



Care and support workers' Pay Equity update

On Friday 1 July 2022, the unions - E tū, PSA and NZNO - lodged the care and support workers' pay equity claim for care and support workers in home support, disability, aged residential care, mental health, and addictions.

We aim to conclude the pay equity process this year, BUT the 3% increase on 1 July 2022 (for 18 months) is insufficient. With the minimum wage increase on 1 April 2023, support workers will once more start as minimum wage workers, and our skills/qualifications will be paid unfairly.

Support workers need a pay increase now.

We want a commitment from the Government that support workers will get a down payment on pay equity and get a fair pay increase when undervaluation has been established. This is similar to what workers in other pay equity claims have received. More than 65,000 care and support workers support some of the most vulnerable in our communities.

Care and support workers want their skills and work to be valued and paid fairly.

In 2017 the Pay Equity Settlement Act provided pay rates above the minimum wage (at that time of \$15.75). At the time, the start rate for a support worker was \$19.00 - \$3.15 above the minimum wage. The top rate of \$23.50 was \$7.75 above the minimum wage.

From 1 April 2023, the start rate for a Support Worker will **increase** to the minimum wage of \$22.70, and the top rate of \$28.25 will be \$5.55 above the minimum wage.

Worker's pay has gone backwards - some are now minimum-pay workers!

With current inflation at 7.2%, the 3% increase on 1 July 2022 was not enough. **Support workers need an increase now.** They cannot survive while they wait for the pay equity claim to be concluded.

We are asking that the Government agree to an *additional pay increase* for all support workers during the pay equity claim process. That means a down payment on the eventual outcome – the same as other health workers have received in their pay equity claim process.

We are asking for you to support care and support Workers. Community health needs to keep skilled, trained, experienced support workers. There are already staff shortages in many regions, and many services struggle to attract new support workers – the rates are too low for the complexity of work required.

Experienced, skilled support workers are leaving for higher-paid jobs, which will only worsen with low pay rates!

We are essential health workers and services mustn't be put at risk, leaving our elders, the disabled, and people in the community with mental health issues without the support they need to live with independence and dignity. It is vital, and it needs investment from our government.

Will you support us to get our pay equity claim settled and funded this year, and support legislation to ensure workers get paid the rates they deserve? Will you also support a pay increase now for support workers while we continue to progress our pay equity claim?