

- 2.22 Some individuals will have more time to volunteer and can take on more than one-off tasks for care providers. While in most instances this will not involve providing direct care, this could involve activity such as housekeeping, food preparation, wellbeing activities, telephone befriending and care, depending on previous experience. Employers will assess individual's experience and skill level when assigning tasks. We will publish more detailed guidance about the use of volunteers in social care [alongside this strategy/this week – draft not yet cleared through PHE/Ministers]

Security, wellbeing and appreciation

- 2.23 Most of our social care workforce are amongst the lowest paid in our society. About 90% of the social care workforce earn less than the starting salary of the lowest-paid NHS workers. That makes the contribution made by those workers to supporting the most vulnerable in our society all the more incredible and the dedication of our social care workforce is recognised and appreciated.
- 2.24 We want to do all we can to ensure that those working in social care have the security necessary so that the only factor in their decision to work, isolate or shield themselves, is that same public health advice given to everybody in order to keep individuals, families and the wider public safe.
- 2.25 In March, as an immediate step we provided local authorities with £1.6 billion of additional funding which could be used to pay for the additional costs that we knew that the sector would face as it responded to the pandemic, including the cost of backfilling shifts while as far as possible maintaining income for those that were unable to work as a result of the public health advice and wider social distancing measures. This is on top of measures that allowed the payment of Statutory Sick Pay from the first day of sickness or isolation and increased Universal Credit and Tax Credits by £20 a week for one year from 6 April, meaning claimants will be up to £1040 better off.
- 2.26 We know, however, that we need to do more to support the financial security of the social care workforce at this incredibly challenging time.
- 2.27 For those social care workers who are generally able to work, but are unable to do so for short periods of time because they are unwell or self-isolating, we want to protect their income, so that they are guaranteed not to lose out financially because they are doing the right thing. We expect local authorities to

fund social care providers in a way that means that means employers can continue to pay their workers their full wages for up to [X weeks of sickness or isolation during the pandemic]. Where local authorities face particularly disproportionate costs of doing this, the Government will meet the costs centrally. [POLICY NOT AGREED WITH MINISTERS] And there this is not happening we want to know, and will work with those representing care workers to ensure there is a way that staff can flag if they are not receiving the support to which they are entitled. [DN: Policy not agreed; needs work.]

- 2.28 Where social care workers are unable to work for a long period of time, because they are in a high-risk group, or because they are shielding during the outbreak, employers can furlough these workers, to ensure that they continue to receive 80 per cent of their normal income.
- 2.29 Despite the unpresented support from Government to maintain the income of workers across the country, we know that sadly some social care workers, like many across the country, will find themselves in financial difficulty. The voluntary sector plays a vital role in supporting people when Government is unable to do so. Recent weeks have seen many generous and big-hearted donations from businesses and individuals alike in order to support those who care for others. Many have partnered with NHS charities for which we are very grateful. We would encourage those considering similar commitment to consider supporting those working on the front line in social care, including for example, to charities such as the Care Workers Charity.
- 2.30 International workers make up 16% of the social care workforce. In London that rises to 38%. In some parts of the country our social care system would completely collapse without them. We want them to know that we are so grateful for the contribution that they make to our society, and the role they have played in supporting our country through this crisis. As an initial step, for those working in social care who have come to the UK on working or dependent visas, we will automatically extend any visa that is due to run out before 1 October for an extra year. This will mean that they do not need to worry about their visa expiring during the pandemic. The Government will consider whether additional measures need to be taken in order to recognise the extraordinary contribution that the international workforce has made to the health and social care sector. [NOT AGREED WITH HOME OFFICE]