

Funding Grant Award Body: NIHR Policy Research Programme - Investigating Variation in Pay in Adult Social Care

Principle Investigator: Professor Carol Atkinson:
Manchester Metropolitan University.

Co-Investigator: Professor Carol Woodhams and
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Dr Katie Willocks, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Timeline: March 2023 – March 2024

Awarded: £248,809



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Project Outline: This research explores variations in pay in England for adult social care workers, who deliver care to vulnerable people in their own homes, residential/nursing care homes or supported accommodation. It also explores how local conditions, such as deprivation, and local authority processes for buying care affect pay variations. Finally, it investigates how pay variations affect workers, for example, leaving their jobs or developing skills.

The research is important because care worker pay is low and this has a negative impact on recruiting workers and keeping them in their jobs. There are often staffing shortages and this negatively affects the care of those in need and the families/friends who support them. For example, care visits may be short or missed, and there might be many different people delivering care to the same person, which is undesirable. Improving pay, the experiences of care workers and making sure that care delivered is of high quality is very important.

The research has three parts. The first works with statistics provided by Skills for Care to investigate local conditions, local authority buying processes, pay variation and their impact on workers, care recipients and their friends/families. The second is a survey of organisations that provide adult social care which explores their pay practices and identifies good practice. The final part involves interviews with managers of care organisations and with care workers themselves to explore their views on pay variations and the consequences for care workers, care recipients and their families.

The project aims and research questions were set by NIHR. Patient and Public Involvement has started as we have worked with a local authority commissioner, managers of care organisations and the lead and a representative of the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Greater Manchester Public and Community Involvement and Engagement panel (NIHR ARC GM PCIE Panel) to develop the questions and design our project. As the research begins, we will meet regularly with a Patient and Public Involvement group that represents the views of carers, care workers and care recipients/their friends/families. We will have a wide range of advice on e.g. interview questions to ask, how to get people to take part in interviews and how to communicate our results.

Implications: It is important that our results create change. We will work with a project steering group involving the Department of Health and Social Care, local authorities, care managers and Patient and Public Involvement representatives to ensure that our results have wide uptake by both policy makers and those working in the sector. We will also work with this group to design ways to communicate that make sure the results are available to care recipients/their families. Finally, we will hold end of project workshops.



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