

**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#)
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**This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care](#)
[Committee](#) consultation on [Health and Social Care Workforce](#)**

HSC 43

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Fforwm Gofal Cymru | Care Forum Wales





RESPONSE TO THE SENEDD HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE COMMITTEE CONSULTATION ON THE HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE

Who are we?

Care Forum Wales is the leading professional association for independent sector social care providers in Wales with over 450 members. Our membership includes those who provide care homes and domiciliary care services. Our members come from both the private and third sectors and we aim to engage and professionally support independent providers, to spread good practice, and help members provide a high quality service.

Our members include a variety of structures: large corporate groups, home-grown small and medium enterprises (SMEs), registered social landlords, and voluntary and charitable organisations.

Overview

It is hard to overstate the current workforce crisis in social care. As the First Minister himself said the sector was fragile going into the pandemic. The pressures of the last 18 months on the workforce have been tremendous: the pressure of keeping themselves safe, those they cared for safe, learning to work in full PPE, regular testing and the anxious waits for PCR results each week and concerns not to do anything outside work that endangered those they were caring for in work. People did pull together and make it happen. But in some ways as the restrictions in the rest of the world have eased the pressure on the social care workforce has been more keenly felt. Unlike others they are not able to work if they are a household contact of someone positive or have visited an amber list country. The restrictions in work remain in terms of testing and PPE. Like other sectors we have staff re-appraising their priorities, taking the retirement they postponed, taking time out to have postponed operations etc. but we also have staff who are leaving the sector in increasing numbers as they do not feel the reward they receive reflects the job they do. These fall into two categories: those looking to earn the same or slightly more in retail, leisure or hospitality and those wanting to stay in health and care but moving to work for a Health Board. We recently heard from one of our members who said:

“The last time I raised the issue I spoke of my complete dismay that I had lost 8 team members to recruitment to the Health Board bank. Today I've reached a complete loss as I can now report 14.

14 highly skilled, highly experienced team members all because social care is so severely underfunded that I just cannot compete with the wages. £18+ for some





hours over the week and yet commissioners still today think it's right and fair to pay our team members a pitiful £8.91 per hour.

My biggest fear is that I'm going to be left with less and less team members - something that I truly hope the Health Board are ready for because I've no idea how we'll continue to run. This relentless recruitment drive, with huge promises from the Health Board against the dire wages we are commissioned on cannot continue.

No amount of values-based recruitment or jobs fayres is going to fix what is happening to social care right now, the entire system is about to crumble from underneath us. Social care needs immediate attention, waiting for this coming April just is not good enough anymore."

It is also worth noting that Health Board workers will not be required to register with the attached learning and development requirements and responsibilities, whereas care home workers will from October 2022 and domiciliary care workers already are.

The Welsh Government pledge to pay all frontline care workers the Real Living Wage is welcome – but realistically will not be enough. Scotland has recently announced that it is increasing wages in commissioned care from the Scottish Living Wage to £10.02 per hour from December <https://www.gov.scot/news/over-gbp-300-million-new-winter-investment-for-health-and-care/>

We need a quick fix of more money to the frontline to stabilised things followed by a strategic plan as envisaged including ensuring a career structure with appropriate differentials over and above a better starting point.

This would benefit not just the health & social care sector but the economy more widely. Recent research by Skills for Care indicates adult social care contributes £50.3 billion to the English economy <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/About/News/News-Archive/Adult-social-care-contributes-50.3-billion-to-English-economy-our-report-finds.aspx> . This is up from £38 billion in 2018: if we extrapolate the figures for Wales similarly they will have gone up from £1.2 billion https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/The-Economic-Value-of-the-Adult-Social-Care-Sector_Wales.pdf to £1.59 billion. But the most telling statistic is that the economic value of social care was highest in Scotland where higher wages are paid to care workers <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/About/Skills-for-Care-and-Development/The-economic-value-of-the-adult-social-care-sector-UK.aspx>





The Strategy

The Strategy itself is admirable but as set out above, it currently feels as though the situation has gone backwards since it was published. The immediate priority must be to address the current workforce crisis before moving on to establish a more strategic focus.

We would particularly draw attention to workforce planning and, in particular nurse training, where the needs of independent providers are not sufficiently taken into account.

*Chief Executive
8 October 2021*

I can confirm that we understand our evidence may be published.