



Organise network submission to the BEIS Committee Inquiry on UK Labour Markets

November 2022



The report below is based on the experiences of 11,894 workers in the Organise network who took the time to share their experiences of working life with the BEIS Committee.

Of the workers who took part, 6,633 are in full-time employment, 4,622 are self-employed, and 639 are currently out of work.

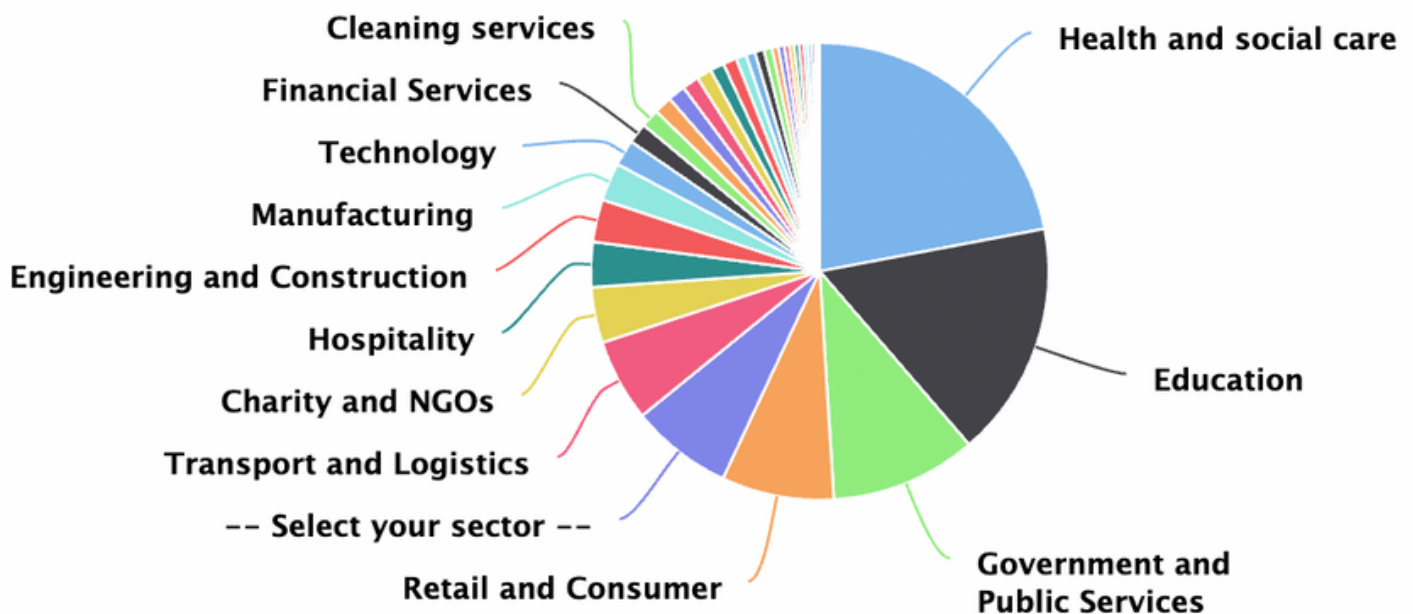
Following the main report, there are two appendices spotlighting the working conditions of two groups of workers facing particularly urgent challenges in this moment - school workers and carers.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the perspectives of workers in the Organise network as part of the BEIS Committee's inquiry into the UK Labour Market.



Part 1: Employees

Employees surveyed in this report represent a wide range of sectors:

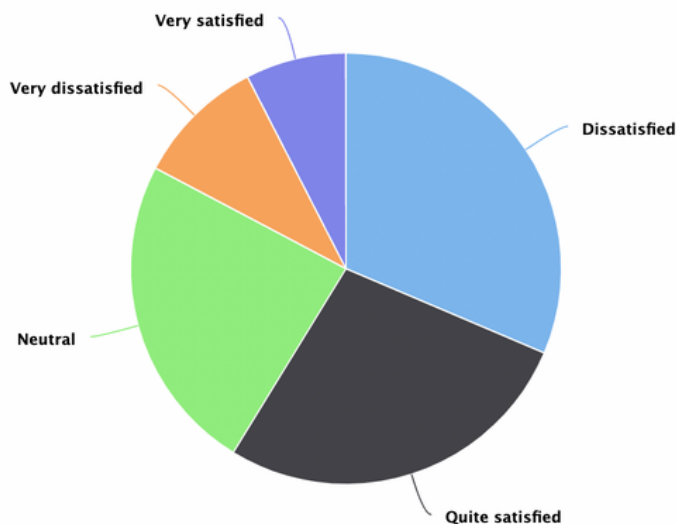




a. Job satisfaction

Overall levels of job satisfaction reported by employees were mixed - with 31% of respondents reporting feeling dissatisfied with their job, 27% feeling quite satisfied, 24% feeling neutral, 10% feeling very dissatisfied, and only 8% reporting feeling very satisfied with their job at the moment.

How satisfied do you feel with your job at the moment?

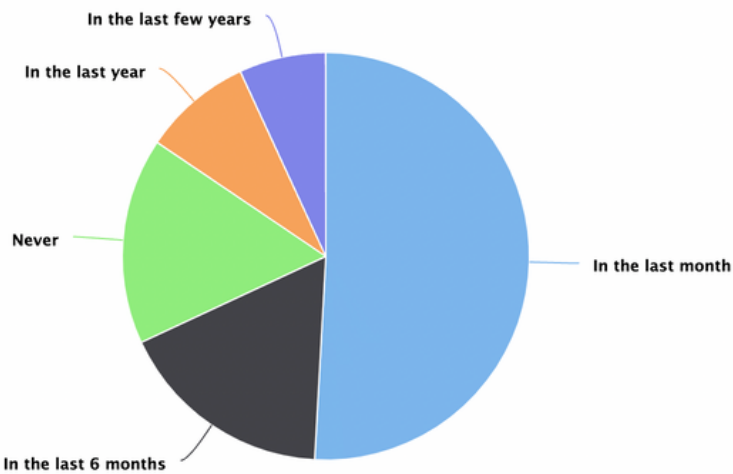


Answer	# Respondents	% of respondents
Dissatisfied	2076	31
Quite satisfied	1810	27
Neutral	1584	24
Very dissatisfied	643	10
Very satisfied	499	8



Additionally, over half of workers surveyed reported having thought about leaving their current job in the last month - and more than three quarters of respondents saying they've thought about it at least once in the last year.

When was the last time you thought about leaving your job?



Answer	# Respondents	% of respondents
In the last month	3335	51
In the last 6 months	1126	17
Never	1075	16
In the last year	566	9
In the last few years	452	7

When asked to give more detail on why they wanted to leave their jobs - and what stopped them - here's a snapshot of what Organise members said:

"Like many hard working people, I'm stuck in a situation where I am not earning enough money to live on and pay the bills, but there's no options available to improve my income." (Retail and Consumer sector)

"Archaeology feels like a dying industry. I still love my job and believe it is important."

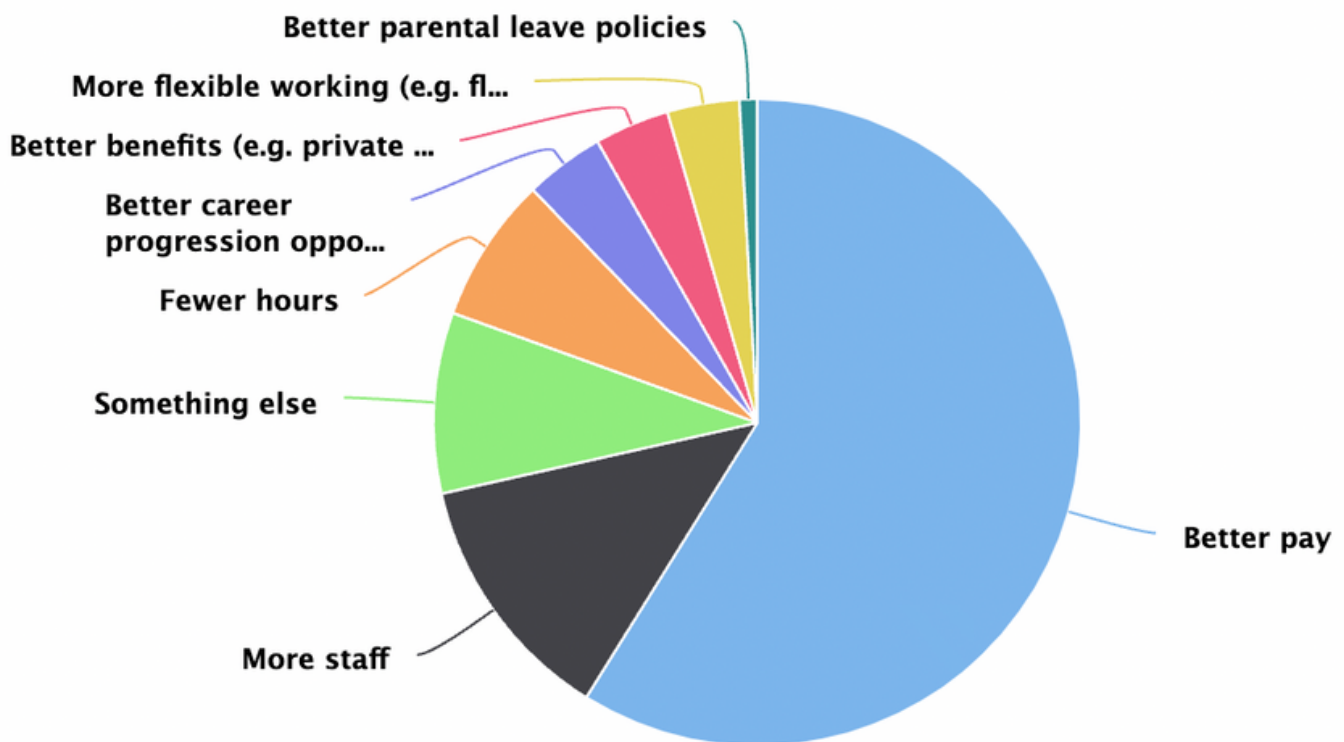
"I work in the NHS, chronic staff shortages increased demand which we cannot meet, never get to do what I know would be best practice. After almost 40 years in this sector, the thought of doing this every day until I can retire at 67 depresses me beyond words."

"I'm thinking of leaving the industry I'm currently in (retail/food) for the care industry. However, the lower pay, added responsibility & difficult working conditions stopped me."

"I work part-time as a fitness instructor. It's impossible to get enough classes to work full time (besides which it's so demanding, it's not really possible). I considered taking a full-time office-based job and only teaching evenings and weekends."

"We're currently on strike. The railway is in complete disarray and is so poorly managed. Nobody cares whether trains run or not. Management are effectively on strike everyday. They are not fixing any problems we face at work or improving anything for staff and passengers. i'm concerned over job security but it is so expensive to retrain and there are no quality jobs out there."

When asked what one thing people would change about their jobs right now if they could, here is what Organise members voted for:



Of those who voted for 'something else', some of the views shared are quoted on the following page.

"I work part-time in care. I can't physically manage to work full time as I have blood cancer, though I need the money. I have been trying to resurrect my own massage/therapy business that was decimated by lockdown, with no support. I am too tired, to build it up, have post-vaccine health issues and I am now stuck fighting anxiety and depression. Costs are rising while I am sinking."

"We are never assured funding. There is no job security and it is difficult to forward plan. I work for a Women's Aid organisation."

"I am a civil servant. Morale is very low."

"I work part-time for a not-for-profit that does important work in finance. I'd love to be able to work full-time but they lack the budget and many of the staff work part-time."

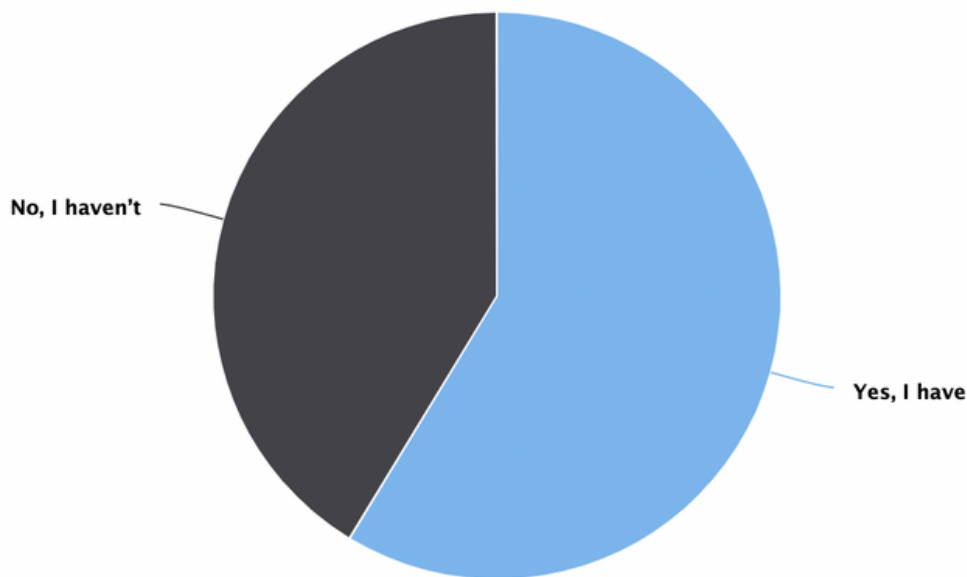
"I'm a Single mum with 2 kids one being disabled. I need flexibility in my work to look after her during the mornings/evenings. (Term time!) The UC/Jobcentre seems to think that I can work at 6am and leave my children unsupervised and again in the evening! I can't. More flexible working is needed for those that can't work those hours! Would it suit the government to have lots of children under the care of social services because a parent had to work what the UC/JC say? Increase the amount people like me can work and earn without being penalised by the system! £135 a week is all I can earn on Carer's allowance. I'd like one MP to live on that for a month and see how stressed/anxious you are about keeping a roof over your head, food on the plate, and heat in the house."

"Working in a school I am low paid and do not get paid for holidays and can't claim benefits for the time I cannot earn any money without getting a second job. But how can I get a second job for a few weeks here and there?"



b. Retraining & career changes

When asked if they'd ever thought about switching careers entirely, 59% of Organise members surveyed said they have considered a switch:



If you said 'yes', which sector did you want to switch into?

"I have just left the NHS and now work in a warehouse."

"I switched from the civil service to become a lorry driver."

"I moved from private to public sector, already thinking of switching back."

"I changed to IT but returned to nursing. I sincerely wish I hadn't. It is too late to return now."

And what, if anything, has stopped you from making the switch?

"Moving into a new sector would likely require me to complete further under-/post-grad qualifications, which I can't afford and can't get student loans for as I already have degrees." (NHS)

"NHS pay for the responsibility we take is low but I don't think I could bring myself to go private as so many of my colleagues have - against their principles and mine but I could double my income for fewer hours" (NHS)

"Fear of the unknown and seeing the drop in pay initially. Also, the centre purpose of my current role is in line with what I want to give back to society, the politics surrounding makes this difficult however. Am aware that my current position is not something I can see myself retiring in though, despite the time and studying given to get there" (Local authority employee)

"It isn't from want of trying. Companies want experience in that industry rather than looking at the skill base and passion of the applicant."

"Risk to my pension, financial security in general - I've been at my current place long enough to qualify for redundancy pay. Also - I'm exhausted and this year has knocked my confidence." (BBC)



Finally, employees taking the survey were asked this question:

"Before you finish, is there anything you want to say to MPs reading this survey about your work life that you haven't been able to share yet?"

A few representative responses are shared below:

"More & more workers in my field are finding it hard to survive, working more & more overtime just to make ends meet. Something needs to be done about pay, terms & conditions for the working class. It hasn't been that long since we were being applauded as front-line workers & now it seems we are bottom of the barrel again with no help from the government." (Royal Mail)

"Local Government must be better funded. People in Local Government work hard and long hours which the public don't see, trying to cover roles that become vacant and are then frozen due to budgets. All of this knocks on to providing services to the public, especially statutory ones where these must be met."

"We need affordable childcare - women are directly penalised and forced to take up the majority of unpaid care (both of children and older relatives). The cost of public transport is extortionate, it is also unreliable and doesn't provide a great connection service to rural areas which rely on the service more."

"In the early 2000s as a single mother I had 3 jobs, all permanent contracts - 1 working in primary education with 2nd language English & special needs pupils- 4 days a week, 1 - 3 x 4 hours evenings for the National Blood Service & 1 x 10 hours a week as a site cleaner on a building site, all part-time - all stable income all fit in with my life & allowed me to be available to care for my daughter, pick her up from school & also gain a mortgage offer & buy the house we still live in 20 years later. - Zero hours contracts prevent this, they contribute to financial difficulties, mental health problems, child poverty & keep people in situations where they feel safer on benefits than on taking employment offers that are not supportive of allowing people to build a life - build a stable home life, have more than 1 job if the need is there -please please change - actually please stop zero hours contracts they are one-sided relationships which do not work - I went from working in a hotel - I loved the job - offered 30 hours on a zero hours role & within weeks was only receiving 8 hours because they took on too many zero hour staff for the Christmas period in case we were busy or absences so the 30 hours was shared out between us all - please look at the effect it is having on so many peoples lives."

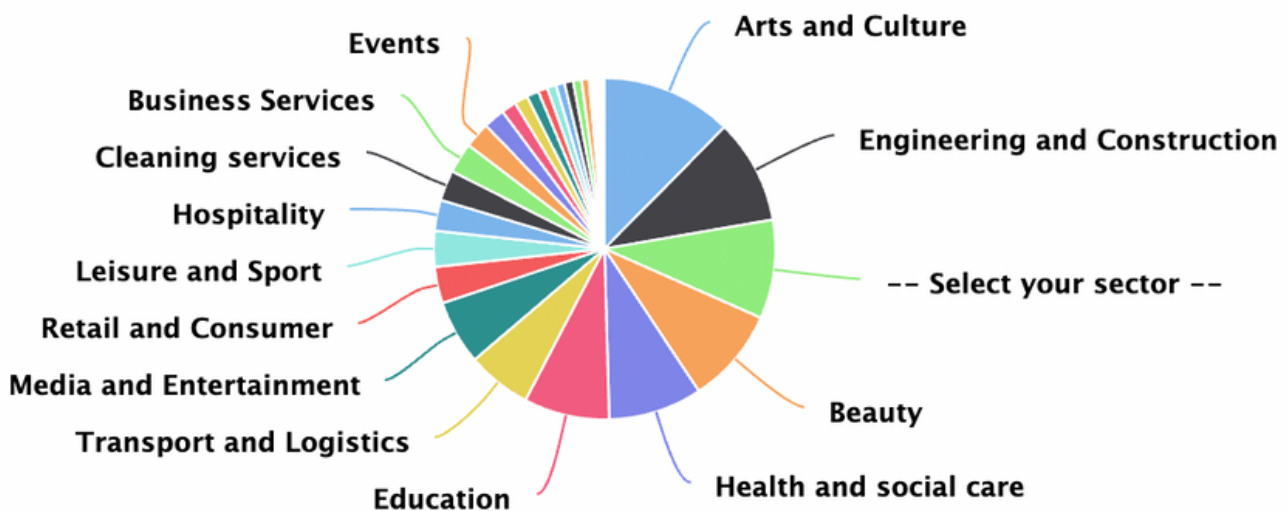
"My sector (culture) is unbelievably underfunded and relies on too few people doing too much and not being paid enough. Re-examining the culture sector's funding models, investment in people/skills recognition, freelancer conditions and support structures, and developing a better work/life balance whilst working in the arts is really important, or we will lose a fantastically rich and important sector for our economy, lifestyle and common heritage in the UK."

"It's just not fair that the lowest paid are struggling so much, our pay is not going up with inflation, and care work is so underpaid anyway. What we do is just not recognised. Sometimes I feel that I might as well be claiming benefits! Low-paid workers I think are getting the worst deal at the moment - and without the care sector what would you do???"



Part 2: Self-employed workers

Self-employed workers surveyed in this report also represented a wide range of sectors:

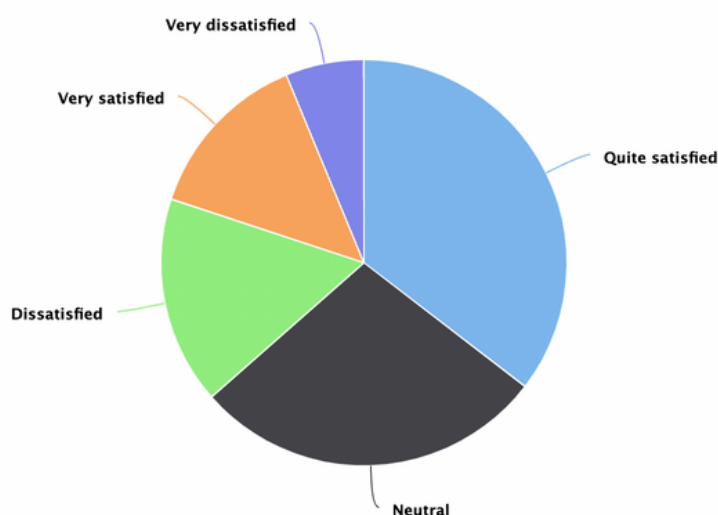




a. Job satisfaction

Overall levels of job satisfaction reported by self-employed workers were higher than those of employees - with 49% of workers reporting feeling either quite satisfied or very satisfied, and only 23% of workers reporting feeling dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their work.

How satisfied do you feel with your work at the moment?

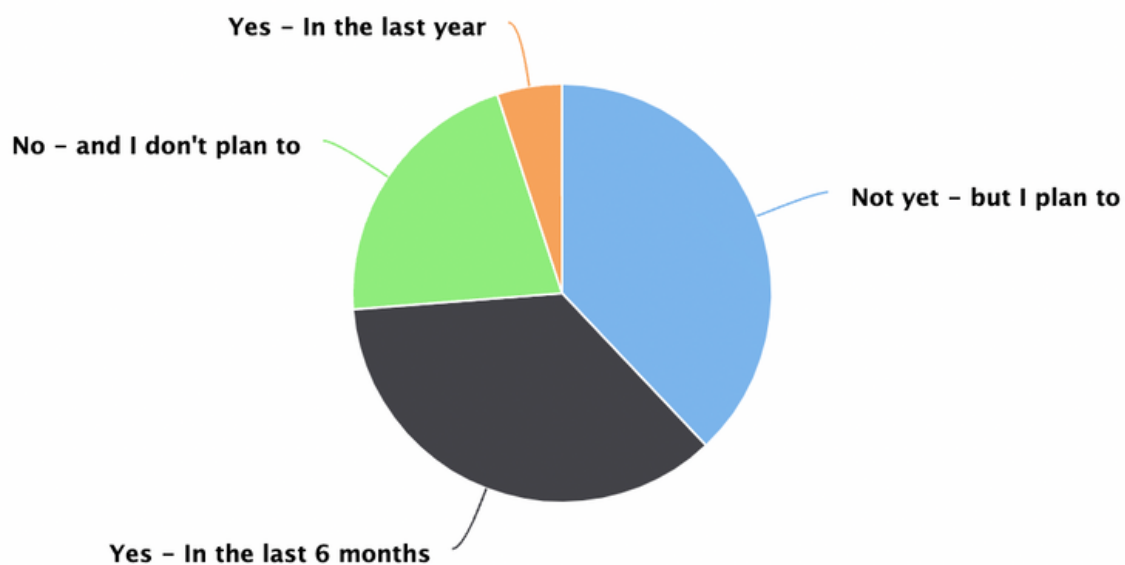


Answer	# Respondents	% of respondents
Quite satisfied	1626	35
Neutral	1290	28
Dissatisfied	761	17
Very satisfied	627	14
Very dissatisfied	287	6



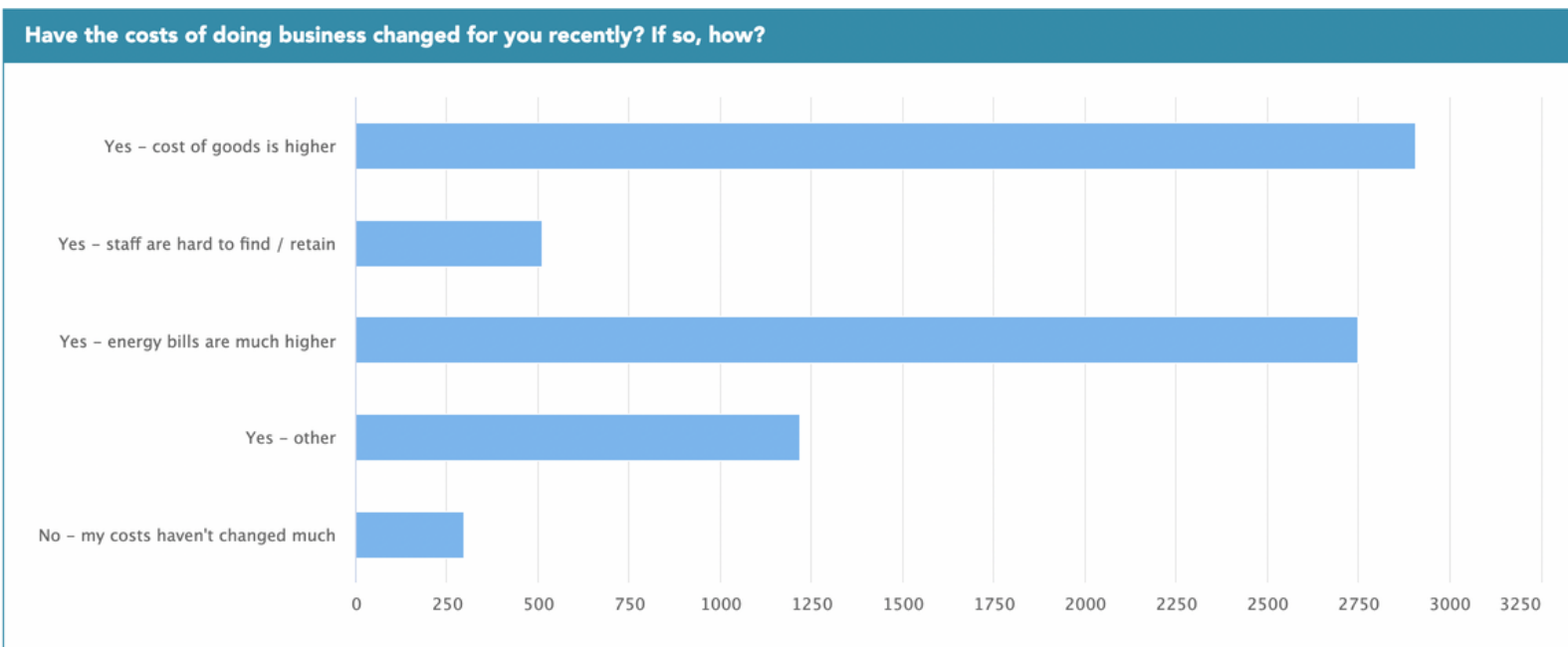
b. Pay & working conditions

Self-employed workers in the Organise network reported that the cost of living crisis was already having an acute impact on their work and the rates they are able to offer clients - with 40% of respondents saying they have already raised their rates, and a further 38% saying they plan to do so.





The rise in self-employed workers' fees has been brought on by a rise in costs - with almost all respondents reporting a rise in some of their core business costs. The price of goods and energy bills were the most widely-reported cost rises among respondents:





c. Switching careers & retraining

When asked whether they'd ever thought about leaving their profession, 36% said they had never considered doing this, but 29% said they had considered doing so within the last month.

When was the last time you thought about leaving your profession?



Answer	# Respondents	% of respondents
Never	1652	36
In the last month	1349	29
In the last 6 months	844	18
In the last year	400	9
In the last few years	329	7

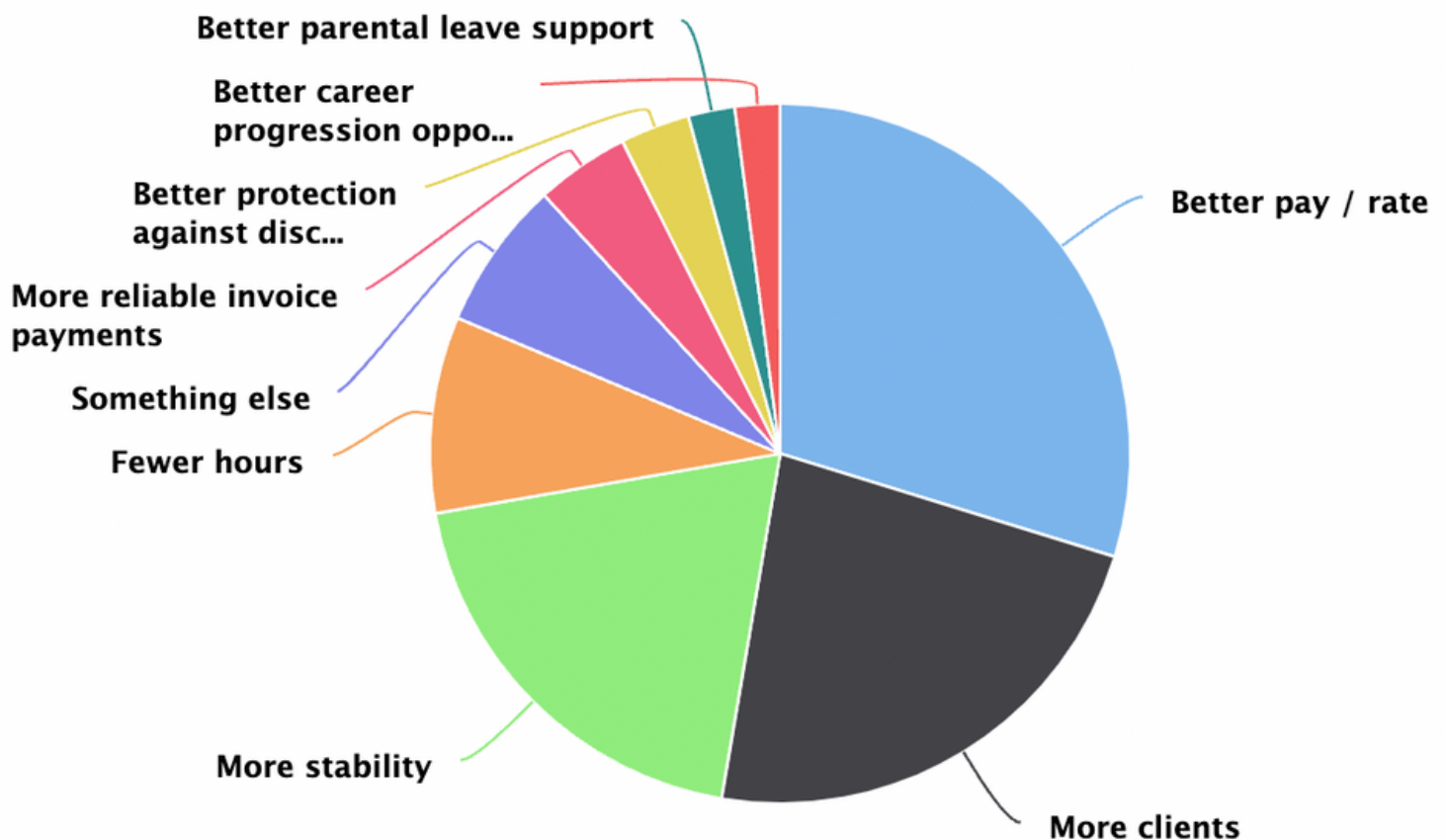
When asked why they considered switching professions - and what stopped them - here is what a few respondents had to say:

"Being self-employed in this country is incredibly difficult. I have worked for well-below minimum wage for over 15 years now. My wife was recently made redundant from her job with Norfolk County Council in April and has been forced to set up as a self-employed freelancer, mostly working for the exact same department she was previously employed by, even working on the same projects she was on before redundancy. We now have no safety net or pensions. VAT is the main thing that kills small business. I have just de-registered due to a huge decrease in turnover but the VAT I paid in the last year will not be returned to me. That sum of money would make a massive difference to my business, my family and my own mental health. I think it's appalling the way self-employed people are treated and the apparent lack of understanding of what it's like to work for yourself in a low-earning industry."

"I am a British Sign Language Interpreter. I contracted Covid in the first wave and have since suffered the long-term effects of Long Covid. I received no financial help from the Government during lockdown or as a result of illness. I have used all my savings meaning I have no safety net. My job is stressful and irregular but I cannot leave due to my commitment to the community I serve."

"I am self employed running a small business. I didn't qualify for support during covid and my business had to close. I used up all of my savings. My business is now operational again but the costs of running it mean some days I run at a loss and when I do make a small profit I earn on average £3 per hour. I'd be better off on benefits."

When asked what one thing people would change about their work right now if they could, here is what self-employed Organise members voted for:





Finally, self-employed workers taking the survey were asked this question:

"Before you finish, is there anything you want to say to MPs reading this survey about your work life that you haven't been able to share yet?"

A few representative responses are shared below:

"There seems to be a point of view that a career is just something to make money, and that people can just change to another better paid more stable job. There is little support for people that have invested years in time, training, experience and their own money in developing vocational careers."

"We need to be transitioning into renewables and upskilling all people - especially school leavers. The government needs to invest in education if it genuinely believes in a high skilled, high paid workforce, because their current pitch is just convenient sound-bites with no substance. The private sector will not do it on their own - shareholders won't let them. So this reliance is shortsighted and deluded. Government needs to invest in people and return key infrastructure to the public sector - creating jobs and value whilst reducing costs and ensuring investment."



"The only job opportunities for many well-qualified, highly experienced people over 50 are low paid insecure jobs in warehouses and supermarkets. More opportunities for better jobs, better pay and job security should be made available to older people as we have to work till we're 67. That's a tough call if it's hard, manual work with long hours on poor pay. The world of work needs a massive rethink."

"We need MPs to understand that simply "working harder" is not a solution when pay rises and incomes are stuck at levels below that of inflation and the cost of living. Giving pay rises to people on low incomes means that money gets SPENT in the UK economy, generating income for others and taxes which then benefit society."

"I work in libraries, which have had budgets cut again and again for the last 10 years. There's nothing left to cut apart from staff or closing libraries. How can a civilised society that really cares about the poorest put such institutions at risk?"

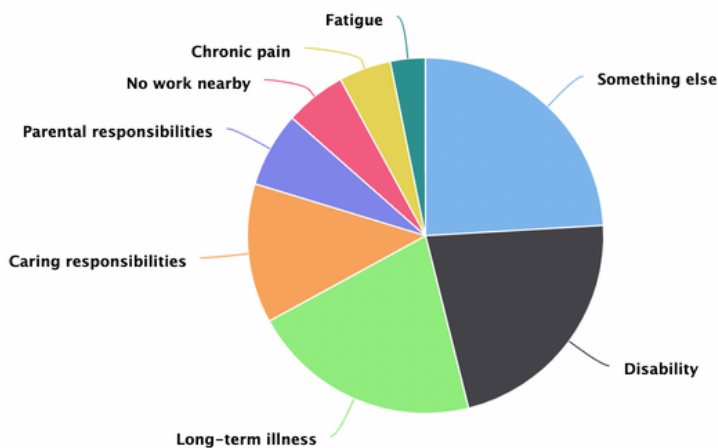
"Social care staff are completely undervalued. We provide a necessary service in often challenging circumstances. Our job is not without skill and responsibility, but our pay is incredibly low. Everyone that I know who works in care feels utterly demoralised."



Part 3: People out of work

Survey respondents reported being out of work for a wide range of reasons:

What's the main reason you aren't working right now?



Answer	# Respondents	% of respondents
Something else	152	24
Disability	139	22
Long-term illness	132	21
Caring responsibilities	80	13
Parental responsibilities	43	7
No work nearby	35	6
Chronic pain	30	5
Fatigue	20	3

Of those who said "something else", some of the reasons reported were:

"Stress at work, which caused depression"

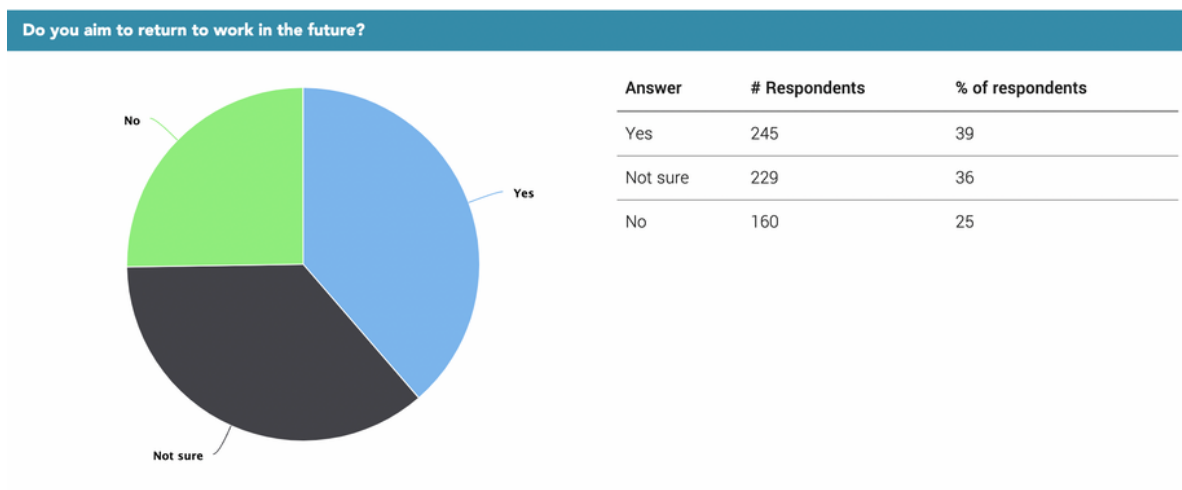
"Planning to donate my liver, don't want to do that and start a new job."

"I work in the construction industry as a groundworker on new build houses I have seen a dramatic decrease in work as interest rates rise and no one is buying new builds, the housing developer has stopped all footings for the houses being dug out, and work is slowly and surely going to stop."

"There are very few shoe-making factories left within the Uk. Literally a dying trade with such talent lost forever. There are now only two tanneries left, I struggled to get supplies to make shoes before my son became so unwell I had to stop. Everything is now made in China. We live in a throwaway society where my skills are no longer required. This country is no longer great. We produce nothing of any worth that I can see. At the moment as I say I'm caring for my son who should not even be in this situation, it's criminal, & then I'm subjected to scrutiny from employment agencies struggling to live on what the government deems an acceptable amount"

"I needed to stop being a school teacher. Been doing it for 17 years in survival education and I was frankly exhausted, constantly stressed and feeling ill."

Of the workers in this cohort, 39% said they planned to return to work, with a further 36% saying they were unsure.



When asked how the government could better support their return into work, respondents cited the following:

"Improve child care for smaller children. The cost of child care compared to the pound per hour worked doesn't work! It costs too much to place children in child care even with 15/30 hours free, part-time wages won't cover childcare costs and basic bills."

"I had to give up my business because our 17-year-old son does not have sufficient funds to meet his care needs. Neither myself nor his partner can work because he needs 24-hour care and he is only funded for circa 40 hours per week."

"Make permitted work more than £20 a week. When permitted work started the paltry £20 was at least over 5 hours of work at minimum wage, the permitted wage amount has stayed the same, it should be £50 by now."



Finally, people out of work taking the survey were asked this question:

"Before you finish, is there anything you want to say to MPs reading this survey about your work life that you haven't been able to share yet?"

A few representative responses are shared below:

"Not every single mum on benefits is claiming by choice. I didn't want to be a single struggling mum! I had a very good career I enjoyed and was working hard in! That was taken away from me by a selfish man who pays nothing towards his children's upbringing and hasn't ever bothered since we split. Maybe make it stricter on dads who have children, to provide for them BY LAW! USA have an amazing family court system! We should be the same! Fathers should be made to provide for children as a law, regardless of if they want to or not! Then that would free up money for child care for many of us single mums and we could return to working again!"

"We want to work, we are fit for work but are completely exhausted by trying to meet our son's needs without sufficient funding to provide the support he needs for his complex condition."



"Treat people as individuals that have contributed to the economy with respect and support when they go through a challenging time. My partner shouldn't be expected to support me. We are not married, I am an independent person and should be treated as such."

"Being a teacher throughout the pandemic and caring for a mother with dementia with lack of support was draining and detrimental to my career and mental wellbeing. Flexible hours would be helpful."

"Why do you demonise the disabled? I worked for over 25 years until an unexpected stroke I paid taxes often working 2 jobs but I'm still treated as someone who doesn't deserve benefits or support"

"Not all people can continue working indefinitely, the construction industry is a very hard knock on your life and causes many conditions and ailments which limit life choices as you get into your fifties and sixties."

"Address the pay gap between men and women, particularly in the public sector where traditionally male careers such as refuse collectors and train drivers get disproportionately well paid compared to caring and cleaning roles (predominantly staffed by women). Equal pay has not been implemented effectively across different workstreams in the public sector."

"Please pause, be bold, be visionary, and consider how much our society is long overdue to make a shift to truly demonstrate the 'caring values' that we claim to have. As our MPs please listen, then strive daily for your intentions, words, and actions to be for the common good, not just the good of the few."



Spotlight on:

School staff

November 2022

This people-powered report is based on the experiences of teaching assistants in the Organise network who took part in a survey to share their experiences of their role.

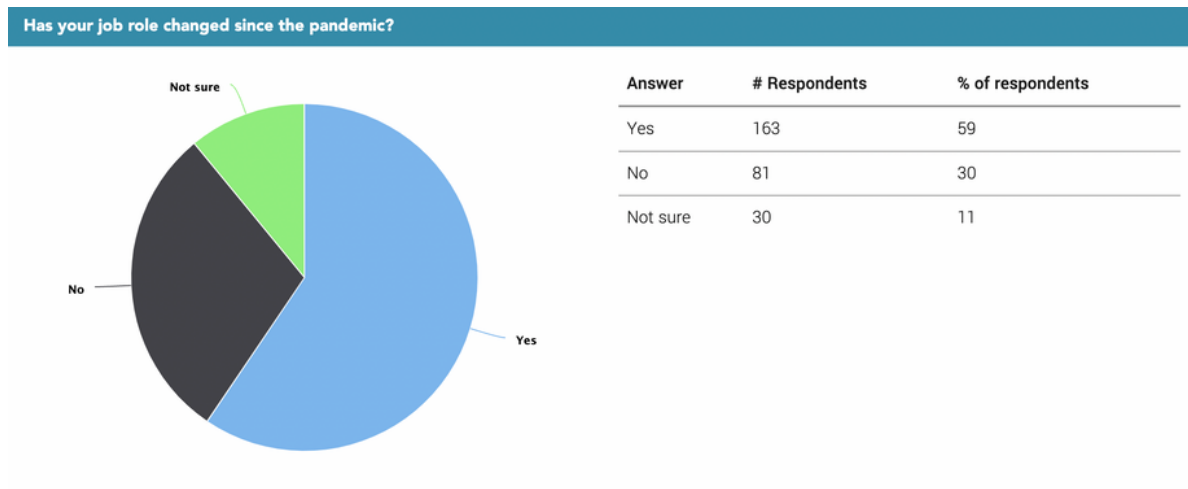
The average pay for a teaching assistant is just £14,149 [1] and it's one of the lowest-paying jobs in the UK. Unlike teachers, TAs only get paid during term time. This has resulted in many reporting that they are struggling with the cost of living crisis.

This report looks into:

- The pandemic and how it changed expectations of the role of a teaching assistant
- The cost of living crisis and chronic underfunding
- Specific policy areas that need urgent attention

92% of teaching assistants are not paid enough to cover their basic needs [2]

Over 59% of respondents say their job role has changed since the pandemic.



When asked 'Could you say a little more about how your role has changed?' this is what Organise members shared:

"Over the 20 years that I have been a teaching assistant I have noticed a lot more work being put on the teaching assistants, but our pay has stayed the same for many years because of the pay freeze. When I first started my job I was paid well above the minimum wage and it was thought of as a good job. But because of the pay freeze, the minimum wage has caught up with the top of the pay scale meaning anybody who now starts work will start work on the same wage as myself who has 20 years of experience. Also, I need to work another 2 jobs just so I can pay my bills, but I have no spare money or no spare time to actually live a life."

"Relied upon to act as a supply teacher at short notice and without supply teacher pay!"

More responsibility, more paperwork. Basically completing a level 3 job role for a level 2 job.

"I do more teaching, prior to the pandemic it was mainly 1-1 or small groups. Now it's whole class teaching or shared class teaching with the teacher. Marking books and planning has become part of my job."

"Given more to do without any more pay."

"Since the start of the pandemic, there has been a high increase in the number of students having special educational needs so more support and intervention work is needed. This falls on teaching assistants and learning support assistants and we are not being valued or paid for this extra work."

"More pastoral care"

"More work and more support for the children covering so many areas in school."

"Greater support is needed for the children, generally. Resilience levels are down and a huge rise in SEN needs, with more educational and behaviour interventions required. I personally do several different jobs across a school day - from sorting breakfast, phonics work, behaviour therapy, lunch duty, lunchtime and playtime supervisor. You name it, it's probably in my job!"

"More pressure longer hours"

"More responsibility for the same amount of pay"

"Children are lacking discipline and need a lot more support. Making up for the time, children are almost 2 academic years behind."

"I was doing PPA cover and am now a nursery teacher as a TA with no choice"

"An expectation to manage day-to-day school like you are being paid like a teacher or higher."

"A lot more pastoral care is required as so many children appear to have been impacted by the pandemic. New pupils are less prepared for school. The impact of austerity and price increases have had a huge effect on our families and our staff."

"TA's do more full class teaching, sometimes doing more teaching than the teachers also doing SEN when not qualified for no more money. TA's are doing more admin jobs also. All these extra responsibilities that are not reflected in our wages."

"Moving up and down to cover absences without adequate training."

"More covering classes, first aiding, dinnertime covering, interventions, plus other extra workloads"

*"Workload has increased drastically because we are constantly bridging gaps that have contributed to children's learning post covid
I have changed from care work to being a TA"*

"Staff shortages and separating key stages has increased time without a teacher and therefore responsibilities."

"A lot more pressure on academic achievement of the pupils. Teachers expecting more of us."

"More work less pay"

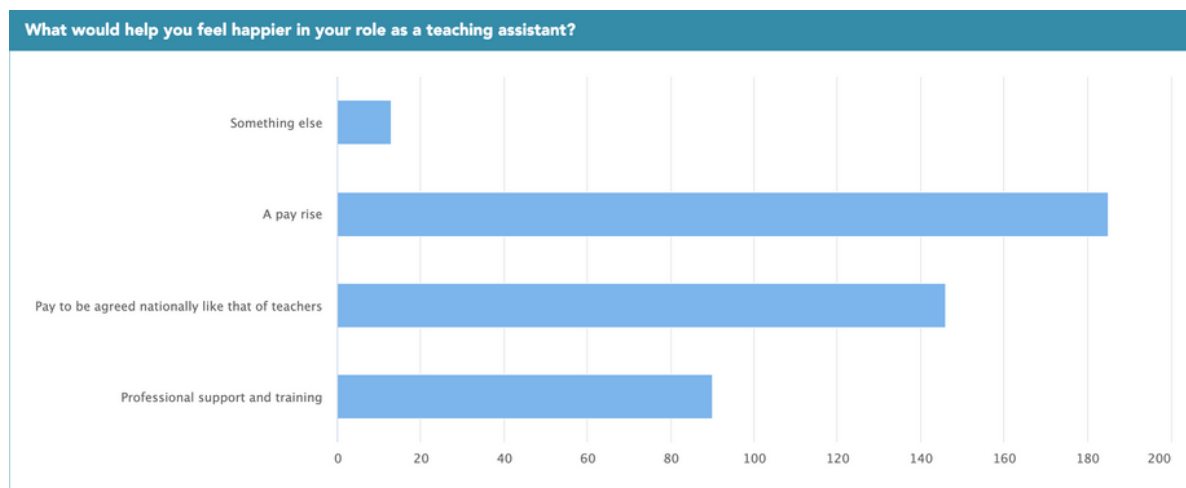
"More responsibility. Standing in for teachers more often."

"Due to lack of staffing, working in an SEN school, I have been left vulnerable to being on my own with children that require the support of more. I now clean the classroom also, due to the lack of cleaning staff. My hours are set but each day I am working, on average, an hour more. And a break? Nope, those never happen now..."

"More children with SEMH after the lockdowns, more children with anxiety issues. Generally more low-level disruption in class."

"Dealing with mental health issues with far more children and staff I am not just a teaching assistant in the classroom I am also covering lessons when teachers are away teaching core lessons as a teacher would, saving the school money by not having to hire a supply teacher however I am not being paid a penny more for this additional responsibility and work. Also when I cover to teach a class I do so without having a teaching assistant to help me which the teacher usually does meaning I also have to do the teaching assistant role of preparing resources etc"

What would help you feel happier in your role as a teaching assistant?



The majority of people said that a pay rise would help them feel happier in their role as teaching assistants.

If you said something else, could you tell us a bit more?

"Something that really bugs TA's is the lack of any career path. I have been on the same pay point for over 15 years though am relied upon more and more to act as a supply teacher etc. whereas new staff cannot do this. It doesn't seem right or fair for all TA's to be on the same pay point (basically minimum wage) regardless of skills."

"Job evaluation, re-evaluate all job roles so the pay reflects the job being done."

"Recognition of the vital role TA's play within the education setting. The pay does not reflect this at all. My wage is less than £15,000 per year, I could get more if I went and stacked shelves in a supermarket. This is why I feel totally undervalued and underpaid."

"TA role to be outlined and not made to do SENCO roles or teachers' role (planning, marking and etc)"

"Stop being taken for granted. I want to keep my job so daren't say no to their demands"

"Permanent contracted working hours for security instead of casual hours (which could be changed/reduced at any time. At present, if school is closed for any reason I'm not entitled to pay"

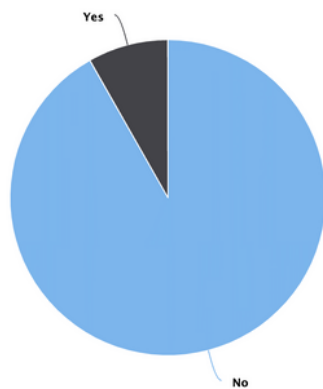
"Recognition for when we go above and beyond, thanks for when we buy resources for the children, out of our, already meagre, wages!"

"Being recognised for the skills we have ie being able to teach a class a lot better than most supply teachers"

"To be listened to by management. Given less box-ticking and for staff resources to be kept running smoothly."

Is your current pay enough to cover your basic needs?

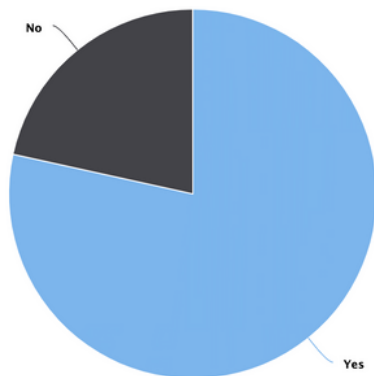
Is your current pay enough to cover your basic needs?



Answer	# Respondents	% of respondents
No	201	92
Yes	18	8

Are you considering leaving your job as a teaching assistant to do something else?

Are you considering leaving your job as a teaching assistant to do something else?



Answer	# Respondents	% of respondents
Yes	171	78
No	47	22

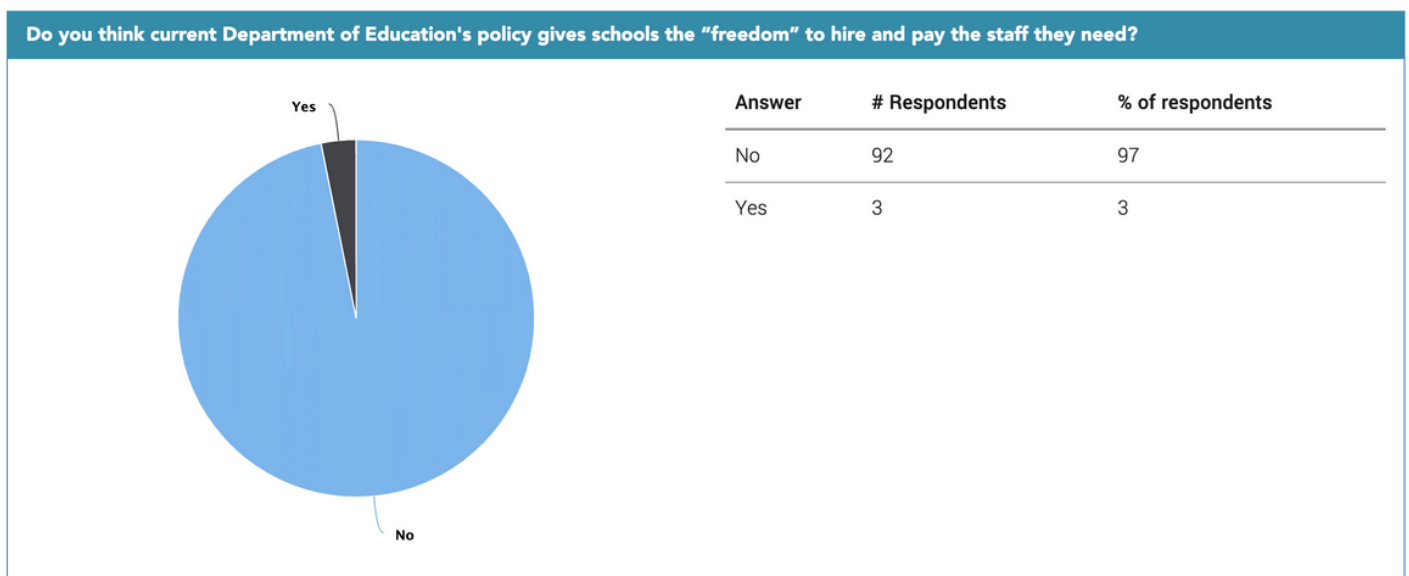
78% of teaching assistants are considering leaving their job to do something else

In light of collective these survey results, over 4,000 Organise members wrote to Gillian Keegan to ask for a pay rise for teaching assistants' and for their pay to be agreed nationally like that of teachers.

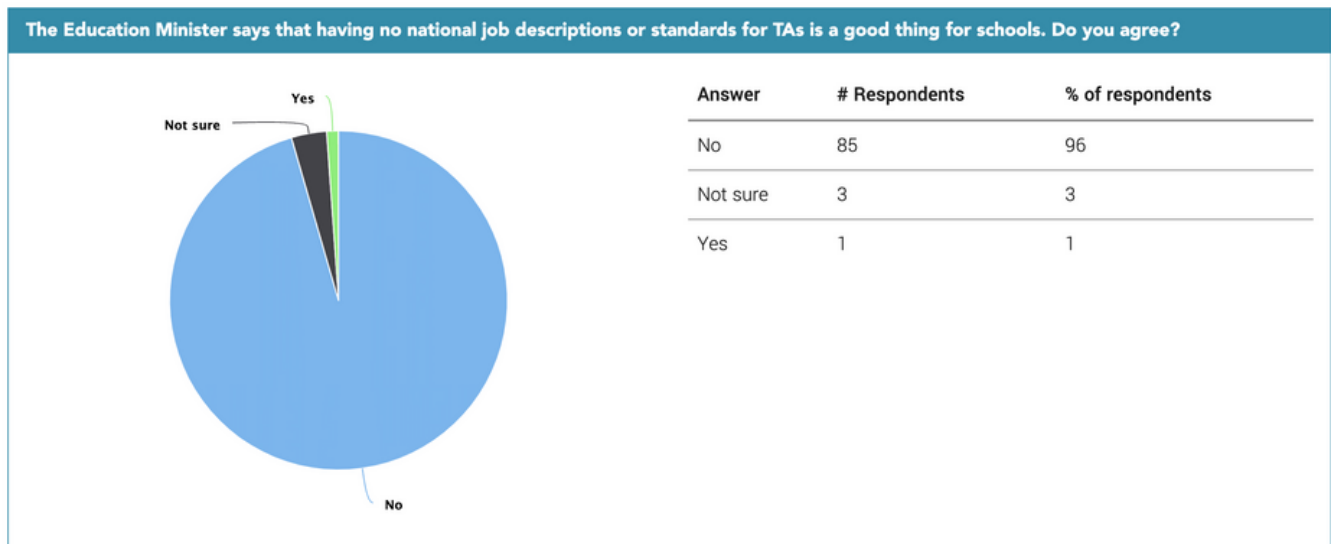
The Department of Education responded saying:

“The Department for Education recognises the vital service that all school staff, including support staff, provide on a daily basis”, but does not want to “intervene in their employment and deployment, nor (...) have responsibility for pay, or have a role in contracts or pay negotiations and arrangements.” [4]

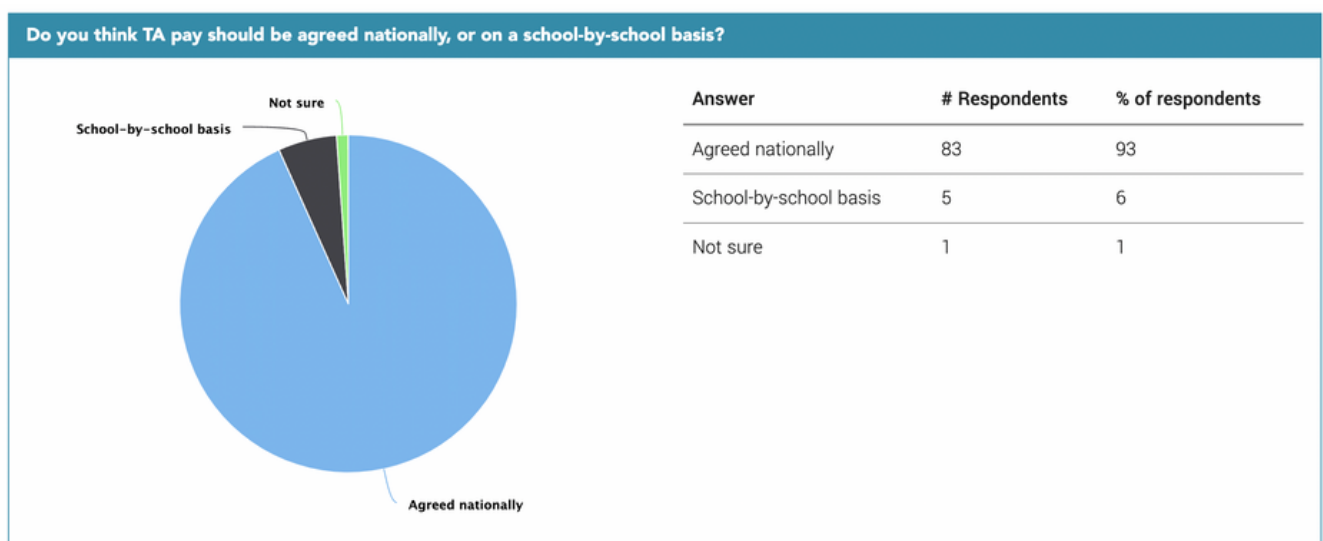
Of the 95 Teaching Assistants surveyed on the DoE's response, 97% disagreed - saying current DoE policy does not give schools the “freedom” to hire and pay the staff they need, contrary to the DoE's claims.



96% disagree with the DoE's claim that having no national job descriptions or standards for TAs is a good thing for schools.



93% think that TA pay should be agreed nationally.



This is what school staff think of the Department of Educations response:

This response shows how little respect or support TAs have. I understand job descriptions as each school has different needs. It is vial that National standards are put in place. We should be treated as professionals. We should be allowed to progress; be supported and encouraged to develop etc. we don't even have a performance management nor invited to the INSET days (that's how much we are respected). Allowing schools to decide on their own standards for TAs is not a good thing - it does not work. I can't even get up to a level 3 position (despite being qualified at Level 3). I am very experienced and highly qualified (I have a degree and a post graduate qualification). I know I'm not the only one. Something needs to done.

Good teachers are leaving all the time because they are tired of the lack of support. More funding is needed to encourage teachers to stay, with more teachers to support the original ones.

My school can't afford to heat the building and pupils are turning up starving. The education system is a mess. Teachers are using food banks despite working sixty hour weeks (paid for 37 of course). It's deplorable. Start paying TAs properly for the amazing job that they do. Schools cannot function without TAs and children will miss out on vital 1:1 support without the TAs working alongside the teachers.

Our employers would like to pay us more, as we take huge responsibility for children's safety and progress, but they can't as budgets are so tight. Schools should be better funded.

This response is pretty abysmal to be honest ! The main arguments I would have with this statement is that it's basically not taking any accountability for the current pay system. By their own admission our jobs are not standardised or structured in terms of what our job role is , therefore the powers that be cannot measure what pay we are actually entitled to. If the onus is on the school then surely the current funding structure should accommodate this and allow enough room for individual schools to award pay to TA's that is impactful and which reflects the job. Until TA job roles are streamlined and made clear, I don't see the pay issue being resolved. Also, the government seem to have enough money to throw at 'guidance policies' but nothing in the pot to support individual schools. I think moving forward , there should be a structured funding system, whereby certain calculated amounts of funding come from 3 different sources and ALL go towards the pay of educational staff. This should be calculated according the actual standard of living of the individual county, how much each school receives in other funding and a pay scale that is fair and achievable for staff. Then the money should be released accordingly from all 3 components/sources 1. Government 2. Local authority 3. School funding pot. Percentages of how much each source gives will obviously be different though and be calculated using the factors mentioned above.

TA pay is not by no means enough, given the skills and education level required to do the job. I can't believe that TAs are paid the same or less than shop floor workers in supermarkets or people offering childcare. I'm not talking about the hours but the salary level - which is poor before the pro rata amount actually paid.

The disrespect for hard working TAs is a national disgrace.

Lack of school funding is inhibiting me to teach to the best of my ability.

Schools budgets are in deficit, so how can they have the 'freedom' to offer pay rises?

Teaching assistant pay is appalling and driving many to leave the role because the pay is not enough to survive on. Teaching assistants provide a valuable role for children with additional needs and it is these children who will suffer as a result of teaching assistants having to leave the role due to pay.

With the deepening recession and the aftermath and ongoing effects of the pandemic, children and young people are facing the toughest living conditions and mental health threats for generations. They will need far more support from teachers, teaching assistants and educational psychological services. Therefore, schools need significantly more funding to enable the next generation to reach their potential and become healthy and productive adults who can contribute fully to our nation's future.

The significantly poor pay is having a detrimental effect on staff and skills will have a definite shortage due to walk outs. Schools need TAs, they are vital to the running of classes and are invaluable to teachers and children alike. The salary does not reflect that in any way at all.

I don't understand how they think schools can deliver everything they are asked to deliver with no extra money. Schools have lost so much during covid and are struggling to cope with demands of so many kinds, including teachers having to act as social workers and parents.

If the DofE wants to relinquish responsibility for overseeing TA pay, they should also relinquish responsibility for managing education overall. They either take their office seriously as the department in charge of running the country's education system, or they don't. They cannot have it both ways.

This stance would make sense for 'private' schools but as state schools are state funded there should be clear guidelines on pay, job description etc, so that individuals are treated fairly across all schools.

Conclusion:

Over 54,200 Organise members signed a petition to get teaching assistants the recognition they deserve for the incredibly hard job that they do. [3]

The petition has 3 main demands:

- 1) The pay of teaching assistants should be agreed upon nationally like that of teachers.*
- 2) A pay increase to reflect the diverse job role that TAs are expected to do.*
- 3) Due to the diversity of the job, all TAs in England should also be provided with proper professional support and training.*

Notes:

[1] Pay scale:

[https://www.payscale.com/research/UK/Job=Teaching_Assistant_\(TA\)/Salary](https://www.payscale.com/research/UK/Job=Teaching_Assistant_(TA)/Salary)

[2] Organise Survey: Teaching assistants: have your say!

<https://the.organise.network/surveys/teaching-assistants-survey/results>

[3] Organise petition: Give all Teaching Assistants a pay rise!

<https://the.organise.network/campaigns/network-give-all-teaching-assistants-an-increase-in-wages-that-is-reflective-of-the-incredibly-hard-job-that-we-do-71618bb0439c7eaa>

[4] Response from the Department of Education:

<https://the.organise.network/campaigns/the-department-of-education-response->



Spotlight on:

Carers

November 2022

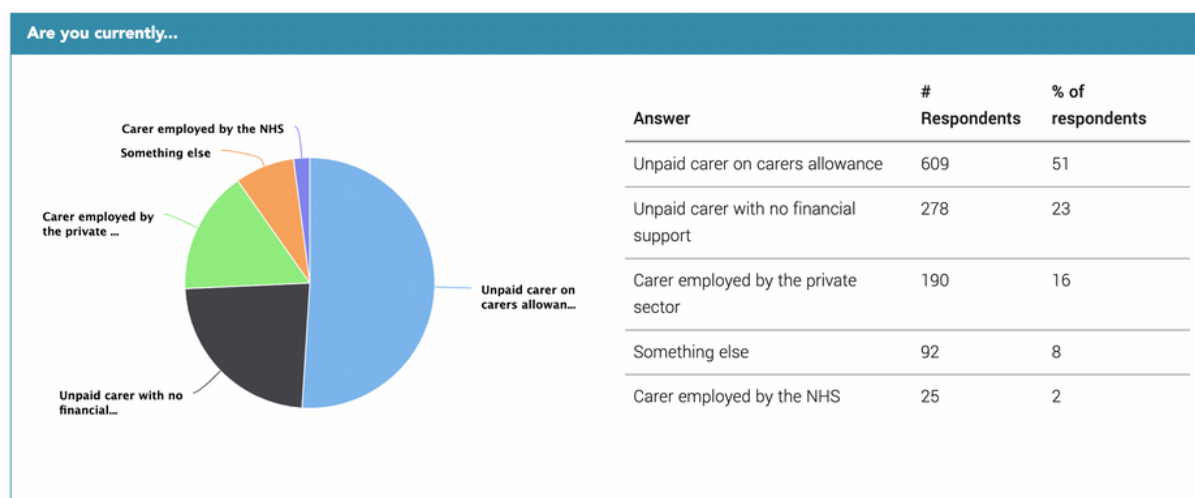
This report is based on the experiences of both unpaid and employed carers in the Organise network who took part in a survey to share the multitude of challenges facing carers. This report explores the intersecting issues that all carers face, as well as highlighting the specific issues that unpaid and employed carers have respectively. [1]

Top lines:

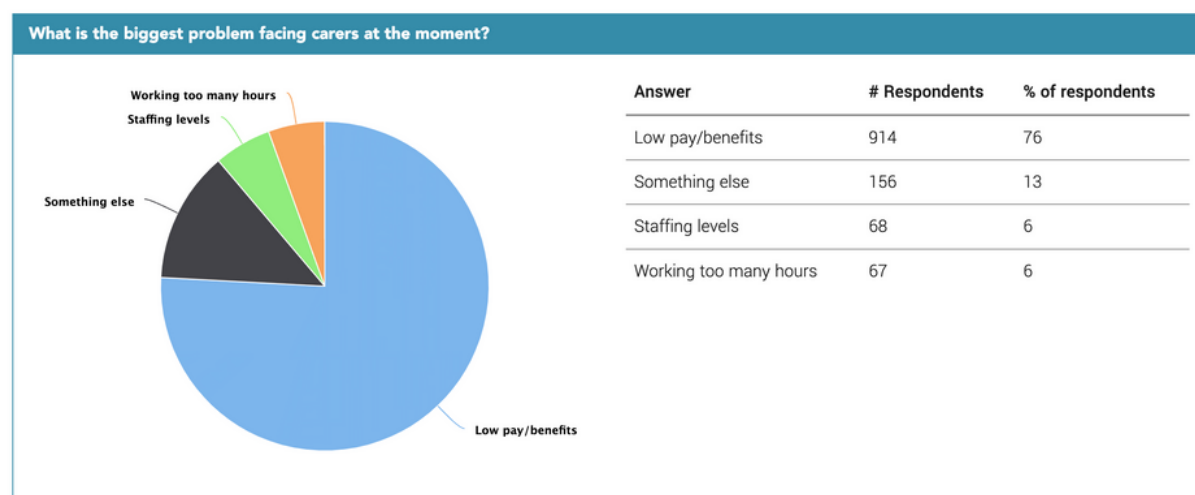
- Carers allowance being deducted from Universal Credit has left many unpaid carers in an economically precarious situation, unable to heat their homes and meet their basic needs.
- There is a big employment gap for carers, with many choosing better pay in other sectors that pay better.
- Many unpaid carers feel their hard work is not recognised by government, despite the fact that they save the tax payer a substantial amount of money by alleviating the strain on the NHS.
- Employed carers are underpaid and overworked, with complaints of burnout and exhausting commonplace.

Overview:

1,194 carers took part in this survey on the Organise platform - of whom 51% are unpaid carers on carers allowance, 23% are unpaid carers with no financial support, 16% are carers in the private sector, 2% are carers in the NHS and 8% are something else.



Of the carers who took part in this survey, over 3/4 reported low pay & benefits being the top issue affecting them at work right now.



For those who said something else, here is a snapshot of what carers in the Organise network had to say:

The cost of living crisis and chronic underpay

My money stays the same but everything else has gone up. I am trying to make my money go further. When I was only just about coping before the cost of living hike.

I have never been in a job so underestimated and undermined. How much responsibility is set upon us for such a small wage is a disgrace. Aldi is paying staff wages more than us now.

£130 cap on earnings weekly needs to be increased. There are professionals who care and can command a bigger hourly wage this needs to be considered and changed. I cannot live on a carer's allowance and £130 per week wages.

The minimum wage does not cover the cost of living. I travel 48 miles a day to & from work.

Exhausted by the additional pressure that being on a low income causes. Less food, no heat, no choices or access to services and basic living requirements.

Carers allowance is too low, means-tested, and deducted from Universal Credit:

I am a parent carer for my autistic son and my mum with MS, I save the government thousands yet I am struggling to put food on the table, heat my flat, and pay my rent. I have been living off a credit card but will struggle to pay it back.

I would love to earn a salary as a carer rather than rely on benefits and state handouts. It would provide greater independence and financial security for both myself and the person I care for. Benefits are not enough to sustain us, and it is a challenge living from day to day. While benefits being raised in line with the living wage would be nice, a better proposal would be to pay us all a living salary, thereby putting us in the position of paying taxes and becoming "active economic units" because we will have money to spend on luxuries and trips out rather than just fighting to cover the essentials.

Unpaid family carers save this country millions of pounds. Considering how low the weekly payment is, how are we not granted the same concessions as other benefits such as free prescriptions and dental help?

I claim a Carers allowance for my son, but because I also claim Universal credit, they deduct the money I get from Carers allowance as it is means tested. So therefore I get nothing for caring.

Being an unpaid carer claiming carers allowance and universal credit is so difficult. There's no break from it (caring for a family member) and we don't have a choice in it, it has to be done. The amount that we're paid is too little to live on, I can't pay all my bills and I can't buy my groceries. Like I said I have no choice, so it's just not fair that I'm not paid enough to live on. It's really affecting my mental health.

As a mum of two disabled children who cannot work, I think the carers' money is really low considering how much it would cost the government if I was a paid carer in a job looking after the same type of children 24 hours a day.

We need a change to Universal credit as now there is no way for me as a carer to get a budgeting loan for clothes, when we were on income support we would get it but it's not available on universal credit which is so annoying due to my husband having incontinence issues he always needs extra/new clothing.

Why is Carers allowance a means-tested benefit? It's our job. A salary isn't fully deducted on UC but the carers allowance is. Many unpaid Carers work harder, and longer than is legal. Those caring for the most complex often get no breaks and are forced out of work. Some are providing nursing-level care. They should be paid for the hours they work at the same rate as the professional who they are replacing.

I'm an unpaid carer for my adult daughter. The carers allowance is pitiful. I panic I won't be able to have the heating on to keep us warm.

As an Unpaid Carer - who has become disabled by being forced to care 24/7 for my two sons for 23yrs with no respite & never a night's sleep. I am angry & exhausted. Because I have been made disabled by the service due to their failures to fund assessed care needs - I am now in the position where the meagre Carers Allowance I receive is deducted from my Universal Credit.

I have 2 disabled children who I care for but only receive money for one and I do more care for the one whom I don't get any money for. It's so wrong.

Exhausted by the additional pressure of being on a low income. Less food, no heat no choices or access to services and basic living. Carers allowance is a joke, we should get it on top of universal credit, not instead of.

Carers on benefits save the government millions yet we are treated appallingly and don't have enough to live on. £64 a week carers Allowance is a disgrace, foster carers caring getting enough to live and pay mortgages but carers have to literally survive. The benefits need to be separated again, the housing benefit needs to be separate and carers all over the UK need proper payment to live and care for the people they care for.

Lack of recognition from the Government:

Carers that are unpaid are not recognised by the Government, we are saving them billions by taking care of our family and friends and neighbours to prevent them from having to go into a professional nursing/caring home, we need to be recognised big time.

I feel with the pay and benefits are terrible with no recognition for the hard work we put in and the hours. The staffing issues are horrendous in care.

A total lack of recognition of the value of what we do in all respects. We are considered unemployed and if in receipt of any money, then it is such a poor sum as to be insulting.

Retention is so low as the role is less attractive than alternative jobs

With better pay, recruitment will be easier and hours will then be less also as there will be more available staff.

I'm accredited with our council, and so self-employed. Wages aren't too bad, I can choose my hours and clients. There simply aren't enough carers. Also, some of the criteria for caring, especially with agencies, are too rigid.

So much pressure on me and doing jobs that aren't even my responsibility

There aren't enough paid carers to go around and I'm having trouble finding anyone.

The main problem is suitable staff recruitment due to the very poor pay offered for an important service offered on many levels this service helps the NHS Using home care services which stops the bed blocking and the knock-on effect that the elderly population in our country has been acknowledged for years as a ticking time bomb with progressive governments underrating and underfunding this vital service. It is now time to recognize this fact and deal with it appropriately with a decent wage that recognizes the multi-talents careers needed to provide an effective solution to helping the NHS

Cuts and austerity:

Devastating cuts to Substance Misuse Services since 2010

Carers Allowance ceases the day you get your state pension. We are expected to care for free after that date.

I am living in poverty because I am caring for a family member because I want to give them a better quality of life than they would have to struggle alone trying to manage to feed and wash.

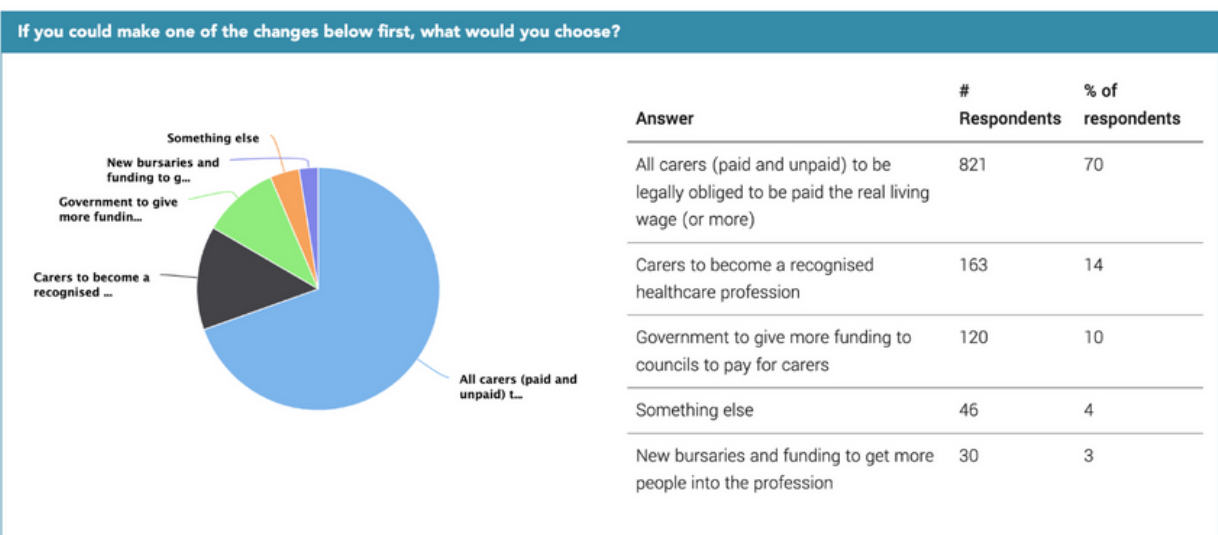
No respite or support:

I'm an unpaid carer of young adult family members. I'm undergoing chemo which is impacting my function, and the anxiety levels of those in my care.

Support is needed for the fear we experience every day.

No support from social care when you care for a family member
I'm a full-time unpaid carer for my wife, and what I would like is a break! Not some voucher scheme whereby someone you don't know may or may not turn up for an hour so I can do something I need to do. That's all.

If you could make one change to your working life, what would it be?



Out of a list of potential policy solutions to the crisis in care, 70% voted for a legally mandated real living wage for carers, 14% voted for carers to become a recognised healthcare profession, 10% voted for more government funding for councils to pay for carers, 3% votes for new bursaries to get more people into the industry. For the 4% that voted for something else, they suggested:

- More help with personal care and more resources (including checks and balances) for residential care when people can't care anymore
- Carers need to be recognised as vital to the welfare and prosperity of the nation. True recognition would lead to changes in wages, training and funding.
- More funding for Substance Misuse Services
- Get rid of silo-operated departments and organisations and put the Care Act as the main work ethic and responsibility to work together to put care first.
- Unpaid carers need the same benefits that NHS staff get as we are after all bridging the gap for the NHS.
- More facilities for supported living

Notes:

[1] Organise survey: National Carers Survey: Have your say
<https://the.organise.network/surveys/National-carers-survey-2022/results>

Thank you for taking the time to read this report.