

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister

I will be brief.

I am writing to you as the CEO of a provider of social care to people with learning disabilities.

Our 600 staff are some of the people everybody clapped for not so long ago. The clapping has faded and we find ourselves back in reality. A reality that is grossly unfair and an insult to those carers that politicians say they really care about.

Despite the fact that our carers have to be highly trained; vetted; face internal and external inspections; supervise medications; work unsocial hours; and bring joy to the lives of vulnerable people, their value is not reflected in their pay.

We know that you are very good at numbers, so you will understand our concerns. Someone joining the NHS as an untrained Healthcare Assistant gets £1 an hour **more** than our fully trained care workers who have much more responsibility; someone stacking shelves at Aldi or LIDL gets paid 15% more. Surely this can't be right. Is it any wonder that we can't recruit carers?

We are facing a cost of living crisis and our staff are leaving to work in other industries – supermarkets for example which is less stressful work, no unsocial hours and a higher hourly rate. I can't close services if I don't have enough staff, we have to manage. We can't leave vulnerable and disabled people without support.

We can't recruit just anyone. To work in care you need commitment, great values, be intuitive, creative and intelligent.

I know that you keep increasing the National Minimum Wage and the National Living Wage, but that doesn't solve the problem. Some councils pass on the increase in the fees they pay us, some don't pass them on in full, so we have to pick up the tab. Every time the NMW/NLW goes up, guess what ALDI and LIDL do too.

I know that you've got quite a few problems of your own at the moment, but don't you think its time that we established a **social care living wage** which is funded properly. Maybe you could come and visit us – have a chat with our staff who support adults with learning disabilities – you will be surprised at the complexity of work they undertake, and maybe, just maybe you will get an insight into why they need to be recognised as professionals who deserve a professional salary.

There's no point in writing to tell me that the proposed reforms to social care are coming. We've been promised these since 2016 and if they ever arrive, will do nothing to address the pay imbalance in social care.

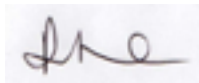
I'm raising this not just because it causes me recruitment and retention problems. I'm raising it because it is a situation that is unfair and unjust across the sector.

I wish there was an easy answer, and I know that there is not one. However, I have 'been around the block' in social care, and I am willing to do whatever is necessary to right this wrong, however long it takes.

I know that you believe in fairness and honesty. So do I, and honestly this is just not fair.

If I can do anything to support you or your colleagues to find a way to right this wrong, I am only a phone call away.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RL', is centered on a light grey rectangular background.

Rachel Law
Chief Executive.

Copy: -

Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
Secretary of State for Health & Social Care

Rt Hon Helen Whately MP
Minister of State for Social Care