



**2nd symposium on Meaningful work - Prospects for the 21st Century
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Meaningful work in health services

Pauline Davies

Doctoral Student

[pauline.davies2 @pgr.anglia.ac.uk](mailto:pauline.davies2@pgr.anglia.ac.uk)

*Lord Ashcroft International Business School,
Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge , UK*

Overview



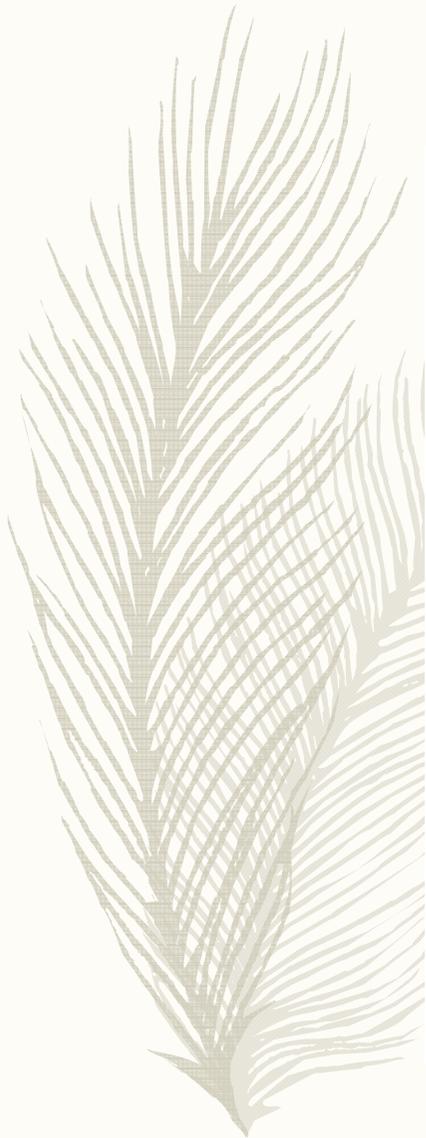
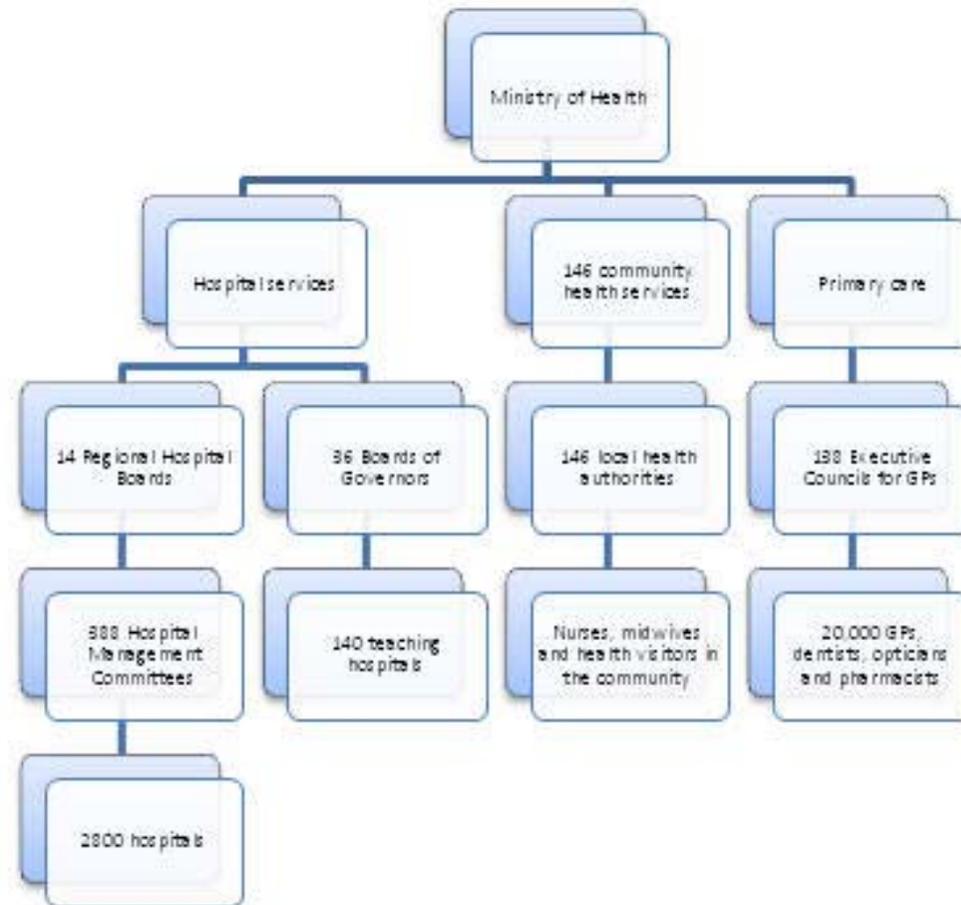
- Background to contemporary UK public sector health services
- Meaningful work and possible linkages
- Research outline

Public Health Services Context (1)

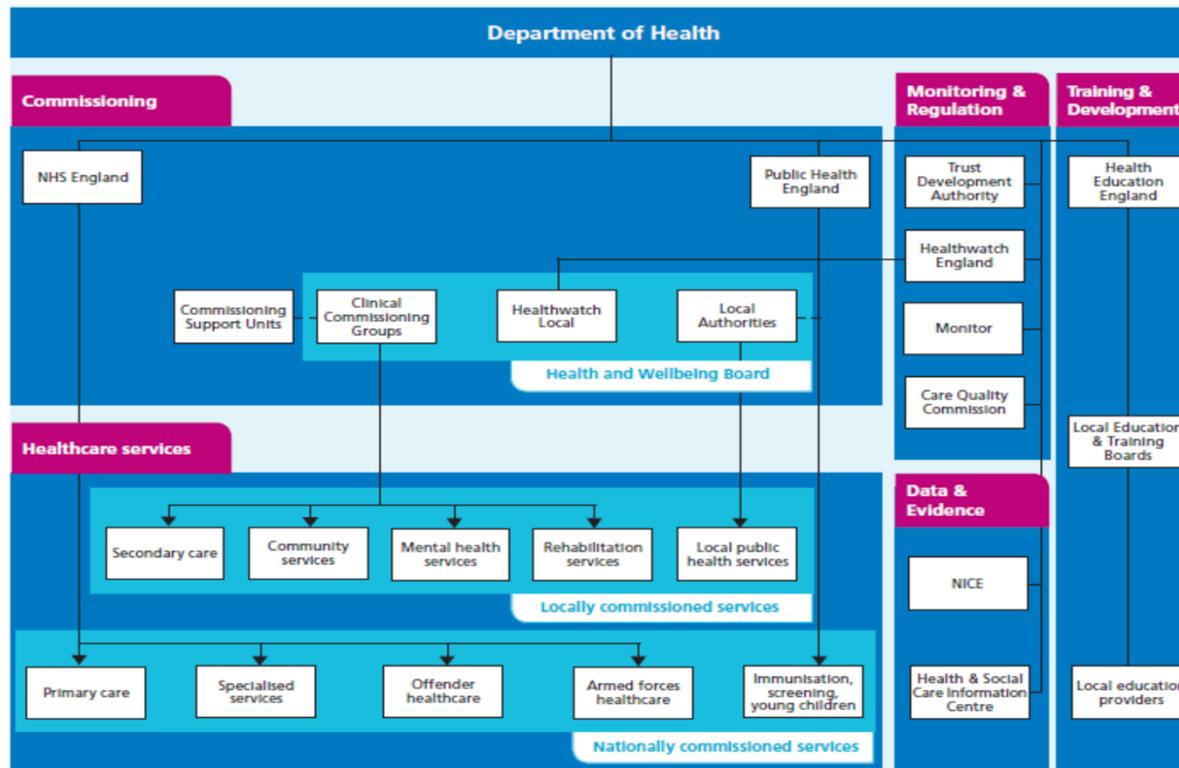


- Beginnings
 - The National Health Service (NHS) a universal health system developed after the Second World War, founded in 1948.
 - Designed to offer free universal care at the point of need to all.
- Changing
 - The Griffiths report (1983) heralded a move from tripartite management of health institutions (doctor, nurse and administrator) to a general management model.
 - Overt structure changes: Strategic health authorities (SHA), Primary Care trust (PCT) to clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and Clinical support Units (CSU)
 - Less visible changes: the introduction of new public management (NPM) , 1980s onwards. Legrand (2010) argued that choice, competition and incentives were instrumental to achieving public service motivation and improvement.
- Now
 - A large organisation or group of organisations and its UK health workforce numbers over 1.2 million people

NHS 1948



NHS (England) 2014



Secretary of State for Health

The Secretary of State has overall responsibility for the work of the Department of Health (DH). DH provides strategic leadership for public health, the NHS and social care in England.

Chief Medical Officer

The Chief Medical Officer is the UK government's principal medical and scientific adviser, the professional lead for doctors in England, and the professional lead of all directors of public health in local government.

National Medical Director

The Medical Director of NHS England is responsible for clinical policy and strategy, promoting a focus on clinical outcomes, enhancing clinical leadership and promoting innovation.

Chief Nursing Officer

The Chief Nursing Officer is the professional lead for nurses and midwives in England and oversees quality improvements in patient safety and patient experience.

Chief Professional Officers

The Chief Professional Officers (including the Chief Scientific Officer, Chief Dental Officer, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer and Chief Health Professions Officer) are the heads of their respective professions and provide expert clinical advice across the health system.

Public Health Services Context (2)



- Contemporary Health sector context:
 - Ongoing change
 - Demand , quality/safety and resource pressures
 - Complex clinical problems and health advances increasing risk
 - Scrutiny, performance management and targets (NPM)
- Patient and staff experience:
- Systematic failings - Care quality and compassion challenges (Frances inquiry, 2013)
 - *a culture of mistrust when a NHS Board reduced staffing levels with catastrophic effects to meet targets*
 - *professional disengagement; patients not being heard; poor governance; lack of focus on standards of service, inadequate risk assessment of staff reduction, nursing standards and performance; and the wrong priorities (pp43-45).*
- Workforce recruitment and retention challenges
- Workforce engagement challenges

Compassion, engagement and motivation challenges

Meaningful work definitions



There are no generally agreed definitions of Meaningful Work (MFW), examples include:

- *‘the degree that a job is experienced to be meaningful, valuable and worthwhile’* (Hackman and Oldham, 1975).
- *“the value of a work goal or purpose, judged to the individual’s own ideals or standards”*. May et al, (2004, p14)
- *‘a subjective experience of the existential significance or purpose in life, at the individual level’*,.(Lips-Wiersma and Morris ,2009)

To resolve this problems Rosso et al (2010) have recommended future research be precise and explicit in the definitions used when assessing meaning in work. They noted that recent researchers have developed specific models for understanding meaningful work

Qualities of the experience of MFW



Baillie and Madden (2016)

- Poignancy: MFW can be poignant rather than just euphoric. When work is meaningful tends to be richer and more challenging than when feeling simply motivated engaged or happy.
- Episodic: a sense of meaningfulness is episodic rather than sustained.
- Reflective: rarely experienced in the moment but rather in retrospect and on reflection.
- Personal: other feelings about work such as engagement or satisfaction tend to be just feelings about work whereas work that is meaningful is often understood in the wider context of the personal life experience.
- Self transcendence - people tend to experience their work as meaningful when it matter to others as well

Kahn (1990)

- Self transcendence is aligned to earlier views of suggesting that meaningfulness in work is a feeling that one is receiving a return on investment of oneself in the currency of physical, cognitive or emotional energy and occurs when individuals feel worthwhile and useful and a sense of transcendence, when the individual feels they are contributing to something greater.

The concept of transcendence is also aligned to the views of Lips-Wiersma (2002) and Rosso et al (2012).

MFW benefits

- Wrzesniewski (1997)
 - job and life satisfaction,
 - May et al (2004)
 - higher levels of engagement
 - Steger and et al (2011).
 - the reduction withdrawal behaviours, lower levels of absenteeism.
 - high organisational commitment
 - Amabile and Kramer (2012,2011):
 - engagement in job
 - more creative, productive, committed and collegial.
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MFW antecedents

Hackman, and Oldham (1976). have focused on job design, emphasising:

- Skill variety where the job requires a variety of skills to be used;
- Task identity which is where the task allows the individual to complete a job from beginning to end with an identifiable result;
- Task significance which is the degree to which a task has impact on the welfare of others in the organisational community;
- Autonomy which is the extent a job gives the individual initiative undertaking the work; and
- Job feedback which is extent which the job provides personal information on job outcomes.

Guadi et al, (2013) :

- work has a clear goal purpose and value connected the employee,
- the employee has a sense of congruence between their own values and the job requirements and organisational mission and goals.

Baillie and Madden (2016) emphasise an ecosystem of meaning in the work place involving focusing on meaningfulness in the following ways :

- organisational,
- job,
- task, and
- interaction

Organisations and managers play a major role influencing workforce experience



Organisation managers can destroy meaning (Amabile & Kramer , 2010) with:

- Focus on mediocrity;
- Changing strategic direction;
- Poorly organised support services;
- Setting unrealistic low relevance goals
- Failure to plan for goals

Organisational behaviour can destroy meaningful work (Baillie and Madden, 2016) by:

- Disconnecting people from their values
- Taking people for granted and lack of recognition for hard work.
- Giving people pointless work to do.
- Treating people unfairly
- Overriding people's better judgement.
- Disconnecting people from supportive relationships; and
- Putting people at risk of physical or emotional harm.

Health service - qualitative findings



- **Horowitz et al (2003) - Meaningful work and physician experiences.**
 - connection with patients
 - the difference made in someone's life
 - fundamental change in the doctor's perspective,
- **Pavlish and Hunt, (2012) (Hunt, 2009) - Meaningful moments of nurses, more likely to occur with:**
 - learning-focused environments with constructive management,
 - cohesive teamwork
 - sufficient patient-contact
- **Cruise et al(2015) - Finding Meaning in the Work of Nursing -an International Study**
 - relationships,
 - compassionate caring,
 - identity
 - mentoring culture.
- **Secret (2005) - Meaning of work for nursing assistants in long-term care work:**
 - experience of family,
 - pride
 - control.

Health service quantitative studies

2014 Mason et al. Surgical intensive care unit trauma nurses engagement and compassion study,

- When work engagement increased, compassion satisfaction significantly increased, and burnout significantly decreased.

2015 Jevé et al. NHS employees, engagement study

- Work engagement overall below the external benchmark

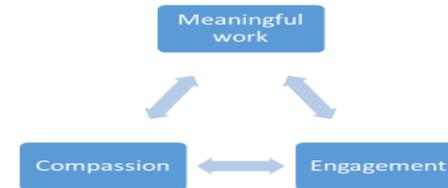
2010 Hooper et al. Nurse compassion study, nurses scores in following area suggested risks:

- Emergency - risk for reduced compassion satisfaction,
- Intensive care - higher risk for burnout
- Oncology - risk for greater compassion fatigue



Research Aims

Conceptual relationships



This study aims to deepen our understanding of meaningful work for people employed in health services, and extend theoretical understanding. It will help us to learn more about what work means for health services personnel and what can impact positively and negatively on their experience of meaningful work, of being engaged, and being compassionate in their work.

Conclusions

- Contemporary health service workplaces are challenging for people who seek to work and stay in the health workforce
- The construct of meaningful work offers scope for further examination



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