and skilled, with uncommon vocational qualities.**

For clarity, we have provided a sample of roles in the public and private sectors which offer a yardstick for the 'size' of the Support Worker position.

ROLE

AMBULANCE PARAMEDIC

POLICE CONSTABLE

HIGHER LEVEL TEACHING ASSISTANT

SUPPORT WORKER – SUPPORTED LIVING/CARE HOME

HEALTHCARE ASSISTANT HIGHER (NHS BAND 3)

POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER

NURSERY PRACTITIONER

CLEANSING OPERATIVE

CHECKOUT WORKER

SCHOOL CROSSING ASSISTANT



Korn Ferry's deep dive into the working routines and practices of Support Workers demonstrably proves that the stereotype of 'low-skilled work' is wrong and unjust. It shows that social care work requires:

- **Specialist skills** – including understanding the specific needs, behaviour, and emotions of the people they support.
- **Physical effort** – including working long shifts, delivering physically demanding tasks – such as providing personal care and facing disrupted sleep when working 'sleep-ins'.
- **Rare characteristics** – including innate empathy and patience.
- **Adapting to environmental challenges** – such as exposure to unpleasant conditions, e.g. contact with bodily fluids, noise, and shouting.
- **Accountability** – colleagues work in a highly consequential environment, which is heavily regulated, and take on significant personal responsibility.
- **Facing emotional demands** – including exposure to physical aggression or supporting end-of-life care.

**KORN FERRY'S
ANALYSIS
BENCHMARKS THE
SUPPORT WORKER
ROLE AS BEING
AN NHS BAND 3
EQUIVALENT IN THE
NHS AGENDA FOR
CHANGE FRAMEWORK.**



5. THE RESULTS – 2023/24

By providing a quantifiable measurement of the Support Worker role, Korn Ferry was able to identify equivalent positions within other sectors and their average remuneration. This allows quality benchmarking of any variances in pay and in terms and conditions across industries. The third instalment of Unfair To Care draws a direct comparison to social care's counterpart sector, the NHS.

THE 2023–24 GAP

SOCIAL CARE

➤ Average Support Worker pay[†]

£21,372

NHS

➤ Average Band 3 NHS base pay mid-point[‡]

£23,576

10.3%
GAP

➤ Average Support Worker pay[†]

£21,372

➤ Mean 'Total Pay' of NHS Band 3 roles**

£28,989

35.6%
GAP

Includes allowances and additional hours payments

➤ Average Support Worker pay with pension[†]

£22,013

➤ Mean 'Total Package' of NHS Band 3 roles***

£34,175

55.2%
GAP

Inclusive of industry standard 3% pension contribution

Inclusive of pension and other benefits



35.6%

The total pay rise needed by social care Support Workers to achieve take-home pay parity with their NHS counterparts****

[†] Figures used are average rates for Support Worker roles (outside of London) and are based upon the National Care Forum's national pay benchmarking exercise of the not-for-profit sector, October 2023

[‡] NHS Agenda for Change Pay Scale for 2023/24 – Band 3 roles

** Assumed 5% increase in line with pay award from 2022/23 figures – does not include one-off ad-hoc NHS payments (uniform payment and backlog bonus - value £1,700) which would increase this gap further

*** Maintained the differential between 'basic pay' and 'Total Package' from 2022/23

**** This figure is based on a comparison between Average Support Worker Pay and NHS Mean 'Total Pay' and therefore underestimates the extent of the gap in real terms by not factoring in entitlements such as pension and sick pay etc. i.e. 'Total Package'

UNDERSTANDING THE PAY GAP

THE GAP BETWEEN SOCIAL CARE WORKERS AND THEIR NHS COUNTERPARTS IS VAST AND WIDELY MISUNDERSTOOD.

Data from the National Care Forum's national pay benchmarking exercise of the not-for-profit sector (October 2023), shows that the **average social care worker outside of London earned £10.93 an hour**. Unlike the NHS, the social care sector does not have a standardised pay framework that recognises progression and accomplishment within the role. In fact, social care funding is so compressed that, on average, a **colleague with five or more years of experience is paid only 7p more per hour than a new starter²³**.

When simply reviewing the gap between the basic hourly wage of an NHS worker at the midpoint of the NHS Band 3 grade, there is a 10.3% gap in basic pay.

2023/24	Care and support worker average pay*	NHS Staff Band 3 midpoint	Pay gap	
Average hourly pay	£10.93	£12.06	+£1.13	+10.3%
Average salary	£21,372	£23,576	+£2,204	+10.3%

* Data from the National Care Forum's national pay benchmarking exercise of the not-for-profit sector (October 2023)



However, crucially, comparing baseline rates of pay alone fails to account for the fact that NHS employees can access enhanced pay that is significantly above standard hourly rates. NHS 'Total Pay' includes benefits for working unsocial hours, night shifts, weekends, and bank holidays. Working these unsociable hours is a common feature for many social care workers, yet rarely attracts any increase in take-home pay.

WHEN JUST A TYPICAL AMOUNT OF THIS BENEFIT IS FACTORED INTO THE PAY COMPARISON, THE REAL DISPARITY BETWEEN THE TWO COMPARABLE ROLES IS MADE MUCH CLEARER.

OUR ANALYSIS DEMONSTRATES THAT THE AVERAGE TAKE-HOME 'TOTAL PAY' SALARY OF EQUIVALENT NHS BAND 3 STAFF IS IN FACT

↗ 36% HIGHER

THAN THAT OF THE AVERAGE SALARY OF FRONTLINE CARE AND SUPPORT STAFF.

2023/24	Care and support worker average pay*	Average total take home-pay for NHS Band 3 workers (inclusive of entitlements for unsocial hours etc)	Gap in care and support staff pay compared to NHS Band 3 average take-home pay	
Average hourly pay	£10.93	£14.83	+£3.90	+35.6%
Average salary	£21,372	£28,989	+£7,617	+35.6%

* Data from the National Care Forum's national pay benchmarking exercise of the not-for-profit sector (October 2023)

23. 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce report', Skills for Care, October 2023



THIS ANALYSIS EXCLUDES THE FACT THAT IN 2023/24, NHS STAFF EQUIVALENTS TO FRONTLINE CARE AND SUPPORT WORKERS EACH RECEIVED A TOTAL OF

£1,700 IN ONE-OFF BONUS PAYMENTS

Factoring this in reveals that NHS workers actually earned, on average, **44%** more than their equivalent colleagues providing social care.

However, even this gap excludes wider entitlements that are typically absent in social care, including competitive pension rates and sick pay (the Mean 'Total Package' of Band 3 NHS workers).

In 2023, we compared the mean 'Total Package' of Band 3 NHS Workers with Support Worker pay, including industry-standard pension contributions, and discovered that this was a staggering 64%.

When we look at the comparison this year, including the £1,700 NHS bonus, it remains a

STUBBORNLY HIGH 62.9%

SCOTTISH COMPARISON FOR CARE AND SUPPORT WORKERS*

2023/24 figures	Scottish minimum basic pay	NHS basic pay Band 3 midpoint	% difference	Difference in basic pay
Hourly pay	£10.90	£13.54	24.2%	£5,164
Annual salary	£21,313	£26,477	24.2%	

Not including one-off payment of £404.00

* Data from Scottish government and NHS Scotland Pay Bands (Agenda for Change) 2023/24.

All of these factors exacerbate a lack of stability in the social care system and the lives of people who draw on it. They also create a talent drain from the sector into the NHS, with 17% of lower-paid social care workers moving on to nursing auxiliary and assistant roles within the NHS (i.e. positions like the Band 3 Healthcare Assistant Role)²⁴, creating imbalance and a lack of capacity within this shared system.

Wider issues relating to the pay of frontline care and support staff also include a lack of or inadequate pay for travel time (homecare staff), as well as the overuse of zero-hour contracts.

The workforce recruitment and retention issues facing social care cannot be seen through the lens of fair pay alone. This report addresses unfair pay for care workers, but there are wider terms and working conditions, such as career progression, skills, qualifications, and

professionalisation, that also need to be resolved in any future national pay and workforce development strategy.

There is currently no national social care workforce system of pay scales for staff in social care. Nor is there an agreed and funded national workforce strategy, although the excellent work that Skills for Care has embarked on to progress a 15-year strategy for the adult social care workforce must be acknowledged and applauded²⁵ and the Government's plans for a new care workforce pathway for social care for training and progression²⁶ noted. This has long been called for by the sector through alliances such as the Future Social Care Coalition and its proposal for a 'People Plan for Social Care'²⁷.

A national pay and workforce development strategy will help achieve pay parity between equivalent roles in the NHS and social care and help realise the benefits of greater integration between these two sectors.

24. 'Lower paid NHS and social care staff turnover', The Health Foundation, November 2022

25. 'A workforce strategy for adult social care', Skills for Care, October 2023

26. 'Care workforce pathway for adult social care: call for evidence', Department of Health and Social Care, January 2024

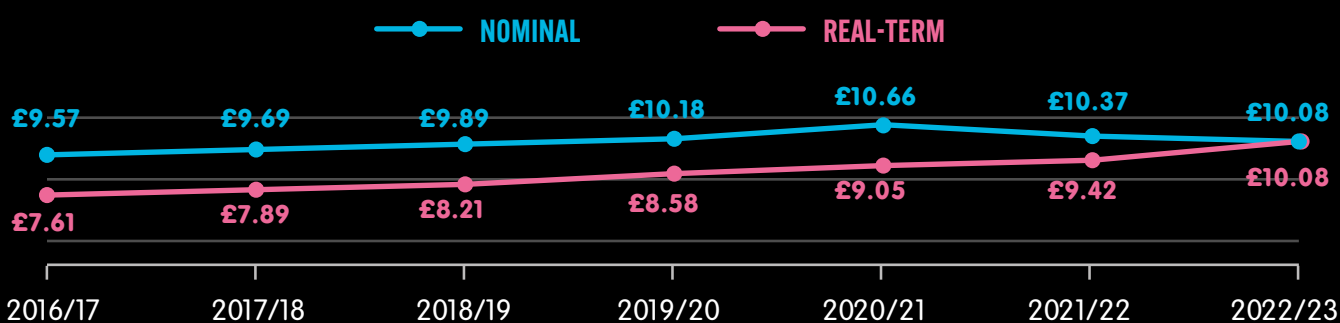
27. 'A social care people plan framework', Future Social Care Coalition, June 2021

DECLINING FORTUNES

Community Integrated Care's Unfair To Care data is supported by Skills for Care's 'State of the adult social care sector and workforce in England' report, which tracks average pay rates over time. Their report showed that in the two years before March 2023 the average real pay fell from £10.66 to £10.08 an hour for care home staff, and from £11.11 to £10.50 an hour for domiciliary care staff.

Moreover, when reviewing 'real-terms' pay data – the economic method of establishing the rates of pay when adjusted to account for inflation at the Consumers Price Index rate – we can see that care workers are paid less well now than they were in 2020/21.

NOMINAL AND REAL-TERM CARE WORKER MEAN HOURLY RATE IN CARE HOMES WITHOUT NURSING FROM 2016/17 TO 2022/23



UNDERVALUED

Whilst the average social care worker is poorly rewarded when compared to their direct peers, they are also significantly undervalued in a far broader societal sense.

To take just one sector, **Korn Ferry's analysis demonstrates that the role of the care and support worker is significantly bigger than the role of a retail assistant.** However, the gap between social care and retail workers is vast and growing.

As just one example, at the time of publishing, the discount supermarket chain, Lidl, announced that its entry level rates for staff outside of the M25 had increased to £12, rising to £13 with length of service, for those working within the ring road, from £12.85 to £13.55 and increasing to £13.85 over time. This is in addition to a £2 per hour Bank Holiday premium and generous employee benefits²⁸. This same pattern can be seen across major retail and logistics organisations,

with Amazon, for example, investing £170 million in increasing frontline pay twice in just a six month period²⁹.

Social care has been defined as a low-paying industry by the Low Pay Commission every year since the 'First Report of the Low Pay Commission' on the National Minimum Wage in 1998, including the current Low Pay Commission report 2022³⁰.

The average frontline care and support worker earns just 5% more than the National Living Wage – the legal minimum salary.

In fact, their pay rate was 10% less than the Real Living Wage in 2023. In short, frontline care and support workers earn on average £1.07 an hour, or 10% less than the hourly rate of pay that has been independently calculated by the Living Wage Foundation³¹ as the minimum to meet their everyday costs of living.

28. Lidl invest 37m in staff pay increase – Retail Gazette

29. Amazon UK to spend 170 mln stg on staff pay rises | Reuters

30. Low Pay Commission Report, 2022

31. 'The real cost of living', The Living Wage Foundation, February 2024



IT CANNOT BE RIGHT THAT A JOB THAT WAS RATED SO HIGHLY BY KORN FERRY FOR ITS SKILL, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND DEMANDS IS ALIGNED SO CLOSELY TO THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM PAY RATES POSSIBLE.

As we explore further in this report, life on a below Real Living Wage salary can be brutal – as people struggle to meet everyday costs to provide for themselves and their loved ones. Whilst social care can be filled with joy, it is also not uncommon to encounter colleagues who are facing unbearable realities – foodbank use, debt, the risk of homelessness, and seeing themselves and their families miss out on important experiences and opportunities – from supporting children through university, to improving their household conditions.

LIFTING FROM THE FLOOR

The close connection of social care pay to the National Living Wage may result in a further escalation of the workforce challenges in the sector over the year ahead, unless resolved.

In April 2024, the National Living Wage will rise from £10.42 to £11.44³². This clearly exceeds the average social care rate of pay – left unaddressed, social care will become a sector that pays people the very lowest wages in society. Without any differential in pay, it is apparent that many social care workers will choose to access far easier and less accountable roles that offer the same – or better – terms and benefits.

And the unfair gap between frontline care and support workers and their NHS equivalents on Band 3 will increase again when the 2024/25 pay increase for NHS staff is announced (expected May 2024).

Fair pay, through a policy commitment to achieve parity with the NHS, is the only way to ensure that frontline care and support workers receive an appropriate and fair reward for the job they do and reduce the drain from social care to the NHS.

This report's pay data, obviously, represents a snapshot in time. Rates will change and evolve, with rises in the National Living Wage and developments in the job market. However, the Unfair To Care series and long-term care sector workforce trends clearly indicate that where a prominent pay gap exists between social care and the NHS, and when care lacks competitiveness in the overall jobs marketplace, social care will always face a systemic recruitment and retention challenge.

32. 'Minimum wage rates for 2024', HM Government, November 2023

6.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF LOW AND UNFAIR PAY IN SOCIAL CARE

There is not only a compelling moral case for improving social care pay, but an equally important social, economic, and productivity basis for change.

IN THEIR 'STATE OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE SECTOR AND WORKFORCE' REPORT, SKILLS FOR CARE HIGHLIGHTS THE ENORMOUS TURBULENCE WITHIN THE SECTOR:

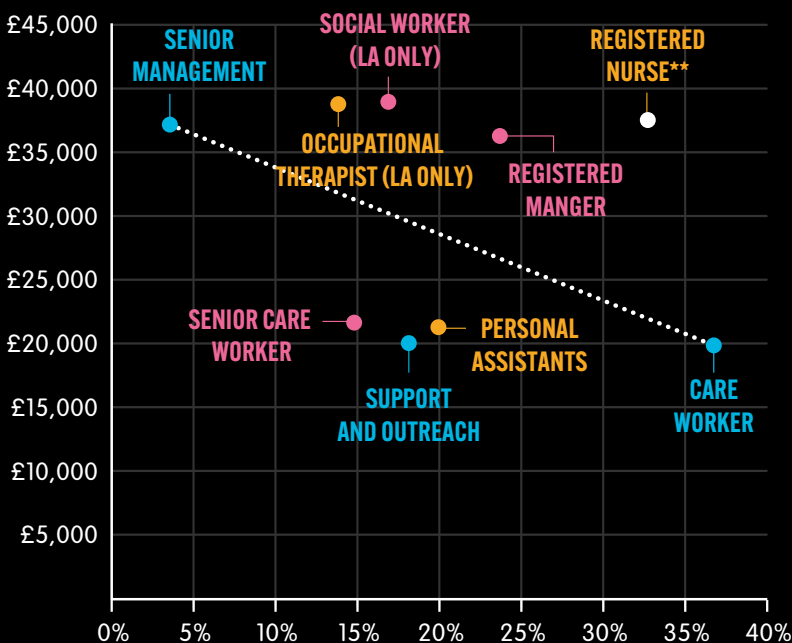
9.9%
VACANCY RATE

152,000
VACANT POSTS A DAY

390,000
PEOPLE LEAVING THEIR JOBS EACH YEAR

ONE THIRD
OF LEAVERS EXITING THE SOCIAL CARE SECTOR COMPLETELY

AVERAGE TURNOVER RATE AND AVERAGE FTE ANNUAL PAY BY JOB ROLE*



* Independent sector only, unless otherwise stated

** Registered nurse data does not contribute to trend line

This vacancy and turnover rate is significantly higher than that of the wider economy. There is a wealth of evidence to indicate that low pay is a primary force in these issues. From the below-Real Living Wage pay rate, to the reality that care workers with five or more years of experience are paid on average just 7p per hour more than new starters, people struggle to make working in care a permanent career.

Pay has an obvious connection with retention and recruitment. Skills for Care's data shows that those paid more were significantly less likely to leave their roles. It is also evident that higher pay rates result in significantly lower turnover rates further up the pay scale in different job roles (see left).



The social care workforce is in trouble. Delivering care is a hugely fulfilling job that does not get the reward or recognition it deserves. Low pay and a poor reputation lead to serious staff shortages, high turnover rates, and a reliance on expensive agency staff and overseas workers. The impact of this workforce crisis is widespread and spelled out below.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Low and unfair pay has a cascading impact on people, organisations, systems, communities, and the country. These are the seven deadly sins that can be addressed through fair pay for frontline social care workers.

1. DISRUPTION THAT LEADS TO POOR CARE FOR THOSE DRAWING ON SUPPORT

5. INEFFICIENCY IN HOSPITAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE SERVICES

2. INCOME INSECURITY FOR FRONTLINE CARE AND SUPPORT WORKERS

6. A DYSFUNCTIONAL CARE MARKET

3. UNFAIRNESS COMPARED TO EQUIVALENT STAFF IN THE NHS

7. UNTAPPED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4. INEFFICIENCY IN THE DELIVERY OF CARE SERVICES

SIN 1. DISRUPTED CONTINUITY OF CARE

At the heart of quality social care is the relationship between people. Unfair low pay causes high staff turnover and staff shortages that disrupts relationships and continuity of care, and therefore undermines the quality of social care people receive. This has been emphasised time and time again by major reports into social care.



“There is an imperative to revalue what makes adult social care work at its best: the quality of trusted and reliable relationships. This in turn requires a move away from what was described as a transactional system – in which care services are clearly defined and time-limited, carried out to support someone once they meet the right eligibility criteria – towards one that values and rewards those long-term and constantly evolving relationships, whether they involve unpaid family members, personal assistants or care workers in directly provided or commissioned services.

Fundamentally, disabled adults and older people must have the same choice and control over their life as other people. We have made that clear in the emphasis we have put on co-production and the need to share decision making so that the right solutions can be found. All of our recommendations... have the objective of enabling people to exercise greater choice over their own care and their own life.”

HOUSE OF LORDS, ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMMITTEE - ‘A “GLORIOUSLY ORDINARY LIFE”: SPOTLIGHT ON ADULT SOCIAL CARE’. DECEMBER 2022



“We believe that a National Care Covenant would make it clear that care and support is about more than contractual obligations and statutory duties, but rather a deeply profound set of relationships in which we are bound to one another. Everyone has a role to play in reimagining care and support, ensuring that we can all live the full life for which we were created.”

THE ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY AND YORK REIMAGINING CARE COMMISSION - ‘CARE AND SUPPORT REIMAGINED: A NATIONAL CARE COVENANT FOR ENGLAND’ REPORT. JANUARY 2023



“We all want to live in the place we call home, with the people and things we love, in communities where we look out for each other, doing the things that matter to us.”

SOCIAL CARE FUTURE

The Health Foundation³³ highlights that understanding a person’s fundamental care and support routines alone obviously does not equal good support. They explain the clear impact that people experience when they do not have consistency of support, stating: *“Even if each care worker does everything exactly the same way, they’ll miss out on building a personal relationship. A lot of people who need care are vulnerable and have complex needs, and an understanding of those needs is built up over time.”*

Skills for Care’s research demonstrates that high staff turnover disrupts continuity of care, and the CQC in their 2023 State of Care report cited one social care provider who said: *“A lack of staff is our biggest barrier to providing good care. It also makes continuity in the carers that those who use our service come into contact with very difficult.”*

33. ‘Stemming the tide: retaining the social care workforce’, The Health Foundation, April 2019



RELATIONSHIPS ARE KEY

GOOD CONTINUITY OF CARE IS CENTRAL TO DELIVERING HIGH-QUALITY SUPPORT.

Victoria Martin, Senior Behavioural Support Strategy Manager at Community Integrated Care, emphasises that consistent, relationship-centred care is key to promoting independence and quality of life:

“The process of building a relationship with the people we support is not just a matter of courtesy and professionalism – it is a necessity which can transform and even save lives. Understanding what brings joy, what is important for self-fulfilment, and what makes someone feel secure is a fundamental part of high-quality support.

Reliable, consistent, and trusted social care is absolutely crucial for people who have learning disabilities. It isn't enough to have somebody who is trained and available

– it must be somebody who is liked, trusted, and is able to deeply relate and understand. I believe that the end of a strong supporting relationship can feel like a bereavement to many people who draw on social care.”

Disrupted care is a direct consequence of high staff shortages and staff turnover. The recruitment crisis in social care strikes at the very basic human rights of dignity, choice, and respect, which should be fundamental for every person. Rightly so, there is growing public acknowledgment and appreciation of these issues.

In January 2024, Community Integrated Care commissioned **YouGov** to deliver exclusive public polling, exploring the attitudes and understanding of the public towards social care. The results demonstrated considerable concern about the state of the sector, with **87%** of all those surveyed (1,798 people) saying that a shortage of social care workers is a big or significant problem for society.

Of those surveyed who draw on care services themselves, or are connected to care via a family member or close friend, a shocking **80%** said that staff shortages had had a negative impact on care. **These impacts included:**

44% SAID FAMILY OR FRIENDS TOOK ON GREATER CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

33% IDENTIFIED A REDUCTION IN INDEPENDENCE OR WELLBEING

38% IDENTIFIED DISRUPTION TO THE QUALITY OF CARE RECEIVED

33% IDENTIFIED A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE WELLBEING OF THE PERSON'S FAMILY OR FRIENDS

38% IDENTIFIED A DETERIORATION IN PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH

27% SAID THAT THE INDIVIDUAL SPENT MORE TIME IN HOSPITAL THAN NEEDED

These represent desperate individual and societal challenges. A full exploration of this data can be read on pages 57 - 59 of this report.

There is a wealth of data that proves the obvious link between instability in the social care workforce and a negative effect on the quality of care. In 2022, the Nuffield Trust said a growing number of care home residents are seeing their care disrupted as providers hand back contracts to local authorities or are closing down altogether, driven in many cases by persistent and severe recruitment and retention challenges.

These issues of workforce gaps are even more serious than inconvenience or sub-optimal support. They can, perhaps, lead to severe quality of life and safeguarding issues. Academic research of the evidence in OECD countries suggests that a 10% increase in turnover was associated with an increase in mortality among nursing home care residents, and a decrease in the quality of care measured by the physical environment and infection control.³⁴

34. 'Who Cares? Attracting and Retaining Care Workers for the Elderly', OECD, June 2020





CHANGING LIVES

Tauseef Iqbal, a person supported by Community Integrated Care in Stockport, describes how incredible care and support has transformed his life...

"I moved to York House around four years ago, coming here from living with my parents. It takes me a long time to get used to people, so it's difficult if my Support Workers are changing all the time. Knowing who is on shift, and who is going to be with me each day, makes me feel more comfortable and I like to see familiar faces in my home. It also helps with my OCD, as I then feel less anxious.

I have a lot of great connections with my team at York House, especially with one of my Support Workers, Patrick. Me and Patrick have similar interests – like cooking, sports and going to the gym – so I have fun when he's supporting me. Recently, I've been learning to cook and because this is Patrick's hobby too, he's given me loads of useful advice.

Cooking is just one of the ways that I've become more independent – I'm also an Inclusive Volunteer with Community Integrated Care. Through this, I've had the chance to take part in volunteering opportunities at different sports events and meet loads of new people. Since living at York House I've learnt new skills, feel more confident, and still have great connections with my family – I'm really glad I moved here."

"SINCE LIVING AT YORK HOUSE I'VE LEARNT NEW SKILLS, FEEL MORE CONFIDENT, AND STILL HAVE GREAT CONNECTIONS WITH MY FAMILY – I'M REALLY GLAD I MOVED HERE."

SIN 2. INCOME INSECURITY FOR FRONTLINE CARE AND SUPPORT WORKERS

An analysis by the Health Foundation in October 2022³⁵ shows that staff working in care homes are far more likely to live in poverty and deprivation than the average UK worker.

Even before the cost-of-living crisis hit, **one in five residential care workers in the UK were living in poverty, compared to one in eight of all workers.** Many relied on state support to make up for low income from employment – **20% of the residential care workforce drew on universal credit and legacy benefits from 2017 to 2020, compared to 10% of all workers.**

13% of residential care workers' children lived in material deprivation, where families are unable to provide children with essentials like fresh fruit and vegetables or a warm winter coat. This compared to 5% of children in all working families.

A 2022 survey of over 1,000 nurses, health, and social care workers reported in Home Care Insight³⁶ found that nearly one in five (14%) nurses have started using food banks (it must be noted that nursing is a significantly higher paid role than the frontline care and support worker). A further third (30%) also know colleagues who have. Two thirds (63%) of nurses and healthcare workers are saying they are having to choose between food and fuel to combat rising energy bills.

The Health Foundation report also found that around one in ten residential care workers experienced food insecurity, living without reliable access to enough healthy food.

ONE IN FIVE RESIDENTIAL CARE WORKERS IN THE UK WERE LIVING IN POVERTY, COMPARED TO ONE IN EIGHT OF ALL WORKERS.

TWO THIRDS OF NURSES, HEALTH, AND SOCIAL CARE WORKERS SAID THEY ARE HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN FOOD AND FUEL TO COMBAT RISING ENERGY BILLS.

35. '1 in 5 residential care workers in the UK living in poverty before cost-of-living crisis', The Health Foundation, October 2022

36. Research reported in Homecare Insight, February 2023

LEAVING

JOBS THEY

LOVE



Alternative
Futures
Group



Alternative Futures Group is one of the largest health and social care charities in the North West. It employs around 1,800 frontline workers, providing specialist support for around 900 people with a learning disability or mental health condition.

Like many other social care providers, it has become increasingly concerned by the growing pressures of low pay and soaring living costs on its colleagues. So for the second year running, they have included **questions in their annual staff survey gauging the impact that the cost-of-living and low pay crisis is having on its workforce.**

Last year's results were alarming and, this year, the **situation has only got worse.**

Of the 78% of colleagues who responded to the survey (1,412), almost **three quarters (72%) said their money ran out before payday and more than half (52%) resorted to using credit cards or borrowing to cover everyday living expenses such as food and bills.** Worryingly, **nearly a fifth** of those who responded shared that they found themselves **drawing on the support of a local food bank to get by.**

To try and help alleviate their situation, **57% were regularly having to do overtime to top up their salary, with 18% taking on a second job to make ends meet.**

Perhaps unsurprisingly then, but no less concerning, **nearly 10% of colleagues reported having to take time off work due to the impact on their mental health** caused by financial worry **and 40% of colleagues are considering leaving the charity to find different, and better-paying, roles.**

And Alternative Futures Group is not unique. These results reflect a similar picture from providers across the social care sector, with people leaving jobs they love because of the crisis.

These issues have resulted in the accelerated growth of unfilled vacancies in the sector – from 112,000 in 2021 to 152,000 by October 2023. Without decisive government investment to enable care providers to offer fair pay, the social care vacancy rate will continue to be unmanageable.

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Alternative Futures Group**

A RESPONSE – WITH LIMITATIONS

Reports by CQC and the Health Devolution Commission³⁷ highlight that employers have pursued a range of measures in response to the cost-of-living crisis and low pay. This includes employee discount schemes and incentives, extra paid holidays, free food and drink, support with housing and transport costs, and financial support and advice, including pay advances.

Increasingly, care providers are also investing in specialist mental health and employee advice services, such as legal and debt advice support, low-interest salary advances, and financial support schemes to help their workers navigate the challenges of life on low pay.

DESPITE WORKING WITH VERY FEW LEVERS TO PULL ON, MANY EMPLOYERS ARE DOING ALL THAT THEY CAN TO SUPPORT THEIR COLLEAGUES.

Many care providers, including Community Integrated Care, have also created their own in-house foodbanks and crisis grant schemes to provide immediate assistance to colleagues in desperate need. However, in a context where providers are fighting for survival due to a lack of sustainable funding, these initiatives frequently either scratch the surface of need or place further financial pressures on providers, with many of these efforts being funded through dwindling reserves.

“ SARAH MORROW, HEAD OF REWARD AT COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE, TALKS ABOUT THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT THE CHARITY OFFERS ITS COLLEAGUES: ”

“We know that our colleagues are not only grappling with the issue of low pay, they’re also in the middle of one of the biggest cost-of-living crises for a generation. That’s why it’s incredibly important to us that we offer our teams a package of financial and wellbeing support options to make their lives a little bit easier.

When it comes to increasing people’s wages, our hands are tied by the restrictions in local authority funding so we have to be clever with the things we invest in. Last year, we implemented a significant suite of colleague benefits to help our people access these resources when they need it most, with a specific focus on financial health.

By partnering with Salary Finance, we are able to support our colleagues to access their monthly pay before payday. Whether it’s an unexpected bill or help to spread their money out across the month, we’ve found it’s really taken the weight off our colleagues’ shoulders.

**SALARY
FINANCE**

Our partnership with Salary Finance also means that our colleagues can borrow responsibly with affordable loans, which typically have a higher acceptance rate and lower interest than those from traditional lenders. Not only has this been improving people’s credit score, giving them financial security in the long run, it’s also meant that people haven’t needed to access short-term, unsecured, ‘payday’ loans that usually have extortionate interest rates. We’ve seen significant numbers use these services, with around 11,300 wage advances being given to over 850 of our colleagues – so it’s clear it’s having a huge impact on many.

Of course, this is just one of the financial benefits that we have in place; we’ve also invested in options that give colleagues money-saving deals on everything from electronics to groceries and a Wellbeing Fund – where people can access a financial grant to get them back on their feet when in difficulty.

We’re proud of our efforts to support the financial resilience of our colleagues, but it shouldn’t have to be this way. With the right funding, people can be paid fairly for their essential roles and enjoy the stability and certainty that they and their families so desperately need.”

37. Report of the roundtable on the Hewitt Report and the Cost-of-Living Crisis, Health Devolution Commission, March 2023

THE PERSONAL IMPACT

THE REALITIES OF LIFE ON LOW PAY CAN BE BRUTAL.

Low pay means that many social care workers cannot build a buffer of savings to deal with typical life-shocks. Past editions of Unfair To Care have highlighted how many are in the perilous position of being one demand – a broken boiler or car, a rise in mortgage or rental rates, a partner becoming sick or losing their job role – away from personal disasters, such as becoming homeless.

These are not isolated issues. **Community Integrated Care's Wellbeing Fund** – a reserve set aside to help staff deal with the sudden and unmanageable life events – **has awarded more than £200,000 to 167 people since 2018**. The stories behind these applications are frequently tragic and harrowing, with hardworking people facing unspeakable challenges as they fight to make ends meet.

COMMUNITY INTEGRATED
CARE'S WELLBEING FUND
HAS AWARDED MORE
THAN **£200,000** TO **167**
PEOPLE SINCE **2018**.



“THE WELLBEING FUND SAVED MY LIFE”

Support Worker, Abbie Bowler, was just 24 when the Covid-19 pandemic struck, her landlord went bankrupt, and she found herself facing homelessness. With no savings to fall back on, and nowhere else to turn, she applied for a grant through Community Integrated Care’s Wellbeing Fund. Three years later, Abbie is settled in her new home and loving life...

“When the pandemic hit, I was working in the hospitality industry and almost immediately, I was made redundant. I was worried, but I saw it as an opportunity to find something that I was really passionate about and could make a career out of. That’s when I came across the role of Support Worker with the charity. I applied and got the job – I was over the moon!

I settled in really quickly and felt like I had finally found my calling. So when only six months in, my landlord went bankrupt and told me he was selling my flat, I couldn’t believe it. I had used up any savings I had when I was out of work, so I had no deposit for a new flat and no one I could stay with. I felt like my life had been turned upside down and my mental health really took a serious knock.

So when my manager, Jordan, approached me and suggested I could try and apply for a grant from the charity’s Wellbeing Fund, it felt like my only hope.

I honestly couldn’t believe it when Jordan called to say my application had been approved, and not only was I getting the deposit for a new home, I was getting some money to buy basic furnishings too!

It’s now three years later and I love my new home and job so much. I’ve built strong relationships with the people I support, in particular, George, who has learning difficulties and complex needs. I’ve come to know George so well and really understand his needs. We have a strong bond and I get so much happiness from seeing him thrive and live the best life he can.

When George decided he was going to move to one of Community Integrated Care’s brand-new purpose-built apartment complexes, I knew I had to move with him too. I just couldn’t see myself anywhere else.

Sometimes I look back and can’t believe how much things have changed for me in just a few years – the Wellbeing Fund honestly saved my life”.

“A LIFELINE”

SANDRA FOY IS A SUPPORT WORKER AT COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE, WORKING AT A SERVICE IN EDINBURGH, HOME TO FIVE PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND PHYSICAL SUPPORT NEEDS.

Like many people working within social care, low pay means Sandra's wages just about cover her family's monthly outgoings, and she can't build up a pot of savings for a rainy day. So, when one of Sandra's beloved family dogs fell ill, just as she was about to move house, she didn't know where to turn.



“

Sandra says, “It was already an expensive month with our move, and finances were feeling tight. So, when Watson became unwell and needed urgent care, and we were faced with a huge, unexpected vet bill, we were stuck.”

What should have been a happy and exciting time for Sandra and her family, suddenly became an incredibly stressful one. That's when she looked to the charity for support.

“I remembered getting an email from our CEO, Jim Kane, outlining all the options for financial support that the charity could offer to colleagues. One of them was something called Salary Finance, where you could access an advance on your wages. I'd used something similar once before in a previous role and so I went to find out more.”

“It was so simple to log into the platform and see how much I could advance on my wages until the next month. I requested a couple of hundred pounds and it was in my account by the end of the next day. Unlike other payday loan schemes, there were no extortionate fees or interest to pay on top. It meant that I could spread out the costs of moving and the bills and give myself some breathing space. It was a real lifeline to me and my family.”

”

WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A HAPPY AND EXCITING TIME FOR SANDRA AND HER FAMILY, SUDDENLY BECAME AN INCREDIBLY STRESSFUL ONE. THAT'S WHEN SHE LOOKED TO THE CHARITY FOR SUPPORT.

THE CARE WORKERS' CHARITY

The Care Workers' Charity (CWC) was founded in 2009 with a clear mission: to ensure that no care worker faced financial hardship alone. Since 2020, it has paid out over £5.9 million in grants, giving over 10,000 care workers a financial safety net.

The charity's CEO, Karolina Gerlich, explains more: *"The Care Workers' Charity is dedicated to championing care workers' wellbeing and professional standards across the United Kingdom. We believe care workers should be respected and celebrated for their invaluable contributions to society and are committed to placing care workers at the forefront of our work."*

"We're proud to have been able to offer a much-needed helping hand to thousands of care workers, with millions of pounds in grants. But we also want to focus on mental wellbeing initiatives, and we provide free counselling sessions and Mental Health First Aider Training in partnership with Red Umbrella."

Karolina continues: *"Despite their invaluable role, care workers face the challenge of stagnant pay in the face of a rising cost-of-living crisis, remaining among the lowest-paid workers in the UK. In 2023, 74% of grants were awarded for daily living costs, including increased cost of food, utilities, and childcare."*

And, naturally, low pay impacts the entire family unit – not just the individual care worker.

"As just one example, we can look at the story of Charlie – a part-time carer with two children, who faced financial strain after a relationship breakdown. Applying for a grant from CWC provided crucial relief, helping her navigate bills and daily expenses during a challenging period."

"AT THE CORE OF CWC IS OUR COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING A VIBRANT COMMUNITY OF CARE WORKERS, PROMOTING A SENSE OF BELONGING AND SOLIDARITY. AS WE NAVIGATE THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE, WE REMAIN RESOLUTE IN CHAMPIONING THE WELFARE OF CARE WORKERS AND ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR VITAL CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY."

“

"I APPLIED ONLINE AND IT WAS QUITE EASY. IT TOOK SOME PRESSURE OFF ME AND MEANT I COULD PAY SOME OF MY BILLS, WHICH HAD BEEN MOUNTING UP!"

CHARLIE

”



the
care
workers'
charity

To find out more about the Care Workers' Charity, the support they offer, or how to get involved, visit: www.thecareworkerscharity.org.uk

EVER-INCREASING PRESSURE

AS A VALUES-LED EMPLOYER, COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE WANTS TO OFFER ITS EMPLOYEES ALL THE SUPPORT IT CAN. HOWEVER, IT MEANS THE CHARITY FURTHER STRETCHING ITS RESOURCES, AND COMPOUNDS THE FINANCIAL PRESSURES THAT IT, AND MOST OTHER CARE PROVIDERS, FACE.

Hft and Care England's 2024 'Sector Pulse Check' report indicates that the most significant pressure facing organisations is workforce-related costs, with nearly all providers of services for older persons (98%) and 93% of learning disability care providers highlighting this as a key cost pressure.

"Our Sector Pulse Check research, written in partnership with Care England, highlights how low pay drives recruitment and retention challenges. Nearly all providers we surveyed – 91% – stated that higher pay would have the greatest impact upon recruiting and retaining staff.

While providers want to ensure their invaluable staff receive remuneration that is commensurate with the skill and responsibility of their role, pay represents a significant financial pressure, particularly due to insufficient fees paid by local authorities. 79% told us that in 2023, local authority fee increases did not even cover the impact of the National Living Wage (NLW) rise, leaving providers to foot the bill.

With some local authorities reportedly offering a 0% fee increase to providers this coming financial year, against a 9.4% rise to the NLW, financial pressures will likely intensify. This contributes to instability and unmet need, with providers forced to close services and hand back contracts, make staff redundancies and offer care to fewer people.

In line with calls in this report, Hft want to see an uplift to the pay of social care staff, but this must be fully funded and ringfenced by central government to guarantee funding reaches care providers."

Hft

”

WOMEN BEAR THE BRUNT AND LOW PAY FUELS INEQUALITY:

The Health Foundation³⁸ said in January 2023 that social care workers – the overwhelming majority of whom are women – play a vital role in society but are among the lowest paid workers in the UK, and experience high levels of poverty and deprivation. Many cannot afford food, rent, clothing, and other essentials, putting their health and wellbeing at risk, as well as presenting a clear moral injustice.

Skills for Care's State of the Sector report demonstrates that women make up 81% of the social care sector. With 1.2 million women working in social care, the lack of fair and equal pay in such a vast sector compounds wider issues of gender equality in society. **Improving pay in social care would help close the overall UK gender pay gap.**

There is a wealth of evidence that women have historically been undervalued across industries. The lack of funding for parity of pay between social care workers and people with equivalent or simpler roles in other sectors, reflects longstanding societal inequalities, despite equal pay legislation over many years to bring it to an end.

It must also be emphasised that, as a diverse sector, the pay issues in social care also contribute to wider societal inequalities. The TUC 'Strategy for a Care Workforce'³⁹ states that 25% of social care employees come from a black or ethnic minority background, compared with 15% across all workers.

Parity of pay in social care makes levelling up a reality for many who face the greatest inequalities in society.

38. 'Health Foundation response to Rishi Sunak comments on care workers', The Health Foundation, January 2023

39. 'A strategy for the care workforce', TUC, August 2023

SIN 3. UNFAIR PAY COMPARED TO THE NHS

Unfair low pay simply does not reflect the true skill, complexity, and responsibility of the role of the frontline care and support worker.

There is a common misconception that social care is the less skilled counterpart of the NHS, with social care workers implementing basic and administrative tasks, whilst the NHS delivers clinical and complex work.

However, the independent assessment of the support worker role, carried out by global experts in job evaluation experts, Korn Ferry, proved unequivocally that the role is a highly skilled and technical one. And equivalent to that of an NHS Band 3 member of staff whose pay, at the midpoint, is 10% higher, or 36% higher when factoring in their total average take home pay.

This is clearly unfair and the Future Social Care Coalition⁴⁰, a cross-party alliance of care sector organisations – employers, trade unions, user voice groups, and care commissioners – have called for an immediate increase in the pay of care and support workers to at least match that of the Real Living Wage, and then go on to achieve pay parity with the NHS, as well as the development of a robust plan and structure for the care workforce – a new Social Care People Plan.

THERE IS A COMMON MISCONCEPTION THAT SOCIAL CARE IS THE LESS SKILLED COUNTERPART OF THE NHS.

INCREASINGLY COMPLEX

WORKING IN SOCIAL CARE HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY DEMANDING IN RECENT DECADES. TO A LARGE DEGREE, THIS IS REFLECTIVE OF THE SHIFT IN TECHNICAL AND CLINICAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT, FROM THE NHS TO THE CARE SECTOR.

The skills needed to work in social care are reflected in **Community Integrated Care's Capability Framework**, which gives colleagues specific training and development built around the core needs of the people they support. With **over 180 modules**, every employee in a Supported Living Support Worker role is expected to have skills in areas such as **communication, relationships, community connection, and sensory and support environment**.

Beneath these category titles are some weighty training and development requirements, such as being able to understand and handle behaviours of concern including **apathy, self-harm, suicide, memory loss, sexualised behaviour, suspicions, paranoia, delusions, manipulation, hoarding, and more**.

The framework details how, depending upon the circumstances, Support Workers should be able to handle **medication, including oral, invasive, nasal, ear and eye administration, intradermal administration and subcutaneous administration**. They are required to exhibit a high level of competence in providing comfort and **personal care, aiding breathing, and occasionally handling terminal sedation and verification of death**.

And of course, they must bring their full personal energy, skill, life experience, and sense of vocation to bear, in order to support people to lead the best life possible.

When you consider that these are the specific workplace skills that a Support Worker needs, you understand why **frontline social care is assessed as being a skilled, accountable, and demanding role, with parity to the NHS Band 3 position**.

40. "It's time to fix social care for good", Future Social Care Coalition, 2023



RECOGNISING A GAP IN THE TRAINING ALREADY IN PLACE IN THE SOCIAL CARE SECTOR, AND THE DIVERSE AND COMPLEX DUTIES REQUIRED OF A SUPPORT WORKER, COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE HAS DEVELOPED AN AWARD-WINNING LEARNING PATHWAY FOR FRONTLINE COLLEAGUES, CALLED GROW.

“ NATALIE POWELL, SENIOR CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AT COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE SAYS:

“Alongside health care, social care is arguably one of the most important services a person will receive throughout their entire lives. Over the past decade, there’s been a sharp increase in the responsibility and accountability expected of those working in the sector to support the wider health and social care system. And whilst we’ve seen this increase in technical skill and complexity in the role of a frontline support worker, we haven’t always seen the professional development or funding to support and recognise this.

Three years ago, we changed how we identify the skills, behaviours, and knowledge that our colleagues need. Through a more detailed analysis of their roles, we found clear evidence that they required a huge range of skills – from providing clinical care to complex behavioural support. Existing training didn’t capture the scope of this, so we set out to create our own learning solution, GROW.

Through GROW we’ve established an astonishing 187 capabilities that our Support Workers need to provide high-quality, transformative support. This number is constantly changing, as we work with real people with diverse needs, their support teams and

families, as well as taking on new services and adapting to meet changing governance and regulation.

The level of skills required for this role show that the future workforce development plans for the sector have to be robust and reflect the true complexity of the job role.

*What GROW solidified most for us was that **social care is a highly professional and skilled career, and an integral part of the health and social care system.** We know that if we’ve got skilled colleagues, we can keep people at home, out of hospital, and support them to live **full, happy lives – filled with independence, opportunity, and meaningful relationships.***

We need to see more investment so that providers can keep producing learning that evolves with the needs of people who work in and draw on our sector, and ensure that Support Workers get the professional recognition and respect they deserve.”

“OUR LEARNING NEVER STOPS...”



Phillip Gahan is a Support Worker at Community Integrated Care's Holmdale service in Runcorn. His team provide around the clock support to five people with learning disabilities, profound physical disabilities, and complex health conditions. Having worked in social care for almost five years, he joined the charity in 2021 and has since completed over 90 pieces of learning, including training in complex skills such as supporting nutrition through percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) devices and medication administration.

“When I joined Community Integrated Care, I was blown away by the amount of support and training I received, it made me realise just how skilled and specialised the role of a Support Worker is.

In my first social care job, I worked for an organisation that didn't offer much in the way of learning and development and I was thrown in at the deep end. I dealt with really challenging situations daily, with little to no guidance. It was a strain on my mental health and despite achieving some brilliant things with the people I supported, it became too emotionally bearing, so I left the sector for a while.

I had other jobs in warehouses but was never fulfilled or challenged, and I felt a pull back to social care. When I started working at Community Integrated Care, I felt like it was where I was meant to be. I was surrounded by an incredible team, and it was a relief when I experienced the support and training in place.

GROW has given me a clear map of the skills and knowledge that I need to deliver the best care for the people I support, and equally, it's made me feel supported in my job.

At Holmdale, we support people with some complex care needs. This means we need to have a huge range of in-depth knowledge and practical skills just to enable people to live their everyday lives with as much comfort and independence as possible. A few of the people we support use PEG tubes for nutrition and many need up to 11 or 12 different types of medication to be administered at one time, each day.

It's important that we're able to deliver this level of skilled input, so that the people we support can live the best lives possible in their own homes, without constant disruption. It means that nurses don't need to come in to administer medication – so we're saving the time of other healthcare professionals too – and we don't need to take people out of their homes or disturb their daily routines to go to a hospital or medical centre. It removes the cost, inconvenience and, for some people, the trauma of having to attend a medical setting.

As Support Workers, our learning truly never stops, and we are constantly adapting and flexing our approach. When I think about what my role involves, and the knowledge and skills me and my colleagues are required to have, I can't quite fathom how support work has ever been considered a “low-skilled” role. It's an insult, and whilst we don't work in social care for the money, we put in maximum effort and have so much skill and passion for what we do, we deserve to be properly recognised and respected.”

“I CAN'T QUITE FATHOM HOW SUPPORT WORK HAS EVER BEEN CONSIDERED A “LOW-SKILLED” ROLE.”

SIN 4. INEFFICIENT CARE SERVICES

Unfair low pay causes major problems for social care providers and their recruitment and retention efforts, leading to extremely high vacancies and turnover rates across the sector.

The 2023 Care Quality Commission report⁴¹ states that many adult social care services have **difficulties attracting new staff to roles to fill the vacancies caused by low pay, high pressure, and staff burnout**. 10% of roles in adult social care in England were vacant in 2022/23, equivalent to 152,000 vacancies.

Skills for Care estimates the **turnover rate** of directly employed staff working in adult social care was **28.3% in 2022/23, equivalent to approximately 390,000 leavers** over the year – with low staff morale and burnout contributing to these low retention rates.

The perceived low status and pay, as well as lack of training and in-work support, is another compounding factor. In some roles, there is also little opportunity for career progression, which makes it more difficult to attract and retain staff that have the right skills and values. These challenges are only going to increase with an ageing population and more people requiring support.

An analysis by the Health Foundation⁴² shows that social care is often a stepping stone to employment in the health sector. The most common destination occupations for 28% of lower paid social care staff leaving care are nursing auxiliaries and assistants (17%) and nursing (11%). Their report points out that policies that aim to address staff shortages only in the NHS could exacerbate vacancies in social care.

Low pay is highly inefficient, unproductive, and costly. It means, on average, that care providers spend time and resources on recruiting and training nearly a third of their staff of every year. A research report by the House of Commons Library⁴³ says that **Skills for Care estimated in 2021 that it costs employers £3,600 to recruit one replacement care worker, giving a total annual cost to the sector of £1.4 billion.**

Moreover, this fails to account for the wider 'opportunity cost' of furthering the impact, innovation, and reach of social care providers, as vast amounts of their operational and back-office time and bandwidth are deployed to simply managing a churn of recruitment and the fallout of vacancies.

SKILLS FOR CARE ESTIMATE THAT THE CARE WORKER COST PER HIRE IS ON AVERAGE £3,600.

THE TOTAL COST TO THE SYSTEM OF RECRUITING 390,000 PEOPLE AT AN AVERAGE COST OF £3,600 COULD BE AS MUCH AS £1.4BN PER YEAR.

41. 'The state of health care and adult social care in England 2022/23', Care Quality Commission, October 2023

42. 'Lower paid NHS and social care staff turnover', The Health Foundation, November 2022

43. 'Adult social care workforce in England', The House of Commons Library, January 2024

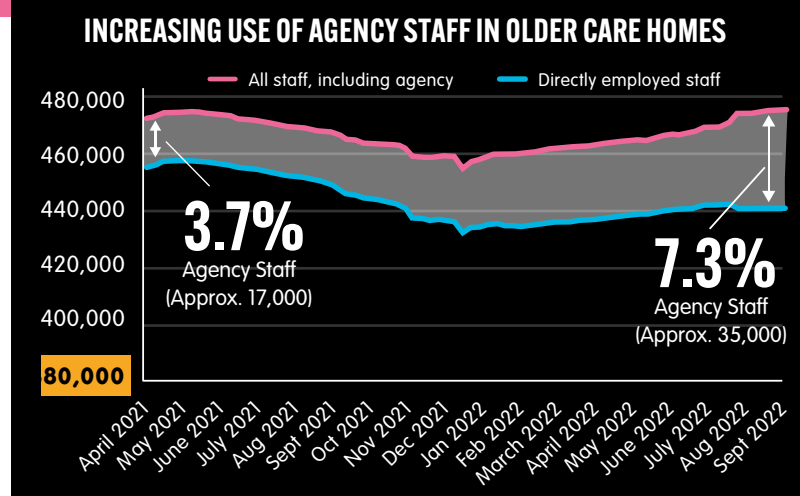
RELIANCE ON AGENCY STAFF

Regrettably, care providers are forced to make use of more expensive agency staff to fill the gaps and provide a safe and quality service. The Nuffield Trust report that whilst the number of staff directly employed by older adult care homes has only marginally increased since the beginning of 2022, hovering just under 441,000, the total number of agency staff employed in care homes almost doubled between April 2021 and September 2022, from around 17,400 to 34,700.⁴⁴

ANALYSIS BY CARE ENGLAND SHOWS THAT THE AVERAGE RATE FOR AGENCY STAFF IS SIGNIFICANTLY MORE EXPENSIVE THAN FOR IN-HOUSE EQUIVALENTS – POSSIBLY UP TO AS MUCH AS **97.6%**⁴⁵

This reflects a supply and demand issue.

These agencies do not offer a superior service in comparison to directly employed social care workers – in many cases the person requiring care may not receive the same quality of support, as deep relationships and understanding cannot be easily cultivated through a rotation of temporary workers. Care providers are paying substantially more for a frequently sub-optimal service because the reduced talent pool in social care has created the conditions for a secondary job market.



Anthony Peters, Head of Commercial Finance at Community Integrated Care Care, says: “With sector-wide recruitment challenges, agency usage has become a necessity for providers to ensure people still get the support they need. As a large charity with over 450 services, our agency premiums last year were in excess of £2 million. On average, we find that agency staff cost £5.50 per hour more than in-house colleagues.

Whilst these figures are stark, it is important to note that Community Integrated Care’s turnover rate is 20.2% - significantly better than the social care average of 28.3%. Our proportional spend on agency is significantly less than many organisations in the care sector. It shows the ineffectiveness of the current system – money is leaking out of the care sector due to supply issues that are directly caused by uncompetitive pay.

It is shocking to imagine the real value and impact that this money could achieve in other circumstances. We’re a charity that improves people’s lives on a daily basis, and whose colleagues deliver life-changing support.

We know how to make investments that change lives and reduce public expenditure - from Technology Enabled Care to more modern, flexible housing and social innovation. Put simply, there are hundreds of ways that this money could be better served to support a more stable and impactful care sector.

Not only that, but our workforce deserves to be rewarded fairly for the work they do. For the past three years, we’ve had to use our charitable reserves to ensure we can give our frontline colleagues a pay increase - which has then correlated with better recruitment and retention figures - so the case for investment is clear. But right now, demand for care and support is simply outstripping the supply of frontline workers.”

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44. ‘The increased use of agency staff in older adult care homes’, Nuffield Trust, December 2022

45. ‘Agency fees for social care: key findings’, Care England, June 2022



SIN 5. INEFFICIENT HOSPITAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

Pressure on hospital beds: The lack of care and support staff in residential and home care services means there is not sufficient capacity for hospital patients who are clinically fit for discharge. These delays create significant financial and clinical pressures on acute hospitals. The Government's analysis⁴⁶ shows that difficulties in arranging social care for people leaving hospital is a key factor contributing to delayed discharges.

Around 64% of delayed hospital discharges were due to lack of social care, including 24% of patients with delayed discharges awaiting the start of home-based care, 16% awaiting residential or nursing home placements, and 24% waiting to begin intermediate care.

From this government report, it is possible to appreciate the incredible inefficiency in the system and the terrible impact on the affected individuals trapped at both ends of it. From the critically ill experiencing worsening health whilst awaiting treatment, to those unable to return to their home for want of adequate support – the individual human tragedies are growing.

Increased delays in care transfers: A House of Commons Library report⁴⁷ showed that in December 2022, **an average of 13,440 patients a day remained in hospital despite no longer meeting the criteria to stay. This was 30% more than the daily average for December 2021.** As well as increasing pressures on hospital capacity, the report says that delayed discharges can lead to poorer outcomes for people and contribute to a loss of independence, despite no longer meeting the criteria to stay.

£1.7bn cost to the NHS: The King's Fund⁴⁸ estimate that the direct **costs of delayed discharges alone in 2022/23 was at least £1.7 billion** (excluding additional costs from activities such as cancelled operations or staff time spent arranging care packages).

46. 'Delivery plan for recovering urgent and emergency services', NHS England, January 2023

47. 'Delayed hospital discharges and adult social care', House of Commons Library, February 2023

48. 'The hidden problems behind delayed discharges and their costs', The King's Fund, March 2023

SIN 6. A DYSFUNCTIONAL CARE MARKET

Unfair low pay contributes to the problems of a dysfunctional care market and regional economic inequalities. Increasing the National Living Wage – even at levels above average wage rises – does not resolve the challenge of competition for staff from other industry sectors such as retail services.

A dysfunctional care system: In the NHS, most care is free at the point of use, state-funded, and usually delivered by organisations in the public sector. Adult social care, by contrast, is a far more complicated **mix of state-funded and privately-financed care, provided by 17,900 organisations**⁴⁹ at prices determined by local market forces and the funding available to local authorities.

Sustainable council-funded care market: A 2017 study into the care homes market by the Competition and Markets Authority⁵⁰ said that **the parts of the industry that supply primarily local authority-funded residents are unlikely to be sustainable at the current rates councils pay**. It identified the immediate threat to financial sustainability as being in care homes primarily serving council-funded residents that rely on state funding because the level of funding has not been sufficient to cover total costs in these homes.

Low fee levels for providers of care to local-authority funded residents descends into a spiral of regional economic and service decline.

In an October 2022 survey for the CQC Market Oversight Scheme, led by Cordis Bright⁵¹, **100% of CEOs expressed a belief that there will be an acceleration of unsustainable contracts being handed back to local authorities**.

Increasing the National Living Wage does not solve the vacancy problem: Rises in the National Living Wage can conceivably mean that jobs in other lower-paying sectors will grow closer in pay to social care jobs than they were before (if employers can't increase wages at the same rate), generating additional competition for workers.

Korn Ferry's research highlights that working in social care is significantly more demanding than many other positions paying the National Living Wage. **So it is inevitable that many will choose far less demanding and accountable work, if offered the same pay.**

In short, raising the National Living Wage does not improve the competitiveness of the care sector when seeking to fill local vacancies or retain existing staff. In fact, it's possible it increases its vulnerability.

100%

OF CEOS EXPRESSED A BELIEF THAT THERE WILL BE AN ACCELERATION OF UNSUSTAINABLE CONTRACTS BEING HANDED BACK TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

CQC Market Oversight Scheme, led by Cordis Bright.

49. 'Key facts and figures about adult social care', The King's Fund, May 2023

50. 'Care homes market study', Competition and Markets Authority, November 2017

51. 'Learning disability and autism social care providers financial impact assessment', Cordis Bright, October 2022

SIN 7. UNTAPPED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

UNFAIR LOW PAY UNDERMINES THE NATION'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, UNNECESSARILY INCREASES IMMIGRATION, AND WORSENS REGIONAL INEQUALITIES.

Economic value of care: The **2023 Future Social Care Coalition report 'Carenomics'**⁵² describes in detail the contribution that social care makes to the UK economy, with a **Gross Value Added (GVA) of £51.5 billion of economic activity in England** alone, when including indirect and induced effects. This surpasses other major sectors of the economy, such as electricity and power.

Skills for Care say that the care sector employed **1.52 million people in England in 2022/23, plus 135,000 people in Scotland, making it a larger employer than the NHS**; and the Carenomics report estimates that **for every £1 invested in social care, £1.75 is generated in the wider economy.**

CARERS UK ESTIMATE THAT THE BRITISH WORKFORCE LOSES AROUND 600 PEOPLE OF WORKING AGE EVERY DAY DUE TO THEM BEING FORCED TO GIVE UP WORK TO SUPPORT A LOVED ONE, WHO IS UNABLE TO ACCESS SOCIAL CARE.

Regional inequalities: In 2022, the Health and Social Care Select Committee⁵³ described evidence of **regional and geographic inequality** in the recruitment and retention of care and support staff. They identified 'high-price' areas such as parts of the south-east, seaside towns, and rural and coastal locations where **people cannot afford to live within a reasonable distance of the care provider's services.** Low pay that leads to staff shortages exacerbates these regional and geographical economic inequalities.

Economic impact of unpaid carers: A significant number of individuals, especially women, have left the workforce, or face challenges in employment, due to increasing unpaid caring responsibilities. Many dedicate caring hours comparable to – and greater than – full-time jobs. The lack of capacity within social care directly contributes to this.

A stable social care sector, with capacity to provide what society needs to support the wellbeing of unpaid carers, ensures that carers can, if they wish, remain in work for longer. This reduces dependence upon benefits, promotes financial independence, and reduces the burden on the welfare system. **Social care supports national productivity in many ways.**

The financial implications of losing economically active people from the workforce is significant. Especially at a time when employment is high and the labour market is extremely competitive as a result. **Carers UK**⁵⁴ estimate that **the British workforce loses around 600 people of working age every day** due to them being forced to give up work to support a loved one, who is unable to access social care.

52. 'Carenomics: Unlocking the economic power of social care', Future Social Care Coalition, October 2023

53. 'Workforce: recruitment, training and retention in health and social care', Health and Social Care Select Committee, July 2022

54. 'Research: More than 600 people quit work to look after older and disabled relatives every day', Carers UK, February 2019

A recent survey of working-age carers by the Centre for Social Justice⁵⁵ has revealed that 41% are contemplating exiting the workforce or reducing work hours due to caregiving demands, signalling a significant economic and personal toll.

The disruption to employment for carers results in broader economic costs, including decreased productivity, higher absenteeism, and diminished employee engagement, costing the UK economy approximately £3.5 billion annually.

Immigration and overseas workers: A report by the House of Commons Library⁵⁶ says that the Home Office granted 78,000 visas to care workers between June 2022 and June 2023, of which 18,000 went to senior care workers.

Social care accounted for 65% of all health and care visas issued, and 37% of all long-term work visas went to carers. This is a very significant increase as the number of people from overseas starting direct care-providing roles increased from 20,000 in 2020/21 to 70,000 in 2022/23.⁵⁷

The health and care sector has never admitted such large numbers of work visa holders as in the immediate post-pandemic period, under the post-Brexit immigration system. **57% of care organisations reported an increase in overseas applications.** This increased use of overseas workers in frontline care and support roles has been crucial for many care providers faced with a serious problem of staff shortages.

However, in late 2023, the Government announced changes to make it harder for care providers to recruit overseas workers by no longer allowing social care workers to bring dependants (partners and children) with them⁵⁸. The care sector is concerned that this change will worsen the continuing problem of staff shortages and high rates of staff turnover, with fears that care providers could close services if they cannot meet minimum safe staffing levels.

Consequently, care provider bodies⁵⁹ have called on the Government to act swiftly to invest in improving the pay and conditions of care workers to drive up domestic recruitment to compensate for the potential impact of this change in the visa rules.

Better pay for domestic frontline care and support staff would reduce the negative impact of the new rules on care workforce shortages and have a positive impact on the economy.

Put starkly, policymakers have a choice between increasing immigration or increasing the pay of frontline care and support workers to prevent a further deterioration of care services.



55. 'Creating a Britain that Works and Cares', The Centre for Social Justice, February 2024

56. 'Visas for social care workers', The House of Commons Library, October 2023

57. 'Social care workforce crisis', The Health Foundation, October 2023

58. 'Changes to legal migration rules for family and work visas in 2024', The House of Commons Library, February 2024

59. 'Care England comments: Changes to immigration', Care England, December 2023



7.

THE SOCIAL CARE TRIPLE WIN

The call for investing in the pay of frontline care and support staff is unanimous across the health and social care sector.

The message from all of those concerned is absolutely clear. From those who work in or draw on social care, care providers, sector representative bodies, regulators, trade unions, think tanks, academic institutions, charities, and parliamentary inquiries. There is one simple call for action: give frontline care and support staff a fair pay increase.

INVESTING IN FAIR PAY WILL BE A COST BUT IT WILL ALSO BRING MULTIPLE BENEFITS AND FINANCIAL RETURNS. THESE BENEFITS CAN BE SUMMED UP AS THE SOCIAL CARE TRIPLE WIN:

WIN 1 BETTER LIVES:

An engaged, stable, and valued workforce delivering high-quality, relationship-centered care. Creating better outcomes for individuals and making social care a career of choice.

WIN 2 COST-EFFECTIVE CARE:

Delivering greater savings, efficiency, and productivity in social care and the NHS through fully staffed, integrated, and stabilised services. Care providers can drive greater impact and innovation for society through increased capacity and further ability to focus outwards.

WIN 3 ECONOMIC GROWTH:

More and better jobs for local people, strengthening local economies, levelling up of low-income areas, reducing expenditure on benefits and avoiding working-age adults leaving employment to become carers.



THE WINS IN FOCUS



WIN 1: BETTER LIVES FOR PEOPLE WHO DELIVER AND DRAW ON SOCIAL CARE

Investing in the pay of frontline care and support staff will reduce staff shortages and reduce staff turnover. That will help to ensure that there is support by a consistent staff team who can build strong and informed relationships with the people they support – knowing the person well, developing trust, being responsive to specific needs and aspirations, promoting their wellbeing, and supporting them to lead a fuller and more independent life.

Investing in social care workers through better, fairer pay within a proper career structure based on qualifications and experience will raise staff morale, reduce financial insecurity, and open up opportunities for progression at work. This will have a direct impact on the quality of the care and support they provide to people who have the right to expect the best.



WIN 2: COST EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES

A win for social care providers: Managing the churn and turbulence of the recruitment crisis depletes the resources and capacity of social care providers. The operational energy expended managing vacancies, training new colleagues, and constantly recruiting creates waste. Low pay is a false economy.

Fair pay for frontline care and support staff will make a direct and immediate difference to reduce staff shortages and reduce the extraordinarily high staff turnover rates in the care sector, which stood at 28.3% in 2022/23⁶⁰. It will make working in the social care sector more attractive, increase staff morale and reduce staff burnout from the pressure of working in understaffed services and managing the challenges of life on low-pay.

This investment will reduce care providers' costs in having to recruit and train a third of their staff every year and diminish the secondary market for significantly more expensive agency workers.

With stability, greater resources can be deployed to deliver further innovation, better services, and more ambitious support.

A win for hospitals and the NHS: The increased availability of fully-staffed home care, supported living and residential care services will reduce the delays in transfer of patients from hospitals to social care support. A reduction in delayed discharges will, in turn, reduce the backlog of people waiting for in-patient hospital treatment as more beds become available.

A win for the health and social care system: A better paid, better staffed, and consequently stronger and sustainable social care market will help to ensure that the health and social care system as a whole works more effectively and efficiently.

Fair pay will provide better opportunities for staff to move more freely, both ways, between the NHS and social care services. Integrated Care Systems will be better placed to develop joint health and social care workforce strategies that meet local needs and priorities, with innovation at their heart.

Investing in the right care will also reduce the reliance on costly long term NHS inpatient facilities, which, for many, are the wrong support option and mean that they are separated from their communities and the people that they love.

60. 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England', Skills for Care, October 2023



WIN 3: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

A win for the economy: Fair pay for frontline care and support staff will unlock the economic power of social care. The care sector is huge – its 1.52 million workforce in England and 135,000 in Scotland – is one of the largest sector employers in the UK and bigger than the 1.4 million in the NHS. Every £1 invested in social care will bring a return of £1.75 to the nation's economy.

A win for local communities/society: With a more stable social care sector and a reduction in expenditure on agency and recruitment costs, the headroom for impact and innovation led by social care providers increases significantly.

Many providers, like Community Integrated Care, can point to developing innovative community and technological programmes which have been academically assessed as achieving an enormous financial and social return on investment. From enabling people to share their talents with society through work or volunteering, to leading national programmes that support greater social inclusion, health and wellbeing, a thriving social care sector can be a force for social and economic good.

A win for levelling up: Fair pay for frontline care and support staff will reduce regional inequalities including 'high-price' areas such as parts of the south-east, seaside towns, and rural and coastal locations where people cannot afford to live within a reasonable distance of the care provider's services.

A win for working age adults: Fair pay means care services are more fully staffed and reduces the need for unpaid carer support to fill the gaps. This helps working age adults to stay in the paid workforce which reduces their reliance on benefits, promotes financial independence, and reduces the overall burden on the welfare system.

Around 80% of family carers state that they feel lonely and isolated, and a further 72% say that their responsibilities have impacted their mental health⁶¹. The personal toll of the social care pay gap is felt far and wide. The impact of a lack of support, or the turbulence of inconsistent support, results in real – and frequently overlooked – challenges in the physical and mental health of carers, bringing further pressures to the NHS.

A win for welfare: 20% of the residential care workforce accessed Universal Credit and legacy benefits from 2017 to 2020, compared to 10% of all workers nationally. Fair pay directly reduces national expenditure on welfare benefits.

A win for immigration: Better pay for domestic frontline care and support staff reduces the need to recruit overseas workers to fill staff shortages and has a positive impact on the national economy.

AROUND **80%** OF
FAMILY CARERS
STATE THAT THEY
FEEL LONELY
AND ISOLATED

A FURTHER **72%**
SAY THAT THEIR
RESPONSIBILITIES
HAVE IMPACTED
THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

HOW MUCH WOULD INVESTING IN FAIR PAY FOR FRONTLINE CARE AND SUPPORT WORKERS COST THE COUNTRY?

THE NET COST OF BETTER PAY

In 2023, the TUC estimated in its 'Care Minimum Wage' publication – which explored the economic viability and impact of improving care worker pay – that creating a £15 per hour minimum wage for care and support workers would benefit 547,000 care workers at a gross cost of £5.9 billion. However, this gross cost would be massively offset by significant quantifiable savings elsewhere in the system:

➤ Reducing the costs of recruitment from dealing with high staff turnover could save up to

£1.4BN

➤ Reducing delayed transfers of care from hospital, because more care places would be available in a fully-staffed care system, could save the NHS up to

£1.7BN

There could also be wider savings that are more difficult to quantify, including:

- Reduced use of expensive agency workers by care providers
- Reducing delayed transfers of care from hospital, because more care places would be available in a fully-staffed care system, could save the NHS up to
- Reductions in spend on Universal Credit claimed by care workers
- Increases in economic growth and income tax payments
- Reductions in the cost of Carer's Allowance (currently £3.5bn per year) as fewer people need to become unpaid carers
- Increased reach and value of social care, through investment, greater capacity, and focus on innovation and social impact
- Maximising the value of people returning to work full time and leaving the benefit system (estimated in 2017 to be at least £35,100 per person)⁶²

AN ACHIEVABLE AND AFFORDABLE STEP TO TAKE

Given this combination of significant savings to care providers and to the NHS, and wider savings and added economic value to the country, it is reasonable to conclude that the net cost to the country of fair pay for care and support workers is substantially lower than the gross cost.

It is an achievable and financially affordable step to take. And one that would have widespread benefits for people and organisations across the health and social care system.

SCOTLAND

The Scottish government has introduced a minimum wage for social care workers. This was £10.90 per hour in 2023 and will rise to £12.00 in April 2024. Despite having several characteristics that might reflect an entry point to greater professionalisation of its social care workforce – including registration and the minimum wage – the Scottish social care system still faces real recruitment and retention challenges.

In July 2023, the Coalition of Care & Support Providers in Scotland reported that their average workforce turnover rate was 25%, an increase of 5.5% in the year prior. This demonstrates that workforce stability cannot be achieved through partial concessions to fair pay but can only be realised through parity between the social care sector and its parallel sectors – particularly, the NHS.

62. 'Movement into employment: return on investment tool', Public Health England, October 2017

8.

MOBILISING THE SOCIAL CARE VOTE



2024 IS A GENERAL ELECTION YEAR IN WHICH PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES AND POLITICAL PARTIES ACROSS THE BOARD WILL, INEVITABLY, BE ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT THEY WOULD DO TO IMPROVE THE SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM GENERALLY AND IMPROVE THE PAY OF CARE AND SUPPORT WORKERS SPECIFICALLY.

The YouGov logo, featuring the word "YouGov" in a bold, red, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol.

Many people who will be casting their vote in the 2024 General Election will have direct experience of social care services in different ways - as a receiver of social care, as a social care worker, as an unpaid family carer, or as someone with a disability. Many more will have indirect experience of social care services through what they see and hear during their relationships with people in the care system as a relative, friend, or neighbour.

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR FAIR PAY IS VERY HIGH AND GROWING

In January 2024, Community Integrated Care commissioned YouGov to explore this issue in an exclusive national opinion poll of adults in England. In a survey designed by us – and reflective of polling questions asked for last year's Unfair To Care report⁶³ – we put the following key questions to the public⁶⁴:

1. How important, if at all, do you think (a) social care workers, and (b) NHS workers, are to UK society?
2. There is currently a shortage of social care workers in the UK. How much of a problem, if at all, do you think that this is?
3. Do you, a family member or close friend, access social care services? And if so, have you or they experienced any negative impacts as a result?
4. Thinking about a scenario where a social care worker and an NHS worker were doing jobs that had equivalent skills, complexity, and responsibilities, which one should earn more, or should they both earn the same?
5. Based on what you know about how much social care workers earn, do you think they are generally, underpaid, overpaid, or paid about the right salary?
6. Would you have a more or less favourable view of a political party if they committed to improving pay and conditions for social care workers, or would it make no difference?

63. Unfair To Care 2022/23 – www.unfairtocare.co.uk

64. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,798 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 9th - 10th January 2024. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in England (aged 18+)

THE RESULTS WERE STARK... ⁶⁵

95% of adults in England believe that social care workers are important to society

Social care is shown to have strong parity of esteem with NHS workers, who 98% of respondents said are important to society.

87% recognise the shortage of social care workers as a problem for society

87% believe that social care shortages are either a very big (38%) or significant (49%) problem. Only 1% of respondents do not believe that the shortages are a problem at all.

61% believe social care workers are underpaid

In a new question introduced for this year's poll, respondents were asked whether they felt social care workers were underpaid, overpaid, or paid about the right salary. 61% believe they are underpaid, with only 13% believing they are paid the right salary for their work.

70% believe that social care workers should earn the same salary and benefits as equivalent NHS

Demonstrating the growing sense of parity between social care and NHS workers, 70% said social care workers should earn the same as NHS workers doing a role of equivalent skill, complexity, and responsibility. Our 2023 polling, conducted with Ipsos, found 61% support for this same question.

53%

OF ADULTS IN ENGLAND WOULD HAVE A MORE FAVOURABLE VIEW OF A POLITICAL PARTY COMMITTED TO IMPROVING PAY AND CONDITIONS FOR SOCIAL CARE WORKERS

The opinion poll found that more than half of respondents would have a more favourable view of political parties that commit to improving social care terms and conditions. Just 2% of the polled participants stated that they would have a less favourable view of parties that improve pay.

This sentiment will have many roots – including the greater appreciation for social care workers following the pandemic and the impact of campaigns like Unfair To Care. However, perhaps the greatest stimulus for recognising the need for change is simply that the endemic social care workforce challenges are affecting so many people.

EVERYDAY IMPACT...

18% of respondents drew on social care or had a loved one who accessed social care services. Of these, 44% reported greater demands on family carers due to a lack of consistent support.

Tragically, 38% reported worsening physical or mental health, whilst one in three (33%) reported a reduction of wellbeing for the individual and, separately, a reduction of wellbeing for the carer. Almost 4 in 10 of people with a connection to social care report being affected by a disruption to the quality-of-care services (38%).

Scaled across society, these figures represent enormous pressures being faced by people who should expect comfort and stability, unappreciable demands being carried by family and friends, and shocking inefficiencies within our public services.

IT IS EMINENTLY CLEAR FROM THIS POLLING THAT THERE IS SUCH STRONG POSITIVE PUBLIC SENTIMENT TOWARDS CARE WORKERS, A GROWING APPRECIATION OF THE SKILLED AND COMPLEX WORK THEY DO – ON PAR WITH NHS COLLEAGUES – OBVIOUS SUPPORT FOR FAIRER PAY, AND A DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT TO DO MORE. COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE BELIEVES THAT SOCIAL CARE WILL BECOME A PIVOTAL ELECTORAL ISSUE IN 2024.

SEVERAL OTHER MAJOR STUDIES REINFORCE THIS POLLING

The 2023 British Social Attitudes survey indicates that 57% of people are dissatisfied with the state of social care. Concerns include the lack of support available (64%), poor pay, working conditions, and training for social care workers (57%), and insufficient support for unpaid carers (49%).⁶⁶

Health Foundation research underscores public priorities for social care reform, including improving pay and conditions for staff (42%), enhancing health and social care integration (37%), increasing staff numbers (32%), and providing more support for informal carers (32%).⁶⁷

UNLOCKING THE ELECTORAL POWER OF SOCIAL CARE

This is a politically important issue in every constituency in the country. The YouGov poll for this report shows that a commitment to better pay for frontline care and support workers would influence more than half of voters in England.

66. 'British Social Attitudes: Survey reveals record level of dissatisfaction with social care services', Nuffield Trust and The King's Fund, March 2023

67. 'Public perceptions of health and social care: what are the priorities ahead of a general election?', The Health Foundation, September 2023

THE 'SOCIAL CARE VOTE' IN MARGINAL SEATS

The impact of low and unfair pay on people's voting intentions will be even stronger among those with direct experience of the social care system. This 'social care vote' is large and could be very influential. **The total number of people with direct experience of social care in England is around 2.6 million people:**

- In 2023 the adult social care sector employed 1.52 million people⁶⁸
- In 2021/22 a total of 1.04 million people received publicly funded social care (818,000 long-term care and 224,000 short-term care)⁶⁹

People's experiences of social care as a deliverer or receiver of care and support will vary, but there are around 2.6 million people for whom social care has a direct impact on their lives. **The YouGov survey for this report suggests that 80% of people who draw on care services, or are connected to care via a family member or close friend, have had a negative experience as a result of staff shortages in social care services.**

Of course, the choice of who people vote for will not be determined solely by their views on social care, but their direct or indirect experience of care services will likely be one of the more important factors influencing their particular decision.

Crucially, not all constituencies are equally important to winning a general election. In most elections it is the marginal seats with small majorities where elections are won or lost.

The 2.6 million people with direct experience of delivering or drawing on social care constitute around 4,900 votes in each of the 533 constituencies in England. This is around 10% of the average voter turnout in England (given an average turnout of around 50,000 (67%) in the average electorate of 75,000 people).

Across the UK, 141 seats out of 650 were won by a margin of less than 10 percentage points.⁷⁰ There have been a number of boundary changes to constituencies since 2019 but this indicates that **MPs in nearly 100 constituencies in England have majorities of less than 10% and are regarded as marginal seats, as they would only need a 5% swing to change.**

Community Integrated Care urges all political parties to consider the impact of this data ahead of the next general election.

THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE 'SOCIAL CARE VOTE' IN MARGINAL CONSTITUENCIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED THE PROBLEMS OF STAFF SHORTAGES CREATED BY LOW AND UNFAIR PAY, COULD HAVE A MARKED IMPACT, AND BE A CRITICAL FACTOR IN DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.

68. 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England', Skills for Care, October 2023

69. 'Key facts and figures about adult social care', The King's Fund, May 2023

70. 'General election 2019: Marginality', House of Commons Library, January 2020



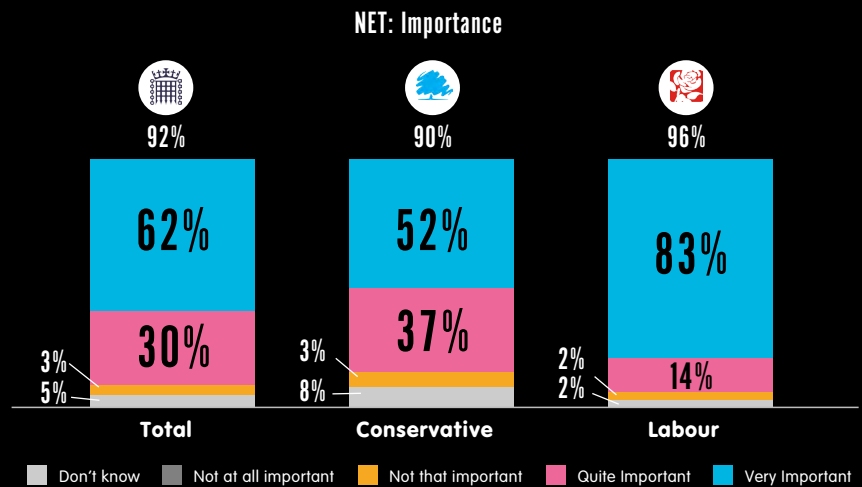
POLITICAL WILL FOR FAIR PAY

With increasing public recognition of the challenges faced by the social care sector and its workforce, it is important to explore whether the views of the public are reflected in their Parliamentarians. To support this, Community Integrated Care commissioned a unique poll with YouGov that explored the attitudes and understanding of Members of Parliament and Scottish Parliament. Its results were illuminating and encouraging.

Between 4th and 26th January 2024, YouGov completed online interviews with a representative sample of 107 MPs weighted by party, gender, electoral cohort, and geography, to give a sample that is representative of the House of Commons. This was augmented with additional interviews with 19 MSPs between 4th and 22nd January 2024. These results indicate deep concern about the challenges in social care, a recognition of the need for fair pay, and desire for action by the next government, across parties.

9 IN 10 (92%) OF MPs SAY THAT PRESSURES IN SOCIAL CARE SERVICES ARE IMPORTANT TO CONSTITUENTS

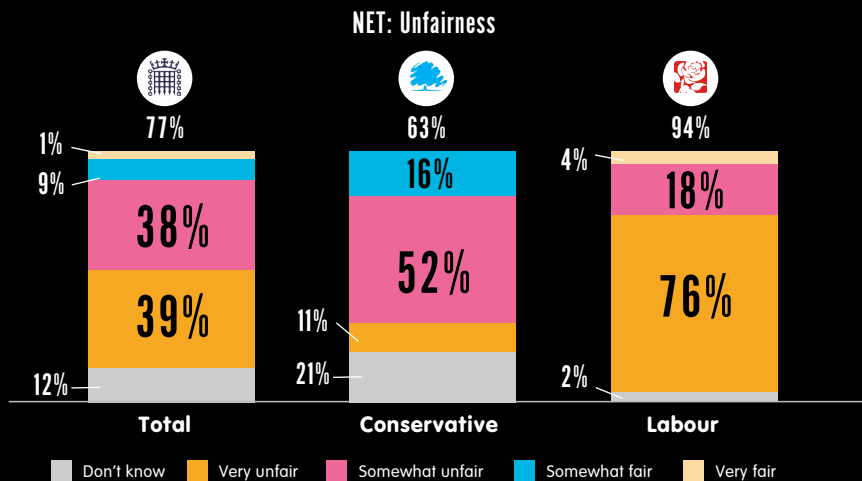
Across Labour MPs, 83% indicate this is a very important topic, in comparison to 52% amongst Conservatives. No MPs feel this topic is 'not at all important' to their constituents.



Question: To what extent are pressures in social care services important to your constituents?
 Base: All MPs (107), Conservative (59), Labour (33), Scottish National Party (9), Other (6)

MPs GENERALLY FEEL THE CURRENT AVERAGE RATE OF PAY FOR A SOCIAL WORKER (£10.93) IS UNFAIR (77%)

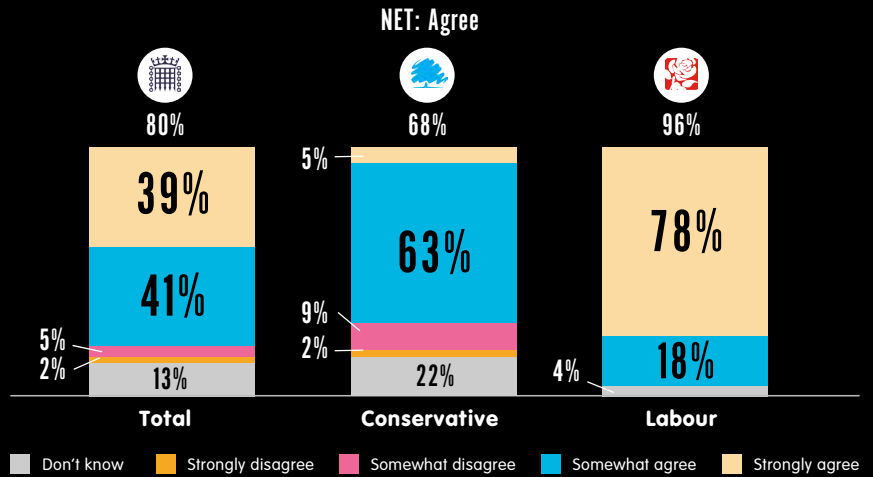
There is a large disparity in the views across parties, as only 63% of Conservative MPs feel the pay is unfair, compared to 94% of Labour MPs.



Question: How fair or unfair do you think the current average rate of pay for a social care worker (£10.93 per hour) is?
 Base: All MPs (107), Conservative (59), Labour (33), Scottish National Party (9), Other (6)

8 IN 10 MPs (80%) AGREE THAT THE NEXT GOVERNMENT MUST ACT TO IMPROVE PAY, AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR SOCIAL CARE WORKERS

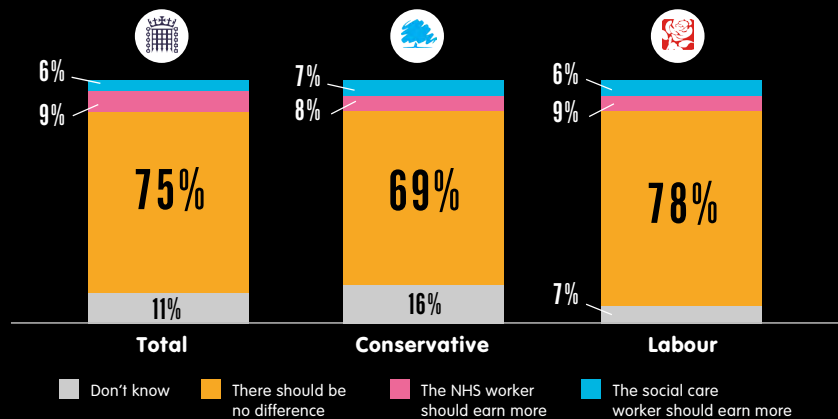
As with social care worker pay, there is a large difference in views across parties, 68% of Conservative MPs agreed, compared to 96% of Labour MPs (78% strongly agreed).



Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the next government must act to improve pay, and terms and conditions for social care workers?

Base: All MPs (107), Conservative (59), Labour (33), Scottish National Party (9), Other (6)

IN GENERAL, THE MAJORITY (75%) OF MPs BELIEVE THERE SHOULD BE NO DIFFERENCE IN PAY BETWEEN AN NHS WORKER OR SOCIAL CARE WORKER IF THEY ARE DOING JOBS THAT HAVE EQUIVALENT SKILLS, COMPLEXITY, AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Question: Imagine a social care worker and an NHS worker were doing jobs that had equivalent skills, complexity and responsibilities. Do you think the NHS worker or social care worker should earn more, or should there be no difference?

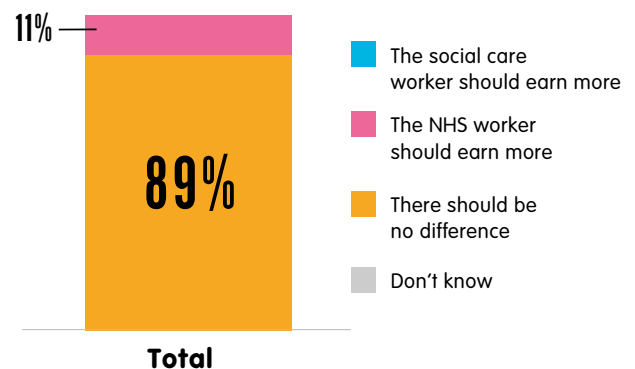
Base: All MPs (107), Conservative (59), Labour (33), Scottish National Party (9), Other (6)

THE PICTURE IN SCOTLAND

In this report's poll of MSPs, we focused directly on the issue of pay parity, exploring whether they believe that NHS and social care workers delivering equivalent roles should receive equal pay. This demonstrated that the support for pay parity is 14% stronger in Holyrood compared to House of Commons (89% of MSPs compared to 75% of MPs).

This near unanimous sentiment from MSPs perhaps not only recognises a moral point – that workers providing an equally important public service, with an equivalently sized job role should be treated with equality – but an important practical one too: a recognition that partial concessions towards fair pay are less effective. Scotland's social care workforce turnover rate has increased by 5.5% in 2023, despite providing a guaranteed minimum rate for social care workers, above the national minimum wage.

NEARLY 9 IN 10 (89%) MSPs FEEL THERE SHOULD BE NO DIFFERENCE IN PAY BETWEEN AN NHS WORKER OR SOCIAL CARE WORKER IF THEY ARE DOING JOBS THAT HAVE EQUIVALENT SKILLS, COMPLEXITY, AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Question: Imagine a social care worker and an NHS worker were doing jobs that had equivalent skills, complexity and responsibilities. Do you think the NHS worker or social care worker should earn more, or should there be no difference?

Base: All MSPs (19)

Whilst it might be surprising to see such strong recognition for the issues of low pay in social care and the case for change within Parliament, given the systemic challenges that have persisted for decades, it is important to note that representatives across all parties and both houses have recognised the moral, social, and economic impacts of low pay in social care in many reports and committees.

For example, the cross-party parliamentary DHSC Select Committee, when chaired by the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP in 2020, concluded that low pay *“devalues social care workers who are often highly-skilled; is a factor in high turnover rates and high numbers of vacancies; and as a result, undermines the quality and long-term sustainability of social care”*⁷¹ and the comprehensive cross-party House of Lords inquiry into adult social care⁷² concluded that the Government should act to remedy low pay in the social sector.

A PIVOTAL MOMENT

This presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity, with both public and political impetus for resolving the challenges faced by people who work in and draw on social care.

This report’s poll reveals strong respect for social care workers, a recognition in the value of fair pay, and a desire for political action on the issue amongst the public. In parallel, there is clear parliamentary consensus that “the next government must act to improve pay, and terms and conditions for social care workers”, driven by a recognition of the concerns of their constituents, the moral and practical dynamics of unequal pay in a shared system, and an understanding that current rates of pay are unfair.

For too long, the challenges faced by people who work in and draw on social care have been left unresolved and unsupported because of a supposed lack of political or public will. This polling is clear – Parliamentarians understand the case for change and want to support it; and social care may be an election defining issue for a public whose appreciation of its social care workforce is mirrored by a concern for its stability.

**IT IS NOW TIME TO
EXPLORE THE ROUTES TO
DELIVERING THIS CHANGE.**

71. ‘Social care: funding and workforce’, House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee, October 2020

72. ‘A “gloriously ordinary life”: spotlight on adult social care’, House of Lords Adult Social Care Committee, December 2022



9.

THE CALL FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

Government investment in fair pay to achieve the 'Social Care Triple Win' will address the funding gap between local authority fee levels and provider care costs, but crucially, this investment will bring clear and substantial economic growth and productivity, cost-effective and sustainable care and health services, better lives for those receiving care, and fair pay for those providing it.

A THREE-STAGE JOURNEY TO FAIR PAY IN SOCIAL CARE.

1.

**IMMEDIATE
ACTION**



2.

**WITHIN 12
MONTHS**



3.

**WITHIN THE
LIFETIME OF THE
NEXT PARLIAMENT**

This report is not ignorant of the current financial pressures that will face this or any future government. But it is essential to understand that fair pay for frontline care and support workers should be as seen by the Government and opposition parties as an investment, not a cost.

Fair pay investment not only delivers better and more equitable care, but also leads to substantial financial efficiencies and productivity across the health and social care landscape. It adds significant economic value and growth to local communities and the country as a whole.

Whilst the case for investing in pay is strong, this report recognises that this may require phased implementation to build the capacity for this investment. It should be informed by five key design principles:

- 1) The aim of achieving 'Total Pay' parity for frontline care and support workers with their equivalents in the NHS**

- 2) Government investment to fund a minimum level of fair pay for frontline care and support workers**

- 3) A robust job evaluation mechanism to underpin a national pay scale linked to a career path for social care staff**

- 4) Flexibility for care providers to best plan and organise their workforce within national minimum entitlements for care and support workers**

- 5) A workforce development plan to address current and future demand for care staff in different roles and at every level**

Based on these five design principles, the journey to fair pay in social care could have three main stages, that could start before and continue after, the 2024 General Election:

STAGE 1.



IMMEDIATE ACTION:

An immediate uplift to pay funded by government so that all frontline care and support workers receive **at least parity with the midpoint of the hourly 'basic pay' level of NHS Band 3 staff in 2024/25.**

One approach to achieving this could be through a **ring-fenced government grant to local authorities**, to embed this level of pay as a requirement in their contracts with care providers.

STAGE 2.



WITHIN 12 MONTHS FOLLOWING THE GENERAL ELECTION:

A new social care sector-specific minimum pay deal for the care workforce is agreed and funded nationally. This could be implemented within 12 months of the next general election as a new national minimum wage level for frontline care and support workers, based on the principle of **working towards 'Total Pay' parity with NHS equivalent staff.**

Recognising the complexity of the care market, the need for objective analysis of this issue, and the requirements for these issues to be resolved with limited delays, one option could be for the **Low Pay Commission to undertake this task with a fresh mandate as the Fair Pay Commission.**

STAGE 3.



WITHIN THE LIFETIME OF THE NEXT PARLIAMENT:

A new national social care workforce plan is developed through a new government-led national care partnership forum, with technical support and leadership from Skills for Care.

This plan should have within its scope the development of a **national social care pay-scale (with appropriate job evaluation benchmarking and bandings), a fully-funded training and qualifications career structure, and a five-year plan that identifies and tackles the workforce shortages** in all roles, in all social care services, and at every level in the social care workforce.

This must draw upon the experiences and insight of people who access support, the people who deliver it, and the providers and key stakeholders that operate within the sector.

This workforce strategy must be comprehensive and fulfil the wider need to make it a **viable, respected, and sustainable career**, that breaks the stereotype of being a low-skilled sector of last resort. This includes a greater focus on **learning and development and qualifications, registration, improved career pathways, and strategic workforce development** and support from an ambitious and empowered national institution.

A NEW FUTURE FOR SOCIAL CARE

The issue of pay and workforce strategy stands alongside a much broader requirement to deliver wider progressive reform and investment into social care – the need for which has been continually outlined throughout this publication and many others.

'Who Cares Wins' is a report on the specific issues of workforce pay, progression, recruitment, and retention. It does not seek to provide a holistic strategy to address the many challenges and opportunities that exist within social care. There are fundamental issues that need to be tackled within the sector, so we can better enable individuals and their loved ones to lead their best lives possible.

The voice and ambitions of people who draw on social care, and their loved ones, must be radically lifted. Too many people miss out on the support that they need, or are supported in institutional and traditional ways. There are visionary opportunities for efficiency and impact through innovation. Commissioning needs to be focussed on organisations and groups who have a genuine commitment to delivering a social impact and a clear sense of organisational purpose.

These are opportunities, not challenges. There are many strengths to the organisations and individuals who deliver social care, but this is not the system that anyone would choose by design.

There is space for a bold reimagining of social care, which listens to and responds to the needs of people who draw on support, and prioritises the progressive organisations who have the vision to enrich society.

There are endless examples of how investment in the wider infrastructure of social care can both play a role in economic recovery, and lead to much wider returns on investment, as a result of the efficiencies it creates.

Taken together, these reforms have the potential to transform the experience of working in and receiving support, and bring untold benefits to the NHS and social care systems, as well as to wider society.



**THIS REPORT URGES
GOVERNMENT TO BE BOLD
IN ITS THINKING. END
THE INJUSTICE OF UNFAIR
PAY. MAKE HISTORY BY
SETTING OUR NATION ON
A TRAJECTORY TO HAVE
SUSTAINABLE, ETHICAL,
AND QUALITY SOCIAL CARE
SERVICES, THAT SET US
APART AND DRIVE SOCIAL
AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS.**

VOICES FROM ACROSS THE SECTOR

There is a remarkable cross-sector consensus that the low and unfair pay of frontline care and support workers is unacceptable and must be resolved.

All Party Parliamentary Group for Social Care



*"Beyond the introduction of a national minimum wage for care workers and the introduction of a banded pay scale, it is vital that social care is seen as a viable career where care workers are financially rewarded for their experience and expertise."*⁷³

Association of Directors of Social Services



*"ADASS wants to see a minimum social care wage that is above the National Living Wage, has parity with NHS pay and clear progression and development."*⁷⁴

Care England



"Adult social care must have a long-term workforce plan with a fully-funded national pay framework for adult social care; and benefits, terms and conditions for care professionals aligned with those in the NHS."

Care Quality Commission



*"We continue to call for a national workforce strategy that raises the status of the adult social care workforce and ensures that career progression, pay, and rewards attract and retain the right professional staff in the right numbers."*⁷⁵

Health and Social Care Select Committee



*"Low pay devalues social care workers who are often highly-skilled; is a factor in high turnover rates and high numbers of vacancies; and as a result, undermines the quality and long-term sustainability of social care."*⁷⁶

House of Lords Adult Social Care Committee



*"The Government must prioritise, with people who work in and draw on adult social care, a comprehensive long-term national workforce and skills plan for adult social care, including a commitment to remedy low pay in the sector."*⁷⁷

Health Foundation



"Across the social care sector, recruitment and retention are affected by the perceived low status of the work, low pay, training, and levels of in-work support. There is little career progression and that means it's hard to attract and retain people with the right skills and values."

The King's Fund



*"Social care cannot continue as a Cinderella service – without a valued and rewarded workforce, adult social care cannot fulfil its crucial role of supporting... vulnerable people in society."*⁷⁸

Local Government Association



*"The Government should provide funding to enable improvement in pay (parity with comparable roles in the NHS), conditions and career development opportunities for the frontline care workforce not directly employed by councils."*⁷⁹

NHS Confederation



*"Healthcare leaders are sounding the alarm and sending a clear message to government that unless social care workers are paid a national care worker minimum wage, there is a real risk of irreparable damage to the sector."*⁸⁰

The Fabian Society



*"Poor pay and conditions are among the factors that have triggered a staffing crisis in the sector."*⁸¹

UNISON



"There is no route to an improved adult social care system in England that does not include urgent action to provide substantial and sustained pay rises for those charged with providing adult social care."

73. Report to be published March 2024

74. <https://www.adass.org.uk/press-release-care-leaders-call-on-govt-to-award-care-workers-winter-bonus>

75. <https://www.cqc.org.uk/publications/major-report/state-care/2022-2023/foreword>

76. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmhealth/206/20605.htm>

77. <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/31917/documents/193737/default/>

78. <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/whats-your-problem-social-care#workforce>

79. <https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/autumn-statement-2023-lga-submission>

80. <https://www.nhsconfed.org/news/nhs-leaders-call-national-minimum-wage-social-care-avoid-staff-exodus>

81. <https://fabians.org.uk/publication/support-guaranteed/>



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