

A Skilled, Supported Workforce



Ensuring that all people working to support children, young people and adults with a learning disability have the skills that they need to do so, and are well-supported

1

Ensure that care and support workers are paid a fair wage for their work, recognising the skill required to support people with a learning disability to live good lives

People with a learning disability deserve to be able to live good lives in their local communities – but they need support to do this. Being a support worker involves empathy and understanding; training in how to support people with a learning disability, including people with a severe learning disability and people with a learning disability whose behaviour challenges; communication skills; adaptability, flexibility, and a willingness to take positive risks.

These are skilled jobs, but due to the low rates of pay available, support workers are leaving the sector, there is high turnover, and it is difficult to recruit and retain staff. This is bad for support workers, who are not being paid a wage that reflect the skills and responsibilities of their role, and it is bad for the people they support, who have the right to build relationships with their support workers, who need support workers who understand their preferences and support needs, and who, in many cases, find change distressing.

[Research by ARC in 2023](#) found that 94% of local authorities are paying rates for supported living services that do not allow providers to meet their statutory obligation to pay the National Living Wage.

Community Integrated Care's '[Unfair to Care](#)' research found that social care workers are being paid on average £8036 less than someone doing an equivalent role in the NHS.

The Government needs to:

Match pay for support workers and social care workers to equivalent NHS bands

Support commissioners to proactively develop person-centred services and support within their local communities

2

The Building the Right Support Action Plan included an action to “introduce new duties on commissioners to ensure that there are adequate community-based services in their local area to support people with learning disability and autistic people”. This was as part of planned reforms to the Mental Health Act, but since the draft Mental Health Bill was not included in the November 2023 King’s Speech, it cannot be brought forward within this Parliament.

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All children, young people and adults have the right to receive person centred support and services that are developed on the basis of a detailed understanding of their support needs, including their communication needs.

This will be individually-tailored, flexible, responsive to changes in individual circumstances and delivered in the most appropriate local situation.

The Challenging Behaviour Charter

While the proposed duty is a step in the right direction, on its own it is unlikely to be enough to ensure there are the right community services for people with a learning disability. When the [financial crises facing local authorities](#) – which is already seriously impacting on decisions around [adult social care](#) and [special educational needs and disabilities](#) – is taken into account, it becomes clear that creating a new duty without ensuring that there is ring-fenced funding available to develop and commission these services will not work.

Any introduction of a new duty around community support needs to be accompanied by resources and funding.

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[The UK Government] should intensify its efforts to guarantee the provision of sufficient community-based mental health services, providing early intervention and preventative support

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United Nations Human Rights

Committee

2024

The Government needs to:

Introduce a strong duty on commissioners to develop community support for people with a learning disability within their local area , and back this duty with resources

The Department of Health and Social Care needs to:

Work with commissioners to share good practice examples of commissioning for people with a learning disability

The Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities need to:

Produce joint guidance stating that commissioners should engage in market-shaping, not just 'buying', if there are no existing services within their area that meet the needs of their local population with a learning disability

We have worked to co-produce these actions and asks, building on years of work that has gone before it.

We are happy to engage with policy makers at a local, regional, and national level about how we can get things right for people with a learning disability whose behaviour challenges.

If you would like to talk about any of the actions in this plan, or any work you are planning on doing, please email actionplan@thecbf.org.uk