

October 2025

Migrant Workers Survey Report

Introduction:

Over 630 migrant care workers took part in **UNISON's Migrant Workers in Social Care Scotland Survey**, between August and September 2025.

The survey was run by UNISON Scotland's migrant workers organising committee which has 20 UNISON stewards and trained activists who are primarily on Certificate of Sponsorships (CoS) in the private and charitable care sectors.

Our demands:

UNISON's national Fair Visa Campaign is led by migrant care workers in the private and charitable sector and is calling on the UK government to issue a common certificate of sponsorship:

- **Visa reform to prevent exploitation** – a body of comprehensive visa reform, to include decoupling visa sponsorship from individual employers in the social care sector in favour of a sector-wide scheme reducing exploitation and remove the employer's power to threaten deportation;
- **Retain the five-year route for** Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) halt retrospective application and recognise the exceptional contribution made by those working in public services;
- **Investment in social care** - proceed with the Fair Pay Agreement as quickly as possible while protecting existing international recruits' immigration status.

KEY FINDINGS

1. **73% want to be able to move employers under new visa arrangements**
2. **62% are considering leaving the country because of the white paper proposal.**
3. **86% say they have an overdraft or credit card debt and 75% have borrowed from family, friends or used private loans.**
4. **27% have used foodbanks.**



Employer relationship:



When asked about their experiences of treatment in the workplace, **45%** of respondents said sponsored workers are treated worse than non-migrant workers. **15%** said their employer changed how they treated them after giving them their CoS and **13%** experienced difficulties with their employers due to their visa arrangements.

Furthermore, **45%** said they experienced racism in their workplace, either by colleagues or service users and their families. **53%** said they don't report these incidents to their managers for fear of the consequences and experience of racism directly from their managers.

Future in Scotland:

The white paper on immigration, which was announced in May 2025, sent a shockwave through migrant workers. 67% felt negatively about it with **59%** saying their lives affected by the announcement. 78% of respondents came with their family, of which 84% have children under 16. Now 62% are considering leaving the country as a result.

16% shared that their experience of racism in their communities and neighbourhood worsened, and **13%** also reported their children's experience of racism worsened in the last year.

Pay:

Despite having **61%** of respondents working full-time, **25%** work more than their contracted hours, some up to 60 hours per week, and yet, **14%** aren't always paid for all the hours they work.

Certificate of sponsorship (CoS):

The impact of employer holding CoS on migrant care workers:

- 37% shared they were scared to make a complaint.
- 31% stated they were scared to speak out.
- 21% feel they can't say no to overtime or picking up shift.