

CORNERSTONE COMMENT ON LIVING WAGE FOR OVERNIGHT SUPPORT



Local Cornerstone - the model that makes discussion about the Living Wage irrelevant.

Cornerstone along with CCPS, the membership body for third sector care and support organisations, applauds the intention behind the Cabinet Secretary's decision to extend the Living Wage to sleepover hours.

However, given our experience of working to implement the commitment to date, we are concerned that it may not be delivered as expected with the potential of unintended consequences arising.

Like other organisations providing care and support in Scotland Cornerstone is grappling with a number of challenges including recruitment (as highlighted in the Care Inspectorate report earlier this week) adequate funding from commissioning authorities and the determination to stay true to our charitable purpose and do more than we are contractually required to do.

We became frustrated with all the talk about these prevailing issues with little evidence of anything changing and decided last year to make change happen ourselves and hopefully inspire others to do the same.

We will of course continue to lobby for adequate funding but in addition we have decided to introduce a new way of working that redirects our limited resources to the front line and ensures that social care within Cornerstone is genuinely valued as a profession.

Local Cornerstone is made up of a number of elements that combine to address some of the challenges facing the sector. The changes will result in any discussions about paying social care workers the living wage being irrelevant. Our new Team Member role offers a significantly higher than living wage rate of pay which will increase year on year to reflect the value of the profession.

Although pay is important the Local Cornerstone model also provides a high degree of autonomy to those working in local communities and allows for those providing care to use their creativity and initiative to provide the highest quality of support.

A significant investment in technology to improve all our systems and processes is assisting us to dramatically reduce our overheads and free up colleagues' time to spend more of it with the people they support. The introduction of technology and the new up-skilled Team Member role will result in a flatter structure which combined with a smaller Leadership Team and a more efficient central support infrastructure results in more of our company resources being redirected to pay our social care staff a decent wage.

We will continue to work with our partners in Health and Social Care to address the sleepover issue and we look forward to receiving the additional funding to pay as a minimum the Living Wage for all hours worked. Meanwhile we will continue to implement our change programme and hope we can influence others along the way.

Edel Harris

CEO Cornerstone

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