

The Care Workers' Charity: Monthly Briefing

Date: January 2025

The Care Workers' Charity (CWC) is committed to supporting and advocating for care workers across the UK. Each month, we compile insights and updates from our advocacy efforts, the Care Worker Advisory Board and Champions project, and data collected from crisis grants and mental wellbeing support. This briefing aims to inform policymakers and stakeholders of the ongoing challenges facing the care sector workforce and ideas for collective action to address them.

1. Advocacy Work Updates

CWC continues to represent care worker voices at key stakeholder meetings, including:

- Workforce Strategy Oversight Executive Meeting Group for Skills for Care
- Responsible Use of Generative AI Steering Committee (Oxford Project)
- IMPACT
- Centre for Care
- This month we also attended sector roundtables focused on recruitment and retention of younger people (having previously recruited care workers for [What Do Social Care Providers Think Of Young Workers? | The King's Fund](#)) and helping businesses adopt a compassionate approach to workforce management.

2. Insights from the Care Worker Advisory Board

The Care Worker Advisory Board and Champions, consisting of 30 frontline care workers, launched in December 2024. They have participated in National Care Service (NCS) roundtables alongside people drawing on care, unpaid carers, and representatives from 40 organisations. A report will be launched on 6th March, highlighting key themes:

- **Centering Care Voices:** We need collaborative forums for co-creating solutions
- **A Shared Vision for Social Care:** The sector needs a clear, unified “North Star” focusing on enabling people to live fulfilling lives with dignity, autonomy, and holistic support.
- **Elevating the Care Workforce:** Reform must prioritise better pay, career progression, and training to enhance the professional status of care workers.
- **Social Care as a Distinct Sector:** Social care must be recognised and valued as a sector in its own right, with dedicated funding and priorities. Improved referral pathways with the NHS are necessary, but social care cannot be seen solely in relation to healthcare.

- **Building on Existing Work:** Future reform efforts should enhance and build upon existing initiatives rather than starting again.
- **Sustainable Funding and Investment:** The NCS is a promising idea in principle, but it must be properly resourced to ensure its effectiveness and longevity.
- **Valuing Care in Society:** A wider societal conversation is needed to redefine how we value both people drawing on care and those providing it. Shifting public perceptions and fostering a culture that recognises the vital contribution of social care.

3. Themes Emerging from Crisis Grants

Our crisis grants programme provides valuable insight into the challenges faced by care workers:

- **Total amount awarded:** £22,922
- **Key observations:**
 - 45% of grants awarded to international recruits.
 - Most grants requested for daily living costs (utilities, food, rent), followed by car repairs.
 - Support workers were the highest applicants, followed by healthcare assistants.
 - Post-Christmas financial strain resulted in an increased number of applications.

Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHWB) Grants:

- Total applications in January: 3
- Funding closed due to budget constraints.
- Applicants cited anxiety and depression as primary concerns.

4. Success Stories and Positive Outcomes

Mike, originally from Ghana, came to the UK on a working visa and has been a care worker for over a year. Facing an eviction notice and financial difficulties, Mike applied for a grant from CWC. Receiving this support allowed him to secure housing and continue working with peace of mind. *"I couldn't afford this move without help. Your support not only helped me financially but mentally and emotionally too, which allowed me to continue doing my job."*

5. Calls to Action

We urge MPs and stakeholders to consider:

- Investing in long-term funding for the social care workforce.
- Introducing registration for English care workers, as is already in place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Establishing a national professional body for care workers to foster a sense of belonging and provide advice and support, governance, education and advocacy.

- Supporting initiatives to enhance pay, training, and career development.
- Recognising social care as an independent sector requiring distinct policy focus.
- Promoting mental health and wellbeing support initiatives within the care sector.

For further information or to discuss any points raised, please contact us at keeley@thecwc.org.uk.