

## HC-One

### **Business and Trade Committee Consultation: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

- Does the Employment Rights Bill adequately safeguard the workers it seeks to protect?

As the largest employer of health and care workers outside of the NHS, HC-One recognise our responsibilities as an employer and in setting standards for the adult social care sector. HC-One are therefore pleased to see the safeguards and protections for workers within the Employment Rights Bill. The UK needs a well-trained, well-supported, and well-paid care workforce to allow those who rely upon adult social care to live their best lives.

- Will the proposed trade union reforms improve working relationships between workers and businesses, and hence, productivity and enable voice at work?

HC-One are proud to be the only major care home provider with a registered trade union and collective bargaining. As the largest health and care workforce outside of the NHS, we recognise the responsibility that represents to lead the sector and motivate positive change. Our trade union, the GMB, has recognised HC-One as 'leaders in the sector' for our investments in colleague pay and conditions.

Whilst most residential care workers are paid on or just above the National Living Wage, with statutory minimum conditions, HC-One's has worked alongside the GMB to bring c.90% of our colleagues to the Real Living Wage or above, with all colleagues able to earn the RLW after two years of service. We have also improved conditions for staff, including day one entitlement to sick leave, parental leave, innovative flexible working, and an enhanced learning and development offering.

*Therefore, HC-One supports the greater entitlements for unions to access workplaces and a simplified recognition process to improve union representation across the care sector.*

### **Impact on businesses**

- What impact will the areas covered by the Employment Rights Bill have on small, medium and large businesses?

HC-One believes that following a sustained period of investment in pay and reward for our colleagues, the Employment Rights Bill will have a minimal negative impact on our costs.

HC-One hopes that by raising standards across the care sector through the provisions in the Employment Rights Bill, and latterly through the Adult Social Care Negotiating Body if properly funded, the Bill could help make a career in care a more appealing and sustainable option.

By investing in pay and reward, HC-One has increased retention to above industry averages, seen a significant reduction in agency usage, and improved the quality of our care. But recruitment challenges remain for the sector which increase the costs of delivering care.

The UK needs to build a workforce that is ready to meet the scale of increasingly complex need in adult social care. HC-One believe that the Adult Social Care Negotiating Body could improve care outcomes for residents, but the sector requires adequate funding levels to meet increased workforce costs.