

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

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# Acknowledgment and disclaimer

- This presentation draws on the Longitudinal Care Study (LoCS). Research Team: Dr Shereen Hussein (PI), Ms Jo Moriarty, Dr Martin Stevens, Prof Jill Manthorpe, Ms Jess Harris, Dr Kritika Samsi, Dr Michelle Cornes.
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# Background

- The social care workforce constitutes between 5-7% of the total UK workforce.
- Very large presence of migrant workers
  - Up to 40% in London and large cities
- Gendered workforce (80% women)
- Provision linked to local funding; sensitive to austerity measures
  - Private sector major supplier of services but attached to the public purse
- Wages are a major cost component
  - 10-12% of care workers are estimated to be paid **below** the National Minimum Wage
- Becoming more fragmented due to funding cuts and various policy directions

# About the presentation

- In the main draws on data from the Longitudinal Care Study
- Ongoing analysis: emerging findings
- Focuses on perceived job satisfaction and job strain
- Survey data collected Karasek Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ) → Demand-Control model
- Contextualized with data from in-depth interviews
- Focus on the experience of men to examine work-life balance among the minority gender in the social care domain

# About LoCS: Longitudinal mixed methods' study

- 4 local authority areas in England
- Care homes, home care and some local authority staff
- 121 interviews (T1 & T2)
- Female = 95  
Male = 26



Managers

- Same 4 areas
- Recruited via establishments where managers interviewed or elsewhere, including day centres
- 119 interviews (T1 & T2)
- Female = 87  
Male = 20

Staff

- Same 4 areas
- Recruited via participating establishments or elsewhere
- 60 interviews (45 users; 15 carers)
- Female = 40  
Male = 20

Service users  
and carers

# Multi-mode survey

- Distributed by post and online at phase one and phase two to wider group of social care workers.
- The first round of the survey (T1) took place between May 2010 and July 2011 and received a total of 914 responses.
- The second round (T2) took place between April 2012 and July 2013 and received a total of 428 responses.
- Among the responses to the survey, 172 were received from the same individuals at T1 and T2.

# Social care and austerity measures

You are doing split shifts a lot of the time and they vary as well ... because we have a zero hours contract .... [the council] only pay us the work that the carers [care workers] do. If a client goes into hospital, that's their whole work gone for the week. ***As a carer [care worker] you need to say yes to absolutely everything, .....*** So we ask an awful lot and we don't give that much back. But as a private organisation we can't just pay people guaranteed contracts if we've not got the clients.

(Anna, Employer)

# Pay and working conditions

[Pay rates are] a little bit over the minimum wage, but not by much. That is **deceiving**, because we are now paid by the minute and we are broken down into minutes ... we log in and we log out at each call. .... Somewhere along the line **you've got to catch that time up**. The only way you can do that is to cut a call short somewhere along the line. (Interviewer: But then you would get paid less for that call as well?) Yes.

(Lesley, care worker)

It is like you are part of a machine. You've got to be here at this time and you've got to finish at this time. It doesn't work like that. Some days you could go in and the service user's perhaps having an off day or whatever and they don't want you. What do you do? Another day, perhaps [they are] having a down day and they just want to talk. It takes time. You are running over your time ... We are all human and everybody is different. **It's all down to minutes**.

(Peter, care worker)



# ‘Love’ and ‘vocation’ not for the ‘money’ ...

I think, without sounding too patronising, it’s a **vocation**, isn’t it? I think a lot of people that want to come into social care actually want to come into it because they do want to support people or maybe care for people as part of their own personality.

(Sue, Employer)

I think you've got to **love** what you do as well. Not just—money does come into it, but you've got to love what you do. If it’s just for the money then you are in the wrong job. You've got to love what you do.

(Peter, care worker)

I left school at 15 with no qualifications at all. But erm, what brought me into this? I just like **helping people**. And it just fired my imagination. It’s difficult to put my finger on exactly why. Yes. Money doesn’t come into it for me.

(Steve, support worker)

# What does it mean to be low paid

We get paid, what is it now, £18,000 a year. I don't know with London living, you are meant to, in London they say that £29,000 is the wage required to have a decent life. I think wages wise it's not great. We can't get mortgages either. Nearly every one of us here, there are not many of us that own our own houses. We mostly rent, because we can't get a mortgage.

(Adam, care worker)

If the pay was more I think you would have more people who could do the job stay in it. There must be quite a few people as you said earlier, good people leaving. The good people would stay if the pay was better.

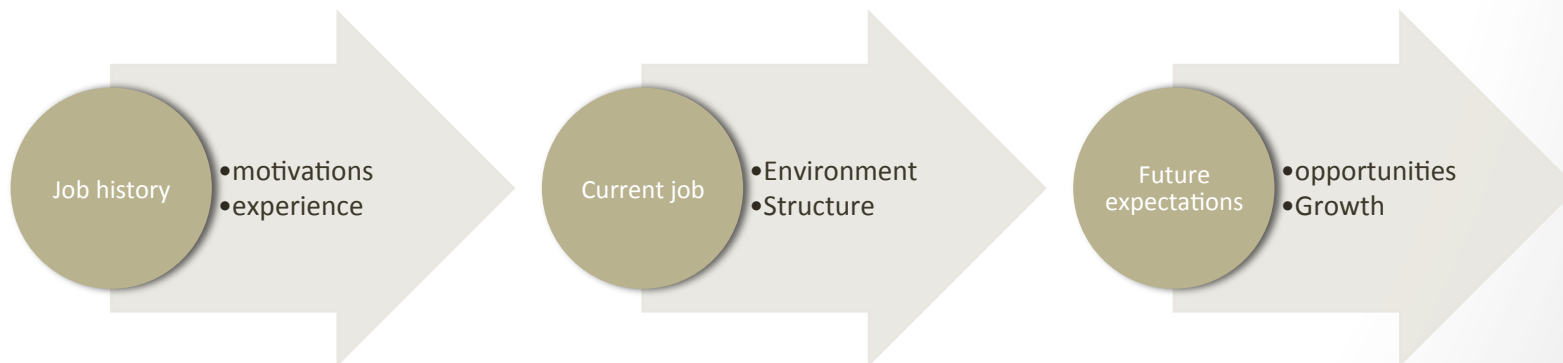
(Simon, care worker)

# What is job satisfaction?

- A person's evaluation of his/her job and work context. A collection of attitudes about specific facets of the job.
- Different elements of job satisfaction
  - General or Global Job Satisfaction
    - How satisfied are you with your current job?
  - Facet Satisfaction:
    - Satisfaction with pay, benefits, supervision, co-workers, the job itself, promotional opportunities etc.
- Relationship between job satisfaction and stress/burnout
  - Impact on workers' physical and mental health and wellbeing

# Job satisfaction '*Journey*'

- A function of what has happened and what is currently taking place as well as future opportunities
- Impacted upon by
  - personal characteristics/background
  - job environment
  - Overall social care status and general attitudes
- Not static, but a cumulative dynamic experience



# Theoretical background

- Fulfillment theory
  - Linked to main motivations: to satisfy workers' demands and fulfilling their 'obligations' – rewards can take different forms
- Discrepancy theory
  - The difference between an actual and expected outcome
  - Future prospects might be more important than what is actually happening
- Equity theory
  - Relational satisfaction of what workers put in (including level of qualification needed) and what they get out – input/output
- Two-factor theory
  - Assumes two 'independent' sets of factors in the same job
  - 'Motivators' intrinsic factors may lead to satisfaction, while 'Hygiene' extrinsic factors may lead to dissatisfaction

# Job satisfaction

	General job sat.	Would advise a friend to take the job	Would you take this job again	How does it compare to expectations	Sat. with Emp. Conditions
Very satisfied/ Definitely yes/ much better	24.9%	22.6%	47.5%	17.6%	28.3%
Satisfied/possibly yes/better	54%	56.3%	33.1%	35.3%	46.4%
Neither/not sure/ same	13.8%	N/A	9.4%	36.8%	20.8
Dissatisfied/ probably no/worse	2.9%	13.8%	5%	9.4%	3.6%
Very dissatisfied/ definitely no/much worse	2.3%	4.4%	2.3%	0.3%	0.9%

# Relationship between job and employment conditions satisfaction

Overall Job satisfaction	Employment Conditions				
	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Very satisfied	57.4%	19.5%	1.4%		
Satisfied	36.2%	70.1%	56.5%	16.7%	
Neither	3.2%	8.4%	36.2%	25%	66.7%
Dissatisfied		0.6%	4.3%	41.7%	33.3%
Very dissatisfied	3.2%	1.3%	1.4%	16.7%	
Total N	94	154	69	12	4

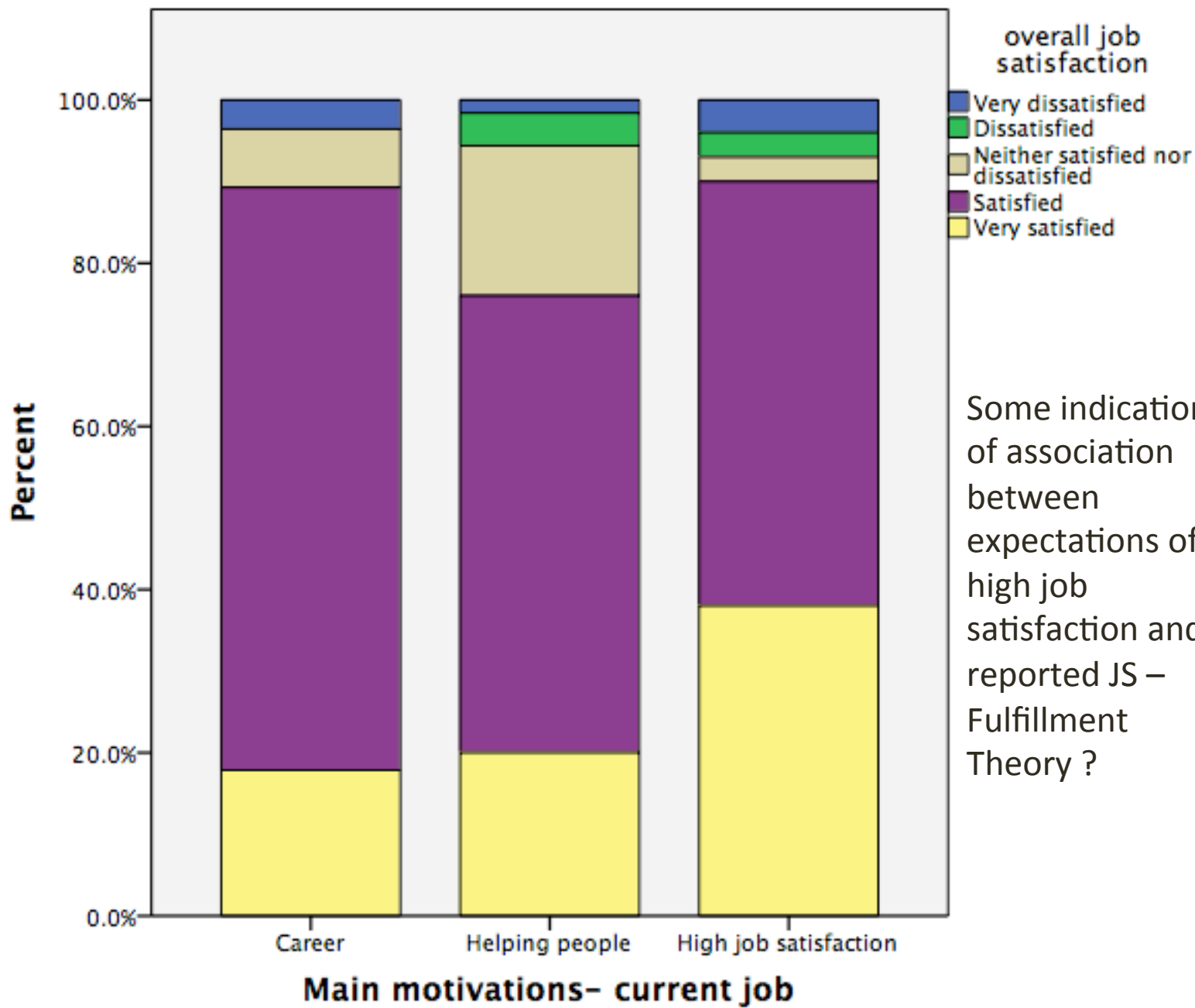
There are some indicators to connect with two-factor theory, with intrinsic motivators factors appear to be more powerful

# Main motivations for current job

First	Second	Third
Good career prospects (21%)	Helping people to improve the quality of their lives (31%)	High job satisfaction (16%)
Personal ability to get on with people (17%)	Working in a team (14%)	Helping people to improve the quality of their lives (12%)
Helping people to improve the quality of their lives (15%)	High job satisfaction (11%)	Interesting, stimulating job (9%)

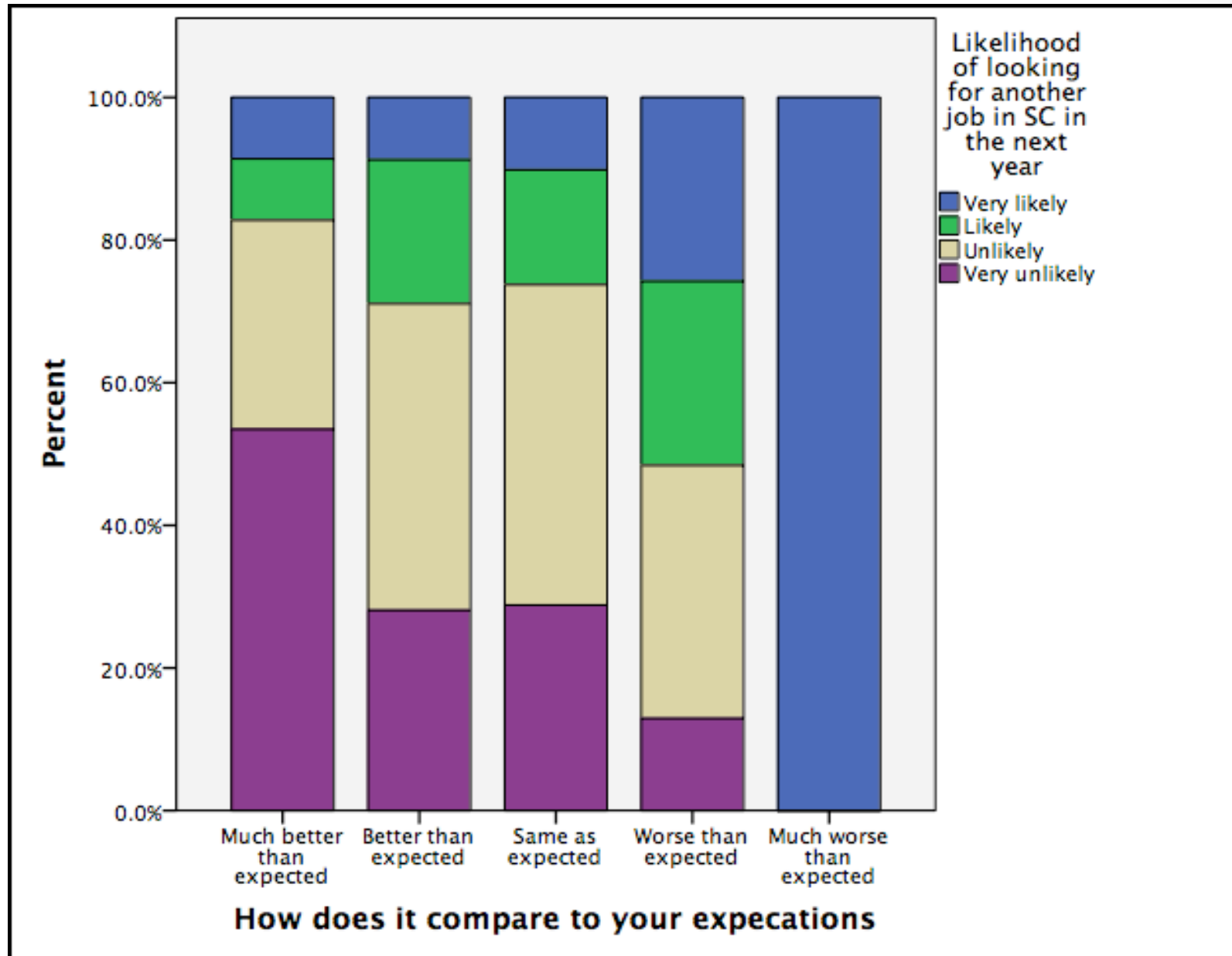
- Some motivations are likely to be affected by common latent variables
- Further data reduction techniques will be applied before further analysis





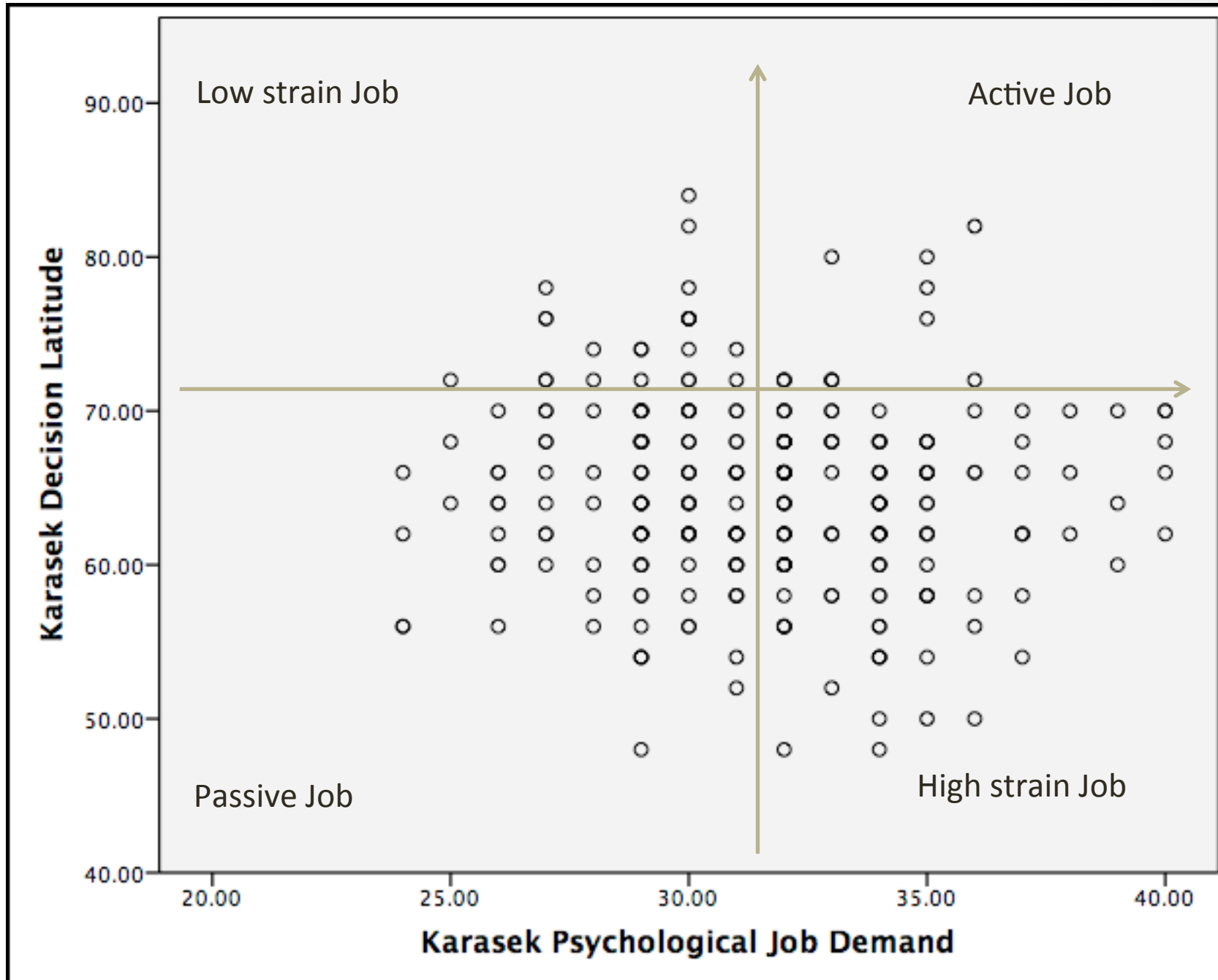
Some indications of association between expectations of high job satisfaction and reported JS – Fulfillment Theory ?

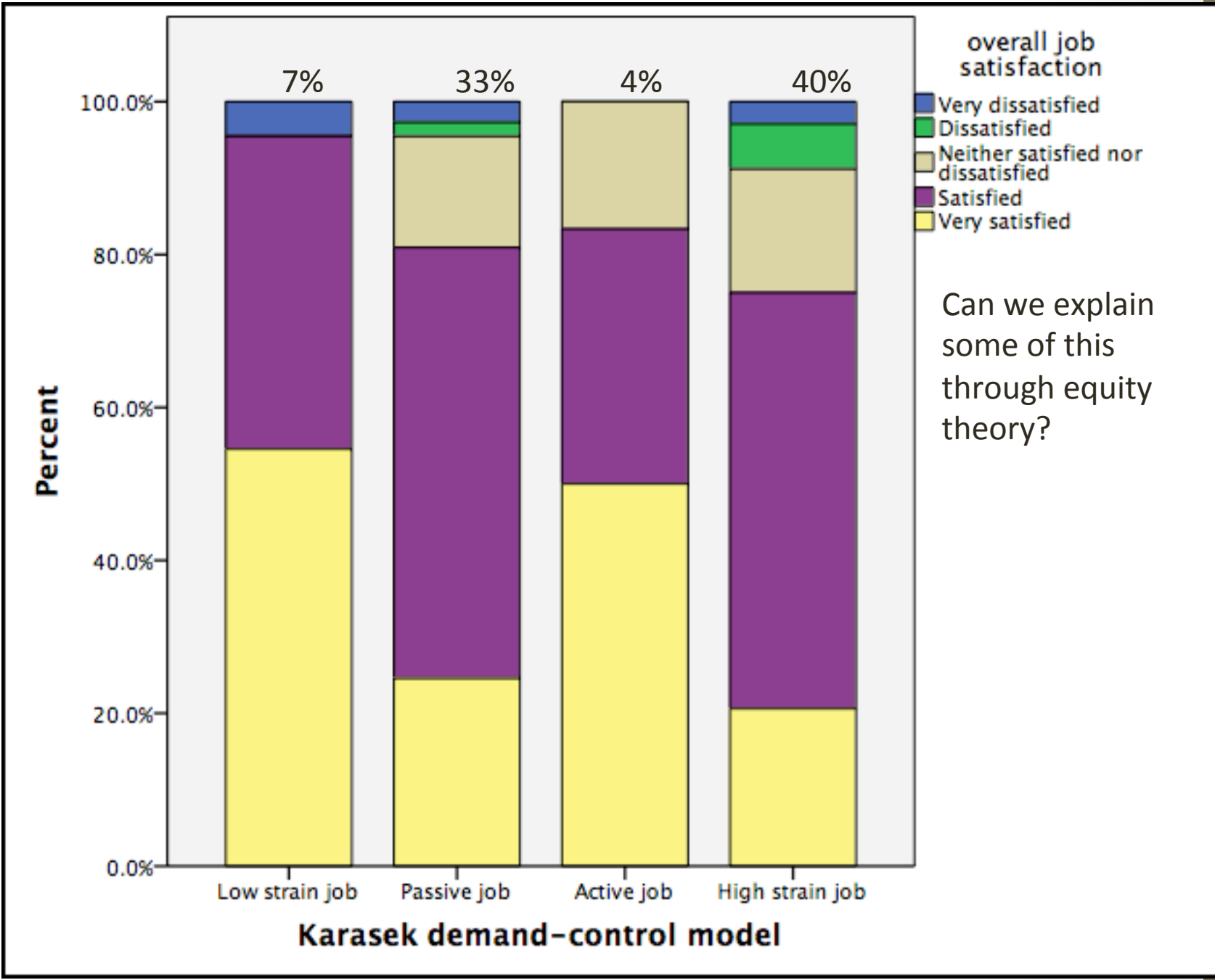
# Expectations and intention to leave: Discrepancy theory



# Karasek Control-Demand Model

- Postulates that job strain is the result of an interaction between demand and control
- a job with high demand and low control is 'high strain' → unresolved stress
- a job with low demand and high control is 'low strain'
- Somewhere between these 2 extremes lie 'passive' and 'active' jobs → ideal state
- The model was examined in relation to workers' health outcomes, esp. cardiovascular disease





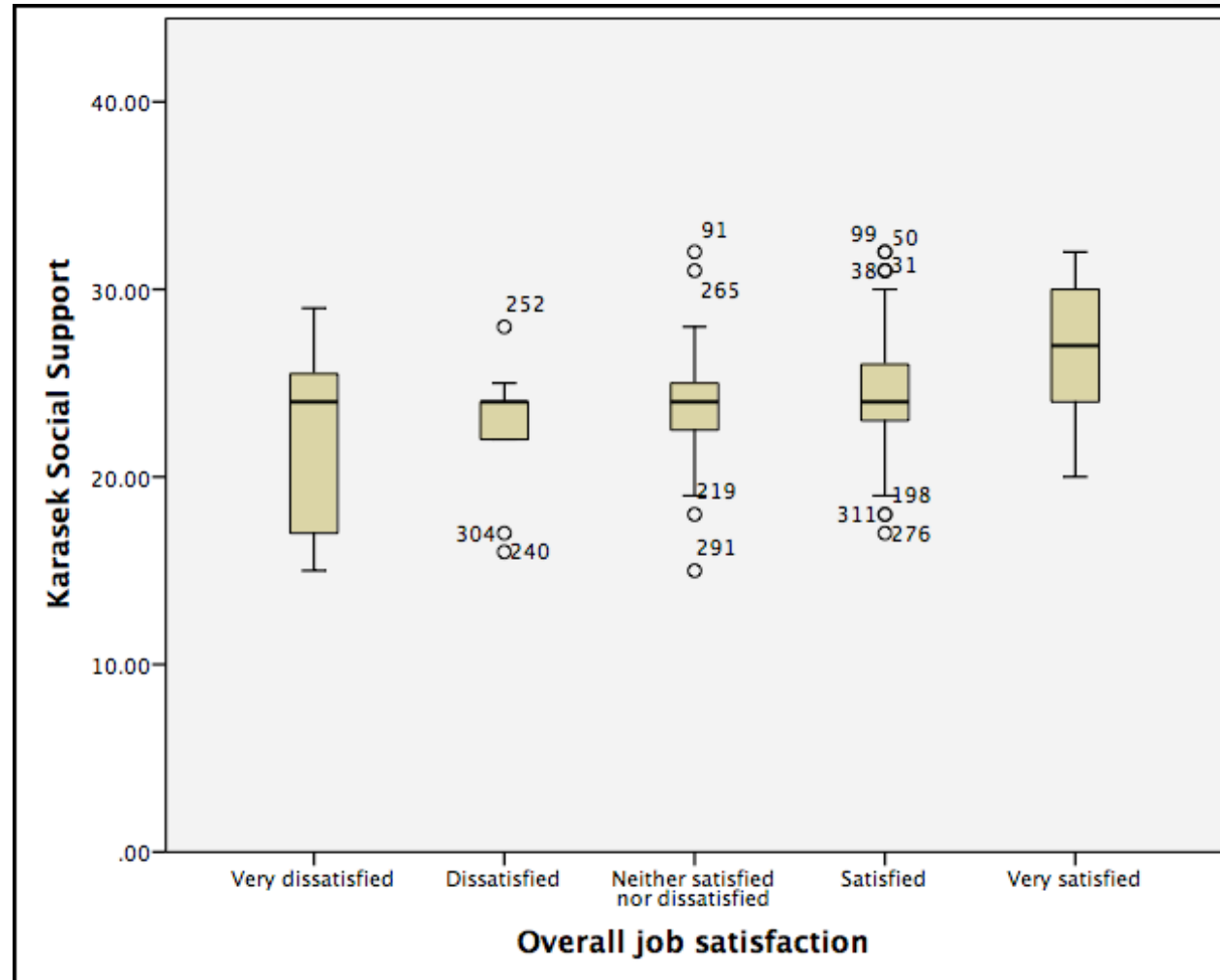
# Support in the workplace

- I would say for me, the times that I feel stressed and dejected from the work is never because of clients, it's because of management.
  - (Dave, care worker)
- In the last year, my elderly mother who she had pneumonia and she went into hospital and came to me to recover. Then she had food poisoning and then she had some problems with her nose, some haemorrhaging and now a fall, a terrible fall, which smashed her face up. Each time she has to come to me to recuperate and recover. In terms of time of work, I have had to have compassionate leave. ***It's a good thing about working for the council, I have to say. We can have up to five days a year compassionate leave. We still get paid.***
  - (Brian, care worker)

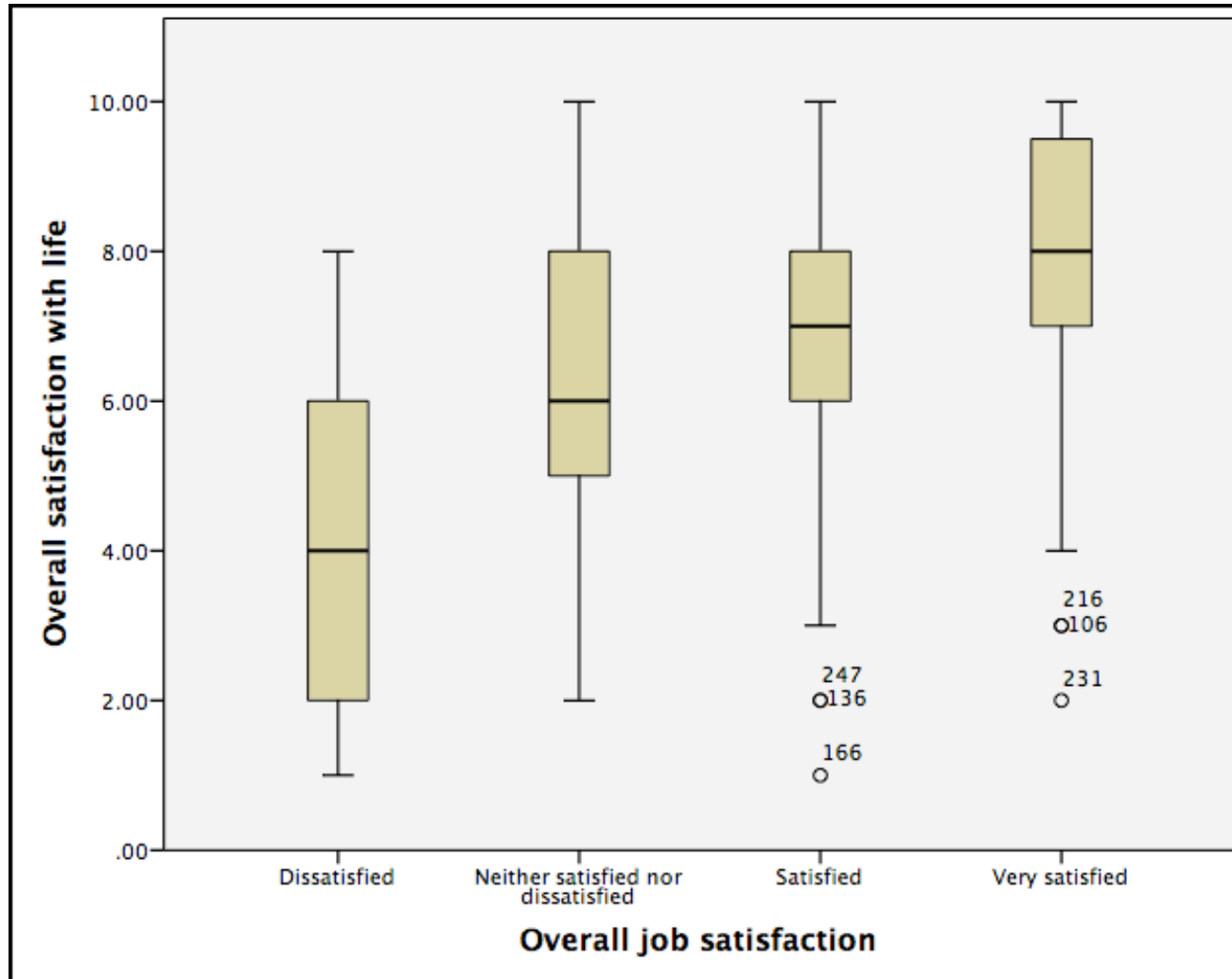
# Other factors in play: Support at work

Karasek Social support  
Measures both  
Co-worker support  
Supervisor support

Fulfillment and two-fold theories



Importantly: job satisfaction is associated with general satisfaction with life





# Work- life juggling

- My wife works in domiciliary care. When I finish here and go home, she then goes to domiciliary care. What she was doing was, she was actually doing a night shift job as well. And so at the moment we are expecting our second child. She has cut back on the work load and she's just doing the domiciliary care in the mornings and in the afternoons until not too late in the evenings .... I tend to think that, yes, if I was offered more hours, I would jump at the chance, absolutely. If I was given the opportunity of taking more hours then I would, yes.

(Phil, care worker)

# Coping mechanisms

You have got your life outside of the workplace and sometimes you have to get on with that as well. For many years, I used to take a lot homework with me you could say. Nowadays, there is a lot on your mind, but there is ways of also I think for staff I sort of do a lot of long distance running and stuff, so sometimes you might have had a long day and I go out for a run and feel fantastic. It's my way of sort of therapy to cope my way

(Peter, care worker)

I used to worry about a person who has told me a horrific story and I take it home. Now, I have learned I can leave it at the door. If someone does mouth something off, I've got a thick skin now. I have to leave it. If someone is going to commit suicide then do it. If they have got it in their mind, they are going to go and do it.

(Matt, mental health support worker)

# Care work can be stressful but usually rewarding

- In actual fact, I have learned more in the last ten years about humanity, about life than I did in the time before that, because when I was working, when I had my business I used to go to work and I used to work in big country houses and stuff like that. I would be there on my own and have a radio on and I would be doing my job and go back home again. But since I have been doing this job, I've had to, you help people and you talk to people and you have got other people to think of and everything like that. I have thoroughly enjoyed it.

(Simon, Care worker)

# And it can mean much more

I have had bouts of depression in the past I have just been homeless with no money. Lost everything. Rock bottom. I came through the whole sort of system. I was alcohol dependent as well .... Coming through it, I had two small children, growing up now and I thought, do they want to see their dad like this. I thought, no, took me off that.

.... I thought, what a good way to give back basically is, I know how these people feel, because I've been there. I've done it. I came to [voluntary organisation] as a volunteer, just to test the water ... one day a week and then two days a week. I really got into it. And then I got offered a job literally three months later.

(Matt, care worker)

# Key findings

- Majority of workers report high job satisfaction, but many join care work **expecting** high job satisfaction → Fulfillment theory
- Emerging findings indicated a distinction between workers' satisfaction with their work with service users and colleagues, and their dissatisfaction with their terms and conditions of employment → Two-fold theory
- The majority have either a 'passive' or 'high strain' job
- Focusing on men, some acknowledged the stress in their work and have developed coping strategies to maintain their home life separate
- Juggling life and work was evident, especially when both partners work in the care sector
- Support, both managerial and co-worker, acts as a buffer from stress

# Discussion points

- Can we afford relying on 'love' and 'vocation' concepts to meet growing demand
- Fragmentation of work and impact on expected 'reward'
- Workers' job strain
- Mechanisms to maintain social support
- Austerity measures and impact on recruitment quality
  - Secondary labour market

# Thank you for listening

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