

At least 166,000 trapped in social care debt



More than 1,100 taken to court by local authorities for social care debt during past two years

An investigation by GMB, the union for carers, has revealed at least 166,000 people are trapped in debt for their social care.

The Freedom of Information requests, submitted to every local authority in Great Britain with responsibility for social care, also show at least 1,178 people have been taken to court by local authorities for social care debts.



“ These stark figures show the UK’s social care ticking timebomb has now blown a gaping hole in families’ finances.

Sharon Wilde, GMB National Officer

Of the total of at least 166,835 people who are in arrears on their social care payments, more than 78,000 have debt management procedures started against them by their authority for non-payment of social care charges.

The true figure is likely to be higher as some authorities didn't respond.

Sharon Wilde, GMB National Officer, said:

“These stark figures show the UK’s social care ticking timebomb has now blown a gaping hole in families’ finances.

“The fact more than 1,000 people have been taken to court because they’re unable to pay for their own care – or that of their loved ones – shows the system just isn’t working.

“Meanwhile, our ageing population is creating a huge demand for care staff – but caring is still not seen as a sought after career.

“The lack of local authority funding often means low pay – and the sector is struggling to recruit and retain the dedicated staff needed to provide the best care to the UK’s most vulnerable people.

“We need a clear, coherent strategy for funding social care now and in the future.

“Otherwise the struggle to recruit and retain carers will become even more acute, while tens of thousands of people are plunged into debt trying to pay for the level of support that they need.”

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