



22 September 2020
12.30 - 1.30pm
Online & Interactive

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Social Care Personal Assistants: who are they, what do they do, what potential do they have for offering person-centred care and are there any downsides?

SEMINAR PRESENTATION:

Social care personal assistants (PAs) are a growing segment of the care workforce. They have a distinctive role in that they are usually directly employed by the person who needs support/care or are self-employed and directly hired. This direct employment relationship is held to offer real opportunities for relationship-based, person-centred care and support to be provided, because employer and employee come to develop a deeper working relationship than possible amongst 'traditional' care workers.

This presentation is based on selected findings from semi-structured interviews with 105 social care PAs, and 26 'key informants' – essentially, people directly involved in some way in supporting the development of the PA workforce locally or nationally. The research had several broad aims, including to describe and document this emergent workforce: the nature of their role, their experiences and employment conditions; their potential to support people with personal health budgets as well as direct payments, and barriers to PA working.

The presentation will argue that though PAs do offer considerable potential to deliver person-centred care, their employment conditions and access to training are sometimes poor, and although most enjoyed considerable job satisfaction, they were occupationally isolated and unsupported.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY:

John Woolham is a Senior Research Fellow at the Health and Social Care Workforce Research Unit at King's College London, and an Honorary Senior Fellow of the National Institute for Health Research School for Social Care Research. Prior to this he worked as a Senior Research Fellow at Coventry University, and before this spent many years working as a local government researcher. Research interests include the use of assistive technology and telecare to support older people, personalisation and personal budgets, and most recently, social care Personal Assistants. In his spare time he reads stuff, goes hill-walking and messes about on motorcycles.

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