

Sustainable Care: connecting people and systems

ESRC Large Grant programme and International Partnership, 2017-2021

Five exceptional PhD study opportunities - PhD No. 4

Study topic: ***Combining care and paid work; how can technology help?***
Dates: ***October 2017 - September 2020***
Awarding institution: ***University of Sheffield (UoS)***
Funding: ***Sustainable Care PhD studentship, available for three years of study***

The successful applicant will be awarded a 3-year studentship (subject to satisfactory performance at annual review points) covering doctoral fees and an annual stipend to support living costs¹.

Supervisor(s): Luc de Witte, Professor of Health Services Research, CATCH, UoS
Mark Hawley, Professor of Health Services Research, CATCH, UoS
Marieke Spreeuwenberg, Professor of Remote Care, Zuyd University, NL

Linked Work package: ***Technologies to support working carers: connecting people and systems [WPB3]***

Description of the PhD study: This PhD is in health and related sciences. It will explore the potential role of technologies in supporting the sustainable wellbeing of working carers², a group often facing tough choices between their work and care responsibilities³. Technology holds the potential to support working carers in fulfilling their dual roles by supporting them in situations where they cannot be present, and with care co-ordination. This PhD will identify and examine specific aspects of working carers' roles amenable to intervention, select priority areas for support and explore how technologies can be assembled, modified or introduced to address these.

Indicative research questions:

- What aspects of worker/carer roles are amenable to better co-ordination via use of technology?
- In the specific priority areas selected, how and why are technologies used, with what effects on care relationships, wellbeing outcomes and carers' capacity to fulfil both roles?
- Could technology be better configured to support them, and are further innovations needed?

Indicative research methods: This study will require a range of different methods, likely to include: systematic literature review; qualitative interviews (with individuals and focus groups); co-design workshops; and usability evaluation techniques. Details will be negotiated with the successful applicant; the research will be subject to university research ethics approval.

Essential Applicant Requirements

- A Masters qualification, or equivalent, in a relevant discipline (awarded, or expected in 2017)
- Demonstrable research skills, supported by a relevant qualification
- Ability to work independently, supported by a supervisory team
- Ability to work in regular dialogue with the wider ESRC Sustainable Care team and as part of the linked WP team (see above; see also 'Expectations of all linked PhD students')
- Strong written and oral communication and presentation skills
- Fluency in English language

NOTE: This study will be undertaken in close collaboration with *Zuyd University of Applied Sciences* in the Netherlands; the PhD student will undertake some of his or her studies there (dates negotiable).

¹ The studentship will cover tuition fees at the UK/EU rate (worth approx. £4,170 pa) and will also provide a tax-free stipend at the standard UK Research Council rate (for 2017/18, £14,553 outside London), each for 3 years. Additional funds will be provided for travel and equipment, and students will have access to unique opportunities within the ESRC Sustainable Care programme. NOTE: **International students from outside the EU are eligible to apply, but must have the means to pay the difference between the applicable UK/EU and overseas tuition fee rates.**

² 'Working carers' are people in paid employment who also provide care and support for a relative or friend with a long-term condition or disability, or who needs assistance in old age.

³ King, D. & Pickard, L. (2013) 'When is a carer's employment at risk? Longitudinal analysis of unpaid care and employment in midlife in England', *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 21 (3): 303-314; Pickard, L. (2004) *Caring for older people and employment: A review of the literature*, London: Audit Commission; Yeandle, S., Bennett, C., Buckner, L., Fry, G. & Price, C. (2007) *Managing Caring and Employment*, CES Report No. 2, London: Carers UK.