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RETAIN

# Tackling labour turnover in the care sector



# RETAIN project

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# Labour turnover and labour shortages

## Workers:

- excessive workloads, poor health

## Service providers:

- obstacles for recruiting qualified personnel to provide quality care
- increased hiring, recruitment and training costs
- risks of work accidents, reputational damage and decreased demand for service

# Labour turnover and labour shortages

## Trade unions:

- obstacles for recruiting and organizing workers in the care sector

## Care users:

- lack of continuity in staffing linked to decreased quality of care provision and increased health and safety risks



# Project activities



# Causes of labour turnover

1

Wages and  
working  
conditions

2

Training and  
career  
progression

3

Health and  
safety

4

Collective  
bargaining and  
union  
representation



# Vicious cycle of labour turnover





## Wages and working conditions

- **inadequate wages** one of the major reasons for labour turnover
- **understaffing** cited as a critical issue leading to burnout and workers' intention to leave the sector
- involuntary **part-time** work
- other **unfavourable conditions**: working overtime, rotating shifts, evening, night and weekend work, short-notice scheduling





“For some of us, this is just  
**one of the jobs**  
in our precarious lives”

Wages and  
working conditions

- a lack of training and opportunity for career progression cited as one of the reasons workers leave the sector
- **no formal qualifications** needed for some sections of LTC workforce even though care workers provide complex tasks, no career progression benefits



Training

- a lack of training leads to **low professionalization** and **undervaluation** of the sector
- our unions think that the best way to raise the professionalization of the sector is by **increasing training**



Training





## Health and safety

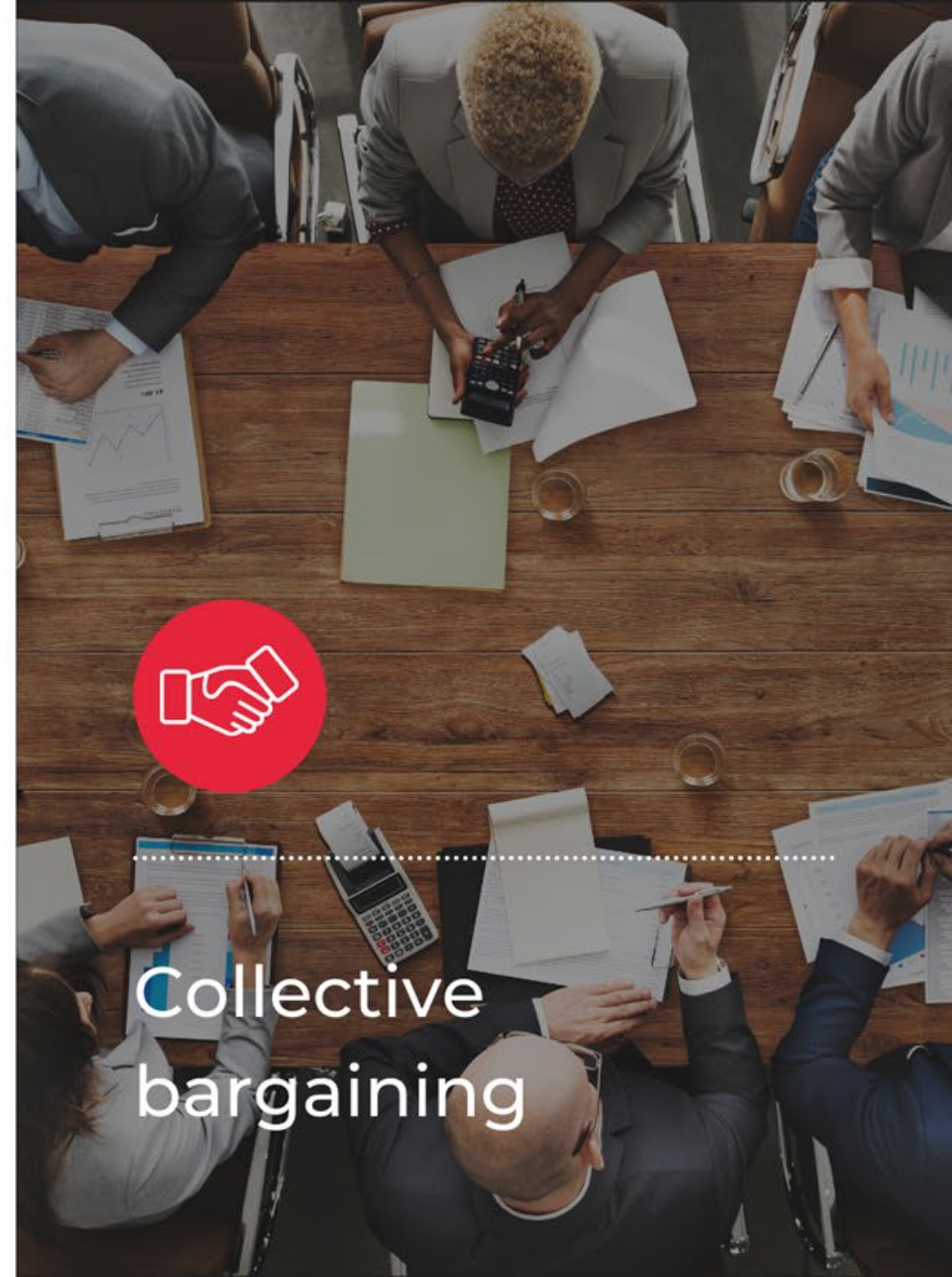
- significant **health and safety risks** reported (both physical and psychological)
- health and safety risks **increased during COVID-19**: care work as one of the most dangerous professions in the world



## Health and safety

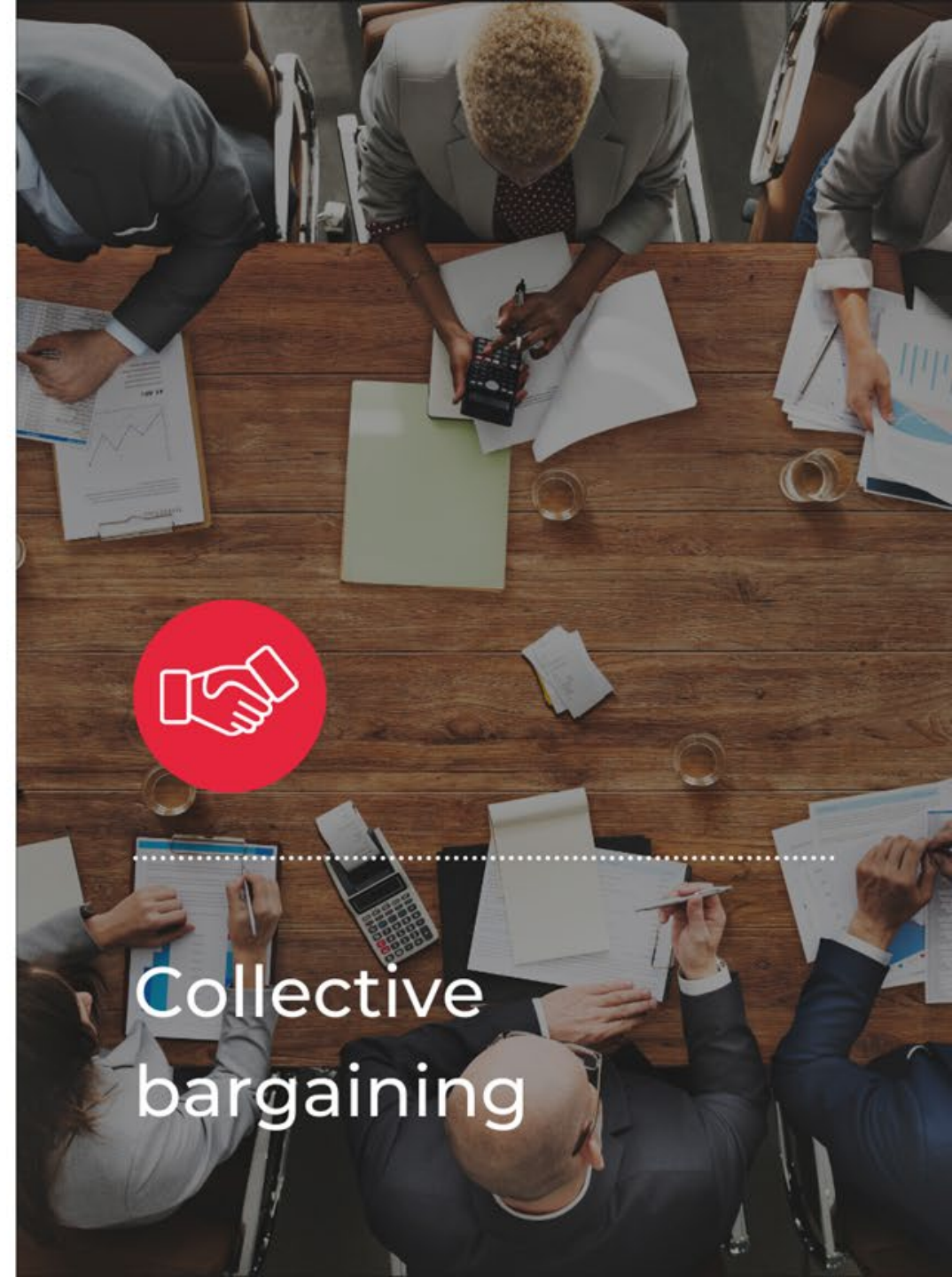
- workers report a **lack of PPE** and **mental health problems**
- “People are becoming **burnt out** and thinking of leaving the sector. We are expected to provide essential work but we receive **no recognition** for the risks we are undertaking”

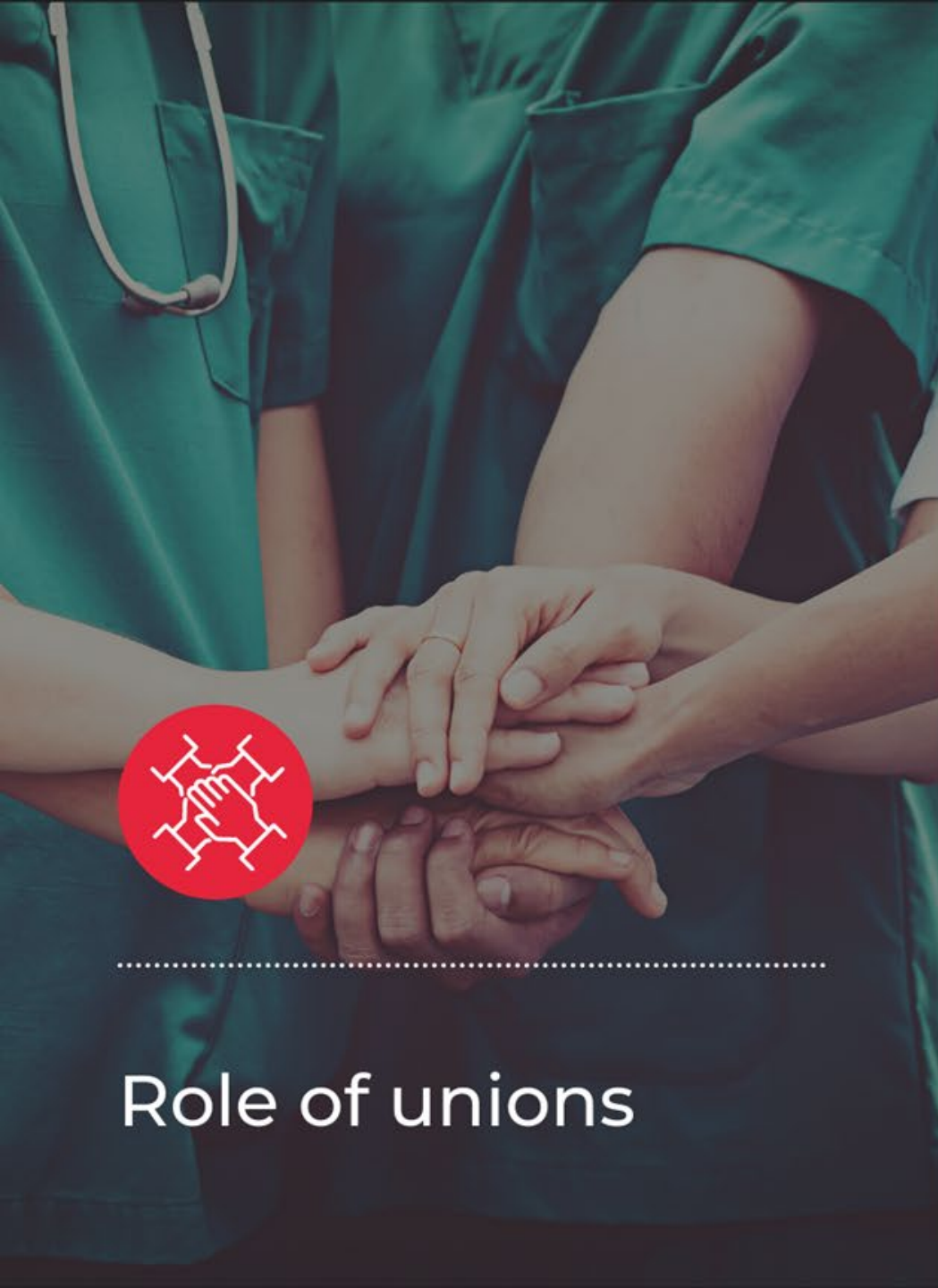
- respondents think that **sectoral collective bargaining** can raise wages and improve working conditions
- in some countries **only enterprise-level collective bargaining**, lower levels of collective bargaining reported in the private sector, some report problems with attempts to unionize, low levels of unionization especially in SEE and CEE, not a clear representative structure of employers





- countries with sectoral collective bargaining have **better wage outcomes** than with single-employer CB





- studies show that unions play an important role in **decreasing labour turnover** as they are capable of helping to resolve concerns employees have at work, resulting in them staying longer
- expanded social dialogue and collective bargaining necessary steps to **improve working conditions and retention of workers** including on pay, training and working conditions

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## Role of unions



A close-up photograph of a healthcare professional, likely a nurse or doctor, wearing blue scrubs and blue nitrile gloves. They are gently holding the hand of an elderly patient. The patient's hand is wrinkled and has some visible skin conditions. A stethoscope is visible around the healthcare worker's neck. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Thank you!