

Policy package:

**Improving recruitment, retention
& training of social care staff**

Social Care Change Group

The challenge

Engage Britain

Britain needs more and better care. There aren't enough people working in care, and we don't value what staff we do have enough.

Here are some practical steps we can take to recruit, train, and retain more staff.

Policy summary

Fair and standardised pay

The first thing we have to do is to give people working in care **fair pay** and ensure this is **standardised nationally**.

Where care workers or Personal Assistants (PAs) are doing equivalent work to NHS staff, they should be paid the same wages.

Aligning pay with the NHS will help towards ensuring parity of esteem.

Valuing care workers

We need a **major overhaul of benefits**, ensuring care workers and PAs get proper sick pay and holiday, and paying for travel time.

As a society we need to **show how much we value care workers** as well as making their job easier. One simple way we can do that is to provide them with a 'green badge', similar to a 'blue badge', that will allow them to park for free close to their clients.

Caring is demanding. We need to **give staff more emotional and psychological support**.

We also need to give care workers and PAs a **louder collective** voice as part of the effort to increase the sector's status in society and secure for it a better deal.

Training & progression

Care workers need more and better ways to develop their careers so more of them stay and develop in the sector. PAs need access to high quality training specific to their role.

We need to **capture and properly reward experience** alongside new qualification routes. For example, a mentoring scheme in which experienced staff are paid to support new entrants.

These new career **progression routes need to be standardised and national** so that skills are properly rewarded and recognised.

A vocation to care

We need to **attract more people with a vocation to care** and reach out to underrepresented groups like men and younger people.

Careers in caring can be made more attractive by **trusting frontline staff to have input into care packages**, alongside the people they're caring for.

We need to **challenge the negative portrayal of care** with inspirational stories from the sector. One idea is for schemes like the Duke of Edinburgh awards to allow for more volunteering in the care sector.

Another is for immigration rules to be relaxed to allow more foreign recruits.

Long term reform

We need to understand the real cost of care, with government covering the shortfall between funding and delivery costs, including for fair pay and conditions.

The **care sector is very diverse**. The people who draw on care have very different needs and are served by some 17,000 different providers, incentivising change across them will require statutory guidance or legislation.

Any reforms must preserve and where possible **increase flexibility**, for example over the hiring and development of personal assistants. **Providers and commissioners should have more freedom** to tailor resources to need, with more stable funding from Local Authorities.

Change at this scale will only happen if government is held accountable to a **published 10 year plan**, similar to that adopted for the NHS.

Policy Ideas

SECTION 1. FAIR AND STANDARDISED PAY

The first thing we have to do is to give people working in care **fair pay** and ensure this is **standardised nationally**.

Where care workers or Personal Assistants (PAs) are doing equivalent work to NHS staff, they should be paid the same wages.

Aligning pay with the NHS will help towards ensuring parity of esteem.

IDEAS FOR CHANGE

FURTHER DETAILS

Clear pay structure and pay progression – consistent, competitive pay and paths for progression across the sector for care workers and PAs. With pay progression being able to be gained both through training, specialisation or experience

Align pay with NHS:

- Map responsibilities & competencies of caring jobs, and compare against appropriate NHS roles & bands
- Create banding (like [NHS Agenda for Change](#)) to standardise pay across the sector and bring into alignment with equivalent NHS bands. No-one working in care should be worse off as a result of this work
- Each band should set out skills and training required to progress to the next band, with checks on compliance and competency

Align pay across NHS and social care – to ensure a competitive wage

National pay review board:

- Set up a new body to undertake pay alignment with NHS work, set national pay scales against bands, and agree key skills and competencies for caring roles
- Rates set by pay board should be a minimum to allow for flexibility
- Pay review board should involve people who work in caring roles and draw on care in the work

Fair pay – ensuring people working in care are paid for their whole shift, not just the hours they are on visits, and any additional costs are covered (eg. petrol or other travel costs, car maintenance etc.)

National pay review board – to regularly review pay across roles in the sector. They would also look at the hourly rates for PAs across the country

SECTION 2. VALUING CARERS

We need a **major overhaul of benefits**, ensuring care workers and PAs get proper sick pay and holiday and paying for travel time. As a society we need to show how much we value care workers as well as making their job easier. One simple way we can do that is to provide them with a 'Green Badge, similar to a 'Blue Badge', that will allow them to park for free close to their clients. Caring can be demanding. We need to give staff more emotional and psychological support. We also need to give care workers a **louder collective voice** as part of the effort to increase the sector's status in society and secure for it a better deal.

IDEAS FOR CHANGE

National policy for consistent benefits and standards – including pay for travel time, sick pay, paid leave for training, Green Badge for carers

Improved support for care workers and PAs – for example:

- Emotional support or access to counselling
- Support for lone workers
- Mentors for care workers, especially for new recruits

Develop supervision standards for care workers – to ensure consistent access to support through supervision

Public awareness campaign – to capture the diversity of what social care is and its value, enhancing respect for the sector and careers within it, potentially including a national day for social care promotion

Enhanced voice for the sector – through a new professional body for people working in care

FURTHER DETAILS

Green Badge for care workers:

This would enable people working in care to be exempt from residential parking restrictions so they can park for free when making home visits.

Professional body for people working in care:

- Professional body to amplify voices, similar to the Royal College of Nursing
- Work with pay review board to set national pay bands
- Create training standards and compliance framework, and help care workers know their rights
- Create guidance on pay progression linked to experience, as well as training and specialisation
- Develop supervision standards for care workers
- Lead public awareness campaign to raise profile of caring as a vocation and as a career
- Work alongside existing unions and national regulators, and in alliance with bodies representing unpaid carers and people drawing on care
- Joining costs to be low enough to be affordable to all care workers

SECTION 3. TRAINING AND PROGRESSION

Care workers need more and better ways to develop their careers so more of them stay and develop in the sector. PAs need access to high quality training specific to their role. We need to **capture and properly reward experience** alongside new qualification routes. One way of doing this would be for a mentoring scheme in which experienced staff are paid to support new entrants. These new career **progression routes need to be standardized and national** so that skills are properly rewarded and recognised.

IDEAS FOR CHANGE

FURTHER DETAILS

Clear career paths & opportunities for development and pay progression – including via training, specialisation (eg dementia care) or experience

Career paths and pay progression:

- As well as training and specialisation, pathways are needed which are based on experience. Eg. one care provider offers 6 month and 2 year pay increases across all care roles to recognise the skills developed and experience gained with time
- Professional body to provide guidance to managers on progress and competency check-ins with staff

National training and qualifications framework developed by newly established professional body, including:

- A nationally recognised framework, curriculum and set of qualifications
- Standardised, accredited induction training, & refresher training
- CQC inspections to monitor and enforce training provision
- Specialised and co-produced training for PAs

National training and qualifications framework:

- Different rules in England, Scotland and Wales places large administrative burden on providers working across nations. New professional body should ensure all nations have the same requirements, without watering down existing regulations in Scotland or Wales.
- Eg. In Wales, it is a legal requirement on providers to ensure that every care worker has to do their NVQ level 2 in health and social care within 1 year of starting in role.
- Training should be co-produced with people working in and drawing on care, and appropriate to roles / caring environments

Training opportunities made available to personal assistants as well as carers – with support available both the personal assistant and those who employ them

Opportunities to attain transferable clinical training – with these being able to count towards future qualifications (e.g. nurse or nursing associate)

Creating the conditions for training & development – eg. paid leave for training, time for reflective practice and supervision from experienced staff

National care training register – to log training, make sure care workers have met min requirements and can carry qualifications to different jobs. Enforce via provider claims to the Workforce Development Fund being linked to completion of the register

SECTION 4. A VOCATION TO CARE

We need to **attract more people with a vocation to care** and reach out to underrepresented groups like men and younger people. Careers in caring can be made more attractive by **trusting frontline staff to make decisions about care packages**, alongside the people they're caring for.

We need to **challenge the negative portrayal of care** with inspirational stories from the sector. One idea is for schemes like the Duke of Edinburgh awards to allow for more volunteering in the care sector. Another is for immigration rules to be relaxed to allow more foreign recruits.

IDEAS FOR CHANGE

Empowering care workers to have greater say – for example:

- Being involved in designing care packages, with people drawing on care
- Encourage employers to enable staff to be involved in decisions and improve ways of working

A values-based recruitment campaign – to bring in people with the values and attitudes that will make them great carers, targeted towards meeting local needs, eg:

- People from diverse backgrounds and all genders with a particular focus on men
- People look for a career change, people used to working in teams and bringing a mixture of skills that can be transferred
- People returning work after having a family

A targeted education program for young people about careers in care – eg: through education, Duke of Edinburgh awards and National Citizens Service

Provide financial support for learning opportunities – to give people access to the sector

Change immigration rules – to make it easier for both skilled care staff and new care staff to enter the UK

FURTHER DETAILS

Changing immigration rules:

- Allow training in care work to be recognised for student visa applications
- Simplify bureaucracy around arranging visas for care workers and PAs, eg: enable providers to be able to request the no. of licenses they need, without having named people for these licenses
- Lower the minimum income level for getting the right to stay and work here so it reflects the lowest wage on the care progression structure/real living wage
- Support providers, especially small companies, and employers of PAs with immigration bureaucracy

SECTION 5. LONG-TERM REFORM

We need to understand the real cost of care, with government covering the shortfall between funding and delivery costs, including for fair pay and conditions. The **care sector is very diverse**. The people who draw on care have very different needs and are served by some 17,000 different providers, incentivising change across them will require statutory guidance or legislation. Any reforms must preserve and where possible **increase flexibility**, for example over the hiring and development of personal assistants. **Providers and commissioners should have more freedom** to tailor resources to need, with more stable funding from Local Authorities. Change at this scale will only happen if government is held accountable to a **published 10 year plan**, similar to that adopted for the NHS.

IDEAS FOR CHANGE

Understand cost of care and investment needed – understand the difference between what providers are paid and the real cost of care, as well as identifying where investment is most needed

Centralised approach to social care funding – with central government covering shortfalls between funding and delivery of care including fair pay and conditions

More stable, longer-term funding from Local Authorities to providers - to allow for more flexible approaches to care

Enhanced regulation – to ensure that standards (on training, benefits, conditions) are consistent across providers

Enabling a broad mix of providers – to provide choice, with encouragement of more social enterprises and charitable organisations that provide care services

Statutory guidance or legislation – to incentivise change across providers, setting out minimum standards on pay, benefits, training etc.

Long term 10-year plan – including the investment needed and mechanisms for paying for it, and details of national standards for pay, benefits and training for care staff and personal assistants

FURTHER DETAILS

Incentivising change across providers:

- Attracting permanent staff and them staying in their jobs, meaning that providers do not have to pay high agency fees for temporary staff, is an incentive to deliver better staff benefits
- Local Authorities and commissioners have limited powers to stipulate what policies providers have
- Statutory guidance or legislation is needed to provide a mandate from central government, with the DHSC working with the new professional body and pay review board to set minimum standards around pay, benefits, training, progression etc
- Statutory guidance or legislation needs to be enforced by the national regulators in England, Scotland and Wales.
- Commissioners would then have more power to specify the standards required of providers in their contracts
- More funding from central government would enable providers to meet minimum standards