

**Director of Social Care and National Care
Service Development Directorate**
Donna Bell



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

E: donna.bell@gov.scot

To: Integration Authority Chief Officers
Integration Authority Chief Finance Officers
Local Authority Chief Executives
Local Authority Directors of Finance
COSLA
Scotland Excel
ILF Scotland
Chief Social Work Officers
Scottish Care
CCPS
Care Inspectorate
Unite
UNISON
GMB
STUC
Care providers

From: Donna Bell, Director of Social Care and National Care Service Development,
Scottish Government

Date: 18 March 2026

Adult Social Care Pay Uplift

Dear colleague,

Following agreement at COSLA Leaders on 27 February 2026, I am writing to confirm the initial details of the annual pay uplift for adult social care workers that was announced on 13 January 2026 by the First Minister as part of the Scottish Budget for 2026-27.

As you are aware, in the Scottish Budget for the 2026-27 financial year, it was announced that £160 million will be transferred to Local Government to support the delivery of a £13.45 per hour minimum wage for all adult social care staff delivering direct care in commissioned services from April 2026. It was subsequently announced on 12 February 2026 that a further £20 million will also be allocated to the Local Government Settlement for Social Care, which can be used towards funding the Real Living Wage for adult and childcare sectors. This funding will be paid to Local Authorities in the weekly General Revenue Grant payments from April 2026.

There has been political agreement that the uplift to £13.45 per hour will be delivered in the same manner as the uplift to £12.60 per hour for these workers, which was delivered in the 2025-26 financial year.

Confirmation of policy intent and national weightings

This policy provides funding to enable the lowest paid adult social care workers to receive an annual uplift in their rate of pay to at least the Real Living Wage (RLW) rate.

National weightings will continue to be applied to deliver the funding allocation for this uplift to providers. The national weightings mean that the uplift is applied to a set percentage of a contract representing the **average full workforce costs** for the type of service commissioned.

The **average full workforce cost** has been calculated based on contractual data and includes all staff employed within the services – not just those in direct care roles, who are in scope of this policy and on the lowest rates of pay – as well as associated workforce on-costs. This average includes workers on higher rates and in non-direct care roles as are included in the contracts.

Any additional funds that providers may have - after the policy intent is fully met and as a result of the national weightings approach - must be spent on uplifting pay for the directly employed workforce working within services for the 2026-27 financial year. It is the provider's discretion of how any remaining funds are to be spent within these stipulations, but this can be used to support differentials or rates of pay for workers in non-direct care roles.

Scope

The pay uplift to at least the RLW rate will apply to staff providing direct care within adult social care in commissioned services in the third and independent sectors. This will include Supervisors, Practitioners, Support Workers, Personal Assistants, and staff providing overnight support. This funding will apply to workers in care homes, care at home, day care, housing support, adult placement services, respite services and those delivering direct support through all SDS Options.

This funding will enable pay for these workers, in these services, to be uplifted from at least £12.60 per hour to at least £13.45 per hour.

Full details of scope and eligible services can be found at Annex A.

Timing and Process

This funding will take effect from April 2026.

In line with existing process and previous years approach, Local Government and Integration Joint Boards will be working through the required governance, legal and contractual arrangements to deliver this to providers.

Local indications suggest that most payments will be made across April and May, with funding back dated and provided from April 2026. Best endeavours will be made to have all payments with providers by July 2026. However, this relies on the timely return of contract variation letters by providers and payments will not be released until providers return their signed contract variation letters.

The Scottish Government and COSLA will meet with Scottish Care, Coalition of Care and Support Providers Scotland (CCPS) and Trade Union representatives to discuss any concerns or questions around implementation and will work together to resolve these quickly through the established troubleshooting process.

Policy Implementation

The uplift to £13.45 per hour will be distributed to providers in the same manner as the previous uplift to £12.60 per hour for the workers in scope using the national weightings approach.

This will mean a 6.75% uplift will be applied to a set percentage of contract values, in line with the **average full workforce costs** for residential and non-residential services. A separate agreed weighted percentage has been set for Personal Assistants who are paid directly through SDS Option 1 budgets.

National Weightings

The national weightings for the £13.45 uplift will be the same as those used for the uplift to £12.60. These percentages are below:

- Residential care – uplift applied to **71.8%** of full contract value.
- Non-residential – uplift applied to **86.9%** of full contract value.
- SDS option 1 Personal Assistants – uplift applied to **90%** of budgets.

This equates to contract uplifts of:

- Residential Care **4.85%**
- Non-Residential Care **5.87%**
- SDS Option 1 **6.08%**

Due to the nature of this approach, this may result in some providers having funds remaining once the policy intent - to uplift pay for the workforce delivering direct care to at least £13.45 per hour - has been fully delivered. As already set out in this letter, any additional funds must be spent on uplifting pay for the directly employed workforce.

The residential care uplift does not relate to National Care Home Contract rates which are dealt with separately and incorporate the pay uplift using the established Cost Model.

Non-workforce costs

This policy, to uplift the minimum rate of pay for adult social care workers, provides funding for wages and associated workforce on-costs within providers contracts.

Local areas still have the ability to offer increases to providers on the non-workforce costs within their contracts.

Any changes on the rest of local contracts, or on Scotland Excel's Adult Social Care National Flexible Frameworks, to address other increasing and inflationary non-workforce costs would be out with the remit of this policy and would form part of the normal local contractual negotiating process with providers and their local commissioners and finance departments. For national arrangements, Scotland Excel will work in collaboration with providers and commissioners in line with the Framework's Price Review process.

Assurance process

For this uplift, and in line with previous practice, providers will be required to sign and return contract variation letters. This will confirm that the funding must only be used for uplifting pay and local areas will be responsible for assuring this funding is used for these purposes through their normal contract monitoring processes.

As per usual process, funding will then be released to providers as soon as possible after they return their signed contract variation letters.

Personal Assistants

Separate guidance will be issued for PA employers.

ILF Scotland

Separate guidance will be issued for ILF Scotland recipients.

Children's Social Care

Separate guidance will be issued by the Children and Families Directorate for Children's Services.

Next steps

I hope this provides clarity on the pay uplift for 2026-27.

The Scottish Government recognises the exceptional work of the social care workforce, and we thank them for the most important role that they play in our communities.

We appreciate you sharing this with your networks and working with us to get this uplift delivered to the workforce at speed.

Yours sincerely,

Donna Bell

Director of Social Care and National Care Service Development

Annex A

Workforce in scope (those eligible to be paid a minimum of £13.45)

Broad title	Role description
Supervisor in Care Home Services / Care at Home Services / Housing Support Services / Day Care Services / Adult Placement Services / Respite Services	Worker who holds responsibilities for providing and supervising the provision of care and/or support provided directly to adults using residential care / a user within a care at home service or of a housing support service. This also includes workers providing overnight support ¹
Practitioner in Care Home Services / Care at Home Services / Housing Support Services / Day Care Services / Adult Placement Services / Respite Services	Worker who provides care and support to adults using residential care and who has responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of care plans. This may include holding keyworker responsibilities. This also includes workers providing overnight support.
Support Worker in Care Home Services / Care at Home Services / Housing Support Services / Day Care Services / Adult Placement Services / Respite Services	Worker employed in providing care / and or support directly to adults using residential care / a user of service within a care at home service or of a housing support service. This also includes workers providing overnight support.
Personal Assistants	Separate guidance will be provided.

¹ Overnight support is where a care worker sleeps, provides a waking night service or night sitting service, in the home of someone they support or in work premises, so that they are on hand in case of an emergency or any other issue during the night.

Services in scope

The uplift applies to commissioned services for adult social care in the independent and third sectors.

This does not include workers in children's, justice, or homelessness services.

Type of service	Definition of services
Care homes	A service which provides accommodation, together with nursing, personal care or personal support, for persons by reason of their vulnerability or need this may include for: alcohol & drug misuse, blood borne virus, learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people, physical and sensory impairment or respite care and short breaks.
Care at home	Care at home is registered by the Care Inspectorate as a support service – "Support Service – Care at home." A support service is defined as a personal care or personal support service provided by arrangement made by a local authority or health body to a vulnerable or person in need. This does not include a care home service or a service providing overnight accommodation.
Day care	Adult day care is registered as a support service – "Support service – Other than care at home." See definition above.
Housing support	A service, also defined as Supported Living, which provides support, assistance, advice or counselling to a person who has particular needs, with a view to enabling that person to occupy residential accommodation as a sole or main residence. This will include delegated and non-delegated services. The nature of the work within the contract (either residential or non-residential care) should attract the current percentage uplifts applied to the total value of the contract.

	While homelessness services largely fall out-with the scope of this policy, the Scottish Government recognises that homelessness services within the housing support sector as defined by the SSSC, where staff provide direct care, fall within the parameters of this policy.
Adult placement services	A service which consists of, or includes, arranging for the provision of accommodation for an adult (age of eighteen years or over), together with personal care or personal support or counselling, or other help, provided other than as part of a planned programme of care by reason of the person's vulnerability or need, by placing the person with a family or individual; but a service may be excepted from this definition by regulations.
All SDS options (1, 2, 3 and 4)	All SDS options where workers provide direct Adult Social Care support, either in a social care provider organisation or someone paying a Personal Assistant.
Respite services	Registerable under a care home and housing support as per the definitions above.
Shared Lives	<p>Shared Lives services are a form of care that supports people to live safely and comfortably in a home and community of their choosing. Care is provided by professional carers - either individuals, couples, or families - in their homes and as part of their local community.</p> <p>The services in scope are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live-in support • Daytime support <p>The nature of the work within the contract (either residential or non-residential care) should attract the current percentage uplifts applied to the total value of the contract.</p>