



Social Care Personal Assistants:

**A TALE OF THREE STUDIES –
and ONE TO COME**

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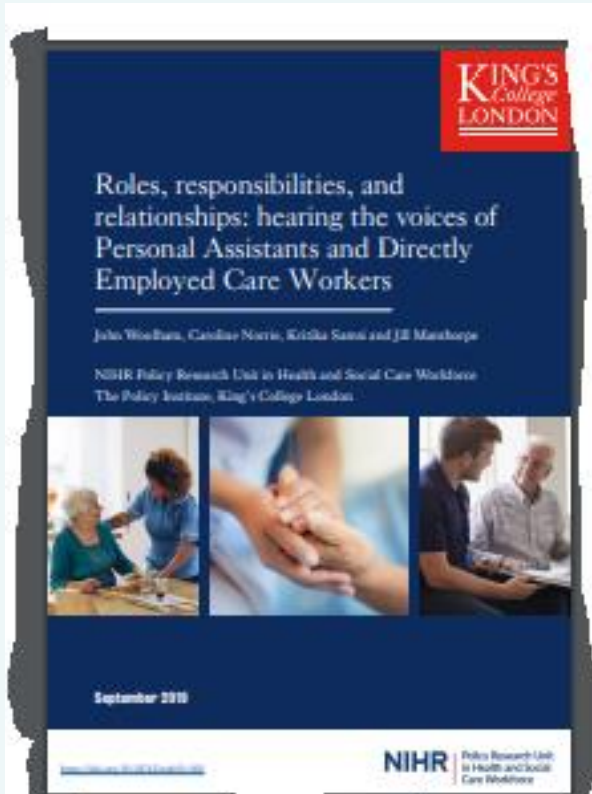
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Study 1 - 2019

Interviews with PAs (n=105)

Directly employed by/self-employed and hired by someone with care and support needs



Key informants (n=26)

Interviews with people expected to have a non-pecuniary interest in PAs

Recruitment:

- Local authorities
- Centres for Independent Living
- User Led Organisations
- Disability rights organisations
- Trades Unions
- Arbitration & Conciliation Service
- [https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/roles-responsibilities-and-relationships-hearing-the-voices-of-personal-assistants-and-directly-employed-care-workers\(3e1bf2ae-f5b4-4402-9954-091b51c64ba8\).html](https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/roles-responsibilities-and-relationships-hearing-the-voices-of-personal-assistants-and-directly-employed-care-workers(3e1bf2ae-f5b4-4402-9954-091b51c64ba8).html)
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Who are PAs?

Our sample – thanking them:

- 87% female
- 86% white
- 92% British citizens
- Mean age 45yrs
- 38% with dependent children
- 37% cared for someone in their own family
- Half in other kinds of employment
- Most had previous care experience
- 2/3 Directly employed 1/3 self-employed
- Mean duration of employment as PA: 4.5 years. Most common reasons for employment turnover: death of employer or abusive behaviour.



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2. Employment conditions: some findings

Contracts

- All should have an employment contract
- 24% of PAs did not have any contract
- 20% said they had a contract from some but not all employers
- PAs sometimes felt contracts were
 - out of date as needs had changed
 - vaguely worded (which led to ambiguity and uncertainty)
- Contracts militate against role flexibility
- Needs of employer change over time



2. Employment conditions continued



Pensions

Employers are legally required to enrol qualifying employees into a pension. Age & earnings determine eligibility.

- Average no. of employers PAs had was 3.2
- Hours & earnings from each employment did not meet thresholds
- **43% who should have been automatically enrolled were not**
- **Overall, only 17% said they were contributing to an occupational pension***

**Excluding self-employed PAs, PAs whose earnings for the previous week were atypical & PAs whose hours fluctuated so much it was not possible to calculate annual income*

National Insurance

Age and income thresholds determine if people should pay.

- **27% who should have been said they were either not paying it or did not know**
- **Amongst directly employed PAs 14% were not.**

2. Employment conditions: cont....



Sick pay

Employers have a legal responsibility to pay statutory sick pay.

Eligibility = sick for 4 consecutive days, be paid more than £113p.w. & tell employer within 7 days.

- 69% of directly employed PAs earnings exceeded this threshold.
- Of this group, only 19% said they would get sick pay, 69% said it wasn't available and 13% did not know.

Payment if work was interrupted

- 52% said they would not be paid if work suddenly ceased or was interrupted for a long time
- 21% did not know if they would be paid

Holiday pay

Most f/t employees entitled to statutory annual leave of 28 days p.a.

- 38% of PAs said no holiday pay was available, but could take unpaid leave.

Payment for cancelled visits

- 37% said they would not usually be paid if an employer cancelled a visit
- 8% did not know

PAs talking about relationships with employers' family

article

Family matters: personal assistants' experiences of engaging and working with their employers' families

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Many people in England employ care workers using state funding or their own resources. This article explores working relationships, communications and experiences of personal assistants with their employers' family members. Data from interviews with 105 personal assistants (in 2016–17) were analysed to explore relationships and experiences. Three overarching themes related to personal assistants' engagement with family members arose: (1) possible complications over accountability and employment; (2) support for family; and (3) being part of care teams. This article provides new insights into personal assistants' relationships with employers' family members, highlights the relevance of the concept of immaterial labour and sets out a research agenda.

Key words personal assistants • direct payments • family • consumer-directed care

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In a nutshell



- Very high levels of job satisfaction
- Genuine opportunities for person-centred, relationship-based care and support
- Large proportions of PAs receiving neither statutory employment rights or protections

- Employment conditions often poor, casualised and 'precarious'
- **Virtually no support for PAs**
 - **Non-unionised**
 - **No national professional association**
 - **Some on-line information – not widely known about**
 - **No opportunities to network**
 - **Not inspected or regulated**
 - **Risk to *both* parties of exploitation**

Study 2 (a)

GPs & Personal Assistants – 20 GPs interviewed

GPs mostly did not know about PAs: their status was ambiguous and their skills often unrecognised

They expressed

- (a) anxieties about the identity of the DECW, and their relationship to their employer;
- (b) experiences of relationship-based care, and;
- (c) tasks carried out by DECWs.

Under the radar: General practitioners' experiences of directly employed care workers for older people

Wilcock, Iliffe, Moriarty & Manthorpe (2020) Health & Social Care in the Community

<https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12943>



Study 2 - What PAs say about health professionals...

‘It’s a real fine balancing act’: directly employed care workers’ experiences of engaging with health services’
Manthorpe et al (under review) 30 interviews

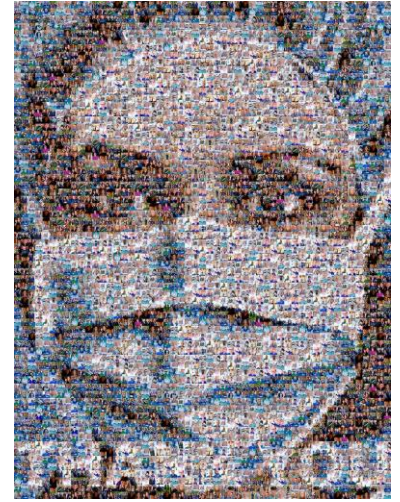


And then there was COVID-19 ..Study 3 – 41 PA interviews April-May 2020

- **‘Invisibility’ ‘uncertainty’ and ‘ineligibility’**
- Patchy local support and generally only for employers.
- We call for a greater role for Local Authorities in registering PAs (which happens in some areas but not others) as a means of identifying and contacting them in any crisis and offering information, support and resources.



New Study 2020-22



Experiences of
Personal Assistant
Employers during
COVID-19

By Samsi, Manthorpe
& Woolham

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NIHR School for
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Sampling for range of
characteristics
including BAME



**Health & Social Care
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