

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU
19 October 2021

Dear Secretary of State

The whole of social care is gripped by a staffing crisis of a magnitude that threatens to overwhelm the sector. Chronic underfunding leading to low wages, staff burnout, and mandatory vaccination are among the factors to blame for this recruitment and retention emergency.

That's why UNISON, the largest union in social care, and the National Care Forum (NCF), which represents not-for-profit care providers, have taken the unprecedented step of writing to you jointly. We're urging the government to act immediately to sustain the provision of quality care for those who depend on services.

UNISON and NCF are receiving daily reports from their members of serious staffing shortages. Care providers are already having to hand back contracts, turn down new requests for care at home, in care homes and other settings as a direct result of the acute shortage of workers. The government must act now because social care matters to us all.

In a recent NCF survey, 74% of respondents had seen an increase in staff departures and 46% said their employees were leaving the sector completely. This comes on top of a pre-existing vacancy rate of 105,000.

The government must act now and give care workers a pay boost to persuade existing staff to stay and to attract much-needed new recruits.

What is also needed is a retention bonus for care employees who have gone above and beyond in the delivery of care during the darkest of times.

In addition, a fully flexible workforce fund is essential to support the wellbeing of existing staff and encourage them to remain in their posts. And the government must scrap – or delay at the very least – the implementation of mandatory vaccination in care homes.

This country cannot afford to lose any more care staff. Each and every one of us has a loved one who may well need their skill, support and compassion, or require help themselves eventually.

Please don't ignore this catastrophe a moment longer.

Yours sincerely



Christina McAnea
UNISON general secretary



Vic Rayner
NCF chief executive officer

