Date

NAME

Minister of State

Department of Health and Social Care

39 Victoria Street

London

SW1H 0EU

Dear NAME OF MP

**Cross Party Call for Emergency Support for Disability and Care Services**

We are writing to you as a cross party group of parliamentarians to show our support for the Voluntary Organisations Disability Group (VODG) seeking government’s support for oluntary sector organisations and their care workers during this cost of living crisis.

Disabled people and families require high quality, safe and effective care and support. The delivery of great services requires our social care workforce to be fairly remunerated for the invaluable work they do. Yet despite care workers contributing over £50 billion to the economy in England each year, thousands of care staff across the country risk being left behind.

Independent analysis has shown that care worker pay is at £9.50 per hour (national median), which is one of the lowest paid roles across the economy. This is compounded by the fact that when evaluating the complexity, content and remuneration in social care, workers would be paid 39% more (nearly £7000 per year) in equivalent positions within the NHS, local authorities, and other publicly funded industries.

Care workers in the voluntary sector are chronically underpaid, as a result of which over one quarter of workers live in, or are on the brink of, poverty. Nearly 1 in 10 have experienced food insecurity, and 1 in 8 children of care workers were ‘materially deprived’, meaning they may not have access to essential resources such as fresh fruit and vegetables or adequate winter clothing.

These factors have had an enormous impact on disability and care services providers in the voluntary sector. The number of vacant posts in the social care sector has increased by 52% in one year and it is now the highest rate since records began in 2012/13, leading to an over-reliance on agency workers and, as a consequence, face soaring costs.

Providers supporting disabled people are trapped between financial pressures because they are directly funded by local authorities. They want to pay their skilled workforce fairly, yet have limited resources to do so. There is a growing gap between commissioning rates and the true costs of provision. As a result voluntary services are moving away from care delivery and talented care workers are leaving the sector.

VODG’s asks are simple: Align social care pay to NHS pay bands and fund local authorities accordingly. This would mean first line care staff are tied to NHS band 3 and would be paid £10.40 per hour. Additionally, we ask government to address the inflationary pressures experienced by the sector, with an additional one-off grant offering emergency support for disability and care services. This would be in addition to the £500 million made available to support older people’s discharge from hospital.

We ask for you to consider implementing these policies, and to meet to discuss this important issue.

Yours sincerely

NAMES OF MPs