The Personal Assistant Workforce Survey

Annual Survey 2022 Report

Contents

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Summary of findings

In total, 912 participants responded to the survey (representing 19% of the known PA workforce in Scotland[1]).

Respondent profile

The 'average' PA respondent was female, aged 53 years, white, Scottish, nondisabled, and identifying as heterosexual/straight. Nearly three quarters (74%) of survey respondents provided assistance or support to one individual only and the majority (86%) have worked for over 2 years as a PA. The youngest respondent was 17 (with few respondents under 25) and the eldest 78 years. 97% of survey respondents identified as white and 85% are PA employees. 69% of survey respondents work with adults aged 16 – 65. The survey report found that nearly half of the male survey responders worked 31 or more hours per week (47%) compared with just under a third (32%) of female survey responders. 48% of respondents provide unpaid care.

Location

Survey responses were not uniformly distributed across local authority areas as a proportion of their populations, but generally bigger populations yielded more responses and all local authority areas have representation.

Wages

The average rate of pay per hour for PA work for those who are employees was £10.83 (range £8.00 - £19.50) and for self-employed was £13.86 (range £9.30 - £22.00).

PA support and job security

Less than half of respondents (42%) agreed 'a lot' that they had sufficient support to do their job well; two in five respondents (38%) agreed 'a lot' they have job security; one out of five either did not have a contract or did not know if they had one. One in five survey respondents also indicated a desire to end their PA role. Less than half of respondents (46%) were confident that their ideas and suggestions were listened to.

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[1] Survey "response rate" is calculated from data from 2021 Scottish Government "Thanks You" payment which provided the number of applicants from each Local Authority area for a £500 bonus offered for work during the COVID19 pandemic. The actual number of PAs in each LA will be higher as PAs of children were ineligible for the payment and some will simply not have applied for any number of reasons. This however gives us a minimum known number for which we can benchmark survey uptake

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PA training

Eight out of ten (81%) respondents received no training in the last year and six out of ten (60%) had no training prior to the last year. However, half of respondents agreed 'a lot' that they had enough training to do their job well. Training was employer funded for less than half of respondents (43%) who had undertaken PA training.

PA Mental health and disability

A quarter (26%) of respondents provide over 20 hours of unpaid help and support per week in addition to their work as PA. Approximately one in five surveyed said they had a health condition or a disability that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months and almost one in five (18%) described having had very poor or poor mental health in the previous seven days.

Job satisfaction

Survey respondents are positive when it comes to their role as a PA with nine out of ten survey respondents agreeing 'a lot' that they trust the person they assist as a PA and their employer trusts them; eight out of ten agree 'a lot' that they feel proud to be a PA, and over three quarters (78%) agree 'a lot' that they love their job.

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1. Foreword from the PA Programme Board

Social care Personal Assistants (PA) are a valued workforce who form part of the wider social care workforce. They are key workers and carry out a unique and varied role assisting an individual who has social care needs, to live the life that they choose – that individual becomes their employer. Central to this role is the working relationship between the PA and their employer.

This survey will help us understand the PA workforce better. We set up the survey to shine a light on this workforce: to ask them what they need, and to know more about them so as to be able to develop support to suit their role. We received a great response – almost 920 responses.

Our plan is to use the evidence from the survey to inform our work in the PA Programme Board and to set our workplan and priorities. We hope that there will be an annual survey so that over time we can ensure that we achieve recognition for PAs within the social care workforce.

We are the PA Programme Board and we advise Kevin Stewart, MSP, Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care on how best to support the PA workforce. The Board is chaired by Scottish Government and Self-directed Support Scotland. Members include PAs, Independent Support Organisations plus more.

You can see more about the Board here https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/pa-programme-board/

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2. Survey Design, Distribution and Analysis

In the month of April 2022, we conducted the first national Annual PA Workforce survey targeting the Personal Assistant (PA) population (16 years and over) residing in Scotland. The annual survey aim is to help us to gain insight into PA Workforce in order to provide tangible support to improve the situation of PAs in Scotland.

The survey was web-based and a direct link to the online survey was shared via social media, the Self Directed Support Scotland website and through the PA Network Scotland. Additionally, a survey invitation email was sent all 4,795 PAs who had applied and been approved for the Scottish Government £500 Thank You Payment for Personal Assistants for work carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is unknown how many PAs could have been eligible for the Thank You Payment but did not apply, and therefore, these figures may not be reflective of the whole PA workforce. However, this provides the best estimate, to date, of the known PA workforce in Scotland.

The following report presents the results of this survey and compares these findings, where appropriate, with data from the Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2020 Workforce Data[a], the data from the Scottish Annual Population Survey 2020/21[b], Scottish Government data on PAs of adults who had been approved for the £500 Thank You Payment[c] and Sheffield City Council Individual Employer Pay Scale Report: Survey & Interview Findings in 2021[d] (the only comparable data we have found on PA rates of pay in the UK).

In total, 912 participants responded to the survey (representing 19% of the known PA workforce in Scotland)[2]. Participation in the survey was optional and no questions were compulsory. Thus, the reporting of our results is limited to our survey respondents and the questions they chose to respond to. Therefore, this report does not claim representativeness and cannot substantiate any inferences about the PA workforce as a whole.

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[2] Data from 2021 Scottish Government "Thanks You" payment provided the number of applicants from each Local Authority area for a £500 bonus offered for work during the COVID19 pandemic. The actual number of PAs will be higher as PAs of children were ineligible for the payment and some will simply not have applied for any number of reasons. However, this data gives us a minimum known number for which we can benchmark survey uptake.

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3. Our PA survey respondents

The data collected from our survey respondents suggests that there could be inequalities in the PA workforce for each protected characteristic. The following section will examine these differences.

3.1 Age

We asked survey respondents, "How old are you or will you be this year?" Of the 875 respondents who chose to answer this question, the largest age grouping was between 55 and 64 years (35%), followed by 45 and 54 years (26%) and 35 and 44 years (17%).

Chart 1: Age profile of survey respondents
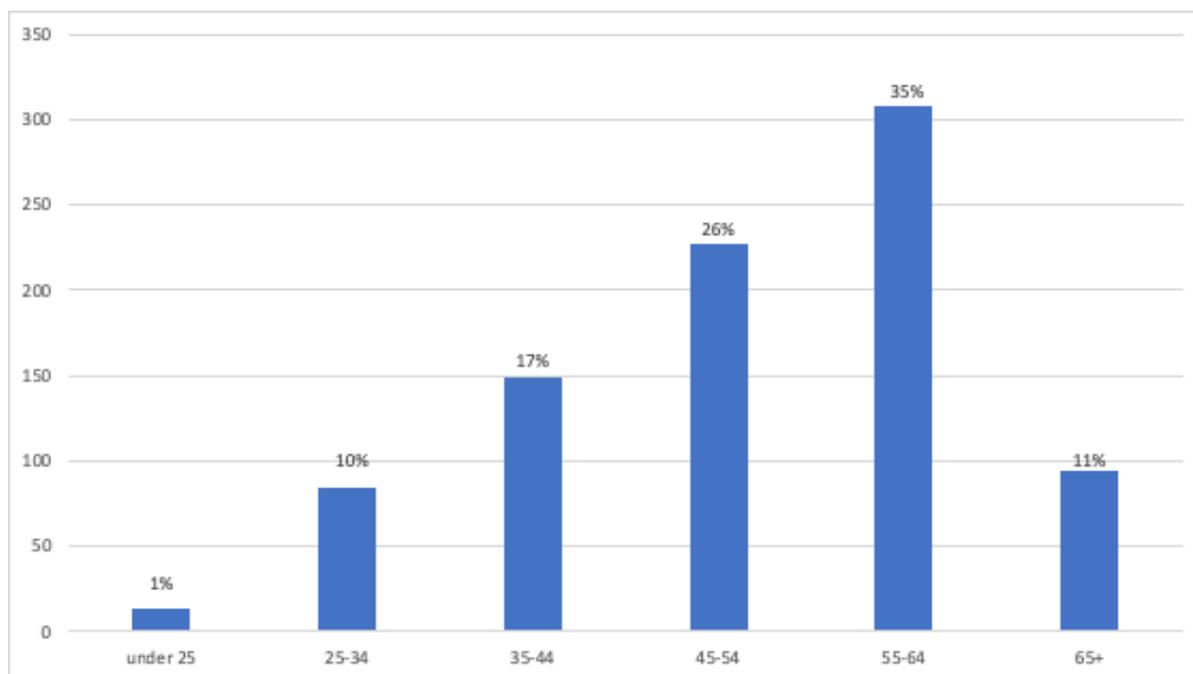
The Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2020 Workforce Data[a] as a whole shows the median age of the social care workforce to be 44 years old. However, our survey respondents are older with a median age of 53 years old (with an average age of 51 years old). Furthermore, the Scottish Annual Population Survey 2020/21[b] findings show just under one third of the workforce (33.2%) are aged 50 years or older, and this rises to 38.6% when looking at those employed in the health and social care sector. However, nearly half of our survey responders are aged 50 years or older, with a range from 17-78 years, suggesting a higher share of older people among our survey respondents that could indicate the role of a PA attracts older workers.

3.2 Gender

We asked survey respondents, "What is your gender identity?". Of the 877 respondents who chose to answer this question 743 (85%) identified as female, 129 (15%) identified as male and 5 identified from other categories (e.g. non-binary or own term).

Chart 2: Gender profile of survey respondents
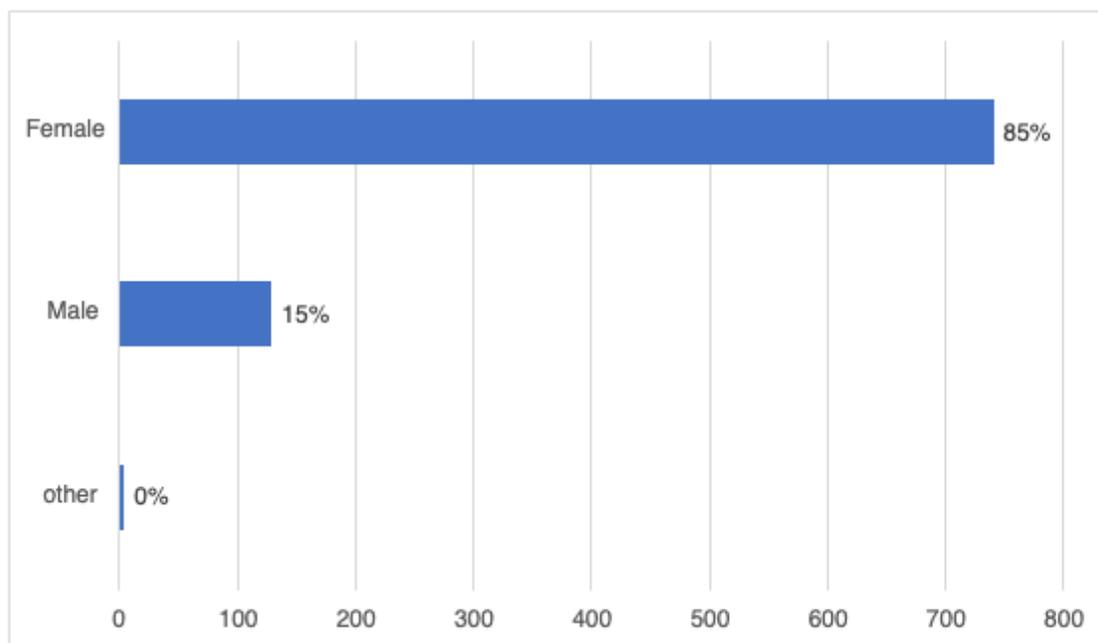
This is mirrored in the Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2020 Workforce Data[a], with 83% identifying as female, 15% male and 2% not known. Similarly, the majority of approved applicants for the Scottish Government £500 Thank You payment[c] were female (82.5%). However, this is not in line with the profile of the broader Scottish workforce with women making up just over half (56.1%)[e] of the workforce.

3.3 Sexual Orientation

We asked survey respondents, "What is your sexual orientation?" Of the 865 respondents who chose to answer this question, 94% identified as straight/heterosexual, followed by Bisexual, Gay/Lesbian and other (each with 2%).

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Chart 3: Sexual orientation of survey respondents

Sexual Orientation	Number (%)
Bisexual	17 (2%)
Gay/Lesbian	19 (2%)
Other	13 (2%)
Straight / Heterosexual	816 (94%)
Total	865 (100%)

We are unable to compare these responses with Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2020 Workforce Data or the 2021 Scottish Annual Population Survey 2020/21 as this data is not collected.

3.4 Ethnicity

We asked survey respondents, "What best describes you? Tell us about your ethnicity." Of the 885 respondents who chose to answer this question 859 (97%) identified as being of White ethnicity and 15 (2%) identified as having Asian ethnicity. The remaining 1% identified as African, Caribbean or Black, mixed or other ethnic group.

Chart 4: Ethnicity of survey respondents

Ethnic Group	Number (%)
White	859 (97%)
African, Scottish African or British African	<5 (<1%)
Asian, Scottish Asian or British Asian	15 (2%)
Caribbean or Black	<5 (<1%)
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	<5 (<1%)
Other ethnic group	<5 (<1%)
Total	885 (100%)

A comparison with the Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2020 Workforce Data[a] is complicated by the ethnicity of nearly one quarter (23%) of this workforce being unknown. However, of the available data, most of this workforce identify as White (74%), followed by 1% identifying as Asian and 1% identifying as Black. In comparison Scotland's Census 2011[f] found that Scotland's population was 96% White, which is similar to our survey respondents.

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3.5 Disability

We asked survey respondents, "Do you have a health condition or a disability that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more that makes it difficult for you to do day-to-day activities?" Of the 882 respondents who chose to answer this question, most of our survey respondents did not consider themselves to have a disability (78%).

Chart 5: Survey respondents who consider themselves to have a disability
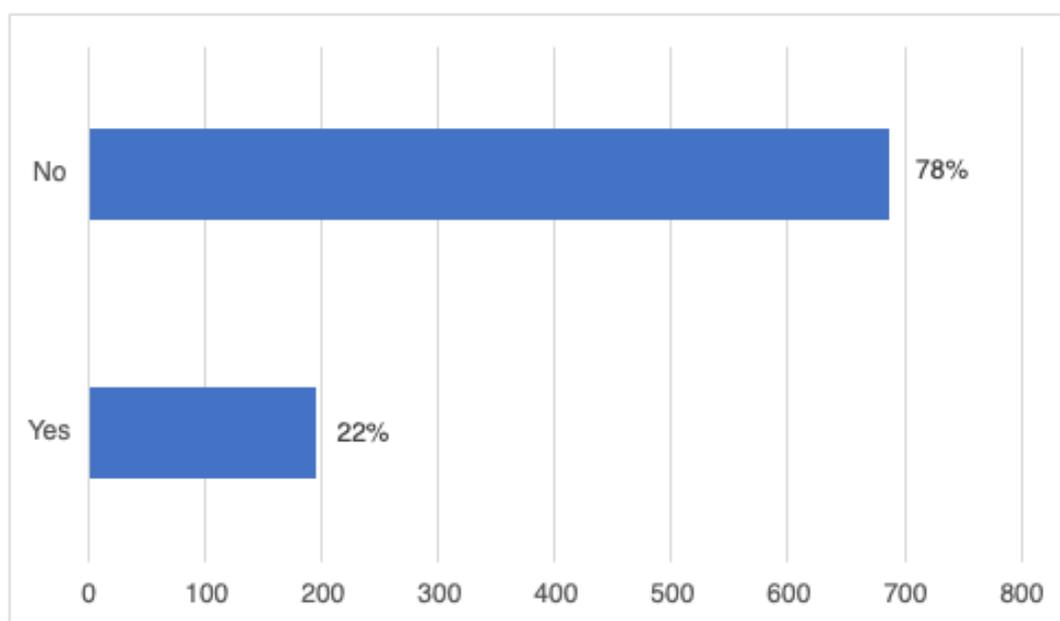
22% of our survey respondents considered themselves to have a disability which is similar to Scotland's population whereby one fifth of the population define themselves as having a disability. We looked at Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2020 Workforce Data where the disability status of 17% of the social workforce is unknown. However, of the recorded data 82% of the workforce did not regard themselves as having a disability. Although these proportions look similar, and it is encouraging that the PA role is accessible to some living with a disability or health condition, drawing any conclusions or making any further analysis was difficult with very low numbers in some disability categories like learning disability, learning difficulty, sight or hearing loss and a very high number or undisclosed disability. 67 respondents reported a 'long-term illness, disease or condition,' 46 reported a 'mental health condition' and 23 a 'physical disability.'

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3.6 Survey respondents and mental health

We asked survey responders, "How would you describe your mental health over the past 7 days? a. Very sad face b. Sad face c. Neutral face d. Happy face e. Very happy face"

Chart 6: Mental Health of survey respondents

Mental Health in past 7 days	Number (%)
🙁	55 (6%)
🙁	110 (12%)
😐	222 (25%)
🙂	280 (31%)
🙂	235 (26%)
Total	902 (100%)

Approximately one in five (18%) respondents describes having had very poor or poor mental health in previous seven days. We looked for comparison with the Scottish Health Survey (2019) but only found that "Around one in four people are estimated to be affected by mental health problems in Scotland in any one year."[g] This data might more usefully remind us that poor mental health outcomes for the PA may put them at risk of poor health outcomes generally and either of these could also impact the person or people they assist.

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4. Where do our PA survey participants work?

4.1 Geographical distribution

We asked survey respondents, "Where in Scotland do you work right now?" Respondents could select any region(s) that represented their current location or locations of work. Of the 905 respondents who chose to answer this question, a total of 941 responses (regions) were selected. By location, we found the largest number of survey responders to be working in Glasgow City (11%), Aberdeenshire (8%), Perth and Kinross (7%), Dumfries and Galloway (7%), and City of Edinburgh (6%) which could be expected given the size of populations in these areas. (continues…)

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Chart 7: Total number of survey responders compared with PAs who received Thank You Payment (% PAs per capita)

Local Authority	PA survey responses (% PAs per capita)	PA Thank You Payment (% PAs per capita)	Local Authority total population
Aberdeen City	16 (0.007%)	131 (0.057%)	229,060
Aberdeenshire	73 (0.028%)	352 (0.135%)	260,780
Angus	18 (0.016%)	164 (0.142%)	115,820
Argyll and Bute	26 (0.030%)	111 (0.130%)	85,430
City of Edinburgh	60 (0.011%)	281 (0.053%)	527,620
Clackmannanshire	5 (0.010%)	25 (0.049%)	51,290
Dumfries and Galloway	61 (0.041%)	233 (0.157%)	148,290
Dundee City	15 (0.010%)	112 (0.075%)	148,820
East Ayrshire	41 (0.034%)	110 (0.090%)	121,600
East Dunbartonshire	31 (0.029%)	82 (0.075%)	108,750
East Lothian	20 (0.019%)	90 (0.083%)	107,900
East Renfrewshire	15 (0.016%)	51 (0.053%)	96,060
Falkirk	10 (0.006%)	64 (0.040%)	160,560
Fife	49 (0.013%)	282 (0.075%)	374,130
Glasgow City	102 (0.016%)	373 (0.059%)	635,640
Highland	35 (0.015%)	238 (0.101%)	235,430
Inverclyde	5 (0.006%)	30 (0.039%)	77,060
Midlothian	23 (0.025%)	94 (0.101%)	93,150
Moray	26 (0.027%)	139 (0.145%)	95,710
Na h-Eileanan Siar	7 (0.026%)	50 (0.189%)	26,500
North Ayrshire	17 (0.013%)	94 (0.070%)	134,250
North Lanarkshire	49 (0.014%)	317 (0.093%)	341,140
Orkney Islands	8 (0.036%)	57 (0.254%)	22,400
Perth and Kinross	63 (0.041%)	250 (0.165%)	151,910
Renfrewshire	16 (0.009%)	103 (0.057%)	179,390
Scottish Borders	39 (0.034%)	319 (0.277%)	115,240
Shetland Islands	9 (0.039%)	75 (0.328%)	22,870
South Ayrshire	13 (0.012%)	44 (0.039%)	112,140
South Lanarkshire	47 (0.015%)	240 (0.075%)	320,820
Stirling	13 (0.014%)	48 (0.051%)	94,080
West Dunbartonshire	14 (0.016%)	102 (0.115%)	88,340
West Lothian	15 (0.008%)	117 (0.064%)	183,820
Outside Scotland	--	17	--
Total	941 (0.017%)	4795 (0.088%)	5,466,000

Chart 8: PA engagement: survey vs SG "Thank You" Payment as a percentage of Local Authority population
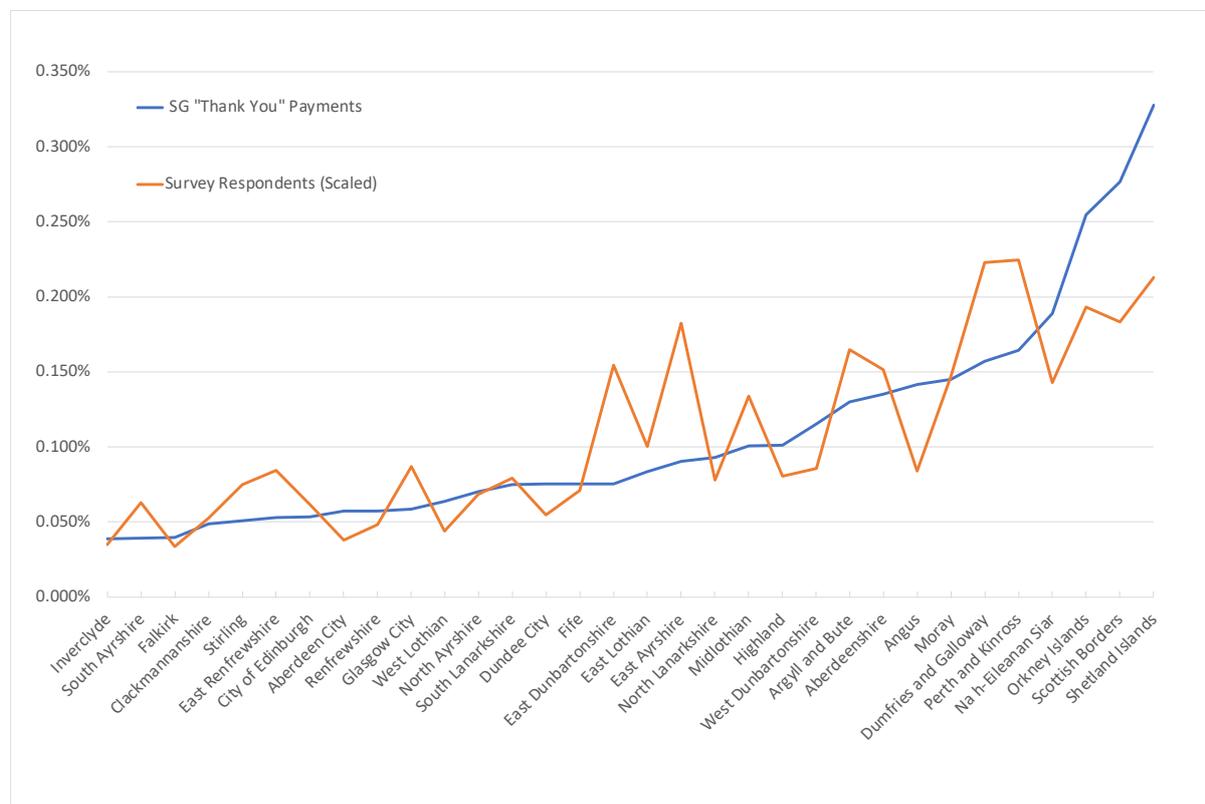
We compared the percentage engagement by Local Authority population of our survey responses with the number of PAs who had received the Scottish Government £500 Thank You Payment[c]. Chart 8 shows a notable variance in the survey respondents with notably more PAs receiving the Thank You Payment per capita in many of the smaller towns and rural areas.

The variance of penetration within Local Authority areas of both the survey and Thank You Payment recipients may not provide the full picture of how evenly PA workforces are distributed in these communities, but it does support the idea that Local Authority area needs could be very different. There are many variables that prevent an assumption that PAs per capita should be uniform and that respondents to both the survey and Thank You Payment[c] are representative of PA numbers in the population, however, a sixfold difference in lowest to highest response ratios of the survey and an eightfold difference in the per capita uptake of the Thank You Payment is striking. This could mean communication, recruitment and/or Self-directed Support campaigns are needed in these areas more so than others for example and this data should be compared with local experiences, PA employer numbers and PA vacancies to get a better picture.

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5. Our survey respondents' experiences of becoming a PA

5.1 How long our survey respondents have worked as a PA

We asked survey respondents, "How many years have you worked as a PA?" Of the 890 respondents who chose to answer this question, the majority (86%) had worked for over 2 years as a PA. Therefore, the experiences and views expressed throughout this survey come from individuals with a significant amount of PA work behind them.

Chart 9: Number of years worked as a PA
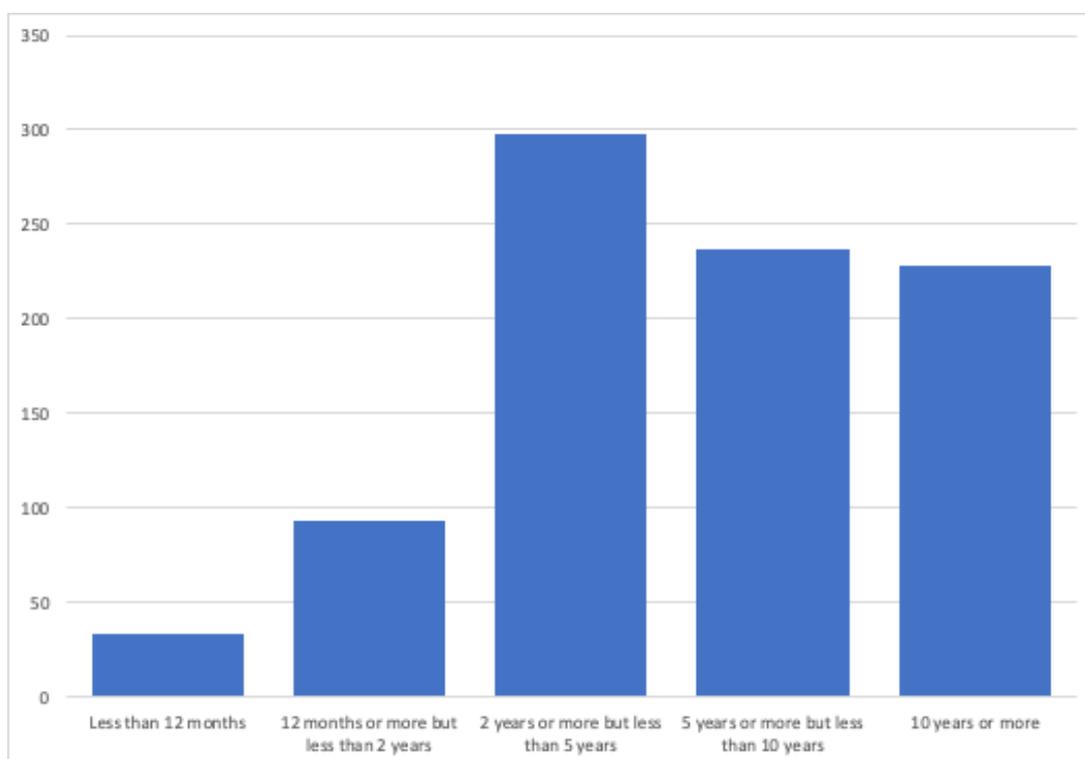
One of the survey recruitment methods was to email a link to PAs who had received the Scottish Government £500 Thank You Payment for work they had carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there is the possibility that those newer to the PA role had less opportunity to find out about the survey and could explain their lower response rates.

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5.2 What survey respondents did before becoming a PA

We asked survey respondents, "What did you do before becoming a PA?" Responses were free text. Of the 824 respondents who chose to answer this question, a word cloud was generated to show the most commonly used words and phrases.

Chart 10: Word cloud of the most common words used by survey respondents when describing previous work

The word cloud indicates that many of our survey responders were not new to supporting roles when they moved to becoming a PA. This suggestion is supported by a study in 2019 by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) of people who had left the SSSC register[h]. Of the 1,001 respondents who completed the survey, just under half (47%) indicated that they were still working in the social service sector, despite leaving the register. This suggests that although they have moved jobs some may continue to work within the social care sector but in a role that do not require registration, such as PA work.

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5.3 How many employers do our survey respondents assist or support

We asked survey respondents, "How many individuals do you assist or support in your role?" Of the 814 respondents who chose to answer this question, nearly three quarters (74%) provided assistance or support to one individual.

Chart 11: How many employers do our survey respondents assist or support
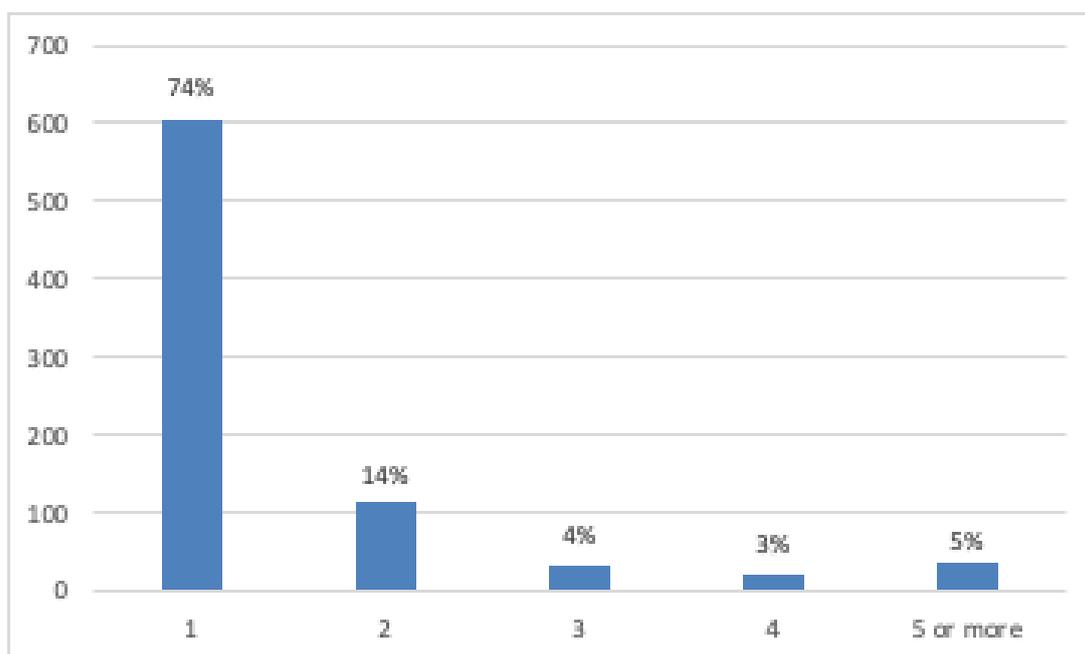
Most of the PAs (89.9%) whose applications were approved for the Scottish Government £500 Thank You Payment said that they only provided assistance or support for one employer (with the average number of employers per PA being 1.14). Of our survey respondents, just over a quarter (26%) worked for more than one PA Employer.

5.4 Who respondents provide PA support to

We asked survey respondents, "Who do you provide PA support for?" Of the 911 respondents who chose to answer this question, the majority (69%) worked with adults aged 16 - 65, while 26% worked with adults aged over 65 years and only 5% with a child or children aged 15 years and under.

Chart 12: Who respondents provide PA support to

Who provide PA support to	Number
A child or children aged 15 years and under	46 (5%)
An adult or adults aged 16 years and over	630 (69%)
An adult or adults over the age of 65 years	235 (26%)
Total	911 (100%)

The Scottish Government £500 Thank You Payment[c] was only made to PAs who provided assistance or support to an adult or adults aged 16 years or older, and therefore, it is unknown how many additional PAs could have been eligible if the Thank You Payment had included PAs working with a child or children aged under 16 years. However, only 5% of our survey respondents provided assistance or support to a child or children under the age of 16 years. It is unclear whether this could be a larger group that we have been unable to engage in the survey and if we need to consider how to reach this group of PAs in future campaigns. For example, could the majority of our respondents come from the population of PAs awarded the Thank You Payment because they received a direct survey invitation link.

6. Survey respondents on continuing working as a PA

6.1 Survey respondents' feelings about continuing their role as a PA

Respondents were asked, "How much do you agree with these statements? a. Not at all b. Unsure c. A little d. A lot"

- I only want to work for the person or people I assist now
- I see myself working as a PA for others in the future
- I want to stop being a PA

For those who chose to answer these questions, a summary of the results is given in the chart below. Overall, nearly two thirds (64%) of survey respondents agree 'a lot' or 'a little' that they only want to work for the person or people they assist now and just over a half (54%) see themselves working as a PA for others in the future. However, it should be noted that many respondents (46%) are post retirement age or approaching retirement age, and therefore, these responses could be influenced by their circumstances and not necessarily the PA role.

The Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2020 Workforce Data indicates a pattern of 20% of registered staff changing their post. There is a rough parallel with our survey data which shows 19.5% of our survey respondents are contemplating stopping being a PA 'a lot' or 'a little' but we don't know how many have acted, or will act, on this.

Chart 13: Responses to "How much do you agree with these statements…?"

Question	Not at all	Unsure	A little	A lot	All
I only want to work for the person or people I assist now	216 (24%)	106 (12%)	131 (14%)	450 (50%)	903
I see myself working as a PA for others in the future	164 (18%)	251 (28%)	217 (24%)	276 (30%)	908
I want to stop being a PA	599 (67%)	121 (13.5%)	121 (13.5%)	55 (6%)	896

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7. Survey respondents PA employment characteristics

7.1 Our survey respondents PA employment status

We asked survey respondents, "In your role as a PA are you: a. an employee (you get a wage slip)? b. self-employed (you do your own tax and NI)? c. doing work through an agency? d. unpaid for some of the work you do?" Respondents could select all that apply. Of the 869 respondents who chose to answer this question, a total of 935 responses were recorded. The majority (85%) of our survey respondents carry out their PA work as an employee.

Chart 14: How respondents are paid for the PA work they do

How paid as a PA	Number
an employee (you get a wage slip)	793 (85%)
self-employed (you do your own tax and NI)	74 (8%)
doing work through an agency	22 (2%)
unpaid for some of the work you do	46 (5%)
Total responses	935 (100%)

7.2 Our survey respondents PA contract type

We asked survey respondents, "What type of contract/s do you have? a. Permanent b. Fixed Term with end date c. Fixed Term without an end date d. Zero hours e. I don't have a contract f. I don't know." Respondents could select all that apply. Of the 778 respondents who chose to answer this question, a total of 810 responses were recorded. The majority (60%) have a permanent contract, 1% have a fixed term without an end date, 8% have a fixed term without an end date, 11% have a zero hours contract, 12% don't have a contract and 8% said they did not know.

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Chart 15: Respondents contract type for the PA work they do

Contract type	Number
Permanent	485 (60%)
Fixed Term with end date	6 (1%)
Fixed Term without an end date	67 (8%)
Zero hours	86 (11%)
I don't have a contract	99 (12%)
I don't know	67 (8%)
Total	810 (100%)

In comparison the Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2020 Workforce Data show 83% (4 out of 5) of the social care workforce holds a permanent contract compared with 3 out of 5 respondents in our survey. Additionally, 1 out of 5 of our respondents either did not have a contract or did not know if they had one. This could suggest that PAs require information and support to ensure that they the understand their employment status and employment rights.

7.3 Our PA survey respondents weekly working hours

We asked survey respondents, "How many hours do you work on average each week as a PA? please don't include anyone you might support unpaid. a. 10 hours or less b. 11-20 hours c. 21-30 hours d. 31-40 hours e. 41-50 hours f. Over 50." Of the 886 respondents who chose to answer this question, just over one third (35%) worked 31 hours or more per week. However, if the survey responses were split by gender, nearly half of our male survey responders worked 31 or more hours per week (47%) compared with just under a third (32%) of female survey responders.

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Chart 16: Respondents weekly working hours by gender

How many hours work per week	Male	Female	All survey responders
10 hours or less	12 (9%)	132 (18%)	146 (16%)
11-20 hours	33 (25%)	198 (26%)	232 (26%)
21-30 hours	24 (19%)	173 (23%)	200 (23%)
31-40 hours	30 (23%)	133 (18%)	166 (19%)
41-50 hours	17 (13%)	56 (7%)	72 (8%)
Over 50 hours	14 (11%)	57 (8%)	70 (8%)
Total	130 (100%)	749 (100%)	886 (100%)

7.4 Our PA survey respondents' rate of pay

7.4.1 Pay rates of employed PA survey responders

We asked survey respondents, "As an employee, what is your average hourly rate of pay? (£ per hour before tax)." Of the 763 respondents who chose to answer this question, the mean rate of pay for PAs who indicated that they were employees was £10.83 (range £8.00 - £19.50). 70% of our employed PA respondents' hourly rate of pay fell within the range of £10.00 - £11.99 per hour.

7.4.2 Pay rates of self-employed PAs survey responders

We asked survey respondents, "As a self-employed PA, what do you charge per hour? (£ per hour before tax)." Of the 66 respondents who chose to answer this question, the mean rate charged per hour by our participants who are self-employed was £13.86 (range £9.30 - £22.00).

57% of our self-employed survey responders indicated they charged £14.00 or more per hour for their work as a PA. Self-employed PAs may earn a higher hourly rate because they will likely be self-funding any annual leave or sick pay as well as paying their own tax and National Insurance. However, only 5% of our employed PA survey respondents had an hourly rate of pay of £14.00 or more, thus, indicating these higher rates of hourly pay for employed PAs to be outliers.

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Chart 17: Distribution of respondents' hourly rates of pay (employee v self-employed)
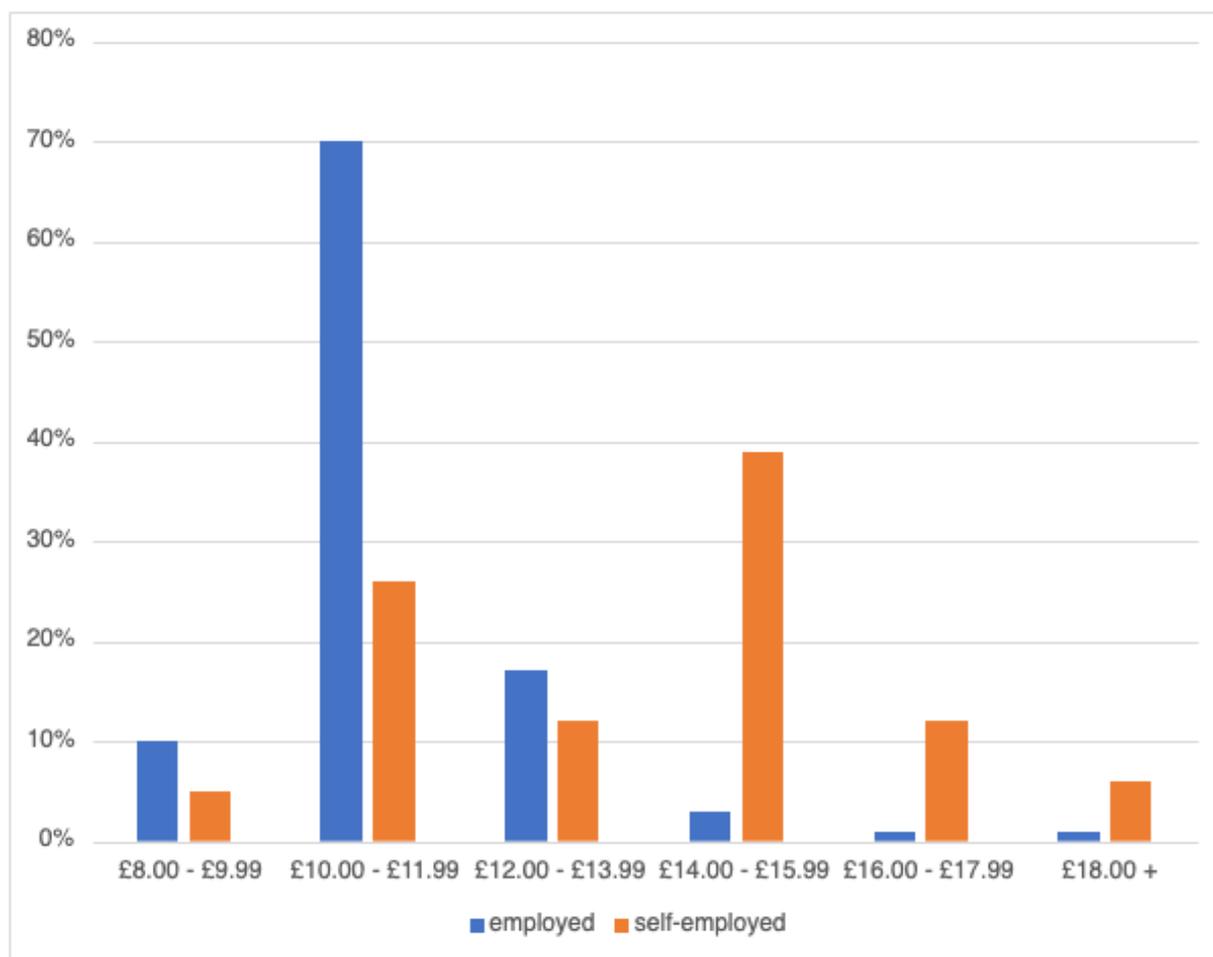
The Individual Employer Pay Scale Report[d] conducted by Sheffield City Council in January 2021 aim was to develop a pay scale to inform the decisions individual employers of PAs in the Sheffield City Council area make about what to pay their PAs. This research investigated current rates of pay of PAs in the Sheffield City Council area. The study found a lower mean hourly rate of pay for PAs in the Sheffield City Council area of £9.95 per hour compared with our study. However, similar to our study they found a wide hourly pay range of £8.10 - £18.92 for daytime PA support. The Individual Employer Pay Scale Report concluded they found "little or no consistency between the pay rates for Personal Assistants in different sectors, or within organisations. Nor are these rates of pay consistently linked to the Personal Assistants roles and responsibilities". We may also need to take in to account that PAs hourly rate of pay may relate to the amount the PA Employer is given in their Direct Payments and this may vary across Local Authority areas.

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8. Survey respondents providing unpaid help or support

8.1 How many PA survey respondents provide unpaid help or support

We asked survey respondents, "Do you look after, or give any unpaid help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others? This could be because of either long-term physical/ mental ill-health/ disability or problems related to old age. Do not count anything you do as part of your PA role or other paid work. a. Yes b. No." Of the 880 respondents who chose to answer this question, nearly half (48%) provided unpaid help or support. If the survey responses are split by gender, the percentage of males (46%) who responded yes to providing unpaid help or support is similar to the percentage of females who responded yes to providing unpaid help or support (48%).

Chart 18: Number of respondents' providing unpaid help or support by gender

Provide unpaid help or support	Male	Female	Total
Yes	60 (46%)	360 (48%)	423 (48%)
No	71 (54%)	384 (52%)	457 (52%)
Total	131 (100%)	744 (100%)	880 (100%)

8.2 Weekly hours of unpaid support provided by our PA survey responders

Of the 423 survey responders who told us they provided unpaid help or support, we asked them, "How much unpaid work do you do a week? a. 10 hours or less b. 11-20 hours c. 21-30 hours d. 31-40 hours e. 41-50 hours f. Over 50 hours" and 419 chose to answer this question. Nearly half (48%) of all responders provided 10 hours or less unpaid help or support per week.

However, the distribution of responses from males on how many hours of unpaid help or support they provided per week showed a similar pattern to females.

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Chart 19: Respondents weekly provision of unpaid help or support by gender

How many hours unpaid support per week	Male	Female	Total
10 hours or less	24 (41%)	176 (50%)	202 (48%)
11-20 hours	18 (31%)	92 (26%)	110 (26%)
21-50 hours	9 (15%)	55 (15%)	65 (16%)
Over 50 hours	8 (13%)	32 (9%)	42 (10%)
Total	59 (100%)	355 (100%)	419 (100%)

The Carers Week 2022 report[i] revealed that one in five adults in the UK (approximately 10.58 million people) give unpaid help or support to family members, friends, neighbours, or others. They define 20 hours or more unpaid help or support per week as significant amounts of care and warn that in the long term this may impact these individuals' abilities to sustain this alongside paid work which in turn may impact on their chances to cope financially.

The Carers Week 2002 report also found 27% of unpaid carers provide significant care (over 20 hours per week). Similarly, just over a quarter (26%) of our survey respondents provide over 20 hours of unpaid help and support per week in addition to their work as a PA.

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9. Survey respondents training, development and support as a PA in the last year

It should be noted that this first Annual PA Workforce Survey was carried out during the month of April 2022, and therefore, some of the responses that our PA survey respondents provide to these questions may be partly attributed to the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and service restrictions related to, for example, lockdowns, shielding, service closures and access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The responses in this section of the survey will be useful to serve as a baseline from which to learn about progress and to inform future recruitment, training and practices involving the PA workforce.

9.1 Survey respondents' feelings about their role as a PA in the last year

Respondents were asked, "For the last year, how much do you agree with these statements…? a. Not at all b. Unsure c. A little d. A lot"

- I have sufficient support to do my job well
- I am confident my ideas and suggestions are listened to
- I trust the person I assist and they trust me
- I feel proud to be a PA
- I have enough training to do my job well
- I have job security
- I love my job

For those who chose to answer these questions, a summary of the results is given in the chart below. Overall, eight out of ten survey respondents agree a lot that they feel proud to be a PA, over three quarters (78%) agree a lot they love their job, and nine out of ten survey respondents agree a lot that they trust the person they assist as a PA and their employer trusts them.

Around half of respondents agreed 'a lot' that they had sufficient support to do their job well (42%), that they were confident their ideas and suggestions were listened to (46%) and they had enough training to do their job well (50%). Importantly, around a quarter of respondents indicated a need for additional or improved training (24%) and support (30%) to do their jobs well by answering 'not at all' or 'unsure' to these statements.

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Chart 20: Responses to "For the last year, how much do you agree with these statements…?"

Question	Not at all	Unsure	A little	A lot	All
I have sufficient support to do my job well	174 (19%)	98 (11%)	256 (28%)	383 (42%)	911
I am confident my ideas and suggestions are listened to	138 (15%)	111 (12%)	244 (27%)	413 (46%)	906
I trust the person I assist and they trust me	9 (1%)	15 (2%)	46 (5%)	830 (92%)	900
I feel proud to be a PA	29 (3%)	29 (3%)	121 (14%)	705 (80%)	884
I have enough training to do my job well	127 (14%)	93 (10%)	236 (26%)	457 (50%)	913
I have job security	176 (19%)	142 (16%)	247 (27%)	345 (38%)	910
I love my job	18 (2%)	25 (3%)	150 (17%)	704 (78%)	897

Only two in five respondents (38%) agreed 'a lot' that they have job security. We compared the responses with the subset of the 485 survey responders who said they had a permanent contract in their role as a PA to see if this may have an influence on response agreements. There was significantly higher agreement with the statement 'I have job security' for the subset of responders with a permanent contract and significantly higher disagreement with the statement for those without, indicating this may offer some perception of job security. However, we do not know if job security is something that is a concern for all our survey responders, for example, almost half (46%) of our survey responders are aged between 55–78 years or old indicating they are approaching retirement age or are post retirement age.

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Chart 21: Comparison of responders who have a contract versus those who don't to the statement, "I have job security"
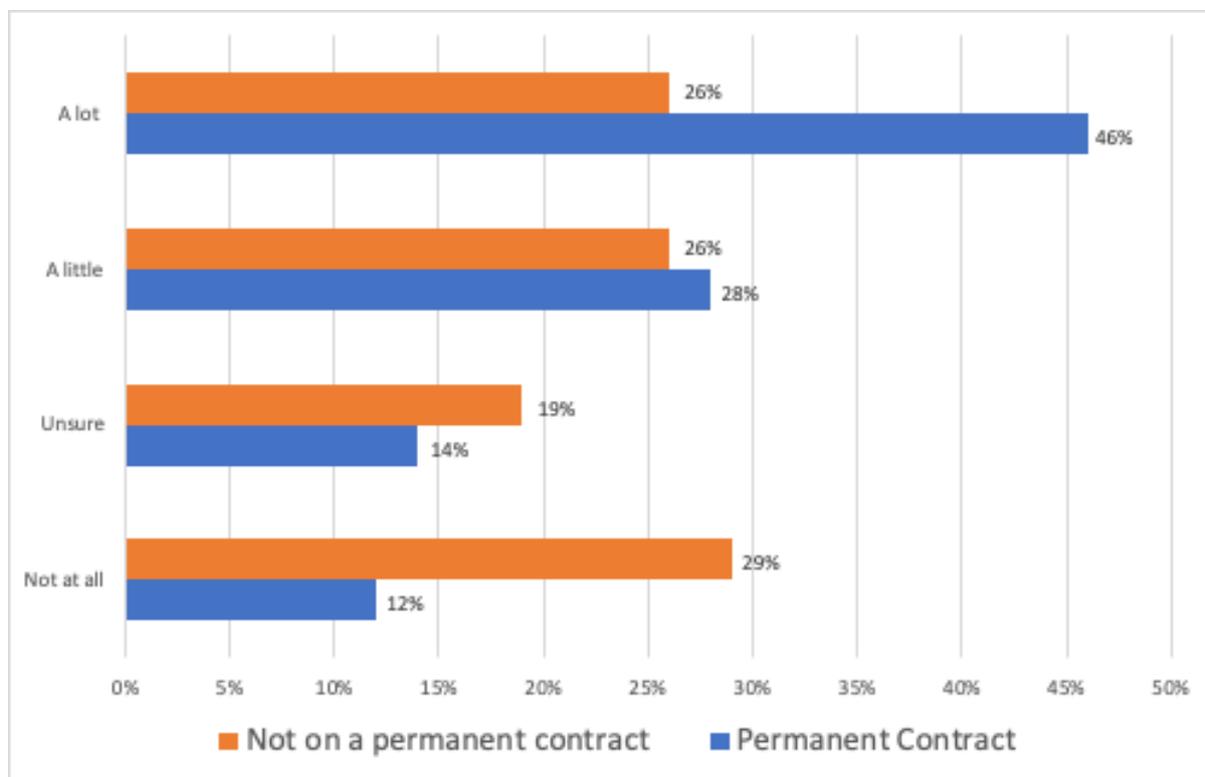
9.2 Do survey respondents' feel the role of the PA is better valued and recognised in the last year

We asked survey respondents, "Over the past year, do you feel your role as a PA is better recognised and valued as part of the workforce? a. Yes b. No c. Don't Know". Of the 916 respondents who chose to answer this question, nearly two thirds (63%) responded 'no' or 'don't know'. It is unclear how respondents interpreted this question and if responders felt their role was better recognised and valued over a year ago or if responders already feel that their role was already valued and recognised, and they had seen no change in the past year. It will be useful to compare this question year on year and in response to future support to the PA workforce.

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Chart 22: Survey respondents' feelings about the value and recognition of the PA role in the last year
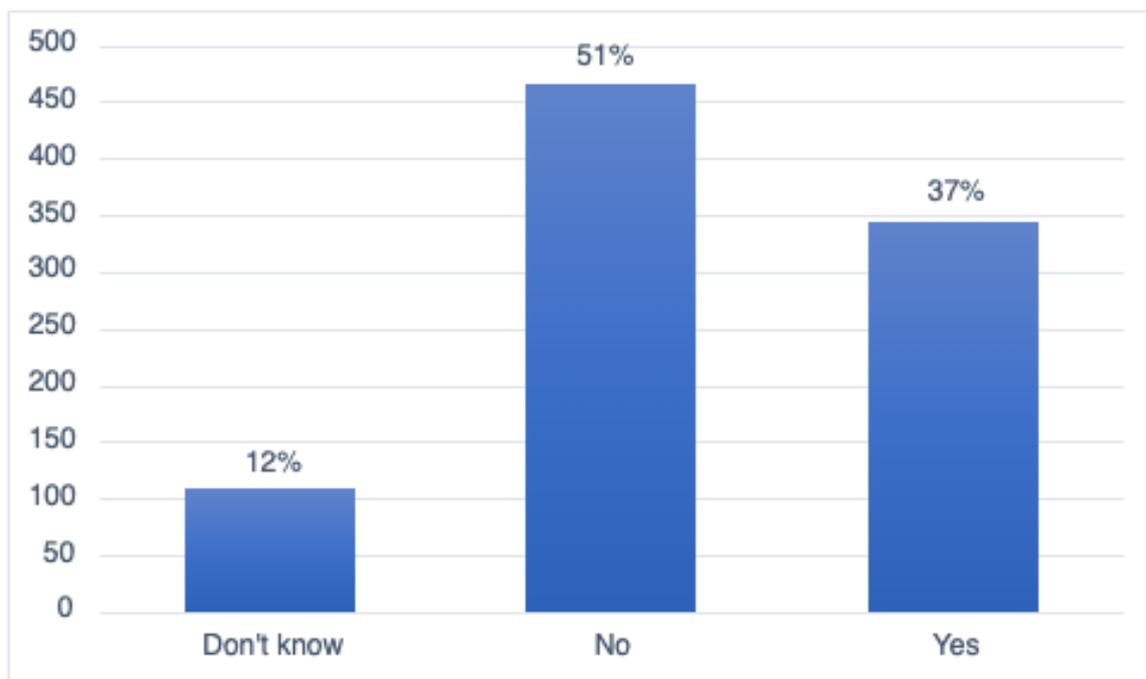
9.3 Have survey respondents had training in the role of PA

9.3.1 Training in the last year

We asked survey respondents, "Have you had any training in the last year? (To support you in your role as a PA) a. Yes b. No." Of the 888 respondents who chose to answer this question eight out of ten responders responded 'no'. However, it is unclear whether other factors need to be considered. For example, the majority of our survey respondents (86%) have been in the PA role for 2 or more years and therefore, it could be that they or their employer think they do need any more training. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have affected training opportunities over the past year.

9.3.1 Training prior to last year

We asked survey respondents, "Did you have any training for your PA role before last year? a. Yes b. No" Of the 883 respondents who chose to answer this question six out of ten responders responded 'no'. This shows that more of our survey respondents had accessed training in the role of a PA earlier than in the last year and could possibly indicate the COVID-19 pandemic had affected training opportunities over the past year. Therefore, it will be

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useful to monitor if there are any changes in the numbers receiving training year on year going forward as we move out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chart 23: Have survey respondents had training in the last year compared to earlier than last year before in support of their role as a PA

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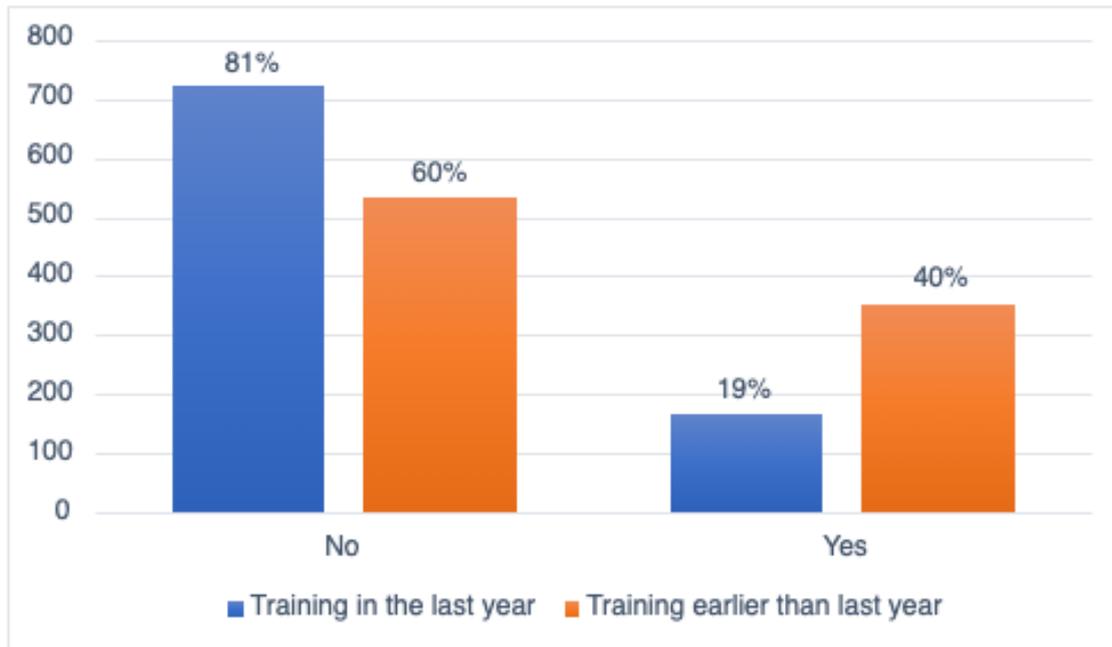
9.4 Training opportunities accessed by survey respondents

Chart 24: Type of training undertaken by survey respondents in the last year compared to earlier than last year in support of the role as a PA

Type of Training	Accessed in the last year	Accessed earlier than last year
A specific induction into your role	24 (5%)	82 (7%)
Moving and assisting/handling	88 (17%)	219 (18%)
Data protection training	41 (8%)	93 (8%)
SSSC Open badges	9 (2%)	17 (1%)
First Aid	62 (12%)	176 (15%)
Disability Equality/ Awareness training	33 (6%)	94 (8%)
Challenging Behaviour/ Positive Behaviour Support	42 (8%)	93 (8%)
Communicating Effectively	18 (3%)	38 (3%)
Dementia Care	21 (4%)	49 (4%)
Epilepsy	30 (6%)	52 (4%)
Food Hygiene	37 (7%)	70 (6%)
Health & Safety	34 (6%)	54 (5%)
Infection Control	17 (3%)	27 (2%)
Person Centred Care	10 (2%)	30 (3%)
Principles of Care and Confidentiality	8 (2%)	14 (1%)
Safe Administration of Medicine/ Medication Support	17 (3%)	37 (3%)
Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults	17 (3%)	32 (3%)
Safeguarding of Children	<5 (1%)	7 (<1%)
Other	13 (2%)	15 (1%)
Total	525 (100%)	1199 (100%)

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9.4.1 Types of training accessed in the last year

We asked survey responders who responded, 'yes' to having received training in the last year in their role as a PA, "What training in the last year?" Respondents could select as many responses as possible that applied. Of the 165 respondents who chose to answer this question, a total of 525 responses (types of training) were selected. Of the training receiving in the past year, we found the most common types of training among survey responders to be moving and assisting/handling (17%) and First Aid (12%).

Almost one fifth (32/165; 19%) of the respondents who indicated they had received training in the past year have been working as a PA for less than two years. Furthermore, as previously indicated, 127 of our survey respondents told us they had been working as a PA for less than 2 years. This shows that only a quarter (25%; 32/127) of new PAs (working for under 2 years as a PA) have received any training in the past year, pointing to a gap in formal training of new PAs. However, of our new PA respondents who have accessed training in the past year, just over one third (34%; 11/32) had done four or more different types of training.

Similarly, of the remaining respondents to this question who have been working as a PA for 2 or more years and answered 'yes' to receiving training in the past year, just over two fifths (42%; 56/133) had accessed four or more different types of training.

9.4.2 Types of training accessed earlier than last year

We asked survey responders who responded, 'yes' to having received training earlier than last year in their role as a PA, "What training earlier than last year?" Respondents could select as many responses as possible that applied. Of the 345 respondents who chose to answer this question, a total of 1199 responses (types of training) were selected.

The training accessed earlier than last year mirrored the trend of training access in the last year in terms of the most common types, namely moving and assisting/handling (18%) and First Aid (15%). A significant pattern is also displayed in the chart. The numbers of PAs receiving training fell across all types of training in the last year. There may be a few factors at play here. COVID-19 lockdowns have in recent times curtailed many training opportunities and this could have impacted upon the survey respondent's experiences. Also, some types of training do not require annual renewal. However, this annual PA survey provides a useful opportunity to monitor the training undertaken by PAs in the years ahead and can review whether a trend is apparent in relation to a steady rolling number of PAs renewing training and if new PAs are undergoing inductions.

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9.5 How survey respondents PA training opportunities are funded

We asked survey responders, "How were costs for any training in the last year met? a. My employer funded b. My Health and Social Care Partnership provided c. I funded it myself d. Other." Respondents could select all responses that applied. Of the 560 respondents who chose to answer this question, a total of 585 responses (funding sources) were selected. The majority of respondents (55%) had their training costs funded by their employer or the Health and Social Care Partnership. However, almost half (45%) funding their own training or 'other' and this raises questions around who has responsibility for ensuring that PAs undertake training.

Chart 25: Funding sources used by respondents to meet training costs

How costs for training met in last year	Number
My employer funded	254 (43%)
My Health and Social Care Partnership provided	69 (12%)
I funded it myself	93 (16%)
Other	169 (29%)
Total	585 (100%)

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10. What do respondents like most about their PA role

We asked survey respondents, "What do you like most about being a Personal Assistant?" This was a free text answer. Overall, 867 respondents chose to write a free text answer to this question, and these responses reveal relatively high levels of job satisfaction. A number of key themes emerged, including, relational motivation, enabling independent living, job satisfaction, flexibility, contributing to local community, the challenge and 'other' which appear to explain these sources of job satisfaction. We've presented these as themes that emerged most strongly and themes that were less so but gave us some insights.

Strongly represented themes

10.1 Relational Motivation

Survey respondents indicated the strong importance of building positive relationships with employers, inclusive of their own companionship and existing family relationships at one end through to the social inclusion of the employer within wider society at the other. Factors such as mutual trust and respect and building a bond with their employers (and their families) and supporting the social inclusion of their employer through person centred care were associated with what respondents liked most about their PA role:

'Making a difference in people's lives'

'Being able to provide person centred care'

'Building positive relationships with families that I support'

'Knowing that what I do makes a small difference to their lives'

'The care and attention I can provide to that one individual, building up a close relationship with them based on empathy respect and dignity where they are comfortable with me which gives me a sense of satisfaction as well as building up a relationship of trust with the family also is very important'

'Being there for the person and he knows his team doesn't change'

'The personal one to one interaction and relationship building'

'Direct employment by the person needing care. Opportunity to build real long-term relationship with that person'

'Best job I've ever had. Pay is rubbish but the biggest reward is the difference I have made to my employer's life. I get a huge amount of satisfaction on a daily basis'

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10.2 Enabling Independent Living

Survey respondents highlighted the importance and uniqueness of the PA role and the sense of achievement felt as they contribute towards providing the means for enabling independent living, such as through increasing employers' confidence, choice and control over their lives:

'Meeting the needs of the people I look after and different people in the community.'

'Love looking after others with learning disabilities caring for community'

'Helping people to live as normal a life as possible.'

'Helping People to live a normal and full life.'

'Watching the client gain confidence and teaching them tasks to become more independent.'

10.3 Job Satisfaction

Survey respondents told us about their positive experiences in relation to enjoying their role as a PA, such as it being intrinsically rewarding, feeling valued and being employed directly by the person they are providing support and assistance to and how this shaped their job satisfaction:

'The satisfaction of helping my client'

'Doing a job I love but without the demands of working for a large organisation'

'Personal touch. Giving truly individual care is satisfying'

'I get thanked every day for my assistance'

'It's hugely rewarding because I feel I really make a difference to the life of the person I support, whilst simultaneously learning from him about patience, resilience and positivity'

'Very rewarding but not financially'

'Satisfaction being able to assist them and make their day a good day'

'I prefer working directly for my employer with no company involved'

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10.4 Flexibility

The survey responses indicated that respondents and employers both benefit from the varying forms of flexible working arrangements of the PA role. This allows flexibility to build a tailor-made package of support around the employer's support needs while also offering working patterns that fit with the other commitments of the PA. Flexible working practices include, flexible working hours (that suit both the employers support needs and the PAs) and the ability to work in creative and person-centred ways:

'Flexible working, hours and tasks discussed and agreed with employer. A steady position. Income regular. All of this allowing a successful caring role'

'I enjoy being a personal assistant as I can give all my time to the client that is most person centred'

'I pick my own hours'

'The shift pattern'

'It's flexible as I have a full-time job and also study'

'The hours are amazing around my lifestyle. My clients and his family are incredible with us. Can adhere to my annual leave even when short notice. My client is a happy go lucky guy who is a joy to look after'

'Providing flexible, tailored support to an individual enabling her to attain independence and social inclusion'

'Both parties being flexible and in direct contact and communication on how the service is run to suit the people involved'

'Flexibility enabling service users to be empowered and decide who where and when they will be supported. Not bound by organisational structures'

'Working directly with the person so that their needs can be met rather than what suits a management rota etc. I enjoy assisting people to live their best life rather than with restraints put upon you by being in a very large team and having to work to company policies'

'Free of constraints imposed by working for a company or organisation. Allows me to apply common sense and a person-centred approach to provide the best support to my client'

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Other themes

10.5 Contributing to Local Community

Having the opportunity to give back to the community was also referred to by survey respondents as something they liked about their role as a PA, indicating the PA role aligns with worker's values:

'I feel like I'm giving back something to the village I live in.'

'Being out and about in the community making a difference'

'Learning loads from the people I work for, about how to conduct myself with themselves, and transferring the knowledge and skills into the wider world'

10.6 The challenge

Survey respondents indicated that the variety of tasks and skills (and skills development) required were positively related to what PAs liked about their PA role:

'The challenge of finding ways to help the person I support achieve their aims and wishes'

'The challenge of cooking for someone who has many food allergies'

'Everyday can be different and seeing the progression and enjoyment in supporting my niece to enjoy independence'

'Enjoy caring and assisting them with everyday tasks. They are so happy it's a joy to go to work'

10.7 Other

There were some additional responses that did not fit with the above themes, including less bureaucracy, location, income reward and necessity:

'I enjoy the autonomy of the one-to-one relationship and not being bound by meaningless role related box ticking paperwork'

'Dealing with one person and not having to drive over city'

'Being financially rewarded for assisting in a caring capacity and being helpful to those in need'

'I have no choice I am carer for my husband care is very limited'

10.8 Employer Agency

There is a slight concern from language use found occasionally across all thematic categories, that the employer's agency over the PA role for some could be undermined unintentionally or the PA is potentially confused about the role. For example, use of infantilising language, prevalence of the term 'clients' or an indication the employer's needs might appear secondary in some cases:

'Binging a smile to those we care for'

'Helping the needy'

'Giving something back to community'

'Watching individuals grow into confident members of society'

'I am respected by the wonderful legal guardian I am employed by'

'I like to make a difference in the persons life, without me they would not cope'

'Being able to help someone who gets little or no support from the services who should be looking after her!'

'I find it very rewarding to put a smile on my clients face making them feel a part of life and not an outcast.'

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11. Key messages

1. Survey responders are a largely homogenous group (white, female, few under 25 years of age). Different approaches are likely to be needed to promote the role of the PA to improve the diversity of the PA workforce in Scotland.
2. The survey results clearly show the importance to PAs of building long term positive relationships with employers. This is an important component and should be taken into account in:
   a. workforce recruitment campaigns
   b. PA development approaches
3. Unpaid care delivery is a significant component of the lives of nearly half the PA workforce. A better understanding of why there is so much unpaid care is needed.
4. PA vocational development needs flexibility and support to accommodate commitments like unpaid care.
5. The perception of job security could be improved with a combination of employer focussed training and improved access to basic information about responsibilities such as the provision of contracts.
6. There is a need for the development of (and access to) relevant training for PAs and information about who should be responsible for funding it (PA Employers or Health and Social Care Partnerships for example).
7. Better access to a range of support for PAs such as training and peer networks would clearly benefit many PAs, however the benefits, the rights and responsibilities around development need to be communicated to their employers also.
8. Local Authority areas may need different priority or approaches for communication with PAs based on high variance in survey and SG Thank You payment response rates. Work could explore how this data compares with the local experiences and demand for PAs.
9. While few in number, some PAs indicated they have no choice in undertaking the role. A better understanding of the reasons why this occurs and routes to support specific to their needs could mitigate the impact on PAs who feel negatively about this. Choice and control in undertaking the work should be a principle that underpins the role as much as it should be for the employer.
10. This survey is evidence of a PA community that is motivated to help deliver their employer's "aims and wishes" with many referencing "independence" and using terms like "person-centred" approaches. However, many people used language that could be disempowering for the employer and PA training about the role should include its relationship to Independent Living and support the agency of the PA employer.
11. Future Annual PA Workforce Survey campaigns should consider different approaches to engage harder to reach PAs.
12. The PA Programme Board intends to explore these key messages and emerging themes identified and use them to inform ongoing work.

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