

House of Commons: Written Statement (HCWS281)

Department of Health and Social Care

Written Statement made by: **Minister of State for Care (Stephen Kinnock)** on 16 Jul 2026.

Adult Social Care - Fair pay agreement and workforce pathway

Today, I am proud to inform the house that this government is setting out the details of the Adult Social Care Fair Pay Agreement, a landmark reform that will turn the page on decades of low pay, insecurity, and the exploitation of adult social care workers. In doing so, we are one step closer to delivering on our manifesto commitment.

Backed by £500 million in funding in 2028/29, the Fair Pay Agreement will introduce annual negotiations between employer and worker representatives to agree improvements to pay and conditions for the adult social care workforce for the first time.

Led by an independent Negotiating Body, the Fair Pay Agreement will strengthen the voice of workers and employers, support recruitment and retention, and help build a stable, sustainable, and growing domestic workforce.

Our response to the consultation sets out how the system will operate in practice, including how negotiations will be conducted, how agreements will be reached and implemented, and the role of the independent chair in overseeing the process. The Government will appoint a chair in the autumn and negotiations will begin in 2027.

Alongside the consultation response, we are also publishing part 3 of the Care Workforce Pathway. The Pathway is the first time the adult care sector, a workforce of 1.5 million, has seen a universal career structure with consistent standards and expectations around the knowledge, skills, values, and behaviours required to deliver high-quality, personalised care and support. By adding ten new role categories we are expanding the Pathway's coverage to nearly all adult social care workforce roles that aren't health or social work, recognising and celebrating the breadth and diversity of the sector. Using the Pathway, staff looking for progression can plot a route for their career and existing staff with specialist skills can be recognised for what they do, such as Enhanced Care Workers.

Since coming into office, this government has passed the Employment Rights Act, strengthened sick pay, supported professionalisation and raised the minimum wage. These much-needed reforms will mean that care workers have better job security, take home higher pay, and see improved professional recognition for their work.

There is more to do, but these important steps will help us lay the foundations for the National Care Service and demonstrate this government's ongoing commitment to tackling the recruitment and retention of the adult social care workforce, by ensuring that there are opportunities to develop and progress, and that people feel recognised and rewarded for the vital work they do.