

# Ethical issues in self-funded social care: co-producing knowledge with older people

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## Introduction

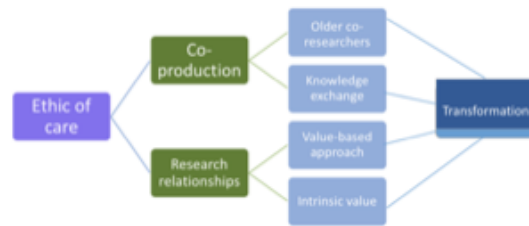
The number of older people paying for social care from their own resources has increased considerably. This is because of changes in the way local authorities organise statutory social care and the impact of public funding cuts to social care and the related tightening of eligibility criteria for publically funded social care. Despite the increase in numbers of older people who self-fund, very little is known about their experiences and their voices are largely absent in policy and practice debates. Our project focuses on the experiences of older people who are self-funding their care in three research sites: Brighton and Hove, Solihull and Lincolnshire.

The research is a collaboration between Dr Lizzie Ward, University of Brighton, Prof Mo Ray, University of Lincoln, and Dr Denise Tanner, University of Birmingham and is funded by the Wellcome Trust. In each research site we are working with a local community partner and team of older co-researchers and local stakeholders.

We are trying understand the ethical issues surrounding risks and responsibilities in relation to self-funded care. Our key goals are to: understand older people's experiences of self-funding; develop theoretical understanding of the ethical issues involved in self-funded care; engage with older people, practitioners, health and care services' commissioners and providers to transform understanding of self-funded care and produce accessible outputs to impact policy and practice.

## Methodology and co-production

Our approach grounded in care ethics



- Human beings as relational
- Care as fundamental to human survival and flourishing
- Connectedness and interdependency
- Power dynamics of care relationships
- Care and social justice

In Lincolnshire a team of ten older co-researchers from across the county are engaging with the project, and we all meet on a monthly basis.



- Collaborative approach enables the voices and perspectives of everyday citizens to be heard - something which has often been neglected in research
- Co-researchers involved in all aspects of the research from design through to outputs
- Bridging the gap between managerial discourse and lived realities

## Fieldwork

We are currently in the process of starting fieldwork. Participants in the study will be older people who are funding their own care, family members or informal carers who are supporting older self-funders, social care providers, commissioners and practitioners.

## Knowledge Exchange

The knowledge exchange groups bring together older people, commissioners, providers, practitioners and academics to develop a dialogue between people with different perspectives and areas of expertise and which goes beyond a 'talking shop' meeting. Our aim is to create a space to reflect and discuss the issues related to self-funded care in ways which allow us to step outside our usual roles. We recently held our second knowledge exchange event which looked at i. the different perspectives in relation to the topic of information and ii. getting everyone to think about the ways in which all groups of people (professionals and older people etc) are both providers and users of information (rather than a more one-sided view of professionals provide information and older people 'use' it).



## Creative Outputs

Through this co-produced project we are aiming to produce knowledge and understanding about self-funded care that will lead to the production of creative outputs. These will be co-designed with our co-researchers and community partners, and informed by the processes of data collection, data analysis and knowledge exchange.

### Older people: care and self-funding experiences

3 year research collaboration funded by Wellcome Trust

