Who Cares? Who Pays?

Future Social Services Institute
RMIT, 10 May 2018

Sara Charlesworth
Who cares? Focus on Home Care Workers (HCWs)

- Their work & working conditions underpin the quality of aged care community-based services
- Underpinning themes:
  - Profound historical gendered undervaluation of paid care work
  - Shifts along the ‘formalisation continuum’ in full recognition of home care work ‘as work’
  - Differences in government & non-government employment

Presentation
- Overview of provision of home care in Victoria
- Crucial role of local government
- Current challenges: increasing complexity of care work; poor pay & working conditions; consumer directed care, outsourcing
- Looking forward: investing in care infrastructure, collaborative advocacy
Growing recognition & formalization of Home Care work

- Home care historically undertaken by family members
- Post WW 2 charities & others providing HC services →
- State & local governments started to assume responsibility particularly in Victoria

Towards formalisation:
- By 1970s HCW inc in govt industry awards - HCWs lowest paid in awards & only 1 pay level (reflecting gendered undervaluing of care work esp HCW)
- 1986 Australian Industrial Relations Commission recognized additional skills required by HCWs in Vic LG → additional (personal care) skill level (this later built on in 1990s via award restructuring into 3 skills classification + a supervisory one)
- 1991 first SACS award (NSW) covering HCWs in non-govt employment– some flow on from govt awards to SACS awards

Towards informalisation?
- 1990s Compulsory Competitive Tendering inc in LG →HCW outsourced
- 1990s & 2000s low rates of pay underpinned by state & fed govts reluctance to fund wage increases
- 2009 award ‘modernisation’ – reduced 23 SACS awards to 1 - poorer conditions cf predecessor awards: Social Community Home Care & Disability Services Award
- Lack of union action in predecessor & SCHCDS awards on ↑work value in HCW →remain on bottom of award – not part of SACS equal pay win in 2012
Home Care Workers & Home Care Work

Who are they? (NACWCS)
- Female: 89%
- Median age: 52 years (recent hires = 46 years)
- Born overseas: 36% (2016 Census)

Conditions of work? (NACWCS)
- HC Ownership: 70% NFP; 9% FP; 20% govt
- Part time: 79% - but over 10,000 HCWs in non-direct employment – labour hire & self employment
- Want more hours of work: 40%
- Hold more than one job: 16%
- Low pay: 60% earn < 2/3rds of Australian weekly median earnings

Increased complexity of clients & work
- ↑ in older frail aged clients with cognitive impairment & high needs ↑ ‘bodily intrusion’ work eg bowel management; peg feeding; cathertisation & changing colostomy, drainage bags, wound dressings

Shift to consumer directed care
- Taylorisation of care ‘tasks’, cuts to time to care, ↑ demands for PT worker ‘flexibility’
HCW & Government Outsourcing

In 1985, under the *Home & Community Care Act 1985* federal, state & territory governments agreed to jointly fund the Home & Community Care (HACC) programme.

**Victoria**

- In Victoria LG became primary provider of HC replacing disparate home care services.
- While the Fed/State funding share supposed to be 60/40%, funding inadequate and Vic LG ‘subsidised’ HC services by an average of 21% (Vella 2008).
- Slow movement to start outsourcing HC services particularly in regional areas – this is now gathering steam once again.

**NSW**

- 2014 NSW Govt decided to outsource Home Care Services of NSW – 4500 HCWs & 50,000+ clients.
- Union campaign against outsourcing and then for single NFP provider.
- 2015 Australian Unity won tender to deliver these services.
- Existing workers covered for 2 years by transition provisions. Now new EBA extended NSW HCS conditions to all Australian Unity’s HCWs in NSW.
# HCW Pay Rates & Key Working Time Conditions: December 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hourly pay rates:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>$19.68</td>
<td>Band 1 (A-D) $26.86-$27.64</td>
<td>Grade 1: $22.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum engagements</strong></td>
<td>Casual – 1 hour PT - none</td>
<td>Casual 2 hours PT - 2 hours</td>
<td>Casual 2 hours PT - 2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spread of hours</strong></td>
<td>6am-8pm M-Sun</td>
<td>6am-6pm M-F</td>
<td>6am-6.30pm M-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel time Between clients</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who Pays? Investing in the Care Economy

Case for public investment in care infrastructure (UK Women’s Budget Group 2016) inc home care

- Includes workforce providing care services, its skills & facilities in which they work

Based on:

- Public sector /NFP provision + improved training & conditions for workers
- Providing paid care for those with unmet care needs
- Shifting some care from unpaid family care to paid care sectors

Findings for Australia:

- 2% GDP direct investment in care industries
  - Would create 600,000 new jobs, 4% rise in emp rates
  - Would address care deficit with increased female LF participation (↑3.7%)
  - Decrease gender gap in employment & in care
  - Improve working conditions in care sector – incentivise men?
  - Increase options for juggling paid work and caring
  - Improved care quality
Who cares? Collaborative Advocacy

Many conditions of HCW, esp under SCHCDS Award, unacceptable in Australian context

- Historical undervaluing + needs for increased level of skill & responsibility
- Fragmentation of employment and porous minimum labour standards
- Limited success thru NFP & FP EBAs & thru Modern Award Review process

→ New approach needed to address conditions of HCW work to underpin sustainable provision of community-based aged care

Extended social dialogue/collaborative advocacy: a New Zealand example

- Momentum began with 2012 Human Rights Commission Inquiry into Aged Care – links made between decent jobs and quality care & sustainable aged care system
- Post Inquiry collaborative dialogue between Human Rights Commission, advocacy groups, unions (E tū & PSA), employer peaks and NZ government - agreement the NMW rate far too low
- Outcomes inc equal pay settlement, ‘regularised’ hours & (fully funded) paid travel time; ongoing collaboration between all stakeholders
Useful links

Investing in the Care Economy

NZ Human Rights Commission Inquiry: Caring Counts

Decent Work & Good Care: International Approaches to Aged Care
https://decentworkgoodcare.com/