

Exploration of 24/7 lone working practices, support, and educational needs of Marie Curie Healthcare Assistants (HCAs) providing palliative care in the community across the UK



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BACKGROUND

Marie Curie HCAs provide direct care to people with palliative care needs in the community, working within a lone worker capacity, most often during the out-of-hours period. Despite being recognised as playing an integral role in the provision of community palliative care, the HCA role remains invisible and undervalued.

To date, no studies have focused on the HCAs lone working practice across the 24/7 period, resulting in little understanding of their needs to provide such care, or how healthcare providers can support them in their role.



PRIMARY OUTCOME MEASURES

1. Understanding of Marie Curie HCA role and experiences in the delivery of lone working to palliative care patients and caregivers in a pandemic.
2. Educational and support needs of HCA across the 24/7 period.
3. Policy and practice recommendations for supporting HCAs in community-based palliative care.



METHODS

Semi-structured interviews conducted virtually using MS Teams with HCAs across Northern Ireland, Scotland and England.

Currently recruiting across all sites.

Interviews will be transcribed and coded. Key themes will be identified.



POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE STUDY

1. Greater insight into the experiences of lone workers and lone working practices within Marie Curie (MC) and help understanding of the complexities of providing this service against a backdrop of a pandemic
2. Help to uncover approaches and actions that may be useful and effective in the context of recruiting and retaining community Health Care Assistants (HCAs)
3. Evidence for ongoing service sustainability, innovation and effective utilisation of resources
4. Explore and examine the views of lone worker staff on how their work and work environment contribute to improving patient and caregiver experiences
5. Evidence for developing interventions and enhancing support within MC for community-based HCAs
6. Provide evidence for learning & development strategies

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