



# **Changing Conversations on Care: The Care Workers' Charity 2024 Manifesto**

## **Care connects us**

Care connects us. It's a fundamental aspect of human existence, tending to essential needs and overall well-being, intricately interwoven within our communities, schools, and relationships with friends, family, and neighbours. However, discussions about care often carry a stigma. Care has been historically undervalued and underpaid, perpetuated by sexism, classism, ableism, ageism, and racism. This systemic undervaluation underscores the need for a profound shift in perspective and policy. We hope those with decision-making power will read and act on this manifesto. It's time to rewrite the narrative, fostering open conversations and recognising care for what it truly is: an ever-present force that unifies us. The Care Workers' Charity believes in honouring and respecting care workers by ensuring they receive the financial and emotional support they deserve. In doing so, we aim to construct a more compassionate and equitable world for everyone.

**So let's talk about care**

## Value Not Cost

Although contributing significantly to the economy, care is often characterised as a cost rather than an asset (a Gross Value Added of £51.5 billion in England alone). This is before recognising the immense impact on the lives of people who rely on social care. We advocate moving away from crisis-centric campaign messages to sharing the economic and societal value it brings. We need to share stories showing the intrinsic fulfilment of working in the care sector and its invaluable impact on people drawing on care to live their lives with choice and autonomy.

## Pay

When we discuss the value of care, we must also discuss the value of those who provide it. A thank-you goes a long way but pay must recognise the level of skills and experience people bring and reflect the role's responsibility. This is why we call for a £15 minimum wage for care workers. At some point in our lives, each of us may rely on the care and support of a care worker. When that moment comes, we want care workers to receive the financial and well-being rewards the role deserves. We cannot expect care workers to deliver excellent care without being supported themselves.

## **Pride in Care**

Despite the undeniable challenges of their profession, care workers consistently tell us how passionate they feel about their jobs, rooted in a commitment to positively impact the lives of those they support. We call for working conditions that allow people to feel they are doing the best job: adequate travel time, advanced rota planning, job security and a supportive environment. Care can and should allow those who draw upon social care the choice to lead the lives they want. It is equally vital to centre the needs of care workers. Taking the same humanistic/human rights approach to the care workforce we advocate for people who draw on social care.

## **Connection and Interconnection**

Individuals relying on social care, unpaid carers, and professional care workers constitute distinct groups with unique needs, yet these needs frequently intersect. Collaborating and forming partnerships with groups engaged in disability rights, fair wages, anti-racism, gender equality, and other advocacy campaigns is essential. It is also imperative to acknowledge the interconnectedness of social care and the NHS, actively seeking opportunities for shared learning and collaboration rather than competition for recognition and funding. We want to be part of a collective effort to foster a compassionate and equitable landscape.

**So let's talk about care...**