

THE GENERATION GAME

Pay inequality means that no one is a winner. At the current rate of increase it will take **23 years** – a whole generation – for social care workers to achieve pay parity with their NHS equivalents.



1.



WELCOME TO UNFAIR TO CARE

INTRODUCTION FROM TERESA EXELBY, CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER AT COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE

Social care is the backbone of society. At its best, it is the skilled sector that enables people to lead full and independent lives in the heart of their communities. It promotes economic productivity by supporting families to balance their working and caring responsibilities and offering a rewarding career that reinvests in local economies. This sector drives innovation and social impact. **It is the safety net that all of us would want and need, should we ever require support in our own lives.**

Yet, tragically, this is also a sector that is beset by perpetual crises. **At the time of publication, the number of unfilled posts within social care had grown by more than 52% to 165,000 vacancies¹ since 2021.** These figures reflect a reality of people missing the vital support that they need, care providers firefighting to manage workforce gaps, and people who draw on support experiencing a devastating churn of Support Workers coming in and out of their lives. This is clearly inefficient, ineffective and wrong. So why *are* things this way?

One clear answer can be found in the issue of pay. As you will read in this report, **working in social care is a provably skilled, complex, and accountable role, which requires rare vocational qualities.** Yet, funding for providers has meant that Support Worker pay has largely hovered mere pennies above the minimum 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?

For decades, the social care sector has been calling for greater investment, fair pay and a coherent workforce strategy. In July 2021, Community Integrated Care sought to bolster the case for action by shifting the debate from one of moral subjectivity to objective fact.

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Published December 2022

1. 'The State of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce in England', Skills for Care, 2022.

Our 2021 Unfair To Care Report 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 technical skills.**

Shockingly, it demonstrated that many would be paid 39% more – nearly £7,000 a year – in equivalent positions within the public sector and local authorities, and up to 42% within the NHS (2021 figures).

The revelation of this pay gap not only became a national news story, with a media reach of 62 million, but moreover, evoked an enormous public response, as the injustice of this inequality was laid bare.

Many leading care sector organisations and policy institutions used the Unfair To Care research within their own work, making it essential evidence in the fight for fair pay. Opposition political parties adopted our conclusions, agreeing that NHS bandings need to be applied to social care as part of greater workforce investment and reform.

So, as we present Unfair To Care 2022/23, has this gap been closed by ambitious government investment? Has a coherent national workforce strategy been created, to make social care a career of choice, ensuring that every person can receive the support they deserve?

No.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that balanced both an economic case for investment in fair pay with the moral case of an entirely unjustifiable pay gap, there has been no bold and decisive action from the Government. **In fact, the pay gap between social care and the NHS remains at a staggering 41.1%.**

Yet there is **significant public recognition of the shared value of both social care and the NHS.** In an Ipsos survey specially commissioned for this report, we have seen the importance placed on social care by the general public being almost equal to that of the NHS.

On the face of it, there has been some fragments of progress in closing the pay disparity. This has largely been driven, we believe, by a positive response from within the care sector, coupled with the extraordinary challenges of national workforce shortages and a cost-of-living crisis.

For the past five years, social care pay has closely tracked increases in the National Living Wage. For the first time in 2022, that pattern has been broken as sector pay rose by 8.2%, compared to the National Living Wage increase of 6.6%.

Look behind these figures though, and you will see that these rises are driven by providers depleting their reserves, in a desperate bid to stay afloat in an inflation-driven employment market.

A recent sector pulse report demonstrates that 80% of provider organisations say that the funding they receive from local authorities to deliver care will not cover their wage bills, forcing them to dig deep into their own reserves as they try to keep pace with wage rises elsewhere². **This departure from minimum wage-anchored increases reflects peril for providers, as much as progress.**

Beyond this, these increases demonstrate glacially slow progress in achieving parity with the NHS. **As this report shows, the reduction in pay gap between social care and the NHS averages just 1.5% per year, since the last general election. At this rate, it will take 23 years – a whole generation – for Support Workers to reach parity with their peers in the NHS.**

We, of course, recognise the need for fair pay across many other sectors and industries, including the NHS. Unfair To Care does not seek to curtail or diminish progress within other sectors, but instead advocates for parity and fairness across these parallel sectors.

Change is needed now. As Britain wrestles with a cost-of-living crisis, too many brilliant and talented Support Workers with a passion for changing lives are experiencing personal crises or finding that they can no longer remain in the sector that they love. **This false economy is depriving people of the quality support that they need to lead full and independent lives.** Despite the many pressures of the moment, **this remains one of the single biggest challenges that exists for the nation today.**

Millions of people are depending upon change. We hope that this report, which has been generously supported by so many of our partners, helps to bring this forward.

Teresa .

2. 'Sector Pulse-Check: A snapshot of the learning disability sector in 2021', Hft April 2022

SECTOR SUPPORT



PHIL HOPE, CO-CHAIR

"Unfair To Care shows us that the recruitment and retention crisis in social care is here to stay for an entire generation unless the Government take serious action to fix it. Warm words about the rise in the National Living Wage are simply not enough to retain staff. The current number of social care vacancies is staggering and will only continue to grow without a commitment to fair pay for care."

The report makes it clear that it is untenable to lurch from crisis to crisis, with just a sticking plaster to remedy the far deeper problems in social care. Without immediate and long-term action to eradicate low pay, social care is doomed forever to be the Achilles' heel of an increasingly integrated health service.

The Future Social Care Coalition supports Community Integrated Care's calls for an immediate and fair pay rise for all frontline social care workers. We want to see a Social Care People Plan to change the culture so all those who work in the sector are valued, respected and properly rewarded. It is time for social care sector staff to be paid fairly and time for pay parity with the NHS. Fair pay is the nettle that must be grasped by the Government. If it is not, an entire generation will be failed."



OONAGH SMYTH, CEO

"Our latest 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England report' showed that the number of vacant posts in adult social care has increased by 52% in one year – the highest rate on record."

As this report notes, that means there are now around 165,000 vacant posts on any given day. Finding and keeping workers is a long-term challenge as our data shows we are going to need around 480,000 extra people working in social care by 2035.

We know that four out of every five jobs in the wider economy pay more than the median pay for care workers.

That's why we need a workforce plan for social care which identifies the numbers, skills mix and innovations in delivery that are needed to meet growing demand – and prioritises staff recognition, value and reward.

Social care has a bigger workforce than the NHS, construction, transport, or food and drink service industries, and there are so many opportunities if people want to specialise or progress into management roles.

We must talk much more positively about how rewarding it is to work in social care, so that we attract quality people to join our sector – and we must make it easier for the people who love working in social care to stay by improving terms and conditions and investing in their career development.

In short, our society needs a step change in how it values social care services and the great people who work with those who draw on care and support in our communities."



MARY WOODALL, SELF-ADVOCATE REPRESENTATIVE

"My name is Mary. I live in Supported Living and I'm a self-advocate member of Learning Disability England's Representative Body. As well as this, I am a member of self-advocacy group Campaign 4 Change and co-production group Unity. I have a physical disability and a learning disability.

This important report highlights that Support Workers, including PAs, should be paid fairly. Low wages and difficulties recruiting and keeping staff don't just impact them and the organisations they work for, it affects consistent, high-quality support that we need to live our lives, delivered by people we know and trust.

The report ties in with 'Good Lives: Building Change Together' – a framework which brings people together to share ideas of what it would take for people with learning disabilities to live a good life. It says "invest properly in all support services" and "enable pay and conditions for the social care workforce to reflect their value as 'key workers'".

I hope that Unfair To Care 2022/23 helps create the change we need so Support Workers and PAs are properly recognised and valued and paid the Real Living Wage and beyond."



VIC RAYNER, CEO

"This is a really valuable report, building on the benchmarking work delivered last year by Community Integrated Care. It brings together insights from across the care and support sector which highlight, yet again, the level of skill needed to be a care and support worker and just how demanding it is to provide high quality, person centred care and support. Unfair To Care also offers some very powerful stories from care and support workers, highlighting how difficult it is to remain in a job they love because of the current low levels of pay and the rising cost of living.

The public perception research by Ipsos shows that the public believe in the importance of our social care workforce to society and all the evidence in this reports shows the urgency of investing in that workforce now, addressing the current pay disparities and longer term planning for the future of this essential workforce."



RHIDIAN HUGHES, CEO

"A society that values disabled and older people who draw on social care services must also value the life-improving roles that care workers fulfil. The stark reality is that the very people that support others are themselves being forgotten.

Society works when there is redistribution and fairness and this report lays bare the stark inequalities that care workers face in their pay. The consequences are felt for those who draw on care and support, with high turnover of staff and an ever-present challenge with recruitment and retention.

The Government can choose to act. The recommendations in this report are right and achievable, and we urge the Government to take them up fully. It is time to address the issue of pay, and to end disabled people and their care workers being left behind."

2.

THE RESEARCH

HOW DO YOU DEFINE FAIR PAY?

› What is a job worth?

On face value, the variances in pay rates across 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 we have lacked an objective framework to advocate for fair pay for frontline Support Workers.

Unfair To Care provides a vital solution to this conundrum, 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 \$1.92bn, it is fair to state that 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 most widely used and accepted platform for role analysis in the world. 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 of roles.



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

FOR 2021'S REPORT, COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE COMMISSIONED KORN FERRY TO DELIVER THE FIRST DETAILED AUDIT OF THE FRONTLINE ADULT SOCIAL CARE SUPPORT WORKER ROLE. IN THIS RESEARCH, KORN FERRY FOCUSED ON THE SUPPORT WORKER ROLE WITHIN SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES. AS A TYPICAL POSITION WHICH 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.

This provided, for the first time, a truly 360° view of frontline social care roles and revealed the true fair rate for pay.

In this report, we have revisited this research, exploring how things have developed since our first report. With expanded insights and a deeper understanding of the direction of travel for fair pay, Unfair To Care again breaks new ground in the case for fair pay.



PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The physical aspects of a role that may cause fatigue or strain.

.....



ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS

Requirements of the role that may be unpleasant or cause discomfort due to exposure to variations in, or extremes of: noise, moisture, dust, odours, noxious substances or temperature.

.....



EMOTIONAL DEMANDS

Requirements of the role that might cause emotional strain due to traumatic circumstances, experiences or events, challenge from or confrontation with others, personal threat or a combination of these.

WHAT'S IN A SUPPORT WORKER ROLE?

KORN FERRY'S FINDINGS

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 analysis clearly distilled the general experiences and expectations of this role:

- ▶ **Know-how:** "Role requires some specialist, practical skills in management of specific healthcare needs. Post holders need at least three months to understand emotional triggers and behaviour specific to each individual in order to respond appropriately to their needs, as well as a high degree of empathy, which goes beyond common courtesy, to provide the appropriate level of care required."
- ▶ **Physical effort / endurance:** "Carers will be working for long periods of time and will be required to exert physical effort in activities such as bathing and showering. Many will be sleeping on site which is typically and routinely disrupted."
- ▶ **Problem solving:** "The role works according to routine procedures. However, there is a requirement to adapt to 'in the moment' situational change and to the unique needs of the individual being supported."
- ▶ **Environmental:** "Carers are with the client constantly and regularly exposed to unpleasant conditions such as bodily fluids, streams in noise e.g. TV / shouting, and temperature. There is little opportunity to change the working environment."
- ▶ **Accountability:** "The role is constrained by clearly defined operating procedures and regulations. Most of the work will be undertaken without close supervision and whilst routine in nature, there will be freedom to decide when and if to change routines in accordance with circumstance. Impact is measured to reflect the delivery of care which is tailored to the needs of the individual without the immediate support of others."
- ▶ **Emotional:** "Carers are likely to experience verbal and/or physical aggression with potential risk of personal injury."

**FAR FROM BEING
LOW-SKILLED, THE ROLE
WAS FOUND TO HAVE
EXCEEDED THE SKILLS
NEEDED IN ROLES SUCH
AS A SENIOR TEACHING
ASSISTANT, POLICE
COMMUNITY SUPPORT
OFFICER AND NHS
HEALTHCARE ASSISTANT.**

3.

THE 2022–23 RESULTS

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, terms and conditions across industries.

For Unfair To Care, we are drawing direct comparison to pay within publicly funded sectors – the NHS, local government and not-for-profit organisations. We recognise that it is unrealistic and unreasonable to compare pay rates with counterpart positions in private sector industries.

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



THE 2022-23 GAP

SOCIAL CARE

➤ Average Support Worker pay[†]

£19,573

➤ Average Support Worker pay with pension[†]

£20,160 Inclusive of industry standard 3% pension contribution

NHS

➤ Mean **total pay** of Band 3 NHS roles[‡]

£27,609 Includes allowances and additional hours payments

➤ Mean **total package** of NHS Band 3 roles[‡]

£33,046 Inclusive of pension and other benefits



41.1%

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT

➤ Average pay of equivalent roles

£26,327

35%

Total pay rise needed by social care Support Workers to achieve parity with LG/NFP counterpart is 35%

[†] Figures used are average rates for Support Worker roles in England (outside London) and are taken from the National Care Forum's Workforce Review, October 2022

[‡] Calculated from Korn Ferry analysis 2021 and NHS Agenda for Change Pay Scale for 2022/23 – Band 3 roles

* The 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.

UNDERSTANDING THE GAP

In summer 2022, the Government announced pay rises for more than one million NHS staff. For the lowest paid, they guaranteed at least £1,400 – equivalent to a pay rise of almost 10% - whilst dentists and doctors received 4.5% extra³.

As health leaders slammed these uplifts as inadequate and tantamount to a pay cut in the face of escalating inflation, social care was once again absent from the public and political narrative about the cost-of-living crisis.

In response, Community Integrated Care recommissioned Korn Ferry to provide updated data, allowing us to benchmark the care sector against its publicly-funded peers. **The findings (using data provided in July 2022 and October 2022) were startling.**

THIS MEANS A SOCIAL CARE WORKER WOULD NEED A 41.1% PAY RISE TO ACHIEVE PARITY WITH THEIR COUNTERPART IN THE NHS, DOING THE EXACT SAME ROLE.

This figure is based on a comparison between Average Support Worker Pay (outside London) and NHS Mean Total Pay, and therefore, actually underestimates the extent of the gap in real terms. When we compare NHS Mean Total Package (factoring in entitlements such as pension and sick pay) with Average Support Worker Pay (including industry standard pension contributions), the gap is actually a staggering 64%.

Using an average pay rate for an NHS Band 3 Healthcare Assistant for comparison – a role that had been analysed by Korn Ferry and confirmed to be equivalent in skills, duties and responsibilities to the experienced social care worker⁴ – we found that:

- The **salary** of the NHS Healthcare Assistant – before overtime and enhanced hourly rates – rose to **£22,447⁵**, following the latest pay rises.
- **This is 14.7% more than a social care worker doing exactly the same job for a salary of £19,573⁶.**

But, unlike many social care workers, NHS employees can access enhanced pay that is significantly above standard hourly rates – e.g. for unsocial hours, night shifts, weekends and bank holidays.

When just a typical amount of this benefit is factored into the pay comparison, the real disparity between the two identical roles is made clear.

In fact, on average, roles in this pay band take home £27,609 per year as their ‘Total Pay’.

➤ Average Support Worker pay⁷

Basic annual salary	Basic salary as hourly rate
£19,573	£10.01

➤ Band 3 NHS Healthcare Assistant – mid point

Basic annual salary	Basic salary as hourly rate
£22,447	£11.48
‘Total Pay’ ⁸ salary	‘Total Pay’ as equivalent hourly rate
£27,609	£14.12

3. Government press release, 19th July 2022: ‘NHS staff to receive pay rise’

4. Unfair To Care – Understanding the pay gap and how to close it, Community Integrated Care. July 2021

5. NHS Agenda for Change Pay Scale for 2022/23. Band 3 mid-point between ‘entry step point’ and ‘top step point’ calculated at £11.48/hr

6. Figures used are average rates for Support Worker roles in England (outside London) and are taken from the National Care Forum’s Workforce Review, October 2022

7. Figures used are average rates for Support Worker roles in England (outside London) and are taken from the National Care Forum’s Workforce Review, October 2022

8. Total Pay includes enhancements for evenings, weekend, unsocial hours etc. Based on a typical amount of this enhanced pay factored in

A GENERATION TO REACH PARITY

It is clear that the pay increases in social care are not moving towards greater pay parity and fairer salaries to any significant extent.

This year, NHS Band 3 pay rose by 6.6%, compared to an average pay rise of 8.2% for social care Support Workers, meaning that the percentage pay rise for a social care Support Worker was 1.6% higher than that received by their NHS peers.

However, given the reduced salary starting point of social care Support Workers, the higher pay received by NHS workers meant that pay rises in health counted for much more.

The financial gap between NHS and social care workers opened by a further £590 this year – £8,036 in 2022, compared to £7,447 in last year's report.

In addition, as we explore further, it is likely that this year's pay rises for social care workers are driven by exceptional circumstances. Many providers are currently subsidising pay through their limited financial reserves. As inflation, competition in other sectors and burnout all drive colleagues to explore better paying careers in other sectors, many providers have raised their salaries beyond the funding that they receive from local authorities. There are obvious restraints on this level of increase being repeated – and even sustained – in years to come.

Previous years' increases show that 2022 may indeed be an exception.

Casting our view back further – the 2019 general election – we can see that, over the past 4 years, NHS Band 3 pay has grown by 17.4% and Support Worker pay by 23.3%.

That's a gain of 5.9%, or an average of 1.5% per year.

WHILST AT FIRST GLANCE THIS PERCENTAGE GAIN MAY SEEM ENCOURAGING, IN FACT, PROJECTING THIS RATE OF INCREASE FORWARD IT WILL TAKE 23 YEARS – AN ENTIRE GENERATION – FOR A SOCIAL CARE WORKER TO MATCH THE PAY OF THEIR NHS EQUIVALENTS.

This is exclusive of the range of other entitlements, including pension and sick pay, which significantly bolster NHS pay and are all respectively reduced or absent within social care.

Indeed, when we look at this 'Total Package'⁹ for NHS equivalents, it will be an astonishing 33 years, before parity will be reached.

Remember, we are reflecting upon people who have exactly comparable roles in parallel sectors. Parity should not take a generation to reach.

**CHANGE IS
NEEDED NOW**

9. NHS Mean Total Package includes pension contributions and other contractual benefits such as sick pay



23 YEARS TO FAIR PAY IS NOT FAIR PLAY.

COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE DOES NOT SEEK TO SLOW OR CURTAIL ANY PROGRESSION IN PAY FOR OUR NHS PARTNERS.

However, we do believe that it is wrong – for everyone – to have such an unjustifiable pay gap between provably comparable positions within a co-dependent system. The workforce crisis is here now. We cannot wait a generation for progress.

EQUAL ROLES, EQUAL IMPACT

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. This stance fails to recognise the demands of support delivered within social care, as well as the shift over decades that has increasingly seen challenging and technical clinical and behavioural support provided directly within the care sector.

To find a practical view of the skillsets needed by social care workers, we can explore the training that Community Integrated Care delivers to its frontline workers, whose roles are within the scope of the Korn Ferry analysis.

Community Integrated Care measures these skills using their **Capability Framework**, through which every colleague receives specific training and development built around the core needs of the people they support. 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 environments.

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.

SOCIAL CARE WORKERS WHO REMAIN LOYAL TO THE PEOPLE THEY SUPPORT, RATHER THAN MOVE INTO SIMILAR ROLES WITHIN THE NHS, HAVE EFFECTIVELY WORKED FOR ZERO PAY FOR THE LAST THREE AND A HALF MONTHS OF 2022.

JAMES IS LEAVING THE JOB HE LOVES



Dimensions is a national not-for-profit organisation supporting people with learning disabilities, autism, behaviours of distress and with complex health needs.

Like so many other care providers, it is caught in a cycle of recruitment and staff turnover as a consequence of a lack of funding for competitive and fair salaries.

Here, the injustice of low pay in the sector is starkly illustrated by their Support Worker, James.

Having a sister who accesses nutrition through a PEG tube¹⁰ and supporting others who share these needs, James is skilled at ensuring PEG tubes are kept clean.

Whilst visiting his sister when she was in hospital, James noted that none of the senior nurses there were confident about how to do this and eventually James stepped in to use his experience and expertise, offering guidance on how to do it.

James is going to leave social care, not because he doesn't love his job, the people he supports, or his team, but because he has his own family to think about. James knows he can get a better paid job in the NHS tomorrow, and with the cost-of-living crisis to consider, his decision, in his own words, is "a no brainer".

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**JAMES IS GOING TO LEAVE
SOCIAL CARE, NOT BECAUSE
HE DOESN'T LOVE HIS JOB, THE
PEOPLE HE SUPPORTS, OR HIS
TEAM, BUT BECAUSE HE HAS HIS
OWN FAMILY TO THINK ABOUT.**

10. A tube that provides nutrition via the abdominal wall, directly into the stomach

THE GREAT RESIGNATION CAUSES PUBLIC SECTOR PAY DROP



But what has happened to wages in the public sector since our last report? Having established social care's equal standing with other publicly-funded roles and delivered a compelling argument for equal pay in the first Unfair To Care, Community Integrated Care asked Korn Ferry to revisit the salary comparisons to provide updated figures for this year.

We found:

- **The average annual salary for a full-time social care Support Worker was £19,573 per annum¹¹.**
- **The average wage for equivalent roles in the public and not-for-profit sector was £26,327.**

This means that the pay gap between social care Support Workers and their equivalents in local government and not-for-profit has *decreased* from 39% to 35% over the past 18 months.

At face value, this might be cause for celebration – pay rises in social care reducing the gap with other sectors. Sadly however, this change does not reflect increases in social care pay but, suggests Korn Ferry, may indicate demographic change within the public sector workforce that is seeing the rapid exit of its experienced colleagues.

This interpretation of Korn Ferry's analysis points to a contraction of pay in the public sector, caused by 'The Great Resignation' which has seen older workers leaving the public sector labour market and being replaced by younger, less experienced and consequently, less well-paid workers.

According to research undertaken by the TUC, the number of people aged 50-65 who were not actively looking for work increased by over 200,000 between the third quarters of 2019 and 2021¹², reversing a 25-year trend that had seen older people extending, rather than shortening, their active working lives.

Far from representing a levelling-up of the social care salary against its public sector counterparts, these new figures highlight one of the driving forces in the social care talent drain. With intense competition from outside of the social care sector, the vacancy rate has risen 52% since 2020/21¹³.

11. Figures used are average rates for Support Worker roles in England (outside London) and are taken from the National Care Forum's Workforce Review, October 2022

12. The TUC: Older Workers after the Pandemic: Creating an Inclusive Labour Market. Feb 2022

13. 'The State of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce in England', Skills for Care, 2022.

This counterintuitive picture of bad news disguised as good news can be seen in the break, for the first time in five years, from National Living Wage pay rise patterns. For half a decade, pay rises for frontline social care workers in the not-for-profit sector have directly correlated with the same percentage rises in the National Living Wage. This year, for the first time, we have seen change as sector pay has risen by 8.2% compared to National Living Wage increase of 6.6%¹⁴.

This initial cause for celebration is actually a cause for deep concern. As social care vacancies hit their highest level since records began in 2012 and inflation drives increases in competitor sectors, care providers are desperately providing whatever increases they can to try to stem their attrition rates. However, there has been no dedicated injection of public funding to meet these rises in pay – instead, in many cases, organisations are depleting their financial reserves, an ultimately unsustainable action. Many care providers are keeping today's problems at bay by pulling their only emergency lever.

The social care sector is unique in that it, largely, has one main funder – local authorities. Unlike central Government, which funds the NHS, local authorities cannot borrow to finance day-to-day spending and they must deliver balanced budgets or utilise their reserves. Local authorities have faced enormous financial pressures for years and must now absorb £2.4 billion in extra cost pressures as a result of inflation, energy costs, and rises in the National Living Wage¹⁵. This has all conspired to make meeting the challenges of low pay impossible for them.

As a result, providers are facing a catch-22 problem, where they cannot secure extra funding for pay but must provide some uplifts in a bid to recruit and retain, as the pay rates in other industries race ahead and inflation rises. Hft's 2022 Social Care Pulse Check found that 80% of providers believe local authority fees cannot fully cover wages. This presents a bleak picture when combined with information from a recent financial impact assessment, commissioned by members of the CQC Market Oversight Scheme, which saw all provider CEOs surveyed expressing their belief that there will be an acceleration of unsustainable contracts being handed back to local authorities¹⁶.

As we will demonstrate in this report, the shockwaves of these challenges are being felt by people who draw upon support and their families, as well as frontline workers, whilst also destabilising the overall health and care system.

**THIS YEAR SOCIAL CARE
VACANCIES HIT THEIR
HIGHEST LEVEL SINCE
RECORDS BEGAN IN 2012**

14. NCF: The Social Care Reward: Pay, Terms and Conditions 2022-23

15. Local Government Association – June 2022

16. Learning Disability and Autism Social Care providers Financial Impact Assessment by Cordis Bright – October 2022

IN 2022, SUPPORT WORKERS EARN LESS THAN SHOP AND DISTRIBUTION CENTRE WORKERS.

Whilst Unfair To Care seeks to only compare the social care worker role to its peers in publicly-funded sectors, it is important to note that Support Worker roles are highly undervalued when compared to commercial roles that Korn Ferry has assessed as being significantly easier.

Korn Ferry's analysis scored Support Worker roles as being at least as accountable, responsible and skilled as roles such as a Police Community Support Officer, Senior Teaching Assistant, and NHS Healthcare Assistant, and significantly more complex than a Checkout Assistant, reflecting the greater skill and personal accountability held by a social care position. Despite this, pay within retail is far greater.

According to research by The King's Fund, around 50% of care workers (which would equate to 395,000 of the 790,000 workers in the independent care sector) earn within 30 pence of the National Living Wage level. This means that nine of the 10 largest supermarkets pay more than social care¹⁷. As just one example of this gap in practice, in late October 2022, discount supermarket Aldi increased their minimum hourly rate to £11 – well above the median social care hourly wage.

BASIC RETAIL SALARIES¹⁸

ALDI	£11.00
LIDL	£10.90
TESCO	£10.90
JOHN LEWIS / WAITROSE	£10.75

AMAZON DELIVERY¹⁹

BASIC	£10.50 – 11.50
OVERTIME	£15.75 – 22.90
NIGHT RATES	£12.21 – 13.41
BENEFITS PACKAGE VALUE	£700



17. The King's Fund, August 2022

18. Retail Gazette, October 2022

19. www.JobsAtAmazon.co.uk

4. PUBLIC OPINION



91% SAY SOCIAL CARE IS IMPORTANT

As the UK stood clapping on their doorsteps to show their support for frontline workers in the spring and summer of 2020, it was clear that a national appreciation for those in both health and social care had been awakened.

But now the applause has ended, to what extent has this activity, and the associated high-profile coverage, impacted the public's view of social care and its importance to society? As a sector quietly accustomed to second place status alongside the NHS and often only considered relevant by politicians at the points it intersects with our healthcare partner, how are social care workers now perceived next to their NHS counterparts?

IS IT TIME THAT OUR POLITICIANS ALIGNED THEIR VIEWS ON SOCIAL CARE WITH THOSE OF THE ELECTORATE?

In November 2022, Community Integrated Care commissioned global leaders in market research, Ipsos, to find out²⁰.

In a survey designed by us, we asked a demographically representative sample of over 2000 adults in Great Britain between the ages of 16 and 75 four key questions²¹.

- How important, if at all, would you say a) social care workers, and b) NHS workers are to society in the UK?
- To what extent are shortages of a) social care workers and b) NHS workers a problem for society in the UK, or not, or do you think there are no shortages of this kind of worker?
- Overall, which one skill classification best describes a) social care workers, and b) NHS workers? (Skilled/semi-skilled/unskilled)
- And, if a social care worker and an NHS worker were doing jobs that had equivalent skills, complexity and responsibilities, which one should typically earn more (in salary and benefits) than the other, or should they both earn the same?

20. On behalf of Community Integrated Care, Ipsos interviewed a representative quota sample of 2,056 adults aged 16-75 in Great Britain using its online omnibus between 4th – 7th November 2022. Data has been weighted to the known offline population proportions of this audience for age, working status and social grade within gender, and for government office region.

21. The respondents were asked about social care workers (and defined social care as the support of disabled people in the community – e.g. in care services, in people's own homes, etc.) and NHS workers (with the NHS defined as government funded health services to support people within health centres – e.g. hospitals, surgeries, etc. – and the community).

THE RESULTS

91% believe social care workers are important to society in the UK.

When asked to rate the societal importance of social care and NHS workers on a scale from 'Very Important' to 'Not at all Important' **91% of respondents felt that social care workers are fairly important or above (25.5% fairly, 65.5% very important)**, with 94% giving these answers for NHS workers (15.3 % fairly and 78.5% very important).

90% believe social care workers to be skilled or semi-skilled.

When it came to choosing the skill classification which best describes social care and NHS workers, **social care workers are seen to be either skilled or semi-skilled by 90% of the respondents** (54% opted for skilled whilst 36% selected semi-skilled) with only 4% selecting "unskilled" for social care. For the NHS, the proportions were different, with a total of 94% selecting skilled or semi-skilled – comprising 81% skilled and 13% semi-skilled. 2% of the sample selected unskilled.

85% of respondents believe that shortages of social care workers are a problem for society in the UK.

The two sectors were also closely aligned when respondents were asked to what extent shortages of social care and NHS workers respectively presented a problem for society in the UK. Selecting on a scale from 'a major problem' to 'I do not believe there is a shortage of this kind of worker' **85% of those surveyed believed social care shortages were a problem (18.5% minor problem, 66.6% major problem)**, and 88% thought NHS shortages were a problem (13% minor problem, 75% major problem). Only 3% and 4% respectively did not believe that there is a shortage of NHS or social care workers.

61% believe that social care workers should typically earn about the same in salary and benefits as NHS workers.

When it came to earnings, **61% of respondents believed that, where a person was doing a job that required equivalent skills, complexity and responsibilities, both social care and NHS workers should earn about the same in salary and benefits.** 7% of respondents believed that social care workers should typically earn more with 24% believing NHS workers should typically earn more. 8% said "Don't know" to this question.



91% BELIEVE SOCIAL CARE WORKERS ARE IMPORTANT TO SOCIETY IN THE UK

5. THE IMPACT

**IN THIS SECTION OF OUR REPORT,
WE LOOK AT THE IMPACT OF
LOW PAY ON PEOPLE WHO
WORK IN AND DRAW ON SOCIAL
CARE - AND WIDER SOCIETY.**





ON COLLEAGUES

THE COST OF CARING

The UK is in the grip of the most severe cost-of-living crisis since the 1950s, with 87% of adults in the UK saying their cost-of-living has gone up²².

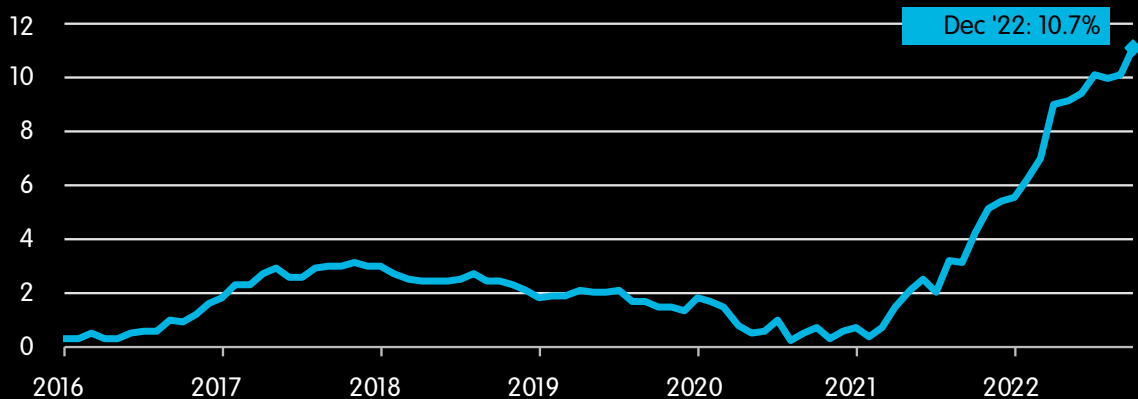
According to the Office for National Statistics, inflation rose from just under 0.5% at the start of 2021 to 10.7% by December 2022²³. The cost of food in the United Kingdom increased by more than 13% between August 2021 and August 2022 – the highest price rises since 1989²⁴. At the same time, domestic energy prices have more than doubled and, for most households, will increase further once the Government's Energy Price Guarantee changes in April.

For those on a Support Worker's salary, these basic necessities represent a much higher proportion of their take-home pay than the average UK worker - around half for most. Now the cost-of-living crisis is eating even further into what remains, and with Support Workers less likely to have savings to fall back on, they are being hit disproportionately hard.

Pay benchmarking data from the National Care Forum states that the average not-for-profit pay rate in England for Support Workers, outside of London, is £10.01 (October 2022)²⁵. The Living Wage Foundation, as of September 2022, stated that the Real Living Wage outside of London is £10.90²⁶. Every hour that the average social care Support Worker works is 89p below the rate independently assessed as the minimum figure to enjoy a reasonable quality of life.

INFLATION ROSE DURING 2021 AND 2022

% annual change in consumer prices (CPI)



Source: ONS, CPI annual inflation rate, series D7G7 [14 December 2022 update]

22. The rising cost of living and its impact on individuals in Great Britain: November 2021 to March 2022

23. Source: ONS, CPI annual inflation rate [14 December 2022 update]

24. ONS, Consumer price inflation, UK: August 2022

25. NCF: The Social Care Reward: Pay, Terms and Conditions 2022-23

26. Living Wage Foundation | For The Real Cost Of Living

SUPPORT WORKERS “AT LEAST TWICE AS LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE FOOD INSECURITY AS HEALTH WORKERS.”

In November 2022, the Trussell Trust announced that use of food banks had almost doubled between 2014/15 and 2021/22, with the Trust supplying 2.1m food parcels during the past year²⁷. As the cost-of-living crisis has really taken hold, the number of people being referred to the Trussell Trust’s food banks for the first time jumped by 40% to 145,000 in just a few months.

Among these is a growing number of social care Support Workers. A survey by the Health Foundation published in October 2022²⁸ found that residential care workers experienced much higher rates of financial hardship than most other sectors, and were at least

twice as likely to experience food insecurity as health workers. Their dependent children were nearly four times as likely to experience material deprivation.

Community Integrated Care has set up its own food parcel service and emergency financial assistance schemes in all of its regions – types of intervention which are becoming common across care providers.

THE REALITY OF LIFE ON A SUPPORT WORKER’S PAY MEANS THAT EVERY DAY IS A BUDGETING CHALLENGE. OFTEN, THE SMALL, UNEXPECTED EXPENSES THAT MOST PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO MANAGE CAN PROVE DISASTROUS WHEN THERE IS NO FINANCIAL CUSHION. THE STRESS OF LIVING ON A FINANCIAL KNIFE EDGE WHILST PERFORMING A JOB THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO SOCIETY IS AN INJUSTICE THAT UNFAIR TO CARE IS WORKING TO REDRESS.

CAN SOCIAL CARE AFFORD TO LOSE ALMOST HALF ITS WORKFORCE?

Alternative Future Group (AFG) is one of the largest not-for-profit social care charities in the North West. It employs around 1600 frontline workers and supports approximately 1000 people who have a range of learning disabilities and mental health needs.

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. In response, it surveyed its workforce to understand the impact and risks of this crisis.

The results are alarming.

Of the 75% of AFG’s colleagues who responded to the survey, almost three quarters (72%) agreed or strongly agreed that they ran out of money before pay day and more than half (53%) resorted to using credit cards or borrowing money from lenders to cover basics such as food and living costs. This meant that, unsurprisingly, 65% of the workforce were concerned about their financial situation.



60% of the respondents also said they had to do regular overtime in order to top up their salary.

Worryingly, for both AFG and the wider adult social care sector, 47% of respondents stated they may be forced to leave their jobs in order to improve their salary.

And AFG is not unique. Across the entire social care sector, people are leaving jobs they love because of this crisis. This has resulted in the accelerated growth of unfilled vacancies in the sector - from 112,000 in 2021 to 165,000 by October 2022. Without decisive government investment to enable care providers to offer fair pay, the social care vacancy rate may well be even higher in 2023.

Used with the kind permission of Alternative Futures Group

27. Trussell Trust End-of-Year Stats Nov. 2022

28. The Cost of Caring: Poverty and Deprivation among residential care Workers in the UK



LIVING WITHOUT A SAFETY NET

Like many other people working in the social care sector, 37 year-old Allen Robinson (pictured above) doesn't have savings to fall back on if the worst happens.

So when he unexpectedly lost his home, he had no 'emergency fund' to finance a new flat and pay day was still a few weeks away.

Facing homelessness, Allen's only option was to stay with family or friends. But with his closest family almost 40 miles away, the commute to work for non-driver Allen would take hours and the fact that he works permanent nights made sofa surfing at friends' houses impossible.

"It was such a stressful time because I absolutely love my job and there was no question of me not being there for the people I support but it really brought home to me just how tricky my finances were. I didn't exactly have a lavish lifestyle but once the rent and bills were paid, there wasn't much left."

Explaining his predicament to his line manager, Allen was told about the Community Integrated Care Wellbeing Fund, a reserve that the charity has set aside to help staff deal with the sudden and unexpected life events that can create significant financial hardship.

The charity quickly organised a grant so that Allen could find and furnish a new flat close to the service where he works – a win-win for both him and the people he supports.

He added: *"My job is so rewarding and there is a deep sense of loyalty which keeps me, and Support Workers like me, in the sector. But the work should be paid much better than it is to ensure more people can do it."*

Now Allen is settled in to his new flat and, thanks to his continuing careful budgeting, he is learning to drive when funds allow.

"I'm really grateful that Community Integrated Care helped me out. It definitely solved a major worry for me."

"MY JOB IS SO REWARDING AND THERE IS A DEEP SENSE OF LOYALTY WHICH KEEPS ME, AND SUPPORT WORKERS LIKE ME, IN THE SECTOR. BUT THE WORK SHOULD BE PAID MUCH BETTER THAN IT IS TO ENSURE MORE PEOPLE CAN DO IT."



A

**CONSTANT
CHALLENGE**

THE CHALLENGES OF RECRUITMENT PLACE SIGNIFICANT PRESSURES ON MANAGERS OF CARE SERVICES. FOR MANY, A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THEIR WORKING DAY IS SPENT FIREFIGHTING THE CHALLENGES OF BEING SHORT-STAFFED AT A TIME WHEN THE OVERALL WORKFORCE, INCLUDING AGENCY COLLEAGUES, IS SIGNIFICANTLY DIMINISHED.

THE RECRUITMENT REVOLVING DOOR



Joe works as the Team Leader at a United Response Service in Southern England where, like the rest of the UK care sector, staff shortages are becoming a real issue.

"I'm currently two staff short within my service and several of my team have approached me saying that they are either actively looking for other jobs or potentially dropping to relief contracts²⁹ as the cost-of-living and inflation is overwhelming them. I have this gut-wrenching feeling that by the end of the year, I will be three or four staff down," he said.

But where people need support, there is no option to wait until new team members can be found to fill vacancies. This means that the use of agency staff, whose cost is significantly above that of full-time employees, is unavoidable.

“

Joe explains: *"For me as a Team Leader, I am feeling deflated and upset for my colleagues. I know times are hard, and I do fully understand that United Response is always doing its best, but I am worried the staffing issues across the sector could result in a lot of services closing."*

"Recruitment is so difficult. We are competing with other sectors that pay £10.50 minimum, with some up to £12.50 or £13 an hour. At £9.80, I don't believe we stand a chance."

And Joe himself is feeling the pressure: *"My own rent has gone up from £650 to £900, my shopping for the month has gone from around £120 to nearer £170 and my council tax has gone from £135 to £165. I am really feeling the strain."*

Reproduced with the kind permission of United Response, which supports young people and adults who have a range of mental health needs and disabilities.

“RECRUITMENT IS SO DIFFICULT – WE ARE COMPETING WITH SECTORS THAT PAY £10.50 MINIMUM, WITH SOME UP TO £12.50 OR £13 PER HOUR.”

29. A relief contract means that an individual works on an 'as and when' basis, with no advance agreement made on the particular number of hours or times of work.



TRYING TO HELP LIGHTEN THE LOAD – A FINANCIAL SAFETY NET TO SEE STAFF THROUGH A CRISIS.

As the burden of the cost-of-living crisis has begun to weigh more heavily, Community Integrated Care has been working to expand our range of colleague benefits, doing whatever we can to support the financial, physical, and mental wellbeing of our 5,500-strong workforce.

Nicola Barnes is Head of People Operations for Community Integrated Care. She has seen a rise in the number of people seeking help from the increased range of colleague benefits, totalling a £170k investment from the charity this year alone. She said: *“We are doing everything possible to help our amazing staff through these hard times and it is heart-breaking to see people who are working full-time being unable to do a grocery shop for their family because they have run out of money.”*

“We know that financial instability is the catalyst for so many additional problems in people’s lives, often with a really devastating impact on their physical and mental health. That’s why our Wellbeing Fund – which provides immediate monetary grants to colleagues facing extreme financial difficulty – is at the core of our support offering. Established four years ago, we are pleased to have been able to support many of our colleagues at some of the most stressful times they’ll ever experience.

“Helping people build a stronger long-term financial footing is really important to us, and so we ensure that all colleagues have access to free, safe and affordable financial advice through an organisation called Salary Finance. Our partnership with Salary Finance means that, as well as financial guidance, colleagues can also access low interest rate loans, a debt consolidation service and a salary advance option, helping them to avoid the dreaded payday loan.”

Inevitably, the pressure of trying to make ends meet is in itself an incredible strain, and that’s why Community Integrated Care has also expanded its free advice and counselling services, adding Spectrum Life, a provider of 24/7 mental health and wellbeing resources, to its range of benefits to provide free, confidential support, guidance and counselling for all aspects of personal, family and work life.

“We’ve also teamed up with Everymind at Work, our new mental health partners – which gives every colleague access to their really innovative app, with practical and proactive support and resources available 24/7 on a variety of topics.”

“Importantly, we are constantly reviewing what we can offer – within our limited financial envelope – to have the biggest impact on our colleagues. We’ve recently changed providers of our colleague discount platform, so that our people have quicker, easier access to a better range of everyday offers and we’ve announced that we will fund membership of The Blue Light Card for every employee – a brilliant scheme offering frontline workers incredible discounts on day-to-day items and activities.”

Nicola adds: *“Only the people who are living hand-to-mouth understand the pressure and stress it can inflict on every aspect of your life, so we want our colleagues to know that there is a safety net that they can rely on, whatever the issue.”*

“These are ways that we can make a difference with the limited financial resources that social care providers have available. However, no matter how strong your employee support offer, it can never offset the need for fair pay.”

ON LIVES

QUALITY SOCIAL CARE IS CONSISTENT AND RELIABLE

Every person deserves the opportunity to live a full and happy life. It is important that we truly appreciate how the workforce crisis impacts this being the reality for many people who draw upon social care.

Here, our Positive Behaviour Specialist, Victoria Martin, talks about the importance of consistent and reliable support, and the true impact of recruitment gaps.

“WE EXIST TO HELP THE PEOPLE WE SUPPORT LIVE THE MOST MEANINGFUL, FULFILLING AND JOYOUS LIVES, AND TO DO THAT, WE HAVE TO REALLY GET TO KNOW THEM.”



“

Living your best life means something different for everyone, so understanding what brings joy, what is important for self-fulfilment, and what makes someone feel secure is a fundamental part of high-quality support.

In fact, we use ‘Best Lives Possible’ as the guiding principle when we are developing a care package for somebody. We exist for no other reason than to help the people we support live the most meaningful, fulfilling and joyous lives, and to do that, we have to really get to know them.

The process of building a relationship with the people we support, however, is not just a matter of courtesy and professionalism – it is a necessity which can transform and even save lives. Using Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) we can help people to communicate and be understood, positively manage behaviours of concern, and ensure the people we support are safe and well and those around them are able to meet their needs.

Reliable, consistent and trusted social care is absolutely crucial for people with 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 understand.

I believe that the end of a strong supporting relationship can feel like a bereavement to many people who draw on social care. That’s why the recruitment crisis in social care strikes at the very basic human right to dignity, choice and respect, which should be fundamental for every person.”

VICTORIA MARTIN

”

SARAH* IS THRIVING WITH TRUSTED SUPPORT

19 year-old Sarah (pictured below with Support Worker Joy Irvine) has a complex learning disability, which means she has experienced challenges with living independently in the community for many years. At the core of this was her need, and right, to be supported by a consistent and skilled team, who she could build a strong relationship and shared understanding with.

Under Sarah's previous provider, much of her support was delivered by agency workers who changed on a regular basis, resulting in a fear of abandonment and real frustration. When close support relationships would breakdown, she would feel extremely vulnerable and place herself at risk of harm.

However, in April, Community Integrated Care proudly began supporting Sarah. The charity has worked hard to ensure that her support is delivered consistently, reliably, and knowledgeably by a dedicated staff team led by Support Worker, Joy Irvine. Together, they have become a regular and reassuring presence in her life.

As well as providing Sarah with the consistency that she needs, the team's growing appreciation of her needs and preferences has forged a strengthening relationship. Put simply, it is impossible to enable people to enjoy the best quality of life, without strong, stable, and person-centred relationships.

“

“Knowing that she will not lose me is a source of real comfort. Through having more stable relationships, Sarah is trusting people more and is far happier,” said Joy.

“We are really seeing an improvement in her overall wellbeing. Because of the strength of our relationships, we can communicate effectively with Sarah and support her to grow in independence. I think this is so important for everyone who accesses social care.”

”



* Name has been changed.

OLIVER'S STORY



Oliver Thomason's story encapsulates many of the problems that exist within the social care workforce.

Oliver (pictured above) is employed by Community Integrated Care to help mentor and support other disabled people to access sport and other community initiatives. He is passionate about his job which promotes physical activity and social connection – key to reducing the inequalities that see people who have learning disabilities lead lives that are 14-18 years shorter than the general population.

Oliver is part of a team developing new models of physical activity that have a seven-figure social return on investment. He works with many world-class organisations, like leading Premier League football clubs and the Rugby Football League. His role is exciting, diverse and impactful – yet despite this, he could not recruit a consistent Support Worker to join him in his fun and rewarding role.

"I have a learning disability, so I need someone to support me to work. I have a very important job role as Community Integrated Care's Sports Inclusion Coordinator. In this job role, I have helped hundreds of disabled people to become more active, make friends and volunteer in sport. These projects have a huge impact on people's health, wellbeing and happiness, so my role is very important.

It took more than 18 months, though, for me to recruit a Support Worker. This held me back from doing all the work that I could have done and meant that I couldn't make the difference to as many people as I wanted. It was really frustrating and stressful. I found it hard getting used to working with people, or having moments when I was unsupported.

There is a recruitment crisis in social care and I know that lots of other people cannot find a regular Support Worker to help them. I am lucky because I have a close family and people to support me, and I am very independent. For other people though, this means that their lives are limited and they experience the stress of not getting the support they need.

I know that social care needs more money to be able to pay people fairly. We see people leaving social care to choose better paying jobs, like with Amazon or supermarkets. This has a big impact on people's lives and it needs to change.

We need politicians to understand these problems and look at how they can help disabled people to find the support that they need."

Oliver's story reveals both the personal heartache and frustration that comes from workforce gaps, but moreover, the ways that innovative and impactful work by social care providers is constrained by a lack of capacity. His role, like so many in social care, is clearly value generating – supporting people to live healthier and more independent lives ultimately reduces healthcare consumption and increases productivity. Yet with constant gaps, the social care sector cannot deliver its fullest impact to society.

Of course, we cannot overlook the impact of the current system on family carers – both those who feel the impact of lack of support provision, and those who feel the constant pressures of turbulent support in the lives of their loved ones.

Around 80% of family carers state that they feel lonely and isolated, and a further 72% say that their responsibilities have impacted their mental health (Carers UK)³⁰. The personal toll of the social care pay gap is felt far and wide.

30. Carers UK State of Caring Survey 2018

ON SOCIETY

THE WIDER IMPACT OF SOCIAL CARE PAY INEQUALITY



£58.8BN

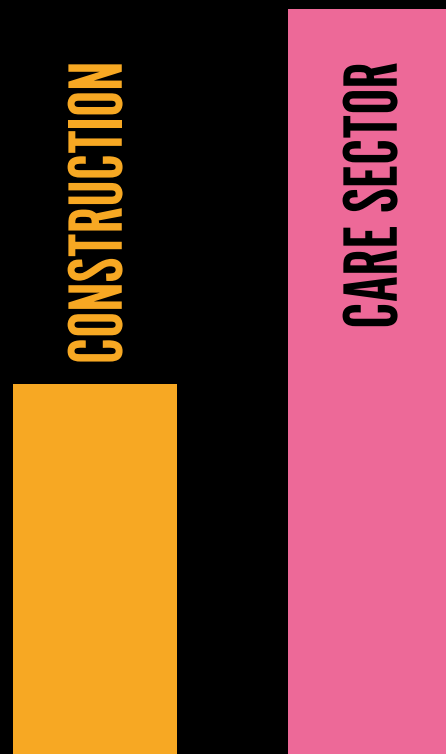
Independent data demonstrates that social care is a net economic contributor to the tune of £58.8bn annually in Great Britain³¹.



1.73M WORKFORCE

There are approximately 1.73m people working in social care across England³², Scotland³³ and Wales³⁴, all of whom contribute to their local economy, fuelling localised spending.

IT IS SAID THAT
**INVESTING 2% OF GDP
IN THE UK CARE SECTOR**
WOULD GENERATE TWICE
AS MANY JOBS AS THE
SAME INVESTMENT
IN CONSTRUCTION.



31. £51.5bn in England, £5.1bn in Scotland and at least £2.2.bn in Wales. Data gathered from: The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England (October 2022), Scotland's care Sector: An Economic Driver, The Enable Group (September 2021) and The Economic Value of the Adult Social Care sector - Wales - ICF Consulting 2018

32. 1.5m in England - The King's Fund - 'Key facts and figures about adult social care', July 2021

33. 134,000 in Scotland - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-care-service-adult-social-care-workforce-scotland/>

34. 91,000 in Wales - <https://socialcare.wales/news-stories/new-report-social-care-workforce>

A high-functioning social care sector is not just a nice-to-have, it's a foundational requirement for human rights.

Whilst there is a compelling economic argument for investing in social care and fixing the workforce crisis, the moral one is clearly of equal standing.

This report has already highlighted the desperate situation in which many social care workers find themselves because of the low pay trap. Indirectly, this negatively impacts the very people who depend upon high-quality public services; providers find it harder to retain the best people, and even for those who remain, the stress caused by their financial situation can spill over into their effectiveness at work.

Our society is richer when all citizens can lead meaningful and independent lives. Social care is a rare instance of a societal challenge in which both the moral imperative and the economic case for change are mutually reinforcing.

And the impacts are not only felt within the confines of the social care sector.

According to the NHS Confederation in February 2022, an average of just 42.7% of patients medically fit to leave hospital were actually discharged each day. Most of the approximately 13,000 daily delayed discharges (around 400,000 per month) happened primarily because of a lack of social care provision into which they could be safely discharged.

From this one statistic, it is possible to appreciate the wild inefficiency of this 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 in number.

But to categorise social care as just a means of enabling hospital discharges is to hugely underestimate its role in communities.

A lack of adult social care provision also means that the number of people waiting for social care is growing. **According to a survey by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) there were 542,000 people waiting for assessments³⁵, care packages, direct payments or reviews at the end of April 2022 – a 44% increase in less than six months.**

The impact of this delay can be devastating for the individual, and also for their loved ones who are left isolated and experiencing significant personal, and often financial, pressures. In fact, Carers UK reports that a shocking 72%³⁶ of carers state that they have experienced mental ill health as a result of their responsibilities.

The provision of sufficient social care would help alleviate many these issues. But without enough skilled people to provide that care, the future of both health and social care looks bleak.

IN APRIL 2022, 542,000 PEOPLE WERE AWAITING SOCIAL CARE ASSESSMENTS, CARE PACKAGES DIRECT PAYMENTS OR REVIEWS – UP 44% IN JUST SIX MONTHS

“TO IMPROVE DISCHARGE THERE NEEDS TO BE GREATER, LONGER TERM, INVESTMENT IN SOCIAL CARE AND COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES. WORKFORCE CHALLENGES HAVE A PARTICULAR IMPACT ON THE ABILITY TO DISCHARGE PATIENTS TO OTHER SETTINGS.” NHS Confederation

35. ADASS Survey: Waiting for Care April 2022

36. Carers UK State-of-Caring-Report-2018

A DEEPENING BUT RESOLVABLE CRISIS

Fair pay contributes to a real solution, enabling the recruitment and retention of more social care workers who have the passions and talents to change lives. However, right now, the sector is losing staff faster than it can recruit them. **According to Skills for Care's latest figures (October 2022) there are now 165,000 vacancies within the social care sector compared to 112,000 last year.**

THE REAL COST OF TEMPORARY STAFF

More widely, the recruitment crisis is depleting the energy and funds of social care providers.

According to a recent survey by Cordis Bright³⁷, which looked at the financial impact of the current economic climate on social care services for adults with a learning disability, the use of agency staff – which cost up to 80% more than a permanent employee – almost tripled between 2020 and 2022.

For Community Integrated Care, the 'agency premium' costs an extra £3m a year. This is money that could be used to advance the charity's social purpose, change the lives of people who access and deliver social care, and fund innovations that can make a lasting impact on society.



IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR STRANGERS TO UNDERSTAND THE NUANCED DETAIL OF HOW A PERSON WANTS TO BE SUPPORTED AND HOW THEY CAN BE ENABLED TO LEAD THE LIFE THAT THEY WANT.

As well as presenting the most expensive staffing solution, agency staff – irrespective of their personal attributes or skills – rarely present the best option for supporting those with learning disabilities.

For the majority of people, coping with a changing rota of unfamiliar faces in their homes can be extremely challenging. It is impossible for strangers to build trust or understand the nuanced detail of how a person wants to be supported and how they can be enabled to lead the life that they want.

“ULTIMATELY SOCIAL CARE IS COMPETING IN A REDUCED POOL OF LABOUR, NOT JUST WITH OTHER SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY SUCH AS RETAIL, HOSPITALITY AND THE NHS, BUT STAFFING AGENCIES THEMSELVES THAT THEN SELL STAFF TIME BACK TO THE PROVIDER AT A HIGHER RATE. SUPPLY STAFF TURNOVER AND VACANCY RATES ARE A GROWING PROBLEM FOR PROVIDERS... THE RISING VACANCY RATES CLEARLY INDICATE A FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM IN RECRUITING AND RETAINING SUFFICIENT STAFF.

(Learning Disability and Autism Social Care Providers Financial Impact Assessment: Cordis Bright 2022).

JOY IS LEARNING TO LEAD

Ensuring skilled and passionate employees have the opportunity to develop their skills within the care sector is key to retaining them.

Joy Irvine (pictured right) has found the job she loves near her home in Peterhead in Scotland, where she divides her time between two services which support people with complex learning and physical disabilities. She is committed to ensuring the people she supports live their best lives possible.

After just over two years as a Support Worker, Joy's obvious ability and her enjoyment of the work made her an ideal candidate for Community Integrated Care's Learn to LEAD programme. Designed by the charity's Learning and Development team to provide the most committed and talented Support Workers with the opportunity to become confident Service Leaders, the programme offers real career progression and ensures that talent is nurtured and retained within our workforce.

Joy was a perfect fit for the programme, having independently sought training and qualifications in her own time to help her understand the range of conditions and behaviours of concern that impact the lives of the people she supports.

Community Integrated Care's Learn to LEAD enables the charity to effectively develop our leaders from within, as well as properly succession plan for the future. This is the work of one provider. The social care sector as a whole needs an expert-led and fully-funded workforce strategy to transform frontline social care work from a job to a long-term, progressive career.



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“I love caring for people, I get so much out of seeing people flourish and the more complex the need, the more determined I am to support that person to live their best life possible,” said Joy, who studied for a year whilst juggling work and family to gain her SVQ3 – a compulsory qualification for social care workers in a supervisory role in Scotland's social care sector.

The Learn to LEAD programme lasts between 12 and 18 months and sees the successful future leaders participating in a series of training sessions, taking on increased responsibilities, and studying in order to develop all the skills needed for the role of Service Leader.

“I would love to lead my own service one day – but it is an immense job that involves being able to manage a great support team whilst maintaining a level of objectivity in order to provide the best care. That's the part I am having to really work on, because I get so attached to the people I support!”

”

SOCIAL CARE KEY TO LEVELLING UP

The Government's Levelling Up Agenda says: *"Good jobs and career opportunities where people live are central to the Government's levelling up ambitions. The route to achieving this is through greater devolution, which would empower local leaders to create local, integrated skills and employment offers tailored to the needs of local economies and residents."*³⁸

So, why is investment in social care omitted from the Levelling Up Agenda? Far from being a cost centre, social care is an untapped enabler of, and contributor to, the communities that need this boost the most. And it is a sector crying out for professional development.

As well as providing 2 million jobs across England and Scotland alone, which are largely rooted in areas of greater economic need, social care stimulates several other local sectors, boosting the purchasing of goods such as cleaning products and services, food and drink, building maintenance services, utilities, financial services, education and training, furniture and household goods, medical supplies, transport services and fuel.

SOCIAL CARE ADDS £58.8BN TO THE BRITISH ECONOMY

Social care delivered £58.8bn to the economy in Great Britain in 2022³⁹.

The financial implications of losing economically active people from the workforce – especially at a time when employment is high and the labour market extremely competitive as a result – are significant.

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.

However, from the perspective of the person being supported, there is a wealth of evidence which shows that professional social care support can increase and prolong independence and delay the progression of other complex health needs, such as dementia. Social care provision also reduces the need for avoidable placements in NHS hospitals and greater consumption of GP, police and other healthcare services.

But social care is also a stimulus for high-growth sectors that reach beyond the national economy, such as technology and scientific research. Solutions designed for health and social care frequently go on to become mainstream, consumer-facing technologies and innovations across the globe.

There are also models of support, technologies and building designs that promote greater quality of life for individuals, yet ultimately deliver a more cost-effective way of providing support for the taxpayer. There are compelling efficiencies that can be found in greater integration of services, adopting innovative technologies that promote independence and reduce dependence upon paid support.

There is also considerable scope to make public money go further, simply by focusing investment and commissioning on organisations that have an absolute commitment to fully utilising their investment for public good. At their very best, social care providers don't just offer services – they positively shape communities and deliver enormous social value.

Many providers, like Community Integrated Care, can point to developing innovative community and technological programmes which have been academically assessed as achieving an enormous social return on investment.

Our sector is constantly seeking to attract talented new people who can bring fresh passion, ideas and skills to transform the lives of the people we support. Social care is innately vocational. But people need a career, not a job, and this is why workforce reform is needed to make that possible.

38. The Levelling Up agenda, House of Commons, 15 June 2021

39. Data gathered from: The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England (October 2022), Scotland's care Sector: An Economic Driver, The Enable Group (September 2021) and The Economic Value of the Adult Social Care sector – Wales – ICF Consulting 2018

**PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL
CARE SUPPORT CAN
INCREASE AND PROLONG
INDEPENDENCE AND
DELAY THE PROGRESSION
OF OTHER COMPLEX
HEALTH NEEDS.**

WHERE THERE'S POLITICAL WILL, THERE'S A WAY.

Devolution has, no doubt, influenced how social care has evolved over the past 25 years in Scotland where Community Integrated Care supports 300 people and employs around 1,000 colleagues. The Scottish Parliament has arguably demonstrated a more consistent commitment to improving social care. This has manifested itself in a sector which is broadly better funded, has a workforce that is paid the Real Living Wage as a legal minimum and is both regulated and required to register in order to practice.

The impact of this is an environment in which, to some extent, providers are able to better operate and more readily recruit frontline workers. However, that's not to say the problem is fixed. These advantages however, have not cured the workforce challenges for the Scottish sector, with a 43% vacancy rate in 2020⁴⁰. Despite being much further along a road that Westminster has yet to set foot on, Scotland is still competing with hospitality, retail, and the NHS when it comes to pay.

In September 2020, the Scottish Parliament commissioned a thorough review of social care in Scotland, which questioned the effectiveness of local authorities' commissioning practices, how people-focused those practices were, and the level of consistency of social care provision across the country.

Chaired by Holyrood's former Director General for Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland, Derek Feeley, the review was tasked with recommending improvements to Scottish social care. Importantly, it took a human rights approach and focused on the outcomes achieved by and with people who use services, their carers and families, and those working in adult social care.

As a result, the Scottish Government has proposed the creation of a new National Care Service (NCS), which has expressed an intention to put human rights at the heart of services and frame social care as an investment in, rather than a cost to, society. The Bill is a long way from being implemented, but it demonstrates that government action can be taken in a sector that has so often been kicked into the political long-grass.

PUT HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE HEART OF SERVICES AND FRAME SOCIAL CARE AS AN INVESTMENT IN, RATHER THAN A COST TO, SOCIETY.

40. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-care-service-adult-social-care-workforce-scotland/>

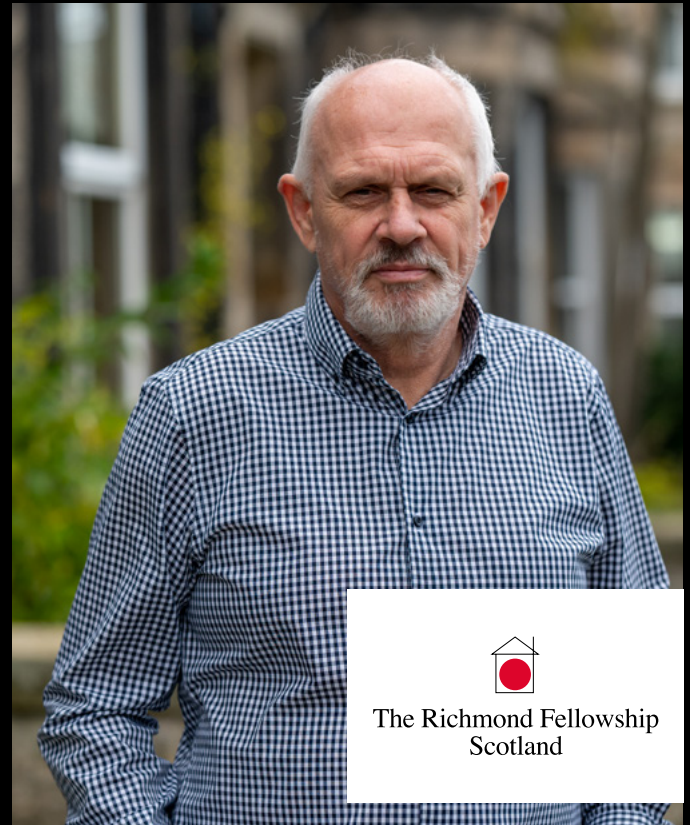
WE NEED TO BE BOLDER

The Richmond Fellowship is the largest provider of social care services in Scotland, delivering community-based services in 26 of the 32 local authorities for people who require support in their lives. Some may have mental health difficulties, learning disabilities or autism; others may have dementia, alcohol or drug issues.

Chief Executive, Austen Smyth (pictured right), views the ongoing recruitment his charity is engaged in as being akin to 'filling a leaking tank' – securing the right staff in the right places (no mean feat in a country with a tenth of the population of England) – only to see them leave. Some quit the sector altogether, whilst others choose to move to the NHS, local authorities or council day services, where they will be doing exactly the same job for considerably more pay.

In Austen's opinion, his charity's ability to recruit staff, only to then lose them to the same job in other better-paid areas of social care, is symptomatic of a misguided focus on achieving 'Best Value'. This, he says, has driven down the price of social care provision over the past 20 years, especially in the not-for-profit sector where it is not uncommon to see charities subsidising the running of services which have been knowingly commissioned at a loss-making rate.

“SCOTLAND IS FURTHER AHEAD IN A JOURNEY THAT IS BY NO MEANS AT AN END.”



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Austen says: *“Social care has been pushed to the bottom of the ladder when it comes to respect for what we do as a sector. We need to be bolder in highlighting the value that we add to people's lives and the benefits we deliver to society.*

“Things may be better in many respects than in England, but the truth is that Scotland is simply further ahead in a journey that is by no means at an end. There's a long way to go to get this sector the pay and respect it deserves.”

“Holyrood has a different perspective than Westminster and I believe that they do see the measure of a civilised society as being the way in which it cares for its most vulnerable members. However, they have the same funding issues to overcome and even if there is a will to effect change, it's really only the funding that actually makes it possible.”

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6.

THE SOLUTION

Last year, we predicted a worsening crisis in the sector if nothing was done to halt the loss of skilled Support Workers and attract new workers into social care. Unfortunately, our prediction came true and the attrition rate is accelerating.

Despite there being around 1.73m people employed in social care in Great Britain – greater than the entire NHS workforce – it remains a quietly industrious after-thought without even the most basic workforce strategy to support its continued survival.

Rather, successive Health and Social Care Ministers have stress-tested the innate kindness and humility of our compassionate core. It is now at breaking point, beset by low pay, poor terms and conditions, limited access to training, little opportunity for career development, and a lack of understanding and recognition for the work it undertakes on behalf of society.

We urge the Government to take the first step in resolving the crisis in the social care sector by addressing the injustice of pay disparity.

HERE ARE OUR **THREE** PRINCIPLES FOR SOLVING THE WORKFORCE CRISIS



PROVIDE AN IMMEDIATE AND FAIR PAY RISE TO ALL FRONTLINE SOCIAL CARE WORKERS, AS AN INITIAL STEP TOWARDS ACHIEVING EQUITY WITH THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND NHS.

In the immediacy, social care workers – including personal assistants – need an immediate pay rise that both delivers improvements in their quality of life and helps to attract more talent to the sector, reducing the 165,000 vacancies that currently exist.

In the short term, this needs to be an injection of funding from central government to uplift salaries to the Real Living Wage.

However, this cannot be the end of the journey. The social care pay gap must be closed by bringing NHS Agenda for Change terms and conditions to the care sector, with the necessary funding, to help end this injustice and these systemic issues.

Social care must arrive at complete parity with its NHS counterparts.



INSTRUCT AN EXPERT-LED SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE REVIEW WITH CROSS-PARTY SUPPORT TO DELIVER A FULLY-FUNDED SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY.

Unless this fundamental change is made – alongside a complementary health workforce plan – recruitment and retention will remain an on-going battle that drains resources and diverts focus away from the people we support.

Social care should not be used as a political football, deployed in campaigning to score points, without the necessary drive or action to fix things. It is time to end the rhetoric and deal with the reality.

The major parties must come together to support a social care workforce review within the current Parliament. It must draw upon the experiences and insight of people who access support, the colleagues 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. 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.

There must also be a strategic focus to reframe working in social care, to break the abhorrent stereotype that it is a low-skilled sector of last resort. We have broken that myth and the insult cannot be allowed to perpetuate, both out of respect for those who deliver social care and the necessity to grow and support the sector.



DELIVER WIDER PROGRESSIVE REFORM OF AND INVESTMENT IN SOCIAL CARE

This issue of pay and workforce strategy, of course, 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 report and many others.

Unfair To Care is a report on the specific issues of workforce pay, progression, recruitment and retention. It does not seek to provide an holistic strategy to address the many challenges and opportunities that exist within social care.

There are fundamental issues that need to be addressed within the social care 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 upon support, and prioritises the bold and 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 the 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 wider society.

WE URGE THE 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.

7. TIME FOR ACTION

THIS IS THE TIME TO BE BOLD. HISTORY SHOWS THAT MOMENTS OF NATIONAL CRISIS ARE OFTEN THE CATALYST FOR THE COUNTRY TO COME TOGETHER WITH RENEWED VIGOUR TO TACKLE ENTRENCHED PROBLEMS.

This report is not ignorant of the financial pressures faced by the Government at this moment. Instead, we believe that investment in social care will deliver greater efficiencies and unlock the potential of organisations that have the abilities to transform society at scale. Investment in social care will stimulate other sectors, which are stagnating at this time of recession.

As this report proves, the public recognises and wants to end this injustice of unequal pay and a broken system. Progressive reform of, and investment in, social care can become a public policy that commands a cross-party consensus.

We implore the Government, politicians of all sides, and all stakeholders to seize the opportunity for change. We need fair investment in the provision of quality social care, or we will see care providers fail. It is immoral that the limited funding for social care means that this is by default a low-pay sector. With greater collaboration, focus and strategy from central government we really can 'level up'.

We hope the public join us in fighting this injustice and that policymakers recognise their personal, moral responsibility for delivering the action that millions of people who access and provide support are depending upon.

**TOGETHER, WE
CAN ENSURE THAT
IT IS NO LONGER
UNFAIR TO CARE.**



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