



Humza Yousaf
First Minister
Scottish Government
Via e-mail

8th January 2024

Dear First Minister,

Fair Work in Social Care

I write as a co signatory to the letter you received from CCPS, dated 10th November 2023, on pay for social care workers in Scotland.

Thank you for your response in which you set out your personal commitment to the principles of Fair Work for the social care sector; however, the decision to only increase pay for social care workers to £12 per hour from April 2024, in line with the Real Living Wage of £12 per hour, falls far short of the principles of Fair Work and parity for third sector social care workers with those in the public sector doing the same job and raises a question of the Scottish Governments commitment to Fair Work for the social care work force.

To re-emphasise the point made by the CEO of CCPS, the headline figure of a 10% increase in pay for social care workers is impressive and higher than most sectors average pay increases of late; however, a 10% increase on a poor salary, maintains people on a poor salary and is not sufficient recognition and reward for the difficult and excellent role third sector social care workers perform within the Health and Social Care system. You have personally acknowledged the critical importance of the social care workforce and the crucial services that are delivered by these workers, yet policy decisions do not reflect this.

Increasing salaries to £12 per hour from April 2024 is not enough to help my organisation, Ark, as an employer of over 700 social care workers with the challenges we face in recruiting and retaining staff; £12 per hour is not enough to promote social care as a good career option for those considering a change and therefore sustaining the sector and the wider health and social care system; £12 per hour is not enough to establish salary levels in social care above those in retail or hospitality; roles that are valuable, but do not carry anything like the challenges and responsibility placed upon social care workers. £12 per hour is simply, not enough.

Third sector social care workers make decisions and are engaged in practice every day, that keeps highly vulnerable people safe and without exaggeration keeps people alive, that is surely worthy of better recognition and reward than the Real Living Wage of £12 per hour.

You have also detailed the record sums allocated for social care pay in recent years and whilst I acknowledge the efforts made by the Scottish Government, you are simply addressing years of cuts to service budgets and huge sums of money being taken out of social care over many years. A culture of competitive tendering and procurement approaches that are not fit for purpose within social care have also driven costs and therefore pay, terms and conditions for social care workers down, that is the stark reality.



My final point is one that I am asked regularly by my own staff; why can't Ark do more to supplement pay for its own workers and top up the £12 per hour, in this case. The answer is simple, we already do. Of the twelve local authority areas Ark provides care and support services in, five are running at a deficit and significant deficits in some areas. This is not acceptable nor sustainable.

Like many providers we have attempted to subsidise the poor contract increases we have received over several years that did not match the increase in costs, including non-care staff costs. The decisions we take to maintain provision in those local authority areas that are running at deficit levels, ensures services to vulnerable people continue and keeps our own staff in jobs; however, it is not viable over the longer term.

Having personally worked in social care for 30 years, I am fully aware of the range of issues and challenges delivering social care presents to Government; local authorities and providers of social care. The current situation is not sustainable, and my fear is that my organisation, other organisations, and the social care system in general, will collapse because we simply cannot resource the services we are contracted to provide, and the Government will not be able to meet the demand for services. This will become a much more significant challenge for the Government than funding services appropriately.

Paying social care staff a decent wage, will stabilise recruitment and retention; will stabilise organisations; will stabilise the sector and will ensure sustainability of the wider Health and Social Care system.

I would urge you First Minister, to re-consider the decision to increase social care workers pay to only £12 per hour and instead pay social care workers £13 per hour from April 2024. This in my view is the absolute minimum a social care worker should be paid and the differential between £13 per hour for social care workers and £12 per hour for the Real Living Wage, should be maintained in future years.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Yours sincerely,



Bobby Duffy
Ark, CEO
On behalf of Ark's 700 social care workers