

**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#)
ar y [gweithlu Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care](#)
[Committee](#) consultation on [Health and Social Care Workforce](#)**

HSC 39

Ymateb gan: | Response from: HC-One





HC-One's response to Health and Social Care Committee of the Senedd

Whether there are any specific areas within the strategy that would benefit from focused follow up work by the Committee?

We share the ambitions of the Welsh Government to improve the quality of care and we need a rewarded, respected and professionalised workforce to deliver this. For too long, social care workers have been undervalued.

What we are doing

HC-One is clear that our Colleagues are key to the kind care we deliver to some of the most vulnerable people in the communities we serve in Wales. Our mission is to be first choice for our Colleagues and we strive to be the most fulfilling place to work in the sector, whether it be through our award-winning training programmes or well-being packages, with access to online GPs, counselling and mental health support.

Our approach to pay and reward is rooted in the principles of transparency, flexibility, fairness and equity in reward, whilst also investing in professional development and career progression. We want to be the leader in sector pay and retention levels, an investor in our Colleagues to learn, lead and grow professionally, a promoter of inclusivity, flexibility and HC-One's unique culture which allows our Colleagues to bring their best selves to work.

We are also one of the few care providers which recognise the role of trade unions and we have a strong relationship with the GMB. This is part of a concerted effort to work in partnership with our Colleagues, listening and sharing feedback and working with them to shape services. In addition, we have built our own internal channels to create a positive space for our colleagues to share their voice - a process we call FUSE. These measures are helping us meet the growing challenge of care vacancy rates and allow us to retain staff, accumulate skills and experience to deliver better care. In addition, we believe there is an important role for the Welsh Government to play.

The retention of skills and experience is becoming a major priority for care providers as the role of the care worker changes. It is now increasingly complex, combining care for people who are physically frail and living with dementia. Yet the levels of skill required to be a care worker belies the perceived low status of the job.

Recognising and valuing carers

A workforce that is properly recognised, appropriately valued and suitably rewarded is a shared goal for all of us invested in Welsh care, and there is more that can be done. We recognise the current economics of the sector make meeting society's promises and hopes for care workers challenging, but we are keen to work with our partners in Wales to give our care workers the recognition and reward they deserve.



We recognise the good work which is already underway in Wales to ensure better support for Colleagues in social care, including the Social Care Fair Work Forum, the Rebalancing Care and Support White Paper and the Inter-Ministerial Group on Paying for Care.

While staff pay and conditions are a key issue, we face a wider challenge in how care workers are valued and perceived, and how the increased levels of skills required to do the job and the high level of trust the public place in them, are both built and recognised.

We support the registration system for adult care home workers, and its important this formalises the national skills, training and education requirements, and gives care workers equivalence with other registered health and care staff. From our experience, we know the demands put on Welsh care workers are significant. Formal recognition of this status, national standards set for education and training and a level of pay that not only rewards people but allows them to stay and develop long term careers is key to a better standard of care and a more fulfilled workforce.

HC-One also believes we need to do more to develop managers to lead people, create good culture and ensure effective management of care homes. National leadership standards could help support this goal.

Making care an attractive career

As well as retaining staff, we also have to consider new ways to attract people into caring professions. Other strategies the Welsh Government could consider / include are:

- A greater focus on 'Care apprenticeships', making it easier for organisations to train people on the job
- Government incentives to attract people into care, building on the outpouring of support for all carers in the last 18 months
- Concerted campaigns to attract people from other areas of the employment market, built around the social value of care, flexibility and sense of community purpose
- Better use of technology and digitalisation in a sector which is traditionally behind the curve in this area

We strongly welcome the focus by the Welsh Government on improving the quality of care through a motivated, engaged and valued, health and social care workforce, and we are ready to work with our partners in Wales to help make these policy goals a lived reality for our Colleagues and the wider care workforce.