

Dear Chancellor

The Time is Now: Urgent Action on Pay is Required Before Winter to Turn Around the Recruitment and Retention Crisis in Social Care Sector

We, the undersigned, believe the social care sector is on the brink of a crisis. Without urgent action by you - and through the forthcoming Adult Social Care White Paper - to support recruitment and retention, we fear for the consequences for people who draw on social care and their families who care for them as well as for providers and care and support workers themselves.

The social care sector faces 105,000 vacancies this winter and the impact of this is becoming clear. There are already reports of:

- Delays in discharge from hospitals
- Care packages being squeezed, including reduced hours for respite and domiciliary care so, for example, people being left in dirty sheets, denied regular baths or showers, and not helped to dress until the afternoon
- Of care being cancelled if there is someone who lives with the care recipient
- Some dying residents in care homes being denied a dignified end to their lives as insufficient staff to sit with them in their final hours
- Of provider contracts being handed back to local authorities

Staff are exhausted and undervalued: morale is at rock bottom.

Pay is the elephant in the room. The Government's living wage – currently £8.91 per hour - is simply insufficient to *retain* the current workforce at a time when demand is high and recruitment bonuses are becoming more common. Nor is the current level of £8.91 (nor £9.50 in April 2022) enough to *recruit* the numbers of new staff required in a sector which has an annual “churn” of 34.4%.

There have been a number of proposals that have competed for your attention. The Future Social Care Coalition have long advocated that pay for care and support workers is immediately raised to the Real Living Wage – now £9.90 per hour (£11.05 in London). And then to parity with NHS pay grades over the Spending Review period ie by 2024.

The Social Care Leaders Group have stated that “pay is one indicator to staff that they are valued and appropriately rewarded” and called for the “Government to set up an independent review of pay levels and the mechanisms for setting pay in the sector.” Any review must involve the carers and their trade union representatives as well those who draw on care.

Most recently ADASS and NHS Providers have proposed a £1,000 retention bonus which although welcome - given care workers unlike those in Scotland and Wales had no bonus at all despite their dedication throughout the pandemic - is no substitute for an immediate pay rise and ultimately parity with NHS staff pay levels.

Bodies representing the NHS are increasingly alarmed as are social care providers. Meanwhile the ‘Unfair To Care’ report provided empirical evidence that frontline care and support workers receive an unjust deal and that social care is not a ‘low skilled’ sector. Carers working in roles with

equivalent scope, complexity and accountability would receive as much as 39% - over £7,000 per year – more, if employed in the NHS.

We all agree that the issue of pay must be addressed and now! We implore the Treasury to seize the moment and act before it is too late. Funding earmarked for staff needs to be clearly ringfenced and provisions put in place to ensure it is passported via local government, private and third sector providers, to care and support workers on the frontline.

Ultimately this is a sector worth £50 billion to the economy annually and it employs 6% of the entire workforce. It is estimated that employees will need to increase by 520,000 in the next 15 years to meet the increasing demand for social care. It is a sector whose potential for contributing to levelling up and to the economic recovery needs to be maximised not squandered.

It is time for the Government to respect and reward all those working on the ‘forgotten frontline’, the social care workforce. It has never been clearer that they warrant and deserve a fair deal. It is also in the interests of the NHS and the wider public that action is taken now, before Winter.

Yours sincerely,

- Rt Hon Alistair Burt, former Minister of State for Community and Social Care (Co-chair, the Future Social Care Coalition)
- Rt Hon Stephen Dorrell, former Secretary of State for Health (Co-chair, the Future Social Care Coalition)
- Christina McAnea, General Secretary, Unison (Co-chair, the Future Social Care Coalition)
- Phil Hope, former Minister for Care Services (Co-chair, the Future Social Care Coalition)

PLUS

- Caroline Abrahams CBE, Charity Director, Age UK and Co-chair, Care and Support Alliance
- Mark Adams, Chief Executive, Community Integrated Care
- Nadra Ahmed, Executive Chair, National Care Association
- Kate Allen, Chief Executive, Kingwood
- Paula Barker MP
- Matthew Bolton, Executive Director, Citizens UK
- Rt Hon Paul Burstow FRSA, former Minister of State for Community and Social Care
- Katherine Chapman, Director, Living Wage Foundation
- Steve Ford, Chief Executive, Royal College of Occupational Therapists, and Chair, Allied Health Professions Federation
- Emily Holzhausen, Co-chair, Care and Support Alliance
- Helen Hayes MP, Co-chair, APPG for Adult Social Care
- Kim Johnson MP
- Barbara Keeley MP, Co-Chair APPG for Social Work and Member, Health and Social Care committee
- Lord Bob Kerslake, former Head of the Home Civil Service
- Rt Hon Norman Lamb, former Minister for Community and Social Care
- Jo Land, Chief Executive, Avenues Trust Group
- Caroline Lucas MP
- Jackie O’Sullivan, Director, Mencap and Co-chair, Care and Support Alliance
- Carys Phillips, Chair, Social Workers Union
- Steve Scown, Chief Executive, Dimensions



- Mohammad Yasin MP
- Helen Walker, Chief Executive, Carers UK

CC Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, Prime Minister and Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care