

## The Geography of Unpaid Caring in England & Wales

Kingsley Purdam and Paul Norman

CCSR, University of Manchester and School of Geography, University of Leeds (2008-2009)

We are examining geographic and social variations in the amount of unpaid caring across England and Wales. Using the Samples of Anonymised Records from the 2001 Census we map sub-national geographic variations in the amount of caring. We consider variations in caring at the individual level using a specially devised index of caring. The primary statutory responsibility for caring for older people lies with the local authority in which a person lives. The local authority and specifically the social services department has the ultimate duty of care and has to assess a person's needs and ensure that services are put in place.

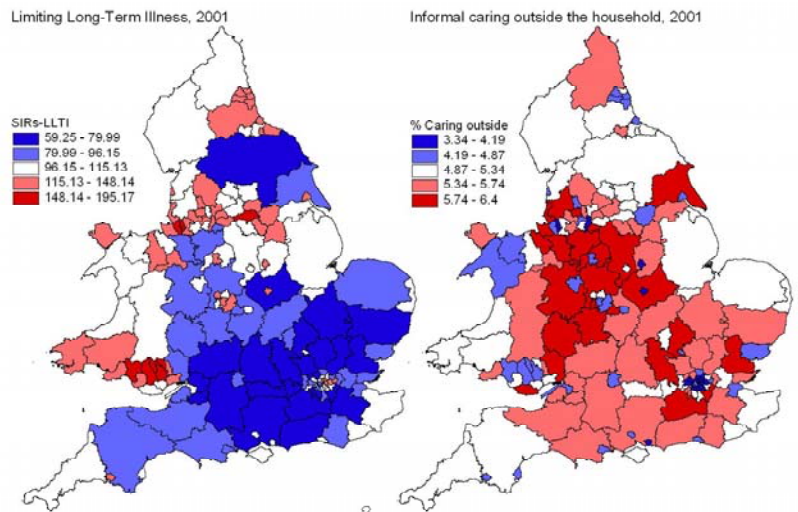
A person is a provider of unpaid care if they give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental health or disability, or problems related to old age. It is estimated that there are over 6 million unpaid carers in the UK of whom 1.7 million provide over 20 hours of care per week. The number of 'informal' carers may need to double within a generation due to the ageing of the UK population.

Our initial analysis supports existing evidence that women aged between 40 and 75 are the most likely to be unpaid carers. There is an association between higher rates of unpaid caring amongst those people in lower social class classifications and those with fewer qualifications.

We also found considerable variations in the levels of unpaid caring across different Primary Care Trust areas. Moreover, there are different geographies of care when comparing unpaid carers who live with a person with limiting long-term illness and those who don't. It is possible to suggest that

people who are providing unpaid care outside their own home are also likely to be travelling considerable distances to provide the care. This perhaps reflects the changing patterns of family dispersal in the UK. As such, these unpaid carers are facing an additional burden that is likely to affect the amount, timeliness and quality of care they can provide. It may also negatively affect the carer's own health in the longer term. The research findings have important implications for our understanding of the dynamics of caring and for service providers at a national and local level and also for the government's focus on the individual care and independent living.

### Unpaid Caring: OUTSIDE household



#### Contact:

Email: [kingsley.purdam@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:kingsley.purdam@manchester.ac.uk)

tel +44(0)161 275 4721

<http://www.ccsr.ac.uk>