

[Insert organisation Logo]

Your name
Your address
Your Address
Your Address
Your Telephone

[Insert Date]

[Name of MP]

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

Dear [insert MP name],

I would like to express serious concerns from the adult social care sector about the current climate in which we find ourselves operating. As members of the Care Workers Union (CWU), we are the voice of workers and are at the frontline of the sector; we see and experience the pressures faced by heroic care staff who simply want the best for their patients.

We also provide an essential service and work very hard for wages at the lower end of the pay scale. Our exposure to the Virus in the early days of the pandemic inevitably took a heavy toll on our health, resulting in many of us leaving the profession and in many deaths.

While we note the announcement of the government's plan for health and social care funding and reform, the Health & Social Care Levy does nothing to resolve the existing workforce crisis that we are experiencing now.

Following eighteen incredibly difficult months, many of us are finding our positions extremely challenging and are genuinely concerned about the sustainability of services, especially in the coming winter months. Many staff are leaving the sector due to stress and poor pay. The workforce crisis in social care is having a direct impact on the NHS, local authorities and on the people seeking care and support. Some home care providers are handing contracts back to local authorities because they simply cannot find the workforce to deliver them, while others cannot accept any new residents because they do not have sufficient staff to support them. The ability to support the elderly, the infirm, and people being discharged from hospital, either at home or in a care home, is also being seriously impacted.

Even before the pandemic, adult social care in England was teetering on the brink; [real terms local authority spending on adult social care in 2018/19 was 2% lower than in 2010](#). This occurred at the same time as demand for social care was increasing. As a result, it has been estimated that approximately [1.5 million older adults had unmet care needs](#). In the long term, these pressures will only increase [further; between 2017 and 2040, the population aged 65 or over is projected to increase by 49%](#).

This workforce crisis is shortly about to be made significantly worse with the implementation of vaccination as a condition of employment in care homes from 11th November 2021. The government's own estimates predict [40,000 care home workers will refuse a vaccine](#). This is on top of a pre-pandemic situation of [112,000 vacancies](#) in adult social care roles. The CWU has formally responded to the government's consultation to extend mandatory vaccination for Covid-19 and flu to all frontline health and social care settings. Surveys conducted by CWU show that 57% of health and social care workers (HCW) disagree with the vaccine becoming mandatory and 37% of HCW will seriously consider leaving the sector if this measure is introduced. If 37% of workers are considering leaving a sector which is already under severe pressure, it would be catastrophic. It is important to note that this is not the result of vaccine hesitancy; indeed, the CWU survey also showed that 77% of HCW have already been

[Insert organisation Logo]

vaccinated. These results show that many HCW are against the use of compulsion and force in being vaccinated and feel that care workers deserve the basic human right to choose.

Let us also not forget that this is a sector which was left to navigate the pandemic by itself during the first wave and then subsequently [blamed by the Prime Minister for not following procedures](#). In fact, [government guidance was to discharge Covid-19 patients from hospitals directly into care homes without a prior negative test](#), demonstrating the government's hypocrisy, especially when much of the world already knew that Covid-19 spread asymptotically.

You will also know, following the [workforce burnout and resilience enquiry](#), that the people working in social care are exhausted and highly stressed. People are leaving the sector rapidly and action is needed immediately. Due to the lack of suitable staff, existing workers are having to pick up many additional hours.

Many not-for-profit social care providers have operated at a loss during the pandemic. They are having to pay staff increased wages to cover shifts (or pay high agency costs) without additional funding to cover this. It should also be noted that our care workers, who carry out an incredibly hard job, have not been recognised either through their pay or through parity of esteem, with the government announcing yet another public sector pay freeze following freezes during the decade of austerity. This is a sad indictment, and it did not go unnoticed in England that there has been no Government bonus for care staff, unlike in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Given the additional and ongoing problems for providers, our workforce and the people we support set out in this letter, please could you question the Government on what its response to this ongoing crisis is?

The Care Workers Union is calling for the following as a bare minimum in any Winter Plan:

- **Pay a retention bonus to care staff** which is not taxed and not subject to Universal Credit rules.
- **An increase and continuation of current funding** to manage all the IPC and testing requirements we still face (the Infection Control & Rapid Testing Fund which ends at the end of September), plus a **wholly flexible Workforce Capacity Fund** now to support immediate recruitment & retention challenges & upskilling/ training
- **Delay the implementation date** for making vaccination a condition of deployment until it is implemented for the NHS and whole social care sector
- Help local areas create **staffing contingency & mutual aid plans**
- **Add all care workers to the shortage occupation list** now for a two-year period
- **Cancel the decision to stop the additional payment of £20 a week to recipients of Universal Credit** because some of the work force will be in receipt of this benefit because of the insufficiency of their wages.

Yours sincerely,

[Your signature]

[Your name]

[Insert organisation Logo]

[Organisation name]