

**Date: February 2026**

**Introduction:** The Care Workers Charity (The CWC) is committed to supporting and advocating for care workers across the UK. Each month, we collect insights and updates from our advocacy efforts, The Care Worker Advisory Board and Champions Project, and data collected from crisis grants and online communications with care workers. This briefing aims to inform policymakers and stakeholders of the ongoing challenges for the care sector workforce and the collective action needed to address them.

- 1. Advocacy Work Updates:** The CWC continues to represent care workers' voices at key stakeholder meetings, including:
  - Skills for Care: Workforce Strategy Oversight Executive Meeting Group
  - Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC): Workforce Advisory Group
  - IMPACT
  - Centre for Care
  - The Kings Fund
  - Throughout the month, our CEO has actively participated in multiple meetings and webinars to ensure the experiences and perspectives of care workers are consistently represented at national and sectoral levels.
- 2. Insights from The Care Worker Advisory Board and Champions Project:**
  - **Skills for Care Workforce Pathway Engagement Sessions (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February):** Advisory Board and Champions Project members attended two online engagement sessions with Skills for Care to review the proposed Workforce Pathway, including the introduction of a 'Senior Care Worker' role. This was an important opportunity for care workers to directly shape national workforce development plans and ensure their experience informed the pathway.
  - **HMRC National Minimum Wage Session (10<sup>th</sup> February):** Advisory Board and Champions members took part in an information session with HMRC, supporting improved understanding of tax, income and financial responsibilities affecting care workers.
  - **Windsor Castle Reception (11<sup>th</sup> February):** Our CEO, alongside ten care workers from the Advisory Board and Champions Project, attended a reception at Windsor Castle celebrating the contribution of care. Their Majesties and Prime

Minister Sir Keir Starmer were in attendance. This marked a significant moment to elevate care worker voices within a high-profile national setting and to recognise their essential role in society.

- **Advisory Board Meeting (20<sup>th</sup> February):** We convened our Advisory Board to explore delegated healthcare activities in depth. The discussion generated rich, experience-based insight, which will directly inform our forthcoming report on delegated healthcare activities.
- **NatWest Executive Lunch (25<sup>th</sup> February):** A member of our Advisory Board and Champions Project joined our CEO and Head of Fundraising at the NatWest Executive Lunch. This provided an opportunity to contribute to senior-level discussions on workforce resilience, financial wellbeing and the wider challenges facing the care sector, reinforcing the importance of collaboration in driving meaningful change.

### **3. Financial Grants:**

- Total number of Applications received – 115 (includes financial applications at all current stages for all grants)
- Total amount spent this month – £23,606
- Grants were awarded via, Crisis grants, East of England Refugee fund, Oxfordshire and Drapers.
- Applications this month were towards 11 areas in care workers lives that require financial support. These were (in order of high applications) Daily living costs, Preventing Eviction, Car repairs, Home Repairs, Household items, Health Improvement aids, moving costs, whitegoods, DRO/Bankruptcy fee, Funeral expenses and Travel Expenses.
- High number of Care workers/Senior Support workers and Health Care Assistants applied, with a few team leader and admin staff.
- The volume of applications for grants to support daily living expenses continues to rise significantly. Applicants consistently report escalating levels of debt and an ongoing inability to meet repayment obligations. Despite continued periods of cold weather, many individuals are unable to heat their homes due to outstanding utility arrears, placing them at risk of fuel poverty and associated health concerns. In addition, a growing number of applicants are falling behind on rent payments, heightening the risk of housing instability. Financial pressures are further compounded by the inability to fund essential car repairs. For many applicants, access to a reliable vehicle is critical to maintaining employment.

### **4. Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHWB):**

- We currently have some funding available for the Mental Health Wellbeing sessions and received 3 applications this month, of which one was declined for

not meeting the eligibility criteria and two approved. Applications that have been approved have cited depression, PTSD and bereavement which are preventing them for sustaining and balancing their lives professionally and personally.

## 5. Success Stories and Positive Outcomes:

Anna has been a Senior Care Worker for over 12 years. That's where she originally met her husband, Mark, who lives with multiple sclerosis. With two young children, family life can be a little hectic. So, when Mark's condition suddenly got worse and he had compromised mobility, he had to stop working and Anna became both breadwinner and carer.

Juggling her job and taking care of her family was going to be tough but she received some help,

"I'd already been offered a care assessment by the Local Authority to help to redesign the ground floor to make a bedroom and bathroom for Mark. I'd secured a disabled facilities grant and we also made a large family contributed towards the costs. We had no more savings and needed help to buy a large washer, that was large enough to wash Mark's bedding."

Anna reached out to The Care Workers' Charity and applied for a grant online.

"I applied online and thought that I might not get any more help, but after I sent in my documents The Care Workers' Charity gave me a grant to buy the washer we desperately needed. It's not easy but work has been really flexible and we are finally getting somewhere."

## 6. Calls to Action: We urge MP's and stakeholders to take the following action:

- **Prioritise Funding for Mental Wellbeing:** Ensure care workers have dedicated funding for mental health and wellbeing support, including access to counselling and peer support – recognising the emotional demands of care work.
- **Champion Co-Production:** Embed care worker co-production into the design on policies, training and workplace practises. Support and promote initiatives that embed care worker voices at every stage.
- **Address the Continued Impact of the Cost-of-Living Pressures in the Care Sector:** Push and advocate for an urgent review of pay, travel expense reimbursements, sick pay and financial protections for care workers.
- **Work With Our Advisory Board and Champions:** Our Advisory Board and Champions Project is made up of incredible care workers who bring valuable insight. If you'd like to collaborate with them, get in touch.

For further information or to discuss any points raised, please contact us at [olivia@thecwc.org.uk](mailto:olivia@thecwc.org.uk).