



VALUING THE HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE

Scottish Labour's Charter

INTRODUCTION

Scotland's National Health Service and social care sector is nothing without the people who work in it.

For far too long, however, the commitment and sacrifice they make day in and day out has been taken for granted by this Scottish Government.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, our health and social care sectors were struggling. Nurses and doctors repeatedly warned about the under-resourcing of the health service and the high risk of staff burnout, whilst social care workers were stretched to breaking point.

Additionally, years of devastating cuts in local councils across Scotland, alongside the impact of Covid-19, have led to social care workers being under-appreciated with little or no support.

This SNP Government has had 15 years to show our workforce how much it matters, but it has failed time and time again to deliver.

As the party who proudly established the NHS, Scottish Labour presents this charter - Valuing the Health and Social Care Workforce – which declares our promises to staff.



PAY

WE WILL DELIVER A FAIR PAY RISE FOR ALL NHS STAFF AND SOCIAL CARE WORKERS.

We will put in place a long-term pay deal for staff that addresses historic underfunding and low pay, and makes the NHS an attractive place to train and work.

The derisory pay rise of 48p per hour awarded to social care staff further highlights why this sector feels undervalued and unappreciated by the Scottish Government.

We will deliver £15 per hour for social care workers, with an immediate rise to £12 from 1 April 2022. We will also establish collective bargaining arrangements for social care staff.

In addition, we will end all zero-hour contracts in the social care sector to ensure the workforce is properly valued and has greater financial security.



WELLBEING

WE WILL ENSURE THAT OUR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE STAFF ARE SUPPORTED AND TREATED WITH DIGNITY.

It is fundamentally wrong that those who dedicate their lives to treating and caring for others do not receive the support they need and deserve.

The pandemic has highlighted the exhaustive efforts and sacrifices made by our staff, and we must ensure that they can access appropriate support as and when they need it.

We will introduce comprehensive mental health and wellbeing support for those working in the sector and ensure that a culture of safe and healthy work is paramount.

Our workforce should also have access to appropriate break facilities, healthy food, and water in workplaces. Furthermore, it is imperative that rest breaks and annual leave are protected.

Scottish Labour is committed to ensuring that our health and social care workers are treated with dignity, and we will liaise with staff and trade unions to explore new ways of valuing their sacrifices and contributions.



DEVELOPMENT

WE WILL CONTINUALLY INVEST IN OUR STAFF AND ENCOURAGE THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESSION.

Staff in health and social care have been working flat out over the last two years with little or no time set aside to allow them to continue their professional development. It is in everyone's interest that our hardworking staff are given the time and space to pursue such critical activities.

We will ensure that there is protected time for learning, including greater access to education, training, and development opportunities for all staff. Significantly, we will develop pathways for career progression in health and social care.

We will ensure that all compulsory workforce training for social care staff is paid to both increase recruitment and encourage continued development.



WORKFORCE

WE WILL BUILD A WORKFORCE THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF SCOTLAND.

Our health and social care staff are being let down and put under growing and unnecessary pressure by the Scottish Government's failure to deliver a clear workforce plan. Moreover, legislation to ensure safe staffing is yet to be implemented.

We will deliver a health and social care workforce plan that meets the needs of the critically understaffed parts of our services, as opposed to the sticking plaster approach adopted by the Scottish Government. This will be a long-term plan that ensures we have the workforce needed to meet demand, whilst keeping our staff safe. We will consult with stakeholders and ensure that their voices are heard.

We are losing too many skilled staff due to inflexible rules and processes. To retain skilled staff, we support offering a working time review to every staff member considering retirement.

Social care workers must be treated as the skilled professionals they are, with a new approach to how we recruit and retain staff.

Alongside a fair wage and first-class training opportunities, we will fight for the Scottish Social Services Council registration fee to be fully funded by the Scottish Government.



FUNDING

WE WILL ENSURE THAT OUR STAFF WORK IN WELL-FUNDED NHS AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES.

Staff cannot, and should not, be expected to work in a health and social care system that is at breaking point. The problems facing our services – including over 680,000 people on waiting lists, unacceptable A&E waiting times, delayed discharges and cancelled care packages – are not insurmountable or to be accepted, but they require leadership and action, not more indecision and inactivity from the Scottish Government.

We will invest in a comprehensive NHS catch-up programme and plug the funding gap in social care.

Our staff need the resources to be able to carry out their duties and have a fulfilling career; Scottish Labour will ensure this happens.

We believe that this funding is vital because we do not see health and social care as a commodity, but as a long-term investment that benefits us all.





**Scottish
Labour**

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