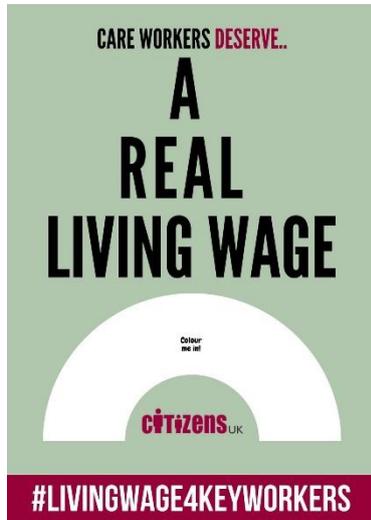


A Guide to Blessing a Care Home
Living Wage for Careworkers Campaign



"It is just morally wrong to put our Care Workers on the front line in the face of infection and potential death, with limited personal protective equipment (PPE), and to do that for poverty pay. For me this is simply unacceptable. I hope that if this epidemic teaches us anything, it will be to draw us back to justice, compassion and love. That is why I am proud to support Citizens UK's campaign for Her Majesty's Government to prioritise the proper funding of social care, ensuring that every careworker will get paid a real Living Wage." **Archbishop John Sentamu**



"We appreciate the Thursday night clapping, but I feel like a Roman Gladiator going into the ring. Everyone is clapping you, but you're pitting yourself against a deadly disease without the proper pay and protection. That's why I've launched this petition to ask Matt Hancock MP to properly fund social care so staff like me and many others can receive the real Living Wage."

Tabitha, a Careworker and Leader with Citizens UK

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1. Campaign Summary

Every Thursday from June 4th to July 2nd we are asking clergy across the UK to use the slot between 19:00 and 20:15 (when we used to 'clap for carers') to:

- a) **listen** to careworkers and the challenges they face;
- b) **appreciate** careworkers by blessing a local care home;
- c) **take action** to engage local council leaders and MPs and ask them to support our call for the UK Government to invest the £1.4 billion needed in the social care sector to fund a real Living Wage of £9.30 an hour for careworkers.

2. Campaign Strategy

Every congregation is likely to have an existing connection with a local care home. You may also have care workers in your congregations – not to mention recipients of care. Following on from Tabitha's agitation we are encouraging as many clergy (and lay people) as possible to use this Thursday to not just *clap* for carers, but to first *listen* to care workers, then to *appreciate* them through some kind of public blessing, and then *act* to help ensure that they get the pay and protection they need.

To make a difference to careworkers like Tabitha, our blessings need to be matched with action. How does blessing a care home lead to the Real Living Wage for Careworkers? Here's how:

- **Sign and circulate Tabitha's petition:** Sending [Tabitha's petition](#) to potential allies in your area can be a great way of raising awareness and galvanising support.
- **Go public with the support of a powerful team of local allies:** Ask your congregation, other clergy and community leaders, careworkers and care recipients to sign three versions of a similar letter – one to your local MP and one to your local council leader, asking them to support the campaign, and requesting a Zoom meeting to discuss the issue. And a third to your local newspaper to highlight the issue;
- **Get the support of your local council leader and MP:** Meet with your council leader and MP – arrange a delegation of 5-10 key community leaders, careworkers and care recipients to meet with your political representatives on Zoom.
- **Ask your local MP and Council Leader make representations to the UK Government:** Ask them to support the campaign and to sign an open letter to the UK Government calling for extra investment in the social care sector to enable careworkers to receive the Real Living Wage of £9.30 an hour.

It has been widely reported that the Prime Minister is due to make a major speech about work in June, and that the Chancellor Rishi Sunak will make some major financial commitments in July and in the autumn, which are all opportunities to push the Real Living Wage for Careworkers onto the agenda. The suggestion this might already be being considered has been reported in the newspapers: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/money/11762307/rishi-sunak-plan-fix-unemployment-boost-economy-national-insurance/> .

If enough council leaders (who commission a lot of social care) and MPs lobby the UK Government, it increases the likelihood that the Chancellor is willing to provide the £1.4 billion extra investment needed to fund a Real Living Wage for Careworkers.

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3. Campaign Timeline

June - Organise - Listen - Plan
Listen to Careworkers - Clappers to Campaigners

- June 4th - Launch of Care Home Blessing
- June 11th - Weekly Thursday Action
- June 18th - Weekly Thursday Action
- June 25th - Weekly Thursday Action

Anticipated speech by
Boris Johnson on work



July - Engage Council Leaders & MPs
Take Action - Negotiate

- July 2nd - Proposed UK-wide Care Home Action
- July 9th - Weekly Thursday Action
- July 16th - Weekly Thursday Action
- July 23rd - Weekly Thursday Action
- July 30th - Weekly Thursday Action

Anticipated
announcement of huge
government stimulus
package

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4. How to Listen to Careworkers

The best way to listen to Careworkers and their needs is to reach out to the ones you know, or who work in the local area. If you already have a relationship with a local care home then you could contact the management, explain the campaign, and ask if you could engage with them and their staff.

You could ask questions like:

- Why did you become a Careworker? What keeps you in it?
- What were the biggest challenges of being a Careworker before Coronavirus? What are the biggest challenges now?
- Are there any practical things the community could do to help you, your colleagues, or those you care for?
- If Matt Hancock, the Cabinet Minister responsible for Social Care, was standing here in front of us, what would you say to him?
- If you could change one thing about the social care system, what would it be?

We are also organising [a weekly 'BEFORE you Clap... Listen' Zoom panel discussion](#) with Careworkers at 19:00 on Thursday evenings from June 4th to July 2nd. Careworkers will be sharing their stories and answering questions, so join if you can.

Here's the link to the first 'Listen before you Clap' Zoom call:

https://www.facebook.com/citizenswales/videos/1044209596038083/?tn-str=k*F

5. How to Appreciate Careworkers

- **Plan a 'Blessing' of a Care Home** – Find a care home in your local area (build on existing links if you have them). If you can, contact them and let them know what you are planning. Listen to their needs and see if there is anything practical the wider community could be doing to support their staff or residents. Think about what you might do for the blessing. You may already have a simple liturgy or prayer in mind. If you can, make sure you **time it to finish at 20:00** so that it can segue into the 'clap for carers' (which may or may not still be happening in your area). You could take a small number of people and do a socially-distanced clapping after the blessing. You could make banners, or write supportive messages in chalk on the pavement outside for the careworkers to see as they enter/leave. It might just be you saying a prayer with a photographer to capture the moment. There's a brilliant video of a Care Home Blessing by Rev Jeremy Heywood and Bishop Alan Wilson in Beaconsfield here: <https://www.facebook.com/stmarysbeaconsfield/videos/686209385565653/>. You could have your congregation 'twin' with the care home and plan a series of activities to meet the needs of their residents or workers. Your congregation could find out what the workers would really appreciate and arrange with a local business and the care home management to deliver some cakes or other goodies for the staff. You could ask your congregation to put up supportive posters in their windows. It's up to you. ***NB Don't enter the care home property unless explicitly invited to do so in advance (and don't block the entrance - the pavement outside is probably safer). Make sure your plans are compliant with social distancing and the latest COVID-19 regulations that apply in your nation.***

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- **Order of Service for Blessing of a Care Home**

With thanks to Rev Dr Jeremy Brooks, Team Rector of the Beaconsfield Area Ministry in the Diocese of Oxford, for this draft [Order of Service](#).

Here's another [liturgy](#) from Fr Jesse Smith, Vicar of Caerau with Ely in the Diocese of Llandaff.

- **Ideas for Blessing Actions**

- Deliver cakes or flowers for the staff
- Give them a potted plant/seeds to represent the emergence of care workers into the public realm as the campaign develops
- Offer chaplaincy or pastoral care to the staff
- Draw rainbows in chalk on the pavement outside the care home
- Write supportive messages for the staff to read as they walk into work
- Organise people to applaud outside the care home at 20:00 each Thursday
- Help the staff with practical issues like securing PPE, or offering lifts if they want to avoid public transport
- Learn the names of all the care workers, and have the congregation write individual appreciation cards
- Invite a care worker to share their experience with your congregation
- Organise the care recipients to sign a letter to the local MP supporting the call for a Living Wage

6. How to Take Action for Careworkers

- **Ask your Local MP to Back the Campaign**

- Find contact details for your local MP:
<https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>.
- Here's a draft letter (though best to put in your own words with as much local content and flavour as possible!):
Dear [Name of MP],

I am writing to you as the *[Vicar of Parish]* to ask for your support for the Citizens UK campaign to ensure careworkers are paid the Real Living Wage of £9.30 an hour (£10.75 in London).

Careworkers are at the frontline of the fight against COVID-19 in *[name of constituency]* and having recently blessed a local care home, I know how much care recipients and their families value their vital work. We have all been 'clapping for carers' on Thursday evenings in recognition of the danger they face, and yet they are often paid at the minimum wage (also known as the National Living Wage) of £8.72 an hour. We are calling for the UK Government to invest the £1.4 billion that the Resolution Foundation estimates it would cost for every careworker to be paid the Real Living Wage of £9.30 an hour. This would allow careworkers to live with greater dignity and to escape from poverty pay. *[Add detail on what local careworkers say about the impact extra pay would have on their lives.]* We know that the public, commissioners of social

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care such as local authorities, employers of careworkers, and recipients of care, would all like careworkers to be paid the Real Living Wage, but need additional investment from the UK Government to enable this.

We request an opportunity to meet with you on Zoom to discuss this issue with local community leaders, care recipients and careworkers, and would be grateful if you could offer some dates and times to meet.

We would also be grateful if you could raise this issue with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Health Secretary at the earliest opportunity.

- **Ask your Local Council Leader to Back the Campaign**

- Find contact details for the leader of your local unitary, metropolitan borough, London borough, or county council (the larger of your local councils if you have more than one – they are the ones who tend to commission social care). The easiest way is to go on their website, and find the contact details for the ‘Leader of the Council’.
- Here’s a draft letter (though best to put in your own words with as much local content and flavour as possible!):

Dear Cllr [Name],

I am writing to you as the *[Vicar of Parish]* to ask for your support for the Citizens UK campaign to ensure careworkers are paid the Real Living Wage of £9.30 an hour (£10.75 in London).

Careworkers are at the frontline of the fight against COVID-19 in *[name of council area]* and having recently blessed a local care home, I know how much care recipients and their families value their vital work. We have all been ‘clapping for carers’ on Thursday evenings in recognition of the danger they face, and yet they are often paid at the minimum wage (also known as the National Living Wage) of £8.72 an hour. We are calling for the UK Government to invest the £1.4 billion that the Resolution Foundation estimates it would cost for every careworker to be paid the Real Living Wage of £9.30 an hour. This would allow careworkers to live with greater dignity and to escape from poverty pay. *[Add detail on what local careworkers say about the impact extra pay would have on their lives.]* We know that the public, commissioners of social care such as local authorities, employers of careworkers, and recipients of care, would all like careworkers to be paid the Real Living Wage, but need additional investment from the UK Government to enable this.

As a major commissioner of social care, we hope you could support the campaign by indicating that you would implement the payrise to a Real Living Wage for Careworkers if the UK Government provided additional financial resources to do so.

We request an opportunity to meet with you on Zoom to discuss this issue with local community leaders, care recipients and careworkers, and would be grateful if you could offer some dates and times to meet.

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We would also be grateful if you could join with other community leaders and council leaders across the country write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Health Secretary asking them for extra investment to fund the Real Living Wage for Careworkers.

- **Write to your local paper**
 - Here's a draft letter (though best to put in your own words with as much local content and flavour as possible!):

Dear Sir,

Careworkers in [name of area] are at the frontline of the fight against COVID-19. Having recently blessed a local care home, I know how much care recipients and their families value their vital work. We have all been 'clapping for carers' on Thursday evenings in recognition of the danger they face, and yet they are often paid at the minimum wage (also known as the National Living Wage) of £8.72 an hour. We are calling for the UK Government to invest the £1.4 billion that the Resolution Foundation estimates it would cost for every careworker to be paid the Real Living Wage of £9.30 an hour. This would allow careworkers to live with greater dignity and to escape from poverty pay. *[Add detail on what local careworkers say about the impact extra pay would have on their lives.]*

We know that the public, commissioners of social care such as local authorities, employers of careworkers, and recipients of care, would all like careworkers to be paid the Real Living Wage, but need additional investment from the UK Government to enable this.

Please support the campaign by signing the petition at <https://www.livingwage4keyworkers.org.uk/> and writing to your MP asking for their support for the campaign.

- **Tell us what happens!** – Please keep us up-to-date with any actions or responses from MPs/council leaders/local newspapers etc by emailing jonathan.cox@citizensuk.org.

7. Resources

Archbishop Sentamu and the Bishop of Durham launch Citizens UK's '[Real Living Wage for Care Workers' campaign](#).

[Channel 4 News report](#) on the campaign launch

Longer [Channel 4 News report](#) featuring Tabitha's story and good analysis of the structural problems in the social care sector:

Tabitha's petition is [here](#).

Alison Webster's podcast for Via Media: [We can't go back to not caring about care](#).

Campaign image for posters and social media 1: [Careworkers Deserve a Real Living Wage](#).

Campaign image for posters and social media 2: [Careworkers Deserve PPE](#)

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Video of a Care Home Blessing:

<https://www.facebook.com/stmarysbeaconsfield/videos/686209385565653/>

Social media

@CitizensUK

#LivingWage4CareWorkers

#LivingWage4KeyWorkers

Living Wage for Careworkers [Campaign Planning Template](#)

8. Frequently Asked Questions

What if my local care home doesn't pay the Real Living Wage? How do I 'bless' it without embarrassing it?

The vast majority of care homes and companies providing domiciliary care (care in people's own houses) will be paying less than the Real Living Wage to their care workers. Since Citizens UK first started to work on this issue in 2013, we have come across many care providers (who employ the care workers) and councils (who both employ careworkers and commission other organisations to provide care) who want to see the introduction of the Real Living Wage, but they just cannot afford to do so because of the increasing demand for social care, the impact of austerity on public sector budgets, and the long-term underinvestment in social care. Councils and care providers tell us that, if there was more funding available, they would like to pay the Real Living Wage (there are clear business benefits – see here: <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/good-for-business>).

So the target of this campaign is the UK government, not the care homes or councils. Indeed, we see care providers and local authorities as important allies for the campaign – and you can show this by reaching out to them in advance, taking the time to listen to them and the challenges they face, offering to twin your church with them, making your actions as friendly and appreciative as possible, and inviting them to show their support for the campaign by joining you to lobby the local MP.

What's the difference between the Real Living Wage and the National Living Wage?

The real Living Wage is an hourly rate of pay set independently and updated annually (not the UK government's National Living Wage). It is calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK, and employers choose to pay the Living Wage on a voluntary basis. According to the Living Wage Foundation, since 2001 the campaign has impacted over 180,000 employees and redistributed over £800m to some of the lowest paid workers in the UK.

Explaining UK Wage Rates

	THE MINIMUM WAGE <small>Government minimum for under 25s</small>	NATIONAL LIVING WAGE <small>Government minimum for over 25s</small>	REAL LIVING WAGE <small>The only wage rate based on what people need to live</small>
WHAT IS IT?	£8.20	£8.72	£9.30 across the UK and £10.75 in London
IS IT THE LAW?	Statutory	Statutory	Voluntary
WHAT AGE GROUP IS COVERED?	21 and older	25 and older	18 and older
HOW IS IT SET?	Negotiated settlement based on recommendations from businesses and trade unions	A % of medium earnings, it aims to reach 66% of median earnings by 2024.	Calculation made according to the cost of living, based on a basket of household goods and services
IS THERE A LONDON WEIGHTING?	No London Weighting	No London Weighting	Yes - Separate higher rate for London

In April 2016 the government introduced a higher minimum wage rate for all staff over 25 years of age inspired by the Living Wage campaign - even calling it the 'national living wage'.

While we welcome this pay rise for low-paid workers, it is not a Living Wage as it isn't calculated based on actual living costs. The government's 'national living wage' is not calculated according to what employees and their families need to live. Instead, it is based on a target to reach 66% of median earnings by 2024. Under current forecasts this means a rise to £10.50 per hour by 2024. For under 25s, the minimum wage rates also take into account affordability for employers.

The real Living Wage rates are higher because they are independently-calculated based on what people need to get by. That's why we encourage all employers that can afford to do so to ensure their employees earn a wage that meets the costs of living, not just the government minimum.

You can find more information on the Living Wage Foundation website:

<https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage>

How much will this cost? Who should pay?

The Resolution Foundation estimates that it would cost £1.4 billion to fund the Real Living Wage for all careworkers in the UK, and while social care is devolved to the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland governments, only the UK Government has the financial clout to fund this change sustainably.

What about all the other issues with our broken social care system? Shouldn't we be calling for wholesale reform?

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Yes – there are deep and pervasive problems in the social care sector that have been ignored for too long. Government after government has promised to resolve the issue, but it has continually been kicked into the long grass – and each time the prospects for a Living Wage for Careworkers has been kicked into the long grass too. Careworkers can no longer wait for the wholesale reform – they need a Living Wage now!

Why are we doing this on a Thursday evening? Isn't this when we should be doing the 'clap for carers'?

There has been a massive outpouring of support for keyworkers as part of the 'Clap for Carers'. There are now calls for the clapping to end, and to focus on securing improvements for keyworkers. In some places clapping may continue, and it is perfectly possible to include clapping to happen straight after your blessing.

We want to shift the narrative from 'clapping is great' to 'we need a Real Living Wage for care workers.' We want to continue the wider 'mood music' of clapping and positivity which is recognising our key workers, and move it to calls for change. We want to bring to life the real life experiences of care workers through their own stories. We want to ring in key political opinion formers to call for a Living Wage for our 'Care Workers' and put pressure on the UK government. We want to build the movement of people calling for a shift in the narrative to support a Living Wage for Careworkers.