



Care Conversations

Briefing for Leaders

1. Background

On Thursdays we've clapped for keyworkers as they keep Britain going during lockdown. But clapping isn't enough.

"I feel like a Roman Gladiator going into the arena on a night shift. Everyone is clapping for you, but you're pitting yourself against a deadly disease without the proper pay and protection." – Testimony from Tabitha¹

Millions of keyworkers; from care workers, to cleaners and couriers, to hospital porters to transport workers, are facing an increased risk of disease and death at work on poverty wages.

The social care sector is at the epicentre of a pay and public health crisis:

- [Half a million care sector staff are paid below the real Living Wage according to the Resolution Foundation.](#) This equates to around 58% of care workers.
- [New research from the Living Wage Foundation shows that at least 280,000 social care sector employees are in low pay and insecure work.](#)
- Residential care homes have been particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. [For example, almost one fifth of residents at Sunnyview House in Beeston died recently following coronavirus symptoms.](#)

Leeds Citizens member organisations are coming forward with testimony from people who work in social care and/or who are concerned about justice for carers. Their stories have focused on 3 areas (aka PPE):

- **Pay** – the real Living Wage and an end to poverty pay in the sector
- **Protection** – adequate personal protective equipment to allow them to respond to COVID-19 safely
- **Equality with the NHS** – better training, working conditions and support for care workers, parity of esteem for the sector with the NHS

Clapping for care workers is not enough, but it does present us with a golden opportunity.

Our role is to transform this *awareness* and *sympathy* into **action** and **change**.

Your organisation can play a role by having **Care Conversations**.

¹ Tabitha is a pseudonym for a care worker who is active in the campaign

2. Care Conversations

- Care Conversations is a Listening Campaign from Leeds Citizens that aims to build relationships and highlight stories from the social care sector, to drive positive change.
- We are looking for testimonies from care workers, care recipients and their relatives about the realities of the social care system – both the positive experiences and the challenges people are facing.
- Your organisation can participate by:
 1. Reaching out to members of your community/congregation who work in the social care sector or receive social care
 2. Contacting local care homes or social care providers and getting to know their staff
 3. Offering time and space in your events or publications for listening and sharing testimonies about social care
- Here are some questions you may find helpful to guide your conversations with care workers:
 - *Why did you become a care worker?*
 - *What keeps you in the profession? What experiences have made you proud?*
 - *What were the biggest challenges facing you before COVID-19?*
 - *What are the biggest challenges facing you since COVID-19?*
 - *Are there any practical things you would like the community to do to support you, your colleagues, or the people you care for?*
 - *Does your pay fully cover your cost of living?*
 - *If Matt Hancock, the Secretary of State for Health and 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?*
- Care Conversations can be done in whatever way works best for your organisation. Here are some ideas for how you can have conversations:
 - Organise phone calls or zoom meetings
 - Use your building (with social distancing measures) as a space to host a conversation.
 - Care workers can record conversations between themselves and the people they care for.
 - Care workers and recipients can film short testimonies (vox pops) or record audio diaries on their phones and send them to you via WhatsApp.
 - Use the written testimony form to submit their stories by email.
 - Invite members of your community/congregation to think of a care worker or former care worker they know and book a phone call with them.
- Record Keeping:
 - At a minimum, keep a record who you have conversations with and what their role/position is (e.g. care worker, care recipient, family member).
 - Ideally, make a note of key points from the conversation including stories and ideas for change.

- You can upload any notes, videos, audio files or summaries from your community to this [Google Drive](#).
- Guidance on Consent and Confidentiality:
 - Care Conversations will have the most power if they can build your community/congregation's relationships with social care workers and contribute to driving change in the sector.
 - To achieve this, it helps to be able to share at least some of the ideas and stories we have listened to with a wider audience (e.g. to gain support from the wider congregation/community or decision makers we are calling to take action).
 - However, we ask that everyone participating in Care Conversations respects the wishes of the person they are speaking with regarding anonymity or confidentiality. We can speak to people in confidence (meaning what they say won't be shared at all). We can anonymise stories (meaning a story can be shared but the identity of the testifier is hidden). We can also facilitate opportunities for the person to speak publicly, if they wish to support the campaign.
 - It is important that listeners ask the people they are speaking to what they want to do and make a record of what was decided. Do not share stories unless consent has been given.

3. Online Care Conversations – Thursdays, 6:45-7:45pm

- We are also running a weekly live streamed Care Conversations using Zoom and Facebook Live. These are an opportunity for care workers from around the UK to share stories about their experiences generally and during COVID-19, as well as talk about their hopes for the future of the care sector.
- We invite care workers and community members to join these events, listen to the stories, ask questions and be inspired to take action in your local area.
- The session runs from 6:45-7:45pm with a live stream on Facebook 7-7:30pm.
 - Watch the livestream on our Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/CitizensUK/live/>
- You can also listen back to our previous Care Conversations here:
 - [4th June](#)
 - [11th June](#)
 - [18th June](#)
 - [25th June](#)
 - [2nd July](#)

For more information contact

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***Make sure your actions are compliant with social distancing and the latest COVID-19 regulations.
 Get in touch if you need any advice or guidance***



Care Conversations Questions Sheet

Here are some questions you may find helpful to guide your conversations with care workers:

- *Why did you become a care worker?*
- *What keeps you in the profession? What experiences have made you proud?*
- *What were the biggest challenges facing you before COVID-19?*
- *What are the biggest challenges facing you since COVID-19?*
- *Are there any practical things you would like the community to do to support you, your colleagues, or the people you care for?*
- *Does your pay fully cover your cost of living?*
- *If Matt Hancock, the Secretary of State for Health and 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?*

Record Keeping:

- At a minimum, keep a record who you have conversations with and what their role/position is (e.g. care worker, care recipient, family member).
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Why did you become a care worker?

What keeps you in the profession? What experiences have made you proud?

What were the biggest challenges facing you before COVID-19?

What are the biggest challenges facing you since COVID-19?

Are there any practical things you would like the community to do to support you, your colleagues, or the people you care for?

Does your pay fully cover your cost of living? If not, what impact does that have on your life?

If Matt Hancock, the Secretary of State for Health and 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?

Consent

Thank you for taking part in a Care Conversation. By sharing your story, you are helping Leeds Citizens by raising awareness of the challenges facing social care sector and making a vital contribution to our efforts to secure better Pay, Protection and Equality with the NHS.

It helps to be able to share at least some of the ideas and stories we have listened to with a wider audience (e.g. to gain support from the wider congregation/community or decision makers we are calling to take action). We will only do this with your explicit consent. If consent is not given, your story will remain confidential. We can also share your story in an anonymised form. Please use the table below to indicate your preference.

Identification	Yes	No
I am happy for my real first name to be shared		
I am happy for my real surname name to be shared		
I want to remain anonymous – Leeds Citizens should change my first name, my surname and any particular information that might identify me to protect my privacy and identity		
My story		
I am happy for the words, information and story I have shared with Leeds Citizens to be stored and used as a case study in our campaign materials and social media		
Video recordings		
I agree that video footage of my story can be used where my face can be seen		
I agree that video footage of my story can be used if my face cannot be seen		
Videos of me cannot be used		
Audio recordings		
I agree that audio recordings of me may be used where my voice can be heard		
Audio recordings of me cannot be heard. I would like somebody else’s voice to be used		
Photographs		
I agree that photographs of me may be used where my face can be seen		
Photographs of me cannot be used		
Media		
I am happy to be contacted by Leeds Citizens about sharing my story publicly with the wider community or in the media		

Signed..... Full Name.....