

Time use diaries and valuing unpaid care

SUII workshop 2

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Introduction

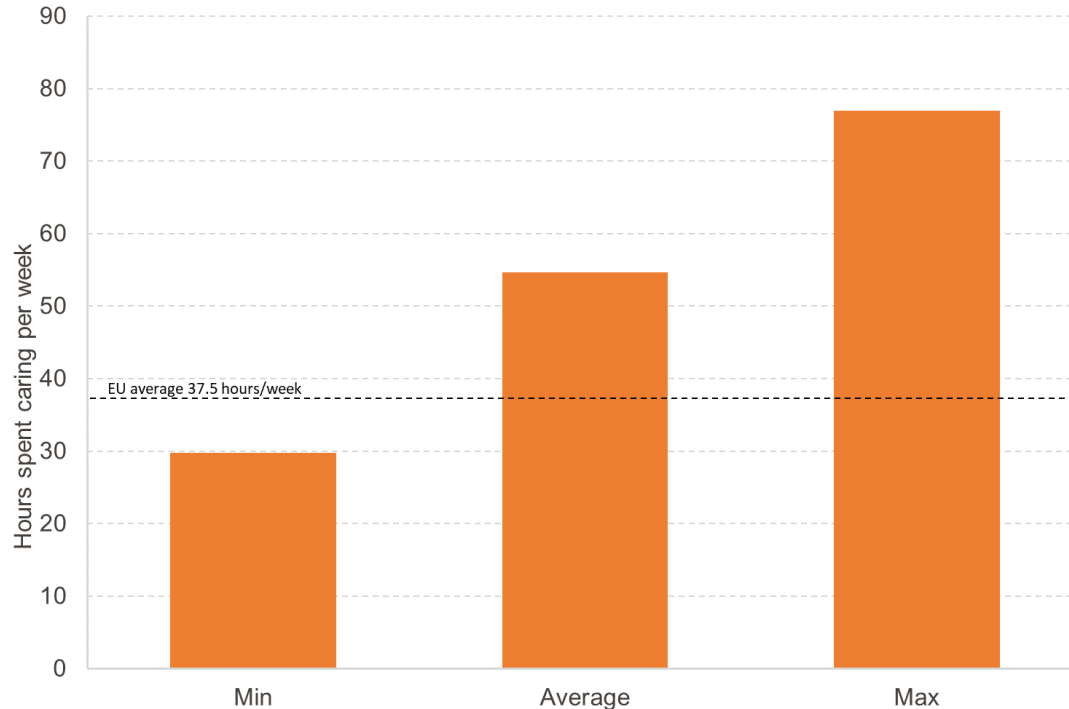
Why did we do this?

- › Time use diaries break down a 24 hour period into half-hour periods. Unpaid carers were asked to write a diary of what caring activities (and other activities) they were doing in each period.
- › Time use diaries are a way of telling a story about the day-to-day realities of being an unpaid carer.
- › They also allow for researchers to add up the time blocks to provide data about the number of hours spent caring.
- › If we have information on the number of hours spent caring, and the type of caring provide, we can look at ways of attaching a value to that time.
 - We can use earnings data to say what it would have cost if the unpaid carer was being paid by the state for the care they provide
 - Or, we can calculate replacement care. That is, what would it cost for that care to be provided by a paid-carer, or what it would cost for the care to be provided in a care setting.
- › Valuing care in this way does not mean that we are saying care should not be provided by unpaid carers. Instead, we use it to say that the contribution of unpaid carers should be better recognized by society.
- › £/€ is a language that many will be able to understand.



What did we learn?

Hours spent caring per week



The data estimated that carers spend on average 7.8 hours a day on caring activities.

This counts activities where the primary activity was the care of an individual.

It doesn't include where caring was a secondary activity – for example watching tv together.

Unpaid care is not a Monday – Friday job, so when calculating weekly averages we include weekends.

We can see that the average time spent on caring activities far exceeds the average for 'paid' work.



The experience of caring

- › The burden of caring for those who completed the diary is heavy. Caring often begins early in the morning and continues at intervals throughout the day and in some cases overnight.
- › Several of the carers appeared to be caring for more than one person – often an older parent and a child or disabled spouse or sibling
- › A smaller number of hours were allocated to personal care than to other caring tasks but the provision of personal care was a regular and demanding task
- › Other caring tasks included administering medication, meal preparation, social and psychological support, attendance at appointments, provision of transport
- › For several carers their role involved complex negotiations and juggling of tasks
- › Caring appears pervasive and even time not spent caring is spent thinking about it



The emotional burden of caring

- › *Every day I do the same, plus take care of the houses, take care of the animals...*
- › *Sometimes my days are quieter...the evenings are emotionally draining...during the day I do everything I can possibly do so I can focus on X and Y [in the evening]*
- › *This is my normal day. Usually it is more stressful because my child gets more tantrums and they are hard*
- › *9.30pm...bed for me as I am usually exhausted...*



Valuing care

Assuming minimum wage:

- › If carers were paid the UK minimum wage for the hours spent caring (£10.42/€12.13), their annual salary would be £30,000/€35,000.
- › Minimum wage workers in the UK working full-time hours have an annual salary of around £20,000/€23,300

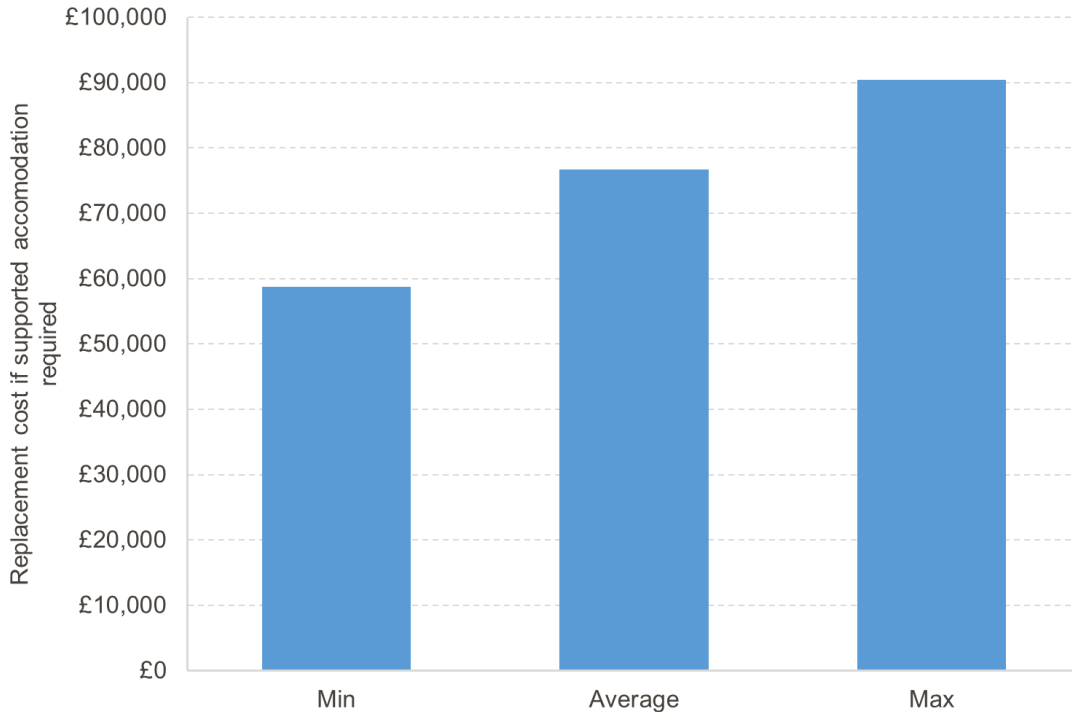
Assuming replacement paid care:

CAUTION: These figures are an illustration based on data published by the Public Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU), based on social care costs in England in 2020.

- If a paid carer provided replacement personal care (on average 25% of all care provided), this would equate to £21,800/€25,400 per year per household
- If supported accommodation was required to provide the same levels of care provided by unpaid carers, this would equate to £76,500/€89,200 per year.
- The big picture message is that all the unpaid carers in our sample contribute A LOT!



Replacement cost of supported accommodation



Estimates based on cost of supported accommodation for adults with specific needs, using PSSRU 2020/21 data







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