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Concern over care assistants' pay

Published: 03 September 2008 08:38 Author: David Blackman More by this
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Care assistants are being paid more than £100 less per week than road sweepers, according to a new report.

The Social Care Employers' Consortium (SCEC), which represents 41 charities employing a combined 65,000 care staff, says in the report that the average voluntary sector carer takes home £243 a week compared to the £351 for road sweepers.

The group blames local authorities for not paying high enough fees to cover the costs of recruiting, retaining and developing qualified staff.

It said almost two-thirds (60%) of charities say they are forced to top up local authority fees with voluntary income, against Charity Commission guidelines.

The report also says that carers in the voluntary sector do not have the same benefits as public sector carers.

Clare Smith, Chair of SCEC and director of human resources at Leonard Cheshire Disability, said: "Since our report in 2004 the Government has not addressed this growing crisis.

"Social care should be seen as a valued and rewarding career, yet because of the way public sector salaries are structured, refuse collectors earn over £150 more a week than voluntary sector care workers.

"Voluntary organisations should not be expected to subsidise public services that benefit millions of families across the UK."

Ms Smith also raised worries about the capacity of the workforce in the voluntary sector to deliver the government's personalised social care agenda, given its low skills base.

Author: David Blackman.



Average carer is paid £243

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Government condemned as social carers are paid less than road sweepers

By Daily Mail Reporter

Last updated at 4:48 PM on 03rd September 2008

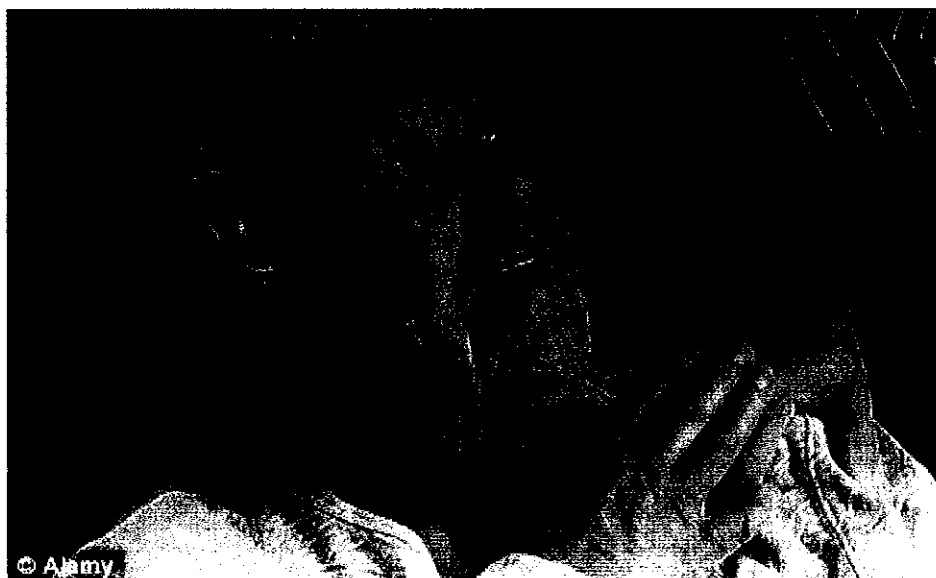
Government promises to help social carers have been exposed as a sham by a new report revealing they are paid half as much as nurses and even less than road sweepers.

Ministers have failed to tackle "chronic under-funding" of the social care sector despite a growing demand for its services, according to the report from the Social Care Employers Consortium (SCEC).

Despite a Government pledge three years ago to improve the situation, social care workers are paid almost one third of a train driver's salary, less than 50 per cent of the average nurses' salary and £100 less per week than a road sweeper, the SCEC report shows.

SCEC represents 41 voluntary sector organisations that employ more than 65,000 social care staff, including Leonard Cheshire Disability, Mencap and Sense.

And its report, called *Social Care: Has Anything Changed?* warns that if the Government wants the voluntary sector to continue delivering high-quality social care services, local authority fees must cover the costs of recruiting, retaining and developing qualified staff.



Caring for the elderly: But who cares for the carers?

In 2004, SCEC called on the Government to address the uneven playing field of public and voluntary sector pay, but the report claims the social care workforce still remains underpaid and undervalued and that staff do not have the same benefits as public sector carers.

In addition, the SCEC says the voluntary sector frequently out-performs other sectors in providing care services but that almost two-thirds (60%) of charities say they are forced to top up local authority fees with voluntary income, against Charity Commission guidelines.

Clare Smith, chair of SCEC and director of human resources at Leonard Cheshire Disability, said: 'Since our report in 2004, the Government has not addressed this growing crisis.

'Social care should be seen as a valued and rewarding career, yet because of the way public sector salaries are structured, refuse collectors earn over £150 more a week than voluntary sector care workers.

'Voluntary organisations should not be expected to subsidise public services that benefit millions of families across the UK.

'On behalf of staff and service users, we call on the Government to live up to their promise to address this crisis. It needs to invest more money in social care, reduce unfair competition for staff and raise the status of social care work.'

The report also highlights concerns over changes to the social care system where care workers are employed directly by individuals, such as a disabled person, who pay them through direct payments or individual budgets.

Clare Smith continued: 'The voluntary sector supports new ways to give service users more choice and control, supporting people to live as independently as possible.

'However, the Government is over-optimistic about how the social care workforce will handle these changes. With reduced regulation and limited funding available to individual employers, how will the skills of the social care workforce be developed?

'A lack of training, and lack of interest in caring as a career, could compromise the standard of care received by individual employers in the long term. More thought is needed into the practical implications of this new way of working.'

Find this story at www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1052163/Government-condemned-social-carers-paid-road-sweepers.html

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Social care staff at bottom of pay pile

It's unusual for employers to highlight how little they pay their workers, but voluntary organisations running social care services for local government say today that their care assistants earn at least £100 a week less than road sweepers.

The idea is to illustrate the argument that the government has done nothing effective in the past four years to tackle what the employers call "the growing crisis in social care", which they say leaves the workforce as a whole underpaid and undervalued – and voluntary sector staff at the bottom of the pile.

In an analysis of recruitment and retention, the Social Care Employers Consortium (Scec), representing 41 organisations employing 65,000 workers, concludes that little has changed since a study in 2004. Recruitment problems have eased, but this is attributed to initiatives by individual employers, rather than to any government action. Six in 10 employers surveyed say they are having to cross-subsidise care contracts with charitable income, contrary to Charity Commission guidelines.

Clare Smith, chair of Scec, says:

"Voluntary organisations should not be expected to subsidise public services that benefit millions of families across the UK. On behalf of staff and service users, we call on the government to live up to its promise to address this crisis."

According to the analysis, voluntary sector care assistants earn "average weekly salaries" of £243, compared with £352 for a roadsweeper and £406 for a refuse collector. These figures are said to be derived from surveys by the authoritative Incomes Data Services (IDS) pay research company. However, IDS points out that the average midpoint hourly pay rate for an unqualified care assistant is £6.84, compared with a basic £6 for a roadsweeper. Although council manual workers would in the past have expected a healthy bonus on top of their hourly rate, this is no longer necessarily the case.

A Department of Health spokeswoman says: "The social care workforce do a fantastic job and the government is supporting them. Local authorities have increased spending on adult social services [in England] by £800m between 2004 and 2007. The government is also investing £290m on training and development of the social care workforce."

David Brindle

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Social Care Employers Consortium issues report on third sector

Posted: 03 September 2008 | [Subscribe Online](#)

writes [Mithran Samuel](#)

Charities including Mencap, Leonard Cheshire Disability and Sense today called for social care training funding to no longer be channelled through local authorities, to ensure non-statutory providers get their fair share.

In a report on funding for voluntary care providers, the **Social Care Employers Consortium**, which represents 41 charities, said that with most services no longer being provided by councils there was "no logical reason" why government funding should be given to authorities to distribute.

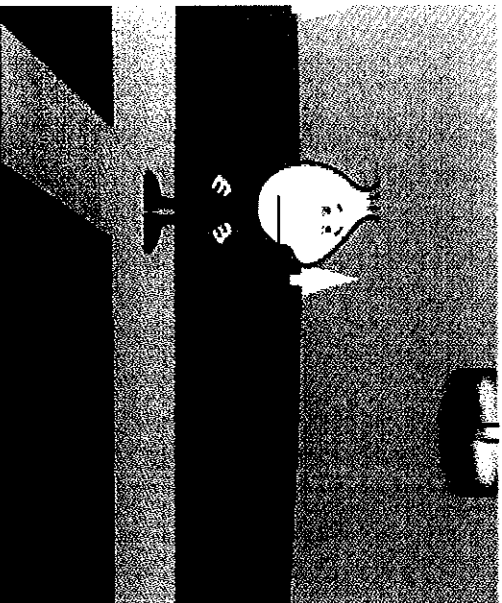
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A report this year from Skills for Care found councils underspent the main former social care training grants, the £50m human resources development strategy grant and the £108m national training strategy grant, by £9.7m and £26m respectively in 2006-7. Last year, the adult workforce development body said it should assume control of all government social care training funds intended for voluntary and private providers amid evidence they were not receiving a fair share.

Purse strings

Mencap chief executive Jo Williams said: "What we really need is an independent organisation holding the purse strings against which each sector – whether it's local authority or third sector or private provision – can make an application and make the case for investment in training. That would level things out considerably."

Though the two grants were not ring-fenced they were designed to be spent on social care training. This year, however, they and many other funding streams were rolled into an area-based grant, worth over £4bn, which councils can use as they please to meet local and national priorities. This has sparked warnings from adult care directors that councils may divert funds from social