

# 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 2024 [Mental Health Bill](#) says that integrated care boards and local authorities need to “seek to ensure that the needs of people with autism or a learning disability can be met without detaining them” when exercising their commissioning and market functions. This duty aims to make it so that people with a learning disability and autistic people can get support in their community, rather than being detained under the Mental Health Act, and is therefore a positive step in the right direction – but we are concerned that this duty does not go far enough to achieve its aims.

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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](#)

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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*

## [United Nations Human Rights Committee](#)

2024

The wording of this duty 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.

### **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 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 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**