

1. LIVING WAGE & LIVING HOURS

“Given how meaningful the work is I’m angry that my employers and other care providers don’t give us a fair wage. For me it means I sometimes have to work a triple shift. That’s a day followed by a night shift followed by another day. It’s exhausting. I’ve just got married and as I look forward to the possibility of a family, how can I stay in this job I love so much?”

FLINT,
CAREWORKER FROM LONDON

OUR TRACK RECORD

- Over 13,000 Living Wage accredited employers and 427,000 workers receiving pay rises every year thanks to the real Living Wage. We’ve put £2.1bn back into the pockets of workers since the campaign began over 20 years ago.**
- Won a real Living Wage for care workers in Wales, impacting over 50,000 social care staff.**
- Over 100 Living Hours accredited employers, providing security and predictability of hours to over 50,000 workers.**

Campaign overview

A wage that meets everyday needs is the minimum people need to live with dignity. Yet one in eight UK workers earn below the real Living Wage.¹ Polling by our Living Wage Foundation found that 56 per cent of those people had turned to a food bank in the past 12 months,² with soaring inflation forcing

choices between ‘heating and eating’. Citizens UK launched the Living Wage campaign in 2001 and it is one of our most established campaigns with over 13,000 responsible employers now accredited as Living Wage Employers. But the campaign has never been more urgent or relevant. The pandemic shone a spotlight on the importance of key workers such as those in the care sector. It highlighted the injustice of the UK’s care workers earning less than the real Living Wage and struggling to survive while caring for the most vulnerable in our society. That injustice has only been made worse in this cost of living crisis.

Now is the opportunity to campaign to win the real Living Wage in health and social care for the first time in England – following Wales and Scotland – and to build it into government procurement so that all public money supports Living Wage jobs, as in Scotland and Northern Ireland. It’s only a Living Wage if you have enough hours to make ends meet. That’s why we will also campaign to promote and embed Living Hours – with a focus on health and social



care, recognising this sector has high levels of insecure work. Living Hours provides minimum shift notice and hours, giving the 6.1m people in insecure work³ greater security and control over their lives and income.

What are we trying to change?

Around 3.5 million people now earn below the real Living Wage,⁴ with women and minority ethnic workers disproportionately likely to be in low paid jobs.⁵ In social care alone, a vital sector that continues to grow as our population ages, around 40 per cent of jobs are paid below the real Living Wage.

That means millions of working people are also in poverty, unable to cover living costs and meet everyday needs. At the same time, millions more workers are trapped in insecure forms of work, unable to get the regular, secure hours they need to plan for their futures. Many experience last-minute shift cancellations that cause further costs and disruption, such as transport and childcare.

How are people in our communities affected?

The Living Wage movement began at a meeting in East London more than twenty years ago, when Citizens UK brought together churches, mosques, schools and other local institutions to talk about the issues affecting their communities. One issue came up again and again – low pay. Working with community organisers, workers decided to act, and from that meeting a powerful movement came together calling for a Living Wage.

From this, we have helped secure over £2.1 billion into the pockets of low-paid workers in our membership and beyond. But with the cost of living soaring there is so much more to do.

Living Hours was developed through an in-depth listening campaign with 700 Citizens UK members. They provided evidence of the scale and complexity of under-employment and insecurity. This was the genesis for the development of our Living Hours standards.

FLINT'S STORY

My name is Flint from Panjym City Church in London, and I am a proud care worker. It's long hours and not enough pay but it's God's work and it's meaningful. As a care worker I get to serve others through simple acts of kindness. A kind word, a cup of tea, a listening ear to those who need it.

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FLINT,
CAREWORKER FROM LONDON

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SOLUTIONS WE THINK MIGHT HELP?

- 1. UK Government to provide sufficient funding and guidance to ensure that all publicly funded social care jobs in England are paid at the real Living Wage - as has already been achieved in Wales and Scotland.**
- 2. UK Government to embed the real Living Wage and Living Hours through procurement and commissioning strategies, sectoral agreements and good work standards.**
- 3. UK Government to strengthen people's rights and access to predictable, sufficient hours. All workers deserve wages and hours that meet their everyday needs.**

