

The latest news and announcements from Derbyshire UNISON

UNISON community conference

When UNISON's community service group held its conference recently, pay for social care workers was top of the agenda



Care workers put their lives on the line for £8.72 an hour during COVID

Community conference attendees in Glasgow at the weekend heard how social care workers put their lives on the line for the minimum wage of just £8.72 an hour during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Delegates told conference that it is 'shameful' that, throughout the pandemic, social care workers were exposed to deadly risks without appropriate PPE.

Before the pandemic, the social care sector was already in crisis. In 2018, UNISON's Care in Need report found that nearly half (48%) of care workers said they do not have adequate time to support people with dignity and

compassion. Over 1 in 4 care workers did not have time to bathe, shower or wash the people they care for.

In 2019, the all-party Parliamentary group on social care declared that care workers were "overlooked, undervalued and in desperate need of more government investment."

Three years on, despite risking their own health to provide vital

frontline services to vulnerable and elderly people, care workers remain neglected by government.

UNISON national officer for community Andrew Dobbie said: "Delegates to our conference expressed anger at how care workers had been treated during COVID-19, but also pride at the great work so many members had done to care for those who depended upon them during the crisis.

Care workers need to be treated as the skilled professionals they are and paid accordingly. We will be working as hard as we can to bring about a transformation of the sector that makes that possible."

Low wages and high pressure conditions have created a 'revolving door' culture in care work, where staff turnover is high. Data from the Care Quality Commission in October 2021 showed a vacancy rate of over 10% across regulated care settings in England.

The community service group has committed itself to continue its campaign for fair pay and a national care service.