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5 KEY ASKS

SOCIAL CARE



GMB is committed to campaigning in five key priority areas for all of the social care workforce.

1. PAY JUSTICE

Set a bargaining agenda that delivers pay justice, including campaigning for more funding for the social care sector, to give workers a real living wage as a minimum and in line with Local Government nationally agreed pay structures.

2. PROFESSIONAL WORK

To truly recognise the professionals working within the social care sector by introducing a registration system in England, in line with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

National training standards to enable genuine career progression and respect.

3. SAFE STAFFING LEVELS

Safe levels of staffing to ensure staff feel safe at work and ensure quality of service delivery to all service users and residents.

4. NATIONAL SECTORAL BARGAINING

National Bargaining arrangements to ensure fair pay and terms across social care, irrelevant of employer.

5. A NATIONAL CARE SERVICE

A universal national care service which is funded from the public purse through taxation, that formalises a universal pay structure with excellent terms and conditions. A system that is focussed on care and not on profits.



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ASK 1

Pay Justice

GMB commits to campaigning for Pay Justice for all of the social care workforce, as well as for sufficient levels of funding for the entire sector.

For far too long, the social care workforce has been underpaid and undervalued. GMB seeks to remove the expectation that if you work in social care you do so on minimum rates of pay. All entry levels should be paid as a minimum at a real living wage rate of pay, with all other roles taken through a job evaluation process, ideally in line with local government pay structures.

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, finally social care workers were recognised as the key workers they are. Much of the workforce continued to work, at times putting their own lives on the line in order to continue providing the care that our most vulnerable in society need. All of this, whilst being denied access to appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), regular testing and pay justice.

The lack of contractual sick pay for much of the social care workforce, remains a real problem and one of the biggest issues facing GMB members. GMB is committed to campaigning for full contractual sick pay to be an entitlement for all the social care workforce.

GMB welcomed that during Covid-19 the Government committed extra funding to social care, including £600 million in England as an emergency fund for Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) measures. (£58 million in Scotland; £35 million in Wales; and £20 million in Northern Ireland). An additional funding commitment of £546 million has also been made as part of the Government's Winter Plan for Social Care. The money has been allocated to local authorities to distribute locally. However, we have real and genuine concerns that this money is not reaching the frontline.



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A crucial element of IPC in social care is strict adherence to self-isolation guidance from the Government. Yet as most of the social care workforce (97%) are only entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), this has proven to be difficult advice for our members to follow. The statutory right to £95.85 per week SSP is simply an unrealistic amount of money to be able to survive on, especially when the social care workforce is predominantly on minimum rates of pay.

Many workers within social care do not even qualify for SSP due to earnings thresholds that need to be met. This is driving the social care workforce even further into poverty. A workforce that is made up of predominately women and people from a Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) background.

The additional funding that has been made available was only ever intended to be directed towards the additional costs arising from the coronavirus outbreak. A new funding settlement is still needed to address the deep, structural problems in adult social care funding and pay for the workforce, including sick pay.

In the aftermath of the coronavirus outbreak, pay justice for the social care workforce that has sacrificed so much must be achieved. There can be no return to what was normal in the past. There can be no forgetting the hugely important role that the social care workforce performs in our society.

The highly skilled, predominantly female care workforce must be properly valued, 50 years on from the Equal Pay Act. The Covid-19 outbreak has shown it is our social care essential key workers that have helped keep the country going and it's time to recognise their worth. Nowhere is pay justice and equality needed more than in the care sector. Our highly skilled social care workforce is still not recognised for the incredible work they do. The minimum wage, or even the real living wage, is not acceptable and is not enough.

The Government need to ensure that in any reforms of social care that they recognise the value of this accomplished, predominantly female workforce. We will not allow for these key workers to be forgotten any longer.



ASK 2

Professionalisation of the Workforce

GMB commits to campaigning for professionalisation of the social care workforce to ensure true value and recognition.

GMB has always recognised that the social care workforce are professionals. The perception that the role is just a caring role and that anyone can do it, is outdated and insulting. Social care work has changed considerably over the last two decades. People entering the adult social care system are older and have more complex nursing needs. Coronavirus has highlighted just how essential this workforce is in the UK. Staff in social care need and deserve to be celebrated, recognised and valued.

GMB sponsored an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) in 2019 to look into the care system, funding and the state of staffing in the sector. Professionalisation of the workforce was right at the centre with recommendations calling for a workforce strategy to address this.

The APPG also called for an effective model of registration for England, in line with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Professional recognition such as a Royal School for Social Care could provide advanced training, development and genuine career progression, improving the lives of the workforce and those that need for care to be delivered. This should be linked to improved pay, terms and conditions. The sector cannot continue to ignore the needs of the older and most vulnerable by accepting that “anyone can do care”.

GMB is calling for an effective model of registration in England, in line with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and this in turn would assist in addressing the levels of pay injustice. We cannot allow a sticking plaster to be put onto social care. It is time that the government recognised that social care work is skilled and as such the pay, terms & conditions need to reflect this.



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ASK 3

Safe Staffing Levels

GMB commits to campaigning for safe staffing levels across the whole of the social care sector.

Safe staffing levels are one of the biggest concerns raised by GMB members in the sector. Staff report to us that they do not feel safe in work and that they are not able to provide the right level of care due to the low ratio of staff to residents within care home settings. Many staff believe that they are unable to provide good quality of care and that they are often at risk of failing in their duty to protect the residents in their care. Common examples of one care member to each floor during night shifts, when many of the residents require double handler care.

Prior to Coronavirus, there were already reports of 110,000 staffing vacancies within social care. It is estimated that 30% of the workforce leave the profession each year. This puts extreme pressures on the ability to provide services to adequate standards. Without proper investment in social care, professional recognition for the workforce and pay justice, this will not be resolved.



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Social care is not seen as an attractive profession due to low pay and high demands. Public support and perceptions of the social care workforce prior to Coronavirus was a workforce of low skill. However, this has changed. Coronavirus has shone a light on who the essential workers are in our society and the social care workforce are at the top of the list. Despite this, the social care workforce is considered to be lower in the hierarchy of importance when compared to colleagues working in health.

A recent Survation poll, conducted on behalf of GMB during Covid-19, identified that we were facing a social care crisis, as **4 in 5 care workers were expecting colleagues to quit**, with low pay being one of the main factors. **79%** of respondents thought that staff shortages were inevitable as people were unwilling to continue working at the current levels of pay amidst the increased risk posed by Covid-19.

Other results from the survey include:

71% believed colleagues would die after being infected with Covid-19 at work.

20% had considered quitting over the lack of PPE.

85% felt their health was at risk due to inadequate PPE.

86% were worried about taking Covid-19 home to their families.

GMB also has concerns on the potential impacts of the UK's Immigration Policy from the Home Office post-Brexit. The requirement to earn above £25,600 to be able to work in the UK, automatically rules out much of the current workforce in care.

ASK 4

National Sectoral Bargaining

GMB commits to campaigning for national sectoral collective bargaining on all pay, terms and conditions of employment.

GMB is campaigning for the establishment of a Social Care Partnership Board consisting of trade unions, service users, care providers, government and other key stakeholders such as those who commission care, to negotiate and agree a National Framework of pay, terms and conditions for the social care sector.

The social care workforce has been let down and feel absolutely abandoned by the Government and this has been exacerbated by Covid-19.

The workforce was left out of original Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) guidance. Priority was given to the NHS for access to PPE. There have been severe delays and poor access to testing, as well being denied full pay for Covid-19 related absences and self-isolation instructions. All of this on minimum rates of pay. It is no wonder that there are few people coming forward to work in social care.

The fragmentation of social care over years of private care providers securing contracts means that there is no central control of pay, terms and conditions in the sector. It took a global pandemic for the government to no longer be able to deny this fact.

National sectoral collective bargaining across the hugely fragmented workforce, to determine national structures for pay and standards is the only way to resolve the huge crisis in social care.



ASK 5

A National Care Service

GMB commits to campaigning for a National Care Service, funded publicly through taxation, formalising a universal pay structure with excellent terms & conditions.

Our social care system is in crisis. It is crumbling beneath us after years of austerity and chronic underfunding. Social care is an essential part of the infrastructure of our society. An ageing population who need support and access to high quality and sustainable services to help them live with dignity. A social care workforce who are over worked and undervalued despite finally being recognised as the essential key workers they are. Social care needs to be put to the top of any Governments agenda.

During one of the biggest challenges to our health and social care system, the lack of sufficient social care funding over many years quickly became apparent. This led to catastrophic impacts on the older and most vulnerable people and care homes across the country. These impacts will never be forgotten by the social care workforce.

The social care sector could, with the right amount of funding take some of the pressures from the NHS to deal with much of the older people's needs and requirements before NHS provision is required. The sector already has a skilled workforce that is providing nursing care which goes mostly unrecognised. The Covid-19 outbreak has proven the benefit of care homes and domiciliary care to the NHS as they have acted as a buffer, preventing many more deaths, as the NHS would not have been able to provide the care for as many people as they have done within the social care sector.

However, the profit motive needs to be stripped out of the care sector. That's why GMB is calling for the care sector to be brought in house under local government control. A universal national care service which is funded from the public purse through taxation, that formalises a universal pay structure with excellent terms and conditions. Fundamentally, a service focussed on care and not profit.



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There are also concerns about the very much privatised nature of social care, which is currently almost entirely provided by independent companies. In the last 10 years we have seen crisis in two major care providers: Southern Cross collapsed; Four Seasons Healthcare went into Administration.

The current financial model of social care is unsustainable. The potential impacts of Covid-19, a 'no deal Brexit' and the Government's Immigration Policy are yet unknown. Funding within social care is unclear. Some reports suggest that there is not enough money going into the social care system and further investment is needed from Government to support the independent care sector that is providing care for state funded residents. However, other reports suggest that large amounts of profits are being extracted out of social care via hidden profit extraction mechanisms, high rents, loans and dividends paid to investors.

There are also issues within Domiciliary Care, with workers being paid by the minute or hour, rather than for the whole of their working time. A block care delivery model of commissioning needs to be adopted. GMB recently launched our Ethical Home Care Commissioning Charter 2020 to assist in our campaigning for reform in this area.

Covid-19 has highlighted the need for more control and less fragmentation of the social care sector. We have seen catastrophic numbers of deaths caused by poor planning and an inability to manage the needs of the sector throughout the Pandemic. Serious underfunding of local authorities has seen the need to contract out these services, forcing the predominantly female workforce to accept a move into privatised care, which normally results in cuts to their future pay, terms and conditions.

The APPG backed GMB's call for a national care body/service and parity of esteem with the NHS. In the absence of government decisions to bring care back in house, the national care body would provide a national identity for social care – professionalising the workforce, with standardised training and a career development framework.



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Help us in lobbying to improve the Social Care Sector in your workplace!

SIGN OUR PETITION FOR SICK PAY!

SIGN & SHARE our petition for contractual sick pay:

www.gmb.org.uk/care-pay

LOBBY YOUR MP!

Contact your elected representative

England	members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP
Scotland	beta.parliament.scot/msps/current-and-previous-msps
Wales	business.senedd.wales/mgFindMember
N. Ireland	aims.niassembly.gov.uk/mlas/search

Copy us in @ publicservices@gmb.org.uk

LOBBY SOCIAL CARE MINISTERS!

Contact Ministers of State for social care directly

England	Matt Hancock/Helen Whatley MP	contactus.dh.gov.uk/
Wales	Vaughan Gething MS	vaughan.getthing@gov.wales
Scotland	Jeanne Freeman MSP	www.jeanefreeman.scot/contact-us/
N. Ireland	Robin Swann MLA	robin.swann@mha.niassembly.gov.uk



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Go to gmb.org.uk/join



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SPEAK TO COLLEAGUES!

Pass this booklet onto a non-union member and ask them to join GMB to be a part of the campaign. They can join using the QR code on this page and by going to:

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