

**23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023**

Dear Mr Yousaf/Ms Forbes/Ms Regan,

You may be aware that Scottish Care and our members have produced the 'Social Care Campaign' which aims to raise the profile of social care in Scotland by 'shining a light' on care homes and homecare services, the crucial role they play and the impact they have on people's lives.

Throughout March 2023, we have been sharing the stories of those who work in and are connected to homecare and care homes via social media using the hashtags **#careaboutcare** and **#shinealight**.

The social care sector in Scotland is facing a crisis like never before. As the leading candidates for the First Minister of Scotland, we need your support to help address the issues faced by the sector and to make social care a priority. Part of our ask is to support our 'Social Care Campaign' by signing our support pledge [here](#), and joining in on the campaign during this lobby month and beyond.

Social care is experiencing the worse workforce crisis in recent years. As reported in our [2021 Workforce Recruitment & Retention Report](#), 87.8% of providers cited recruitment and retention as problematic. According to the [Staff Vacancies in Care Services 2021 joint report](#) from SSSC and the Care Inspectorate, the percentage of care services reporting vacancies has increased to its highest since 2016, with 47% of services reporting vacancies.

Staff are not adequately valued or rewarded for their vitally important role. Poor terms and conditions contribute to recruitment difficulties, rising sickness absence and high vacancy levels. This puts the capacity, sustainability, and quality of care services at considerable risk ([Audit Scotland – Social Care Briefing 2022](#)).

There is a serious need to push for change in the sector to ensure that social care workers receive financial recompense and terms and conditions that reflect their true value. The minimum wage for social care workers is £10.90 an hour, which is almost 20% less than someone doing the same job in the NHS.

The lack of fair contracts and underfunding that the social care sector has experienced to date has resulted in disproportionate salaries and terms and conditions for frontline social care workers. Therefore we are calling for an immediate uplift to allow social care staff to be paid at least £12 per hour.

Throughout the pandemic, social care garnered a lot of media attention, most of which was negative with the perception that independent care providers are profiteering. This highlights the need to be transparent about the true cost of care.

Scottish Care has long argued that the funding of social care in Scotland is wholly inadequate. For care homes, the National Care Home Contract means that any care home not in the public sector is paid just under £800 per nursing home resident per week, this means a reality of £4.28 per hour, in comparison to the cost of an after school club, which costs £12.50 per hour.

Meanwhile, for homecare, the last [Homecare Deficit report from the Homecare Association in 2021](#) shows that independent care at home services across Scotland are paid £18.62 per hour weighted average. Their [2023 figures](#) show that the new Minimum Price for Homecare should be £26.50 per hour.

The inadequacy in funding pushes costs down and risks quality care, as well as highlighting a significant society-wide issue in how we value care and support especially for older people. We ask you to value, invest in and properly fund the sector. Everyone will rely on social care at some point in their lives. We want to see action taken to achieve real parity of esteem between social care and the NHS.

Lastly, we need your help in raising the profile of the social care sector. More work needs to be done so that the wider public can recognise and understand the unique and valuable contribution that social care fills by supporting people to live independently for longer and with human rights.

Now is the time to care about care and shine a light on the social care sector. Join the campaign to support social care in Scotland and help address the crisis in care.

You can find out more about the 'Social Care Campaign' at: <https://scottishcare.org/social-care-campaign>

**We wish you well in your leadership campaign. Regardless of the outcome but especially if you are successful in becoming First Minister, we urge you to truly support Scotland to be a country that cares about care by making this a key and immediate priority.**

Yours sincerely,

Scottish Care – on behalf of all our members.

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**Web** [www.scottishcare.org](http://www.scottishcare.org)

