CARE ENGLAND
Representing independent care providers

Labour's proposals for the adult social care workforce:

Initial reflections/questions from Care England members

At the June 2024 Workforce Development Group (WDG) meeting, Care England was joined by Hannah Bollard from Anthony Collins Solicitors to discuss some of Labour's proposals for the adult social care workforce, should they be successful at the upcoming general election. Many of the proposals discussed came from *Labour's Plan to Make Work Pay: Delivering A New Deal for Working People*.

Key reflections/questions raised in the meeting are outlined below.

Ban on zero-hour contacts:

- The experience of many care providers' is that zero-hour contracts are generally driven by employees. It affords workers of all ages – ex. older workers re-entering the workforce, workers with childcaring responsibilities and younger workers enrolled at university – the flexibility to manage other responsibilities and time commitments. At present, many care providers welcome staff moving to permanent contracts and actively encourage them to do so. A total ban on zero hour contracts would be at the detriment of staff wanting flexibility.
- A total ban on zero hour contracts would introduce additional barriers to recruitment at an already challenging time.
- What exactly would be classified as an "exploitative" zero-hour contact?

Day one rights:

- What impact will Labour's proposals for day one rights have on insurance costs?
- What impact will Labour's proposals for day one rights have on the employment tribunal backlog? How will this be managed?
- A more rigorous referencing process in light of Labour's proposals for day one rights would likely slow down the recruitment process and increase the likelihood of candidates accepting job offers elsewhere.

Single status of employees:

- How would Labour's proposals for a single status of employees apply to agency staff?

Pay – National Minimum Wage (NMW)

- NMW age bands are not commonly adopted by care providers and as such the proposals to remove them due to them being "discriminatory" is likely to have a minimal impact.

Pay - Collective Bargaining:

- The negotiation process must find a way to represent the views of the 18,000 care providing organisations in England, with varying sizes and structures.
- How will the FPA account for regional variance in pay?

- Any funding settlement for increased pay must account for differentials across different roles in the workforce. At present, low differentials discourage members of staff from taking on greater responsibilities.
- Increased pay, without commensurate funding, will necessitate greater cross-subsidy from those self-funding their care, which in itself is exploitative. The October 2025 reforms on the cap on care costs will significantly reduce the money available from self-funders, and this needs to be met by Government in any funding settlement.