

## **Job satisfaction, stress and work-life balance in social care at a time of austerity**

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### **Abstract**

The social care workforce is one of the fastest growing labour sectors in the United Kingdom, with an estimated two million jobs in 2013. It is also one of the main low paying sectors with average hourly pay rates gravitating around the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and many workers are estimated to be paid under the NMW. Care work is increasingly becoming fragmented in provision due to several policy directions as well as progressive local and central government cuts. Several studies indicate that the majority of care workers report altruistic motivations in their labour choice. However, with continuous demand the sector is becoming a magnet of employment to some who may find joining other labour sectors more challenging, such as migrants and women with no formal qualifications and with caring responsibilities. Within such structure, many care workers face various stressors while providing highly emotional care work and in their daily lives outside their work domain. Continuous austerity measures and their consequences including increased privatization influence how care work is organized with increasing blurred borders between work and family/non-work time. In this seminar I discuss emerging findings from a large longitudinal study of care workers' motivations, job satisfaction and experience of stress at work. I will use data from a large survey to explore perception and expectations in relation to job satisfaction linking this to key job satisfaction theories: fulfillment, discrepancy, equity and two-fold theories. These are explored within the job demand and control framework measured by Karasek job content questionnaire. To contextualize the work-life balance strategies I will use data from 20 in-depth interviews with male care workers conducted in 2012-13 as part of the same study to explore the experience of the minority male gender within the context of care work.