

## The PhD Study

 In the UK, social workers are often employed by the local authority, but work into National Health Service hospitals

 This study looked at the factors that impact on social work practice in these settings

 Interaction between structures (legislation, policy, funding, organisations) and individual agency (on the part of social workers and teams)

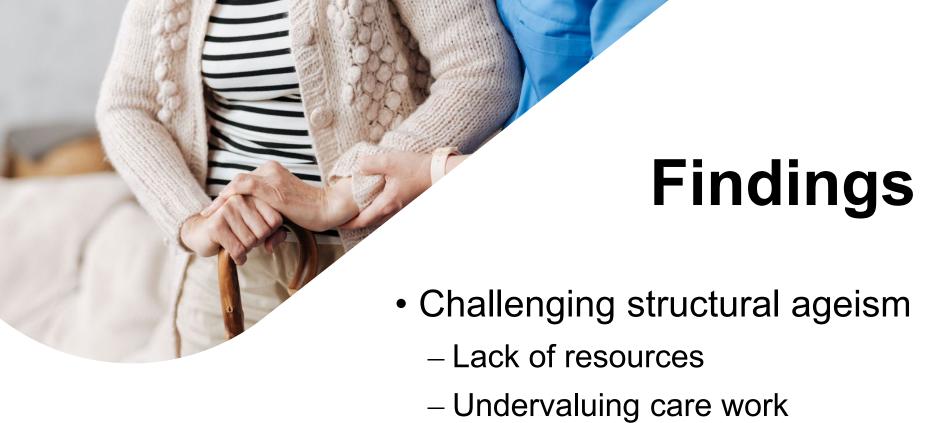
Freedom of Information requests, interviews (n = 15)
and online surveys (n = 93)



## Ageism

- Prejudice, discrimination, and less favourable treatment, based on a person's age (Butler, 1969)
- Usually directed at older people
- Can include patronising treatment, as well as hostile attitudes (Cuddy et al, 2005)
- In Europe, 'older people' are most often perceived as sick, vulnerable, frail, and seen as a 'social problem' (e.g. Katz, 2014; Duffy, 2017; Grenier, 2020)





- Safety > Freedom



- Expressions of ageism
  - Language
  - Assumptions about technological competence
  - Self-neglect
  - 'Us and Them'

## Implications for Practice

• Social workers need to be reflexive and question their assumptions

• Develop conscious awareness of the context in which they work

• Ally with critical gerontology (Moody & Sasser, 2021; Torres & Donnelly, 2022) and Care Ethics (Tronto, 1993; 2013)



## References and Further Reading

- This presentation derives from an article currently under review in the European Journal of Social Work
- See also; Phillips, C., Deacon, L. & Burrows, D. (2024) Social Work in NHS Hospitals: Opportunities and Challenges. Birmingham: BASW
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- Duffy F (2017) 'A social work perspective on how ageist language, discourses and understandings negatively frame older people and why taking a critical social work stance is essential', *British Journal of Social Work*, 47(7): 2068–2085.
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