**Chapter 2**

**Literature Review**

**2.1 Introduction**

This chapter identifies and summarises academic and policy literature relevant to the thesis. Literature regarding a) access to social care, b) health and social care interaction and c) multimorbidity is presented. As the main research is conducted with Scottish data, there is appropriate focus in the structures and policies regarding health and social care in this country. However, this is placed in the wider context of the UK and developed world.

The chapter is organised in three parts following the main themes listed above. Section [2.2](#page16) focuses on social care from a number of perspectives; varying definitions of the term, diﬀering international models, social theory of eligibility and resource allocation, and finally the impact on health inequalities.

Section [2.3](#page38) outlines the policy framework regarding health and social care services, how these services are funded and delivered, and why they are linked. It then describes the legislation that made health and social care integration law in Scotland before reviewing empirical evidence of the nature of the interaction between health and social care services.

Section [2.4](#page44) describes why multimorbidity is important in the context of health and social care integration and then provides an overview of academic literature and policy documents regarding multimorbidity and its definitions, measurement, and epidemiology.

5

Chapter 2. Literature Review

**2.2 Access to Social Care**

**2.2.1 Definitions**

As in the case of multimorbidity, discussed in section [2.4.2](#page45), there is no internationally (or nationally) accepted definition of social care. Indeed, the diﬀerence between what is social care and what is health care has no clear line of demarcation resulting in local variation in provision of services [[McDonald](#page98), [2006](#page98)]. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU) jointly published a report on Long Term Care (LTC) for older people discussing much of what may be described in the UK as social care. In the report, LTC is defined as,

"... a range of services required by persons with a reduced degree of functional capacity, physical or cognitive, and who are consequently dependent for an extended period of time on help with basic activities of daily living (ADL). This "personal care" component is frequently provided in combination with help with basic medical services such as "nursing care" (wound dressing, pain management, medication, health monitoring), as well as prevention, rehabilitation or palliative care. Long-term care services can also be combined with lower level care related to “domestic help” or help with instrumental activities of daily living (IADL)."

[[OECD/EU](#page99), [2013](#page99), pp38]

A recent NICE guideline [[2015](#page99)] addressing social care needs for older people with multiple chronic conditions used a definition provided in the UK Health and Social Care Act [[2012](#page93)]:-

““Adult social care”— (a) includes all forms of personal care and other practical assistance provided for individuals who, by reason of age, illness, disability, pregnancy, childbirth, dependence on alcohol or drugs, or any other similar circumstances, are in need of such care or other assistance, but

1. does not include anything provided by an establishment or agency for which Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills is the registration authority under section 5 of the Care Standards Act 2000.” (The Health and Social Care Act 2012 c7, Part 3, Chapter 1, Section 65, Subsection 4)

6

Chapter 2. Literature Review

The NICE guideline [[2015](#page99)] advises that social care planning for people with multimor-bidity should include holistic assessment of biopsychosocial factors including sexual, spiritual, cultural, and communication needs. It should also consider access to leisure and social activities whilst incorporating issues regarding mobility and transport. Specif-ically, the guideline cites; self-care, taking medicines, learning, volunteering, maintaining a home, financial management, employment, socialising with friends and hobbies as activities that all patients should be able to take part in should they wish to and social care assessment should assess the ability of the individual to achieve this.

A more succinct definition of social care is used in a report to the Minister for Care Services at the UK Department of Health, :-

"The group of services that provide personal care and support to people in social situations – such as family; the community; a communal setting; to help them achieve independence and to promote their positive contribution as citizens." Platt

[[2007](#page100), pp. 4]

Huxley et al. [[2007](#page94)] are critical of this service-based definition and argue that social care is intended to improve general well-being for those that are in need. As quality of life is an important factor of well-being, Huxley et al. [[2007](#page94)] argue that wider issues regarding environment and the quality of public and private services also play an important role in social care. Indeed, Daly and Lewis [[2000](#page89), pp.287] argue that social care is “. . . an activity and set of relations lying at the intersection of state, market, family (and voluntary sector) relations.”

This view is reflected in an aspirational constitution for social care published by an independent, cross-party think-tank [[Bartlett and Guglielmi](#page87), [2009](#page87)]. The authors argue that all citizens should have an equal ability to live and control a full and active life. Where this is not possible the state should have a duty to provide the necessary help, in whatever form that is required, to individuals who require it.

A more clearly defined concept is that of *personal care* which has been provided for free in Scotland since 2002. The legislation introduced by the then Scottish Executive necessitated a clear definition and constitutes six dimensions [[Cavaye](#page88), [2006](#page88), pp.256].

* personal hygiene: washing etc.
* personal assistance: help with dressings, prostheses etc.

7

Chapter 2. Literature Review

* continence management: toileting, catheter management etc.
* food and diet: help with eating, food preparation etc.
* problems of immobility:
* simple treatments: help with medicines, creams, oxygen therapy etc.

Personal care is, however, only one aspect of social care provision and clear definitions of other services provided to individuals are lacking. Nevertheless, the definitions of social (or long-term) care above all highlight services that are required to aid with an individual’s functional or cognitive needs.

A final definition provided by Colombo et al[[2011](#page89)] will be used for the purposes of this thesis:-

1. a group of services such as; skilled nursing care, social work, personal care, medical equipment & technologies, and therapies. Delivered by,
2. a range of professionals such as; nurses, low-skilled carers, or allied health profes-sionals. In,
3. various locations such as; at home, in an institution, or via community care.

This definition clearly captures the broad range of services that can be associated with social care that are only partially provided in other definitions. It acknowledges that social care can include a number of components including personal, nursing care and help with other domestic activities, and articulates the variety of settings where this can take place. Whilst it is common in Europe to describe “Long-term care” in relation to these services, this thesis will refer to “social care” as this is the most commonly used term in the UK. Furthermore, unless stated otherwise, reference to social care in this thesis will be with regard to care received by adults over the age of 65.

**2.2.2 International models of social care**

There are four ways in which social care can be provided to those in need; informally via family or community, formally via voluntary non-profit organisations, formally via the state, or formally via for-profit organisations [[Munday](#page99), [2003](#page99)]. In Europe, increasing demand from users has led to many welfare systems being unable to adequately provide care [[Pavolini and Ranci](#page100), [2008](#page100), [Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89)]. Changes in demography, the labour market, democracy, and values have all contributed to the increasing pressure

8

Chapter 2. Literature Review

on care services [[OECD/EU](#page99), [2013](#page99), [Anttonen](#page85), [2005](#page85), [Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89)]. There is wide consensus that lower birth rates and higher proportions of older people mean that a gap has emerged in the number of adult children able to provide informal care to their parents [[Anttonen](#page85), [2005](#page85), [Deusdad et al.](#page89), [2016](#page89), [Pavolini and Ranci](#page100), [2008](#page100), [Munday](#page99), [2003](#page99), [Robertson et al.](#page101), [2014](#page101), [Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89)]. Traditionally, informal care was provided by women. As gender equality improves, more women are employed outwith domestic circumstances which also reduces the pool of informal social care available [[Anttonen](#page85), [2005](#page85)]. Anttonen [[2005](#page85)] also cites changes in societal attitudes from “familism” to “individualism” as having an impact on informal care resources. These combined factors mean that formal care services are increasingly required to provide social care. Pressures on these services has seen increased discussion and comparison of models of care across Europe over the last 20 years [[Anttonen and Sipilä](#page85), [1996](#page85), [Fernández-Alonso](#page91) [and Jaime-Castillo](#page91), [2016](#page91), [Munday](#page99), [2003](#page99), [Sapir](#page102), [2006](#page102)].

In a report for the OECD, Colombo et al [[2011](#page89)] categorised the varying models of social care into three main groups with subdivisions as shown in Table [2.1](#page19).

Table 2.1: Models of social care in OECD countries adapted from Colombo et al (2011)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Model** | **Countries where employed** | |
|  |  |  |
| **Universal coverage** |  |  |
| a) tax based | Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland | |
| b) public long-term insurance | Germany, Japan, South Korea, Netherlands, Luxembourg | |
| c) health system | Belgium | |
| **Mixed systems** |  |  |
| a) parallel universal schemes | Scotland, Italy, Czech Republic, Poland | |
| b) income-related universal benefit or subsidy | Ireland, Australia, Austria, France | |
| c) mix of universal and means-tested (or no) benefit | Switzerland, New Zealand, some Canadian Provinces, Spain, and Greece1 | |
| **Means-tested safety net** | England, USA | |

* Spain and Greece have less well developed formal care services

Universal models of social care are characterised by; a) a single system being in place for delivery of services, b) nursing *and* personal care are provided for all individuals meeting defined eligibility criteria, and c) some form of charge is levied on service-users [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89)]. Three subdivisions of universal coverage social care models are identified in this classification.

The tax-based universal models, also known as the Nordic model of care, have strong local-government influence in both the raising of funds and delivery of services [[Colombo](#page89) [et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89), [Fernández-Alonso and Jaime-Castillo](#page91), [2016](#page91), [Munday](#page99), [2003](#page99), [Sapir](#page102), [2006](#page102)]. Overall responsibility remains with national government which also contributes funds,

9

Chapter 2. Literature Review

often dependent on local population need and structure [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89)]. Public long-term insurance schemes are mandatory in the countries that employ them, although the age at which citizens begin to contribute varies (e.g. only over 40s contribute in Japan) [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89), [Forder and Fernández](#page91), [2011](#page91), [Eleftheriades and Wittenberg](#page90), [2013](#page90)]. These models have found it increasingly diﬃcult to fund provision and have either increased user-payments or decreased coverage in recent years [[Robertson et al.](#page101), [2014](#page101), [Forder and Fernández](#page91), [2011](#page91), [Eleftheriades and Wittenberg](#page90), [2013](#page90)]. In Belgium, social care is viewed as a health risk and is financed through the health system with a cap on user-contribution. This results in a medical (rather than social) model of care delivery, mostly provided by nurses [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89)].

In contrast to universal models described above where a single system is in place for social care delivery, mixed social care systems employ either; a) universal coverage via diﬀerent sources/sectors or b) a mixture of universal and means-tested benefits [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89)]. Whilst acknowledging the wide variation in systems, Colombo et al [[2011](#page89)] identify three subdivisions of mixed system models of social care as shown in table [2.1](#page19).

Parallel universal schemes provide social care via two or more sectors (e.g. nursing care via health provider and personal care from a non-healthcare source) [[Colombo](#page89) [et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89)]. Major diﬀerences exist between countries in how this is delivered in practice with varying degrees of coverage. Income related universal benefits provide needs-based universal coverage of social care but benefits received vary according to income [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89)]. France provides a good example of this system where cash benefits are need *and* income based - benefits are paid at six levels of dependency, those with higher incomes are paid proportionally less and top-up care costs themselves [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89), [Glendinning and Bell](#page92), [2008](#page92)]. The final subdivision of mixed social care models has some universal entitlements provided alongside means-tested services e.g. free provision of nursing care with means-testing for personal care.

Colombo et al [[2011](#page89)] include Spain and Greece in this final subdivision of mixed social care models but note these countries have formal care systems that are much less developed than elsewhere in the OECD. Sometimes referred to as the Mediterranean model, informal care from family and other sources constitutes the main form of social care in these countries [[Fernández-Alonso and Jaime-Castillo](#page91), [2016](#page91), [Munday](#page99), [2003](#page99), [Sapir](#page102), [2006](#page102)]. As this role is traditionally carried out by women, the Mediterranean

10

Chapter 2. Literature Review

model has attracted criticism from a feminist perspective [[Munday](#page99), [2003](#page99)].

The final model in Colombo et al’s [[2011](#page89)] classification of social care in OECD countries is the means-tested safety net model (Table [2.1](#page19)). In this model only those below a pre-determined threshold are entitled to state-provided social care. Despite the free provision of health care and some non-means-tested benefits, England is included in this category in the report. Presumably this is due to the fact that state support in a residential home in England is provided only after an individual has depleted both income *and* assets below a threshold [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89)], a system not seen in other countries 1 [[Glendinning and Bell](#page92), [2008](#page92)].

Of the three models of social care described in this section, universal systems have a number of advantages over the other two [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89), [Glendinning and Bell](#page92), [2008](#page92)]. Sharing the burden of social care provision among the entire population, either via general taxation or mandatory insurance schemes, results in a reliable, predictable source of finance enabling states to plan more eﬀectively [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89), [Glendinning](#page92) [and Bell](#page92), [2008](#page92), [Forder and Fernández](#page91), [2011](#page91)]. Mixed systems of social care can still result in considerable costs for those that require care, whereas the costs to individuals in the means-tested system can be “catastrophic” [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89), pp240]. The means-tested system can also be perceived as unfair for those that need to sell assets (such as a house) to pay for care, particularly when there is variation in eligibility criteria within countries [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89), [Glendinning and Bell](#page92), [2008](#page92), [Charlesworth and](#page88) [Thorlby](#page88), [2012](#page88), [Eleftheriades and Wittenberg](#page90), [2013](#page90), [Forder and Fernández](#page91), [2011](#page91)]. A particular advantage of a universal social care system is that it,

"...generally reduces utilisation of more expensive health care services and professionals (e.g. hospital care, doctors) for long-term care needs, for example by making "social hospitalisation" of frail people with [social care] needs more diﬃcult."

[[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89), pp.222]

Given the pressures on state budgets and the desire to adequately fund care services, this seems a particularly useful benefit of the universal coverage model of social care.

Disadvantages of universal systems are that they are generally more expensive to

1A cap of approximately £72,000 total contribution was to be introduced in 2016 (Eleftheriades et al., 2013)

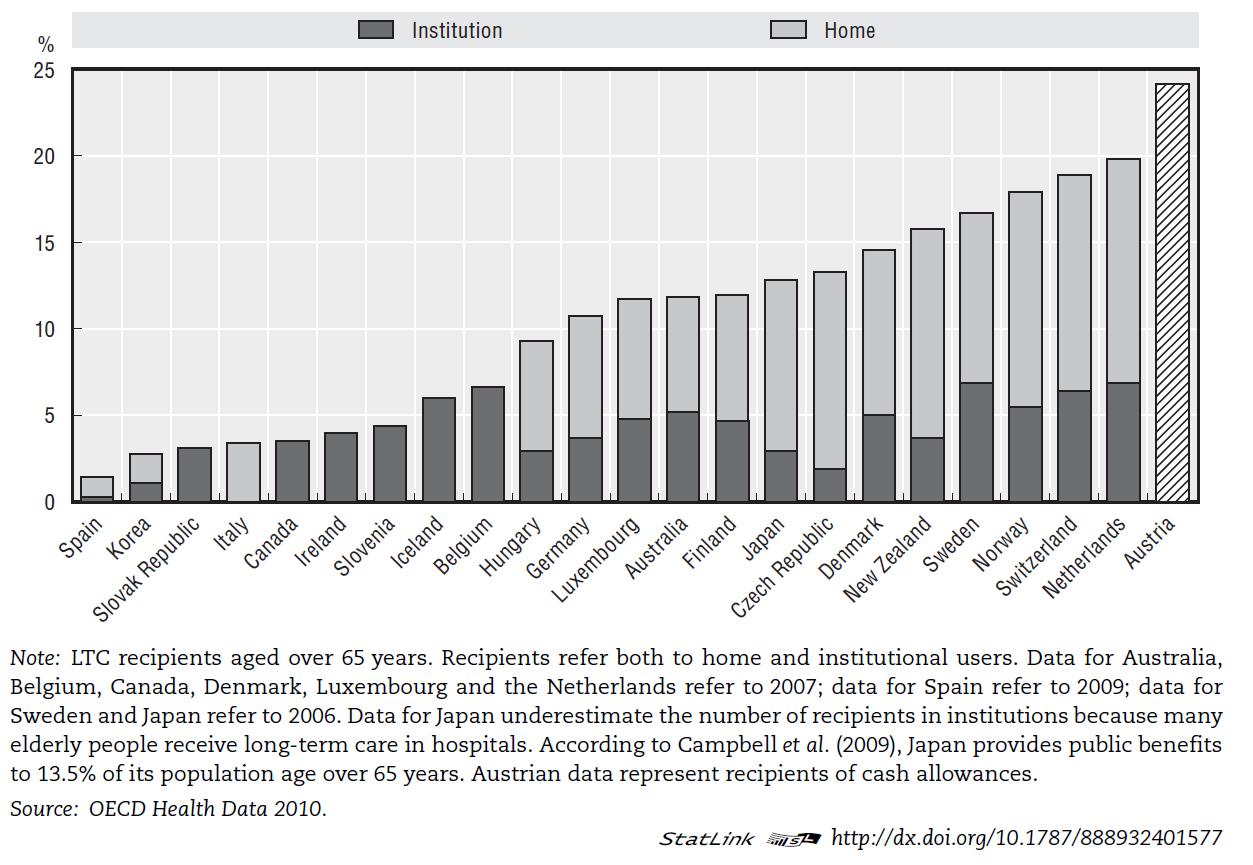
11

Chapter 2. Literature Review

the state than other models of social care and can reduce the amount of informal care provided by relatives for elderly family [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89), [Eleftheriades and](#page90) [Wittenberg](#page90), [2013](#page90)]. The comprehensiveness of coverage can be over-burdensome for the state with a number of countries recently having to cut service or increase user-contributions to compensate for increasing demand [[Robertson et al.](#page101), [2014](#page101), [Charlesworth](#page88) [and Thorlby](#page88), [2012](#page88), [Eleftheriades and Wittenberg](#page90), [2013](#page90), [Forder and Fernández](#page91), [2011](#page91)].

A recent examination of the eﬀects of the 2008 financial crisis on the way social care is delivered across Europe suggests that the distinctions between social care models is beginning to blur [[Deusdad et al.](#page89), [2016](#page89)]. There is evidence those with more comprehensive coverage are reducing levels of care whilst those with less coverage are increasing provision [[Colombo et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89)].

Figure 2.1: Older recipients of long-term care services as a share of the over 65 population, 2008



Given the marked variations in how social care is funded and delivered across countries, it may be expected that there are also marked variations in levels of access and utilisation. Colombo et al [[2011](#page89)] produced a chart (shown in figure [2.1](#page22)) derived from OECD data that shows the proportion of over 65s receiving some form of social care across countries for which data is provided. The chart shows that having a universal or mixed system of social care provision (as described above) does not absolutely influence the number of

12

Chapter 2. Literature Review

people receiving care. For example, South Korea employs a universal (insurance-based) system and has one of the lowest proportions of older people receiving care, whereas Switzerland has one of the highest whilst employing a mixed system involving some universal and some means-tested benefits. This suggests that allocation of resources and eligibility criteria set within countries are likely to be more important in determining access to social care than any particular system of care delivery.

**2.2.3 Access to Social Care - Social Theory of Eligibility**

"...the *criteria* under which a given individual is eligible for publicly funded support for long-term care, and for how much support the individual is eligible, and the *processes* involved in selecting from the general population those who receive this support and determining for how much support each person is eligible"

*[Eleftheriades and Wittenberg, 2013, pp.2*

Two social theories on how eligibility for public services are determined will be discussed in this subsection; street-level bureaucracy and candidacy.

The term street-level bureaucracy is generally credited to Michael Lipsky and his book of the same name [[1979](#page96)], along with its more recent revision [[Lipsky](#page96), [2010](#page96)]. The theory investigates the extent to which front-line public service workers exercise discretion in which individuals of the general public are eligible to access any given service - doing so from a position of authority [[Lipsky](#page96), [2010](#page96)]. As a result, street-level bureaucrats control, “. . . the nature, amount, and quality of benefits and sanctions provided by their agencies.” [[Lipsky](#page96), [2010](#page96), pp.13]. Using the term, “street-level” suggests that the theory is concerned with power, where it resides, and who wields it [[Hupe et al.](#page94), [2016](#page94)]. Street level bureaucrats can be teachers, police oﬃcers, nurses, social workers, or any other worker providing a public service [[Hupe et al.](#page94), [2016](#page94)] and their “. . . decisions. . . , the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures eﬀectively *become* the public policies they carry out” [[Lipsky](#page96), [2010](#page96), pp.xiii].

Evans[[2011](#page90)] and Ellis [[2010](#page90)] both provide a critique of street-level bureaucracy that suggests the theory needs to be augmented to take into account new structures of public services, particularly in social work, that place greater autonomy with managers than front-line workers. They argue that these new structures mean workers who deal

13

Chapter 2. Literature Review

face-to-face with public service users have less discretion about eligibility criteria and are more likely to have to justify eligibility decisions to senior members of staﬀ who now wield more power in terms of service access.

Empirically exploring the eﬀects of street-level bureaucracy poses a number of method-ological problems [[Hupe et al.](#page94), [2016](#page94)]. The use of large sample surveys of public sector workers investigating their views and how they make decisions is one way (e.g. [[Tummers](#page104) [and Bekkers](#page104), [2014](#page104)]). However Lipsky [[2010](#page96)] and Hupe et al [[2016](#page94)] agree that qualitative interview techniques with public sector workers in their own workplace is the best way to fully understand how street-level bureaucracy impacts on front-line services.

The term “candidacy” was first used by Dixon-Woods et al [[2005](#page90); [2006](#page90)] to form a concept of how vulnerable individuals identified themselves as being eligible for a particular health service or intervention given for particular illnesses or health conditions. The theory was further explored and augmented by Mackenzie et al [[2013](#page97); [2015](#page97)] in relation to access and utilisation of all public services as a way to explore concerns about unequal distribution of uptake.

The theory argues that there are a number of social and cultural factors that contribute to an individual’s interpretation of their eligibility for a given service and is based on a seven-stage model as shown in Table [2.2](#page24)

Table 2.2: Seven stage model of candidacy

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stages of candidacy** | **Description of stage** | |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Self-identification of | Process by which individuals come to view themselves as legitimate | |  |
| candidacy | candidates for particular services | |  |
| The availability and | Knowing how to make contact with appropriate services in relation to |  |  |
| accessibility of services | identified candidacy | |  |
|  | Includes the level of explicit and implicit gate-keeping within a service and |  |  |
| Permeability of services | the complexity of its referral systems; in addition it refers the | |  |
|  | "cultural alignment" between users and services | |  |
| Appearing at services and | The work that an individual must do to assert their candidacy in an |  |  |
| asserting candidacy | interaction with a service professional | |  |
| Professional decision | Candidacy as expressed by service user is validated or otherwise by service |  |  |
| making | professional. This influences future oﬀers of service | |  |
| Oﬀers of and resistance to | Service may be appropriately or inappropriately oﬀered by a professional and |  |  |
| services | this may, or may not, be acted on by service user | |  |
| Operating conditions and local | Incorporates factors that influence decision about future service provision |  |  |
| (e.g. resources) and the relationship that develops between service users and | |  |
| production of candidacy | professionals over a number of encounters | |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

This is a much broader theory than that of street-level bureaucracy and focusses on the

14

Chapter 2. Literature Review

barriers and enablers individuals face/use when accessing services. It could be argued that candidacy includes the concept of street-level bureaucracy in the fifth and sixth stages of the model shown in table [2.2](#page24). “professional decision making” and “oﬀers of and resistance to services” are areas where an interface between a service user and service professional takes place - much like the interactions described by Lipsky.

Investigating candidacy as a theory empirically again appears to be best served using qualitative methods. The complex and dynamic nature of candidacy suggests identifying meaningful quantitative measures are unlikely. Both Dixon-Woods et al [[2005](#page90); [2006](#page90)] and Mackenzie et al [[2013](#page97); [2015](#page97)] employed critical interpretive synthesis in their studies.

Both of the social theories described in this subsection deal with the concept of eligibility and how, in the case of street-level bureaucracy, professionals exercise discretion on access to service and, in the case of candidacy, how service-users identify whether they are eligible and oﬀer themselves for a service in the first place. Both theories describe complex interactions between individuals across an eligibility criteria barrier. The next section describes in detail this eligibility barrier in relation to social care in the UK, firstly from a Scottish perspective and then more broadly in the wider UK.

**2.2.4 Access to Social Care - Eligibility in the UK**

"It is through the eligibility criteria that resources are rationed, that is "need" is equated with "resources available". This mechanism severely limited the idea that provision could be determined either by need or by the right to services."

*[Sharkey, 2006, pp.10]*

In Scotland, access to social care is needs-tested via assessment carried out by a social worker. The criteria for social care delivery, therefore, has a very important part to play in how services are accessed.

In 2010 the Scottish Government published a report identifying a strategy for the policy of self-directed support [[Scottish-Government](#page102), [2010](#page102)]. The report was written in con-junction with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and included the recommendation that the National Eligibility Framework developed by the Sutherland review into free personal and nursing care [[2008](#page96)] should be applied across all social care

15

Chapter 2. Literature Review

services. The framework has four criteria for assessing risk in relation to a person’s care needs: critical, substantial, moderate and low [[Scottish-Government](#page102), [2015a](#page102)]. The critical and substantial levels of risk indicate social care needs should be addressed immediately or imminently, whereas a moderate level of risk may indicate either some or no services being required. There is *no explicit description* of severity or which care needs fall into each category and in practice each local authority sets the criteria and decides at which level of risk they will provide social care [[Scottish-Government](#page102), [2014](#page102)].

Equity of access to services is directly influenced by an eligibility framework. Indeed, the strategy for self-directed support [[Scottish-Government](#page102), [2010](#page102), pp.20] acknowledges this and states that such a framework “. . . can result in resources being narrowly focused on individuals with acute needs.” However, the report goes on to state that growing demand and finite resources requires some form of eligibility assessment but this should not have a disproportionate eﬀect on any one group of people requiring care.

The eligibility framework allows each local authority to set thresholds for access to care in line with local priorities and resources. This has the eﬀect that access to services varies across diﬀering council areas. The potential for regional variation is again acknowledged by the strategy for self-directed support [[Scottish-Government](#page102), [2010](#page102), pp.20] which states that, “. . . further work will be undertaken by the Scottish Government and COSLA to assess whether there is merit in establishing national thresholds for access to formal support across all client groups.”

Acknowledgement of problems with eligibility criteria and the promise of “further work” to be undertaken by the Scottish Government and COSLA is repeated in practitioner guidance on Self-Directed Support published in 2014 [[Scottish-Government](#page102), [2014](#page102), pp.19] and that , “. . . it remains the case that local authorities should operate eligibility criteria to determine whether or not an individual assessed as having social care needs can access formal support and if so, which of their needs are to be met by that support.”

Data is not available on levels of care provided by LAs for each of the National Eligibility Framework criteria or for the threshold that each LA provides care at. The Scottish Government collects an annual report of eligibility and waiting times for the first quarter of the year. A recent report [[Scottish-Government](#page102), [2015a](#page102)] provides information on the time individuals had to wait to receive assessment and the time individuals had to wait to receive care in the period January-March for the preceding five years. However, no absolute numbers of people in each category is provided.

16

Chapter 2. Literature Review

The Scottish National Eligibility Framework has striking similarities to that formerly used in England and described in Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) produced by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) [[2013](#page102)]. Exactly the same nomenclature is used to describe the eligibility categories of need. Newton and Browne [[2008](#page99)] critiqued a previous version the FACS guidance and found similar issues to those raised above regarding regional variations in service and concentration of services on those with the highest need. Their paper describes further issues with access to social care in the context of social theory described by Lipsky [[1979](#page96)] and “street-level bureaucracy” (discussed in section [2.2.3](#page23)) where intentional and unintentional judgement of entitlement by social care workers have an impact on whether an individual receives care or not. Newton and Browne [[2008](#page99)] also make the assertion that health and social care has never been accessed equitably by arguing that those with a greater ability to articulate needs and negotiate access are more likely to gain access to services. Although no citation is provided to back-up this argument, it has certainly been described elsewhere [[Matthews and Hastings](#page98), [2013](#page98)] and sits well in the broader discussion of inequitable access to services [[Hastings et al.](#page93), [2014](#page93), [Le Grand](#page95), [1989](#page95), [Tudor-Hart](#page104), [1971](#page104)] (discussed further in section [2.2.5](#page29)).

In England, the Care Act [[2014a](#page93)] aimed to remove regional variations in eligibility in access to social care by imposing national minimum thresholds that local authorities would have a statutory obligation to provide. The Care Act also aimed to ensure local authorities provided care, “. . . as early as possible to help maintain well-being and independence, and potentially delay a situation where longer-term care and support might be required.” [[SCIE](#page102), [2015](#page102), pp.2]. The minimum criteria for being eligible for care involves an individual having needs that impairs their ability to meet two or more of a designated list of outcomes (e.g. managing and maintaining nutrition or maintaining hygiene) [[SCIE](#page102), [2015](#page102)] and is set by the Secretary of State for Health [[Abrahams et al.](#page85), [2014](#page85)].

In practice, the most likely outcome is that the minimum threshold that local authorities will have to provide care will be similar to the “critical” level of the National Eligibility Framework previously used in the FACS guidance [[Burchardt et al.](#page87), [2015](#page87), [Abrahams](#page85) [et al.](#page85), [2014](#page85)] (and similar to that used in Scotland). This will legalise a shift that has already been occurring in England where fewer numbers of LAs are providing care for those with “moderate” needs and only providing care for those with “critical” needs [[Burchardt et al.](#page87), [2015](#page87), [Abrahams et al.](#page85), [2014](#page85)]. Burchardt et al. [[2015](#page87)] state that only

17

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2% of English LAs will have to widen their care threshold whereas 12% could now, legally, tighten care provision as a result of the Care Act. This situation is not new and has been gradually worsening over the past decade and has profound impacts on the quality of, and access to, social care [[Sharkey](#page103), [2006](#page103)].

A recent report by the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Com-mittee [[2017](#page99)] confirmed reductions in the absolute number of people receiving care, the concentration of services in those with highest needs only, reduction in quality of care provided, and the resulting pressures this caused to the health service through increased emergency admissions and delayed discharges. The report highlights the perilous state of social care provision in England and urges immediate attention from the government to address funding shortfalls.

Burchardt et al. [[2015](#page87)] and Abrahams et al. [[2014](#page85)] recognise some positive changes to social care policy through the Social Care Act but are damning about past UK government social care policy in England and Wales. They cite chronic underfunding and cuts for over ten years resulting in fewer numbers of people receiving care at a time when demand is sharply increasing due to demographic change. The “intensification” of services on those with the most acute needs is cited by both sets of authors as counter-productive – ignoring those with moderate care needs completely derails one of the main purposes of the Care Act, preventative services. Indeed,

“As well as lacking in moral sense, such an approach is economically unsound. Waiting for people to have high needs before providing care means that care will be more expensive, as well as pushing more older people into an already pressurised NHS”

[[Abrahams et al.](#page85), [2014](#page85), pp.5].

A similar picture has been seen in Scotland. Absolute numbers of people receiving home care has steadily fallen over the last 10 years whilst the number of hours of care provided has increased [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2016a](#page103)]. There are wide variations in the number of hours of home care provided per population across local authorities [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2012](#page86), [Scottish-Government](#page103), [2016a](#page103)]. This may reflect diﬀerent demographic make-up of each local authority although reductions in ratios per population can be seen in almost all local authorities [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2016a](#page103)]. Audit Scotland [[2012](#page86)] also highlighted that intensifying services is likely to be a short-term solution with negative

18

Chapter 2. Literature Review

long-term impacts and suggests comparison of performance across Scotland would be beneficial in identifying good practice.

In a report profiling the care at home sector in Scotland, MacLeod and Mair [[2015](#page97)] describe large decreases in absolute numbers of people receiving care at home over the ten years to 2013. There have also been significant reductions in the number of people receiving non-personal care (so called “mopping and shopping”). The increase in the number of hours of home care delivered by all services reflects a focus on smaller numbers of individuals with higher care needs. This means those with moderate or low personal care needs and those requiring “mopping and shopping” services are now less likely to receive publicly funded care. Echoing the views of Burchardt et al. [[2015](#page87)] and Abrahams et al. [[2014](#page85)], Macleod and Mair [[2015](#page97)] highlight the potential false economy of this situation – home care services are likely to reduce the need for costly emergency admissions to hospital and delay the requirement for more intensive home care packages.

**2.2.5 Access to Social Care - Social Theory of Resource allo-**

**cation**

"Almost all public expenditure on the social services in Britain benefits the better oﬀ to a greater extent than the poor"

*[Le Grand, 1989, pp.3]*

In his seminal book, “The strategy of equality”, Julian Le Grand [[1989](#page95)] investigated whether social and economic equality had been achieved since the introduction of post-war welfare spending. The book compares the distribution of public expenditure and outcomes across health, education, housing, and transport. It concludes, as highlighted in the quote above, that those with higher socioeconomic position benefited disproportionately from government social services spending across all sectors. Indeed , “. . . there persist substantial inequalities in public expenditure, in use, in opportunity, in access and in outcomes”[[Le Grand](#page95), [1989](#page95), pp.4].

Criticism of Le Grand’s conclusions cites subsequent research that shows empirical evidence indicating a reduction in inequalities and questions the assumption that the sole purpose of the welfare state is to achieve equality [[Powell](#page101), [1995](#page101)]. More recent research

19

Chapter 2. Literature Review

[[Bramley et al.](#page87), [2005](#page87), cited in; [Hastings et al.](#page93), [2014](#page93)],[[Hastings](#page93), [2007](#page93), [Bramley and](#page87) [Evans](#page87), [2000](#page87)] has shown that when comparing distribution of resources at neighbourhood level (rather than national level) there is higher spending in less aﬄuent areas. However some service were found to be “pro-rich” (education, pensions) and others “pro-poor” (parks, environmental services) [[Bramley et al.](#page87), [2005](#page87), cited in; [Hastings et al.](#page93), [2014](#page93)]. Whether a service is more likely to be used by more or less aﬄuent citizens is important in terms of resource allocation - particularly when services are being cut as shown by Gannon et al [[2016](#page92)] and discussed further in section [2.2.6](#page32).

Understanding why there are diﬀerences in resource allocation for diﬀerent types of service has led to the investigation of “middle class capture” of services and how it is obtained [[Gal](#page92), [1998](#page92), [Matthews and Hastings](#page98), [2013](#page98), [Hastings et al.](#page93), [2014](#page93)]. An adapted version of Gal’s [[1998](#page92)] six channel framework of middle class advantage described by Hastings et al [[2014](#page93)] is shown in table [2.3](#page30)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Table 2.3: Six channels of middle class advantage |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Channel** | **Description of channel**1 |  |
| Electoral | Large middle class more likely to vote thus political policies influencing |  |
| welfare services more likely to be geared toward them. |  |
|  |  |
| Organisational | Unions and professional associations representing middle-class |  |
| occupations have strong influence on welfare policy |  |
|  | Resources of education and access to information possessed by middle |  |
| Knowledge | class mean they have better understanding of "how the system works" |  |
|  | and therefore can better exploit it |  |
|  | Middle class has dominant role in media and can thus exert influence |  |
| Mass Media | over how policy is covered. Also able to access and influence those that |  |
|  | produce mass media more easily |  |
| Exit | Ability of middle class to leave public provision for private alternative |  |
| influences public policy in order to avoid this happening. |  |
|  |  |
| Bureaucratic | Public services "run" by the middle classes therefore exert influence |  |
| over how it is accessed and by whom. |  |
|  |  |

* Adapted by Hastings et al [2014] from Gal [1998]

These six “channels” conceptualise the modes of how and why welfare spending in certain areas appears to benefit more aﬄuent groups. In their study investigating street-cleansing services, Hastings et al [[2014](#page93)] observed the influence of middle class capture and some of the channels of advantage described in table [2.3](#page30) suggesting the theories of Le Grand [[1989](#page95)], described above, and Tudor-Hart, described below, should

20

Chapter 2. Literature Review

not be discounted.

"The availability of good medical care tends to vary inversely with the need for it in the population served"

*[The Inverse Care Law: Tudor-Hart, 1972]*

In a similar fashion to Le Grand’s work, the inverse care law has informed much research since first coined in the early 1970s. As discussed in section [2.2.7](#page34), people living in more deprived areas have lower life expectancy and higher morbidity figures and therefore greater health needs [[Baker et al.](#page86), [2015](#page86)]. However, the poorest neighbourhoods in England have been reported to have 62.5 General Practitioners (GP) per 100,000 population whereas the most aﬄuent neighbourhoods have 76.2 per 100,000 [[CfWI](#page88), [2014](#page88)] which suggests health provision does not match need. Recent planned changes in policy to distribute primary care funding based on population age are likely to exacerbate this situation [[Mercer et al.](#page98), [2012](#page98)]. Indeed, increases in workload with deteriorating proportions of budgets has lead the King’s Fund to describe the situation in primary care in England and Wales as, “in crisis” [[Baird et al.](#page86), [2016](#page86), pp.3]. In Scotland, the even distribution of GP workforce among the population means GP practices in the most deprived areas need to provide more consultations, for people with greater needs, at the same funding level as practices with fewer resource demands [[McLean et al.](#page98), [2015](#page98), [Mercer and Watt](#page98), [2007](#page98)]. Poorer access to primary health care is associated with greater demand for unnecessary admission to hospital [[Rosano et al.](#page101), [2013](#page101), [Weston](#page105) [et al.](#page105), [2016](#page105)] which is responsible for high proportions of healthcare expenditure.

There has been no research on whether the inverse care law is perceptible in social care

* a service delivered, like primary care, in a community setting and also likely to have an impact on secondary health care use. Nor has any research specifically investigated variations in the distribution of social care services by socioeconomic position at the local level. Such research would add useful evidence to the debate regarding the strategy of equality and middle class capture.

The next section describes how social care is funded in Scotland and how cuts to services post-2008 may adversely impact less aﬄuent members of the public.

21

Chapter 2. Literature Review

**2.2.6 Access to Social Care - Resource Allocation in Scotland**

Local authorities in Scotland have a statutory obligation to provide social care to individuals they have assessed as eligible for care [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2012](#page86)]. All local authority funding is provided by the Scottish Government via a block general revenue grant made up of a number of components [[Scottish-Government](#page102), [2013](#page102), [King et al.](#page95), [2007](#page95)]. The majority of this grant is calculated via a formula known as the Grant Aided Expenditures (GAE) which accounts for over 80% of the general revenue grant [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2016c](#page103)]. The formula for GAE is calculated using what is called a “client group approach” and is based on 89 services provided by local authorities [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2016c](#page103)]. A national figure for each service is set and each local authority receives a percentage of that figure based on estimates of the number of people that use that service (a capitation) and other secondary indicators such as area deprivation or rurality [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2016c](#page103), [Smith](#page104), [2003](#page104)]. For example, funding for primary school teachers is based on the number of children in primary education (primary indicator) and adjusted to take into account the percentage of pupils in small schools (secondary indicator) [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2016c](#page103)].

The use of formulae to allocate public expenditure has potential to improve eﬃciency in spending and equity of distribution [[Smith](#page104), [2003](#page104)]. Equity of distribution is achieved via the explicit nature of a formula framework with transparent methodology that can be debated and amended [[Smith](#page104), [2003](#page104)] (The formula for the “green book” settlement was agreed with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) [[Scottish](#page102)-[Government](#page102), [2013](#page102)]). However, as King et al [[2007](#page95)] note, GAE grants to local authorities are estimates of relative, rather than absolute, spending needs in that area. The “green book” reporting the annual settlement for local authorities in Scotland stresses that the values allocated for diﬀerent services are not budgets or targets and that local authorities are free to spend resources (other than ring-fenced monies) as they see fit [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2016c](#page103)]. In eﬀect, “. . . the capitation payments seek to oﬀer comparable public sector organisations the opportunity to deliver some average level of service, assuming average responses to social and economic circumstances, and an average level of eﬃciency” [[Smith](#page104), [2003](#page104), pp.309].

The “green book” outlines seven main areas of local authority expenditure from which the 89 services mentioned above are derived; Education, Social Work, Roads & Transport, Leisure & Recreation, Cleansing & Environment, Elections & Taxation, and Other

22

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Services [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2016c](#page103)]. Spending allocation for social care comes under the social work heading which is subdivided into 23 subcategories of services. Of these, nine are directly related to social care as defined for the purposes of this thesis (the others being based on e.g. children’s services);

* service for home based elderly
* residential accommodation for the elderly
* casework and related administration: elderly
* services for people with disabilities
* casework and related administration: people with disabilities
* independent living fund
* carers support and respite services
* care home fees
* personal and nursing care for older people

The expenditure for the first three items in this list as well as carers support & respite services and care home fees are calculated using population weighted indices for each local authority calculated from; the standardised mortality ratio, census data on self-report long term illness & people living alone, as well as pension credit data service for home based elderly) or council tax data (residential accommodation for the elderly). Services relevant to people with disabilities and the independent living fund are calculated depending on the number of people aged 16-64 in each local authority. Expenditure allocation for personal and nursing care for older people is derived from formulae calculated in the Scottish Government Health Directorate Distribution [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2016c](#page103)].

The GAE formula has been in place for some time (initially outlined in 1992 [[Scottish](#page103)-[Government](#page103), [2016c](#page103)]). The more recent issue facing local authorities in terms of finance has been cuts following the 2008 financial crash. In the financial year 2016/17 the overall grant to Scottish local authorities was cut in real-terms by 5% which added to a cumulative real-term cut of 11% since 2010/11 [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2016c](#page86)]. Authorities have been managing this pressure by reducing spending in all areas of their budgets - with the exception of social work [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2016c](#page86)]. £3.1 billion was spent on social work by Scottish local authorities in 2014/15 - an increase of 3% since 2010/11 and a third of all council spending [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2016b](#page86)]. However, given the 5% decrease planned for 2016/17 Audit Scotland [[2016c](#page86)] warn that social work (and specifically

23

Chapter 2. Literature Review

social care) budgets are now likely to be cut, which will likely result in a decrease in the quality of service [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2016b](#page86)].

These budgetary pressures are diﬃcult for local authorities to manage, but what is the outcome on service users? Using the “pro-rich/pro-poor” nomenclature initially used by [[Bramley et al.](#page87), [2005](#page87)] (and discussed in section [2.2.5](#page29)), Gannon et al [[2016](#page92)] investigated the social impact of spending cuts in Scotland. The report found that the vast majority of local authority spending is on services that are “pro-poor” i.e. services that are disproportionately used by people with lower socioeconomic position. As a result, despite attempts to protect these services, the cuts to local authority spending have a disproportionate eﬀect on this societal group. Councils with higher numbers of the most deprived citizens are having to make the biggest percentage cuts in services defined as “very pro-poor” (e.g. social work for children and families or citizen’s advice). These findings echoed an earlier report from the project looking at cuts across the UK as a whole [[Hastings et al.](#page93), [2015](#page93)].

Gannon et al’s report [[2016](#page92)] assigns older persons social work services as “pro-poor” along with local authority public transport but does not distinguish between the two in analysis. It is therefore diﬃcult to dis-aggregate the specific eﬀect of cuts on social care from the report particularly, as shown above, as there was an increase in spending between 2010/11 and 2014/15. Nevertheless, cuts expected to social care budgets from 2016/17 [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2016c](#page86)] are also likely to have a disproportionate eﬀect on those with lower socioeconomic position.

Cuts to services reduce the potential for access to such services. If these cuts are disproportionately aﬀecting more deprived communities it is likely unequal outcomes for these communities will be exacerbated. Given the close link of social care to health care, the question of whether social care influences health inequalities is important. The next section presents an overview of literature on health inequalities.

**2.2.7 Health inequalities**

In the UK, poverty remains the largest predictor of relative ill health and has associations with increased morbidity, multimorbidity, and decreased life expectancy [[Baker et al.](#page86), [2015](#page86)]. People living in deprived areas are more likely to engage in unhealthy lifestyle behaviours, experience multimorbidity at a younger age, and live in overcrowded or

24

Chapter 2. Literature Review

unsuitable housing [[Baker et al.](#page86), [2015](#page86), [Shaw et al.](#page103), [2006](#page103)].

The influential Marmot review into health inequalities found that those in the most deprived areas of England die, on average, seven years earlier than their most aﬄuent peers [[Marmot et al.](#page97), [2010](#page97)] with the gap in life expectancy increasing between 1995 and 2008 [[National-Audit-Oﬃce](#page99), [2010](#page99)]. Subsequent research by the King’s Fund suggests the gap in life expectancy reduced between the periods 1999-2003 and 2006-2010 [[Buck and](#page87) [Maguire](#page87), [2017](#page87)]. The report warns that this improvement may be due to the spending and policy decisions of the New Labour Government of the early 2000s and that recent austerity measures in the UK may undermine the progress made [[Buck and Maguire](#page87), [2017](#page87)]. Indeed, the most recent analysis released by the Oﬃce for National Statistics [[2016](#page99)] suggests the gap in male life expectancy in England is now 9.1 years. In Northern Ireland, the male life expectancy gap is the lowest of all four UK nations, however those in the poorest neighbourhoods die, on average, four years earlier than those in the most aﬄuent areas [[ONS](#page99), [2016](#page99)]. In Wales the gap is slightly larger at 4.2 years [[ONS](#page99), [2016](#page99)]. There is a gap of seven years in life expectancy at birth in Scottish males - those born in East Dunbartonshire can expect to live to 80.5 years, whereas those in Glasgow City can expect to live 73.4 years [[ONS](#page99), [2016](#page99)].

The Scottish Government reports statistics on healthy life expectancy which is defined as the number of years people can expect to live in good health [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2017a](#page103)]. The most recent figures suggest men and women in the most deprived areas can expect to become ill 25.1 and 22.1 years earlier than their most aﬄuent peers respectively [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2017a](#page103)] meaning Scotland has the highest level of health inequality in western and central Europe [[Mackenbach et al.](#page97), [2008](#page97), [Popham and](#page100) [Boyle](#page100), [2010](#page100)].

There are many theories as to why inequalities in health exist across socioeconomic position [[Asthana and Halliday](#page85), [2006](#page85), [Nettleton](#page99), [2006](#page99)]. Some of these, such as statistical artefact and biological reasons, were rejected as being implausible by the Black report [[Macintyre](#page96), [1997](#page96)]. To a large extent, epidemiological evidence and theoretical argument has agreed with that view [[Asthana and Halliday](#page85), [2006](#page85), [Mackenbach](#page97), [2012](#page97), [McCartney](#page98) [et al.](#page98), [2013](#page98), [Nettleton](#page99), [2006](#page99)].

There have been many critiques of other theories proposed in the last 35 years which focus on diﬀering numbers of proposals [[Asthana and Halliday](#page85), [2006](#page85), [Nettleton](#page99), [2006](#page99), [Peckham and Meerabeau](#page100), [2007](#page100), [Smith et al.](#page104), [2016](#page104), [Mackenbach](#page97), [2012](#page97)]. Whilst arguments

25

Chapter 2. Literature Review

over which theory is most plausible to explain the cause of health inequality, most researchers agree on ways to remedy disparities in health outcome. These are the redistribution of income, wealth, and political power [[Smith et al.](#page104), [2016](#page104), [Katikireddi](#page95) [et al.](#page95), [2013](#page95), [Asthana and Halliday](#page85), [2006](#page85), [Nettleton](#page99), [2006](#page99)]. Although health services have an important role to play, it is the “upstream” policies of redistribution that will make the biggest impacts in improving health outcomes across society [[Smith et al.](#page104), [2016](#page104), [Katikireddi et al.](#page95), [2013](#page95), [Asthana and Halliday](#page85), [2006](#page85), [Scottish-Parliament](#page103), [2015](#page103)]. Whilst this has been known for some time, government policies in the UK to date have not addressed these issues and have thus failed to make meaningful improvements in health inequalities [[Frank et al.](#page92), [2015](#page92), [Mackenbach](#page97), [2010](#page97), [Peckham and Meerabeau](#page100), [2007](#page100)].

(Might expand this a little more?)

**2.2.8 Summary**

There is no agreed standard definition of social care, a term often used synonymously is long-term care. The boundary between what is health care and what is social care is often blurry. The definition chosen for this thesis provided by Colombo et al [[Colombo](#page89) [et al.](#page89), [2011](#page89)] encapsulates the wide number of services that make-up social care including nursing, personal, equipment, and technological. The definition also identifies that social care can be provided not only at home, but also in institutions or other community settings.

Three broad models of social care are seen internationally; universal, mixed, and means-tested schemes. Within each of these models there are many diﬀerent methods of delivery across countries and no easy comparison can be made identifying diﬀerences in outcomes across countries. It does appear that universal systems spread the risk of the costs of social care more equitably among the populations where it is employed. Importantly, every model of social care involves some user-contribution towards costs.

Eligibility for social care is determined via pre-specified criteria in all cases. How these criteria are set varies greatly across and within countries. In UK terms eligibility criteria are set by local authorities and have been greatly tightened in recent years as a response to budgetary constraint. Also observed is the process of “intensification” where greater hours of social care are being delivered to smaller numbers of people with higher needs.

26

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This has potential to erode an important function of social care - preventing expensive unscheduled health care use.

Eligibility for social care can also be aﬀected by the individual in need, and those applying the pre-determined criteria. Social theories regarding this include “street-level bureaucracy” and “candidacy”. Both theories describe diﬃculties that may exist in individuals attempting to access public provided services, the latter in more detail and including aspects of the former. Both theories are best suited to being investigated with qualitative methods.

Allocation of resources for social care in Scotland are decided by local authorities. The monies they receive are dependent on a grant from the Scottish Government which is calculated via the GAE formula. The GAE formula allocates money for social care services based on a mixture of data from each local authority including; mortality and morbidity ratios, the amount of people living alone, and the ratio of people paying certain level of tax or receiving certain benefits. This formula has been in place for over 20 years and was agreed with COSLA.

Social theories regarding allocation of resources for public service suggest those with higher socioeconomic position are more likely to benefit from public spending than their less aﬄuent peers. Empirical analysis of; “The strategy of equality”, “The inverse care law”, and “middle class capture” all suggest more aﬄuent groups are better at accessing public services.

There have been significant cuts to local authority budgets across the UK since 2008. Savings have been made whilst trying to protect front-line services but current and future cuts are likely to impact these services. Most local authority spending is on services used by those from lower socioeconomic positions thus cuts will disproportionately aﬀect these people. Little is known about how access to social care diﬀers across socioeconomic and geographic strata. In an age of austerity, the question of whether an inverse *social* care law exists remains unanswered.

27

Chapter 2. Literature Review

**2.3 Health and Social Care Interaction**

**2.3.1 Public Policy**

Scotland "... is a paradoxical tapestry of rich resources, inventive humanity, gross inequalities, and persistent levels of disadvantage"

*[Christie, 2011, pp.2]*

Acknowledging demand for public services was likely to increase, the Scottish Gov-ernment set up the Christie Commission on the future delivery of public services in 2010. In its final report [[Christie](#page88), [2011](#page88)], the commission made a number of pertinent observations including:-

* Increasing demand for public services are due not only to demographic reasons but also because of a failure to tackle inequality
* Spending levels on public services is unlikely to return to 2010 levels until 2026
* Public services in 2010 were fragmented with no coordination and often diﬀerent services duplicated work
* Public services had a "top-down" approach to delivery with institutional and professional needs given precedence over users

The reccomendations of the commission included:-

* Better coordination and integration of public services
* Empowerment of communities in how services are structured
* Reduction in demand for services by focussing on prevention
* Improving performance and eﬃciency of services

These reccomendations had profound eﬀects on subsequent policy and legislation in Scotland, most notably in relation to health and social care services [[Christie](#page88), [2011](#page88)], although this was not the first policy aimed at improving coordination between these services. Previous policies aiming to increase cooperation between NHS health boards and local authority provided social care included; the Joint Future Group [[2000](#page102)], the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act [[2002](#page93)], Community Health Partnerships [2002], and the Integrated Resource Framework [[Ferguson et al.](#page91), [2012](#page91)].

2011 also saw the publication of the Scottish Government vision to achieve sustainable

28

Chapter 2. Literature Review

quality in the delivery of healthcare services by the year 2020 [[Scottish-Government](#page102), [2011](#page102)]. Echoing some of the Christie Commission reccomendations, the 2020 vision contained a number of objectives to change the way health and social care services are delivered including; a focus on prevention and self-management of health conditions, an expanded role for GPs and primary care, a focus on reducing hospital stays & providing treatments in a community setting, improving care for those with multimorbidity, and formally integrating health and social care services [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2016a](#page86)].

The inclusion of the last of these objectives - to formally legislate for the integration of health and social care - was in response to the fact that that although previous policies had made some progress in improving co-ordination between health and social care services, this had not had a demonstrable impact on outcomes for users of these services [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2011](#page86), [2015](#page86), [Petch](#page100), [2012b](#page100)]. This was often as a result, among other things, of diﬀerent cultures in health and social care organisations [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2011](#page86)]. The diﬀerence in culture is perhaps understandable given the very diﬀerent ways health and social care have been historically funded and delivered.

Health care in Scotland, like the rest of the UK, is provided via the NHS free at the point of need to all citizens [[Ham et al.](#page93), [2013](#page93)]. This principal has remained in place despite many internal changes of structure (with some divergence from other parts of the UK)[[Ham et al.](#page93), [2013](#page93)]. Front-line services are delivered by 14 geographically-based health boards [[Ham et al.](#page93), [2013](#page93)].

Provision of social care is the responsibility of the 32 Scottish local authorities who also either provide the services themselves, purchase provision through third-party private or voluntary organisations, or give individuals a budget to purchase provision themselves [[Ham et al.](#page93), [2013](#page93)]. As discussed in section [2.2](#page16), this service is not universal and depends on a needs-test against set eligibility criteria. Means-testing is employed to determine user-contribution to non-personal and non-nursing care institutional care home costs.

Given such contrasting backgrounds, and most importantly separate silos of funding sources and budgets, integration of services had many barriers [[Ham et al.](#page93), [2013](#page93)]. Building on the 2020 vision [[Scottish-Government](#page102), [2011](#page102)] objective of integrating health and social care, legislation to enact this structural change into law was announced in 2011. Section [2.3.2](#page40) describes these changes in more detail.

29

Chapter 2. Literature Review

**2.3.2 Health and Social Care Integration**

"Our vision is that by 2020 everyone is able to live longer healthier lives at home, or in a homely setting. We will have a healthcare system where we have integrated health and social care, a focus on prevention, anticipation and supported self-management. When hospital treatment is required, and cannot be provided in a community setting, day case treatment will be the norm. Whatever the setting, care will be provided to the highest standards of quality and safety, with the person at the centre of all decisions. There will be a focus on ensuring that people get back into their home or community environment as soon as appropriate, with minimal risk of re-admission."

*[Scottish Government, 2011, pp.2]*

The Public Working(Joint Bodies) (Scotland) Act [[HM-Government](#page93), [2014b](#page93)] paved the way for the legal integration of health and social care services and all integrated authorities had management and structural plans in place by the Scottish Government’s designated deadline of 1st April 2016. These reforms are seen as the “. . . most significant change to the way we care for and improve the health of our people, in their communities, since the creation of the NHS” [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2017b](#page103)].

One of the most important changes this legislation made was that funding for the designated integrated services were to be provided from a single budget. In a report investigating future change to health and social care services in England, the Barker commission noted, “. . . moving to a single budget with a single commissioner is not a suﬃcient condition to tackle the myriad problems of integration that face health and social care. But we believe it is a necessary one” [[Barker](#page86), [2014](#page86), pp.9].

Integration is expected to ensure; better outcomes, more eﬃcient use of resources, reduction in hospital and residential long term care use, a shift in care closer to people’s homes, and avoidance of the consequences of fragmented & uncoordinated care [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2015](#page86), [2016a](#page86), [Burgess](#page87), [2012](#page87), [2016](#page88), [Scottish-Government](#page103), [2015b](#page103), [2016b](#page103)]. However, despite streamlining of budgets, there remain significant barriers in achieving these aims [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2015](#page86), [2016a](#page86)].

One of the key principles of the legislation is that health and social care is delivered under one of two models - the body corporate or lead agency model. The former sees

30

Chapter 2. Literature Review

the delegation of budgets from a health board and one or more local authorities to an Integrated Joint Board (IJB). This board is responsible for the delivery of care and develops a strategic plan for how services will be implemented [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2015b](#page103), [Burgess](#page88), [2016](#page88), [Kaehne et al.](#page95), [2017](#page95)]. The IJB consists of representatives from the health board, local authority/authorities, health professionals, social work professionals, voluntary sector workers, unpaid carers, and service users [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2015](#page86), [Burgess](#page88), [2016](#page88)]. The full extent of integrated services delegated to the IJB varies from area to area but as a minimum adult social care services, adult community health services, and some adult acute health services (particularly those that incur lots of emergency admissions) are delegated [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2015b](#page103), [Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2015](#page86), [Burgess](#page88), [2016](#page88), [Kaehne et al.](#page95), [2017](#page95)]. The IJB decides how the delegated budgets will best achieve the aims of the strategic plan for the area and directs the NHS board and local authority/authorities to provide services according to this plan[[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2015](#page86), [Kaehne et al.](#page95), [2017](#page95)].

Under the lead agency model, a plan is made to divide the delivery of specific health and social care services to either the NHS board or a local authority [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2015b](#page103), [Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2015](#page86), [Burgess](#page88), [2016](#page88), [Kaehne et al.](#page95), [2017](#page95)]. Funding for these services is transferred between the health board and local authority as agreed in a delivery plan [[Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2015](#page86), [Kaehne et al.](#page95), [2017](#page95)]. The lead agency plan between NHS Highland and Highland Council is the only one in place in Scotland - all other areas favouring the body corporate model [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2015b](#page103), [Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2015](#page86), [Burgess](#page88), [2016](#page88), [Kaehne et al.](#page95), [2017](#page95)]. Under this plan, NHS Highland is responsible for the delivery of all adult health and social care services, whilst the council takes responsibility for children’s community health and social care services [[Burgess](#page88), [2016](#page88), [Kaehne et al.](#page95), [2017](#page95)].

Comparison of outcomes between the Highland partnership and all other IJBs will be of significant interest. One of the main aims of integration is to reduce unscheduled healthcare use, in particular unplanned admissions to hospital, which can be an indicator of a lack of social care support in an area [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2015b](#page103), [Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2015](#page86), [2016a](#page86)]. There are other key performance indicators that have been set nationally as a way to audit the improvements (or lack thereof) made over time. These are focussed on outcomes on individuals and include self-report of health and wellbeing questions from surveys and statistics collected from routine data on service use [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2015c](#page103), [2016d](#page103), [Kaehne et al.](#page95), [2017](#page95)].

31

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Early indicators suggest that integration authorities are still some way from making an impact on the delivery of services. In a report published immediately prior to IJBs taking control of services Audit Scotland [[2015](#page86)] suggested that disagreements over budgets, poor workforce planning, diﬃcult to understand governance arrangements, and poor planning around involvement of the charity and private sectors meant that little improvement was likely to be seen in 2016/17.

**2.3.3 Research on Health and Social Care Interaction**

"There is tentative evidence that financial integration can be beneficial. However, robust evidence for improved health outcomes or cost savings is lacking"

*[Weatherly et al, 2010 pp. 3]*

The large scale structural change in health and social care services seen in Scotland and further afield is built on (as discussed in previous sections) the expectation that more eﬃcient social care provision can help reduce unplanned health care use. Although intuitive there is very little robust evidence to suggest this is the case [[Petch](#page100), [2009](#page100), [Burgess](#page87), [2012](#page87), [Robson](#page101), [2013](#page101), **?**, [Stewart et al.](#page104), [2003](#page104), [Damery et al.](#page89), [2016](#page89), [Kaehne et al.](#page95), [2017](#page95), [Cameron](#page88), [2016](#page88), [Petch](#page100), [2012b](#page100)].

Much research has been conducted on the *structural* elements of integration with little emphasis on *outcomes* for service users [[Petch](#page100), [2012a](#page100)]. There has also been little attention paid to those who deliver front-line services, indeed, “.. a preoccupation with the process and mechanisms of joint working has diverted attention away from the central role played by the professions, who appear sceptical of the aims of these initiatives and distrustful of their professional colleagues” [[Cameron](#page88), [2016](#page88), pp.12].

The lack of evidence around outcomes may be partially due to the diﬃculty in collecting data that can measure the interaction between health and social care services. A recent report for the OECD [[2013](#page99)] highlighted the paucity of good data regarding social care, even in countries known to have good data resources. The report also suggests that use of routine administrative data may be a useful tool in addressing this lack of evidence [[OECD/EU](#page99), [2013](#page99)]. A small number of studies have been published in the last decade using linked-administrative data to look specifically at interactions between health and social care services.

32

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Porter et al [[2016](#page101)], using Welsh data, reported that aggregate statistics of social care use and emergency admission to hospital showed no correlation. However, when analysing individual-level linked administrative data, those that received social care before an emergency admission episode were more likely to have fewer subsequent admissions with shorter lengths of stay than those that received social care only after an admission. The study period covered six years of data for adults over the age of 65 from one geographic area of Wales.

Using data from four areas in England, Bardsley et al [[2012](#page86)] found that older persons staying in residential care homes were less likely to use unplanned hospital services compared to those receiving social care at home. The study period was based over one year only and all those that died during the year were excluded from analysis which may have had some impact on results. Intensive social care delivered at home was associated with higher unplanned *and* planned secondary care use.

In Sweden, Condelius et al [**?**] found that individuals using high amounts of community health & social care services were also likely to use large amounts of emergency hospital services. This suggests community services may not reduce unplanned health care use. The study period focussed on hospital admissions over one year in the over-65 age group and found a small number of individuals with high multimorbidity had higher use of all primary healthcare, social care, and secondary care services compared to others with lower multimorbidity levels.

In a large comprehensive study in Australia, Kendig et al [[2012](#page95)] linked a population survey to administrative health and social care databases. The purpose of this study was to identify clusters of service users and did not specifically measure the interaction between health and social care services. Using k-means cluster analysis, the study identified nine clusters of service utilisation - three of which accounted for the vast amount of total use.

Diﬀerences in the systems of health and social care, data types, outcomes, and analysis techniques make it impossible to draw robust conclusions from these studies. They each demonstrate, however, that linking administrative data sources is a feasible option for this type of research and that these techniques may be able to improve understanding of the interaction between health and social care services.

33

Chapter 2. Literature Review

**2.3.4 Summary**

Public policy in Scotland has been edging towards greater integration of health and social care services since the devolved Scottish Parliament was set-up in 1997. A lack of progress in shifting care from secondary to community settings through policy alone prompted legislation to formalise the integration of these services - a law which came into eﬀect on the 1st April 2016.

Almost all areas of Scotland have opted to employ a body-corporate model of integra-tion where health boards and local authorities devolve responsibility and budgets to an Integrated Joint Board that sets local priorities and directs how services will be delivered. Early indications suggest IJBs have not yet overcome governance, budgetary, or workforce issues to make any improvements in nationally set outcome indicators.

Very little research has been conducted into the interaction of health and social care services at the user level. Most studies and reports focus on the structural implications of integrating care instead. Novel techniques involving the linkage of administrative data sources at the individual-level are a feasible way of filling the gap in knowledge about the interaction of these services and the impacts they have on service-users.

**2.4 Multimorbidity**

**2.4.1 Why focus on Multimorbidity?**

Internationally, provision of social care has become one of the most important issues for policy makers in recent years [[OECD/EU](#page99), [2013](#page99), [Humphries et al.](#page94), [2016](#page94)]. Some of the key principles of health and social care integration legislation in Scotland are aimed at improving care for those with multiple long-term health conditions - also known as multimorbidity [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2016b](#page103), [Audit-Scotland](#page86), [2016a](#page86)]. In Scotland, approximately two-thirds of individuals receiving social care services are over the age of 65 [[Scottish-Government](#page103), [2016a](#page103)] whilst approximately two-thirds of all those over the age of 65 have multimorbidity [[Barnett et al.](#page86), [2012](#page86)].

It would seem intuitive that a large proportion of those receiving social care (if not all) have multimorbidity. However, no single data source exists that allows this comparison

34

Chapter 2. Literature Review

to be made. Nevertheless, guidelines exist for healthcare professionals to assist in assessing the social care needs of older people with multiple long term conditions [[NICE](#page99), [2015](#page99)]. Multimorbidity is associated with a number of negative outcomes including increased health care usage [[NICE](#page99), [2016](#page99)]. Whether multimorbidity increases use of social care services is unknown but this could have an important role in informing policy decisions regarding social care provision.

Levels of multimorbidity in the Scottish population follow a stark socioeconomic profile with those of lower socioeconomic position having higher levels of multiple conditions and more complex care needs [[Barnett et al.](#page86), [2012](#page86), [Mercer et al.](#page98), [2009](#page98)]. This inequality in outcome is compounded by the fact that primary care provision in areas of higher socioeconomic disadvantage, ergo areas of higher need, receive the same or less funding as other more aﬄuent areas. This inequity in provision of service demonstrates existence of the inverse care law in primary care services [[Tudor-Hart](#page104), [1971](#page104), [Mercer et al.](#page98), [2012](#page98), [McLean et al.](#page98), [2015](#page98)] and has already been discussed in section [2.2.5](#page29).

It is too early to say if health and social care integration result in better or worse outcomes for people with multimorbidity. However, in order to make that assessment, a fuller understanding of the term “multimorbidity” is required. The rest of this section outlines the academic literature regarding concepts of multimorbidity, how it is defined, how it is measured, and finally epidemiological research.

**2.4.2 Definitions**

Despite the increasing importance of multimorbidity on health care systems, there has been some debate internationally in finding an agreed definition of the term or concept [[Almirall and Fortin](#page85), [2013](#page85), [Lefevre et al.](#page96), [2014](#page96)]. Van den Akker et al [[1996](#page105)] first made the distinction between the terms comorbidity and multimorbidity. Comorbidity was originally described by Fenstein [[Feinstein](#page91), [1970](#page91), pp.467] who stated, “In a patient with a particular index disease, the term co-morbidity refers to any additional co-existing ailment.” Van Den Akker et al. [[1996](#page105), pp.65] used the term multimorbidity to describe, “. . . any co-occurrence of medical conditions within a person.” In this sense, multimorbidity does not rely on the presence of a primary, or index, disease but refers to the overall state of multiple illnesses.

Further development of definitions is provided by Valderas et al. [[Valderas et al.](#page105), [2009](#page105)]

35

Chapter 2. Literature Review

who characterise the construct of the term comorbidity found in the literature in four main groups; (a) comorbidity – additional diseases in the context of an index disease, (b) multimorbidity – more than one disease within an individual (without reference to an index disease), (c) morbidity burden – total impact of physiological dysfunction linked to patient outcomes and (d) patient complexity – the eﬀect of non-health characteristics (e.g. deprivation, culture, environment) on morbidity burden.

Valderas et al. [[Valderas et al.](#page105), [2009](#page105)] discuss these four constructs of comorbidity further in relation to three main research areas; clinical care, epidemiology & public health, and health service planning. It is suggested that comorbidity may be a more valid definition for use in specialist clinical care, whereas multimorbidity and morbidity burden would be more appropriate in primary care research. In epidemiological and public health research, the definitions of either comorbidity or multimorbidity would be of use depending on the origin of the diseases being studied and the particular research questions being investigated. Morbidity burden and patient complexity are, according to Valderas et al. [[Valderas et al.](#page105), [2009](#page105)], the most appropriate definitions for research exploring healthcare use and costs.

A further definition of multimorbidity is oﬀered by the European General Practice Research Network (EGPRN) who report findings of a systematic review in the con-struction of their definition. Citing over 100 diﬀerent definitions for multimorbidity in academic research, the EGPRN [[Le Reste et al.](#page96), [2013](#page96), pp.1] aimed to clarify the concept of multimorbidity and define the term as:

"...any combination of chronic disease with at least one other disease (acute or chronic) biopsychosocial factor (associated or not) or somatic risk factor."

This definition goes some way to capture the complexity of the concept of multimorbidity as explained by Valderas et al. [[2009](#page105)] but has not ended debate on the matter.

More recently, a systematic review focused on which diseases, risk factors and symptoms are included in varying definitions of multimorbidity [[Willadsen et al.](#page106), [2016](#page106)]. Whilst the majority of included studies in the review indicated multimorbidity as the presence of two or more conditions, Willadsen et al [[2016](#page106)] found the total number of diseases, risk factors, and symptoms used varied from 4 to 147. Of the 167 included articles in the review, 115 diﬀerent ways of defining multimorbidity were identified [[Willadsen](#page106)

[36](#page106)

[Chapter 2. Literature Review](#page106)

[et al.](#page106), [2016](#page106)].

In a recently published guideline, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) [[NICE](#page99), [2016](#page99)] acknowledge the complexity of defining multimorbidity. NICE agree with other commentators [[Mercer et al.](#page98), [2009](#page98)] that basing the definition of multimorbidity on two or more health conditions *only* does not fully capture a clinically meaningful picture of the concept. The guideline highlights the fact that many people defined as multimorbid in this way may not be ill and have excellent quality of life requiring little or no health care input [[NICE](#page99), [2016](#page99)]. For this reason the guideline is aimed at people with more than 1 long-term condition with any of the following:-

* Diﬃculty managing treatments or day-to-day activities.
* Care from multiple services and requiring care from a new service.
* Both long-term physical and mental health conditions.
* Frailty.
* Frequent use of unplanned or emergency care.
* Prescription of multiple, regular medicines.

[[NICE](#page99), [2016](#page99)]

Although multimorbidity may seem to be an intuitive thing to understand, defining a useful concept of the term has proved to be much more diﬃcult [[Guthrie et al.](#page93), [2011](#page93)]. The most commonly accepted term in academic literature is; “the co-occurrence of two or more long-term conditions in an individual.” This definition will be used for the purposes of this thesis.

Whilst the definition may appear to give some clarity, further questions arise - there are wide variations in the number of conditions from which this definition can be based.

**2.4.3 Measurement**

The findings of three recent systematic reviews have highlighted the myriad ways researchers have approached the measurement of multimorbidity [[de Groot et al.](#page89), [2004](#page89), [Diederichs et al.](#page90), [2011](#page90), [Huntley et al.](#page94), [2012](#page94)]. Each review aimed to collate evidence of measurement tools in comorbidity or multimorbidity but from diﬀerent perspectives: De Groot et al [[2004](#page89)] searched for comorbidity indices to inform research into Multiple Sclerosis, Diederichs et al [[2011](#page90)] specifically searched for multimorbidity measurement

37

Chapter 2. Literature Review

indices, whereas Huntley et al [[2012](#page94)] searched for measures of multimorbidity used only in primary care research. The systematic reviews found 13, 39 and 17 exclusive ways of measuring multimorbidity or comorbidity respectively. The number of medical conditions included in these measurements varied from 4 to 102 [[2011](#page90)]. Most indices are developed from secondary care populations but many have been adapted for other populations including primary care [[Diederichs et al.](#page90), [2011](#page90), [Huntley et al.](#page94), [2012](#page94)].

There are two main ways of measuring multimorbidity: simple disease counts or using an index which applies weights to either prescribed medications or medical conditions and other factors in an attempt to explain severity of illness [[de Groot et al.](#page89), [2004](#page89), [Diederichs](#page90) [et al.](#page90), [2011](#page90), [Huntley et al.](#page94), [2012](#page94)]. In primary care research, the most frequently used measurement is simple disease counts [[Huntley et al.](#page94), [2012](#page94)]. This may because of the ease with which it can be administered compared to more complex indices such as the Charlson index [[Charlson et al.](#page88), [1987](#page88)] or Chronic Disease Score [[Von Korﬀ et al.](#page105), [1992](#page105)] and their variations.

Despite the large number of multimorbidity indices available, Huntley et al [[2012](#page94)] cite evidence that suggests simple counts of diseases or medications are almost as eﬀective as the more complex indices at predicting mortality or health care use in the primary care setting. However, when aiming to predict mortality in primary care, Huntley et al [[2012](#page94)] recommend the best measurement of multimorbidity to be provided by the Charlson index [[Charlson et al.](#page88), [1987](#page88)] and its variations. Measurement of multimorbidity in relation to primary care healthcare use can be predicted with equivalence by either; the Adjusted Clinical Group system [[Starfield et al.](#page104), [1991](#page104)], the Charlson index [[Charlson](#page88) [et al.](#page88), [1987](#page88)], or disease counts [[Huntley et al.](#page94), [2012](#page94)].

Disease counts were also found by Huntley et al [[2012](#page94)] to have good evidence to suggest they provide a robust measure of multimorbidity in relation to quality of life, as does the Charlson index [[Charlson et al.](#page88), [1987](#page88)]. A count of medicines was found to be a good predictor of primary care use and mortality in a more recent paper [[Brilleman and Salisbury](#page87), [2013](#page87)]. In their paper, Perkins et al [[2004](#page100)] argue that indices developed in the secondary care setting, such as the Charlson index, should be used with caution in other settings despite adaptions. More recently, Wallace et al [[2016](#page105)] found little diﬀerence between simple (count) and complex (index) measures when predicting hospital admission but noted that all measures of multimorbidity alone were poor predictors of the outcome.

38

Chapter 2. Literature Review

An emerging method of measuring multimorbidity is to identify clusters of medical conditions that co-exist in individuals at rates higher than would be expected - or non-random prevalence. Recent research and academic discussion suggests identification of disease clusters may enable clearer answers to clinically relevant research questions than currently employed measures [[Le Reste et al.](#page95), [2015](#page95); RN109; [Prados-Torres et al.](#page101), [2014](#page101); [Sinnige et al.](#page103), [2013](#page103); [Holden et al.](#page94), [2011](#page94); [Marengoni et al.](#page97), [2011](#page97); [Valderas et al.](#page105),

[2009](#page105)]. Statistical techniques employed in attempts to identify such clusters include: factor analysis, cluster analysis, the observed-to-expected ratio, multiple correspondence analysis [[Prados-Torres et al.](#page101), [2014](#page101), [Clerencia-Sierra et al.](#page88), [2015](#page88)], principal component analysis, latent class analysis [[Islam et al.](#page94), [2014](#page94), [Larsen et al.](#page95), [2017](#page95)], and machine learning techniques [[Schiltz et al.](#page102), [2017](#page102)].

In their systematic review of clustering methods, Prados-Torres et al [[2014](#page101)] found wide variations in approaches to clustering and characteristics of populations studied. As opposed to many of the studies included in the review, they recommend future attempts at clustering diseases use; population-sized datasets, statistical techniques that are suited to the dichotomous nature of diagnostic variables, and large numbers of conditions from which to form clusters [[Prados-Torres et al.](#page101), [2014](#page101)].

Prados-Torres et al [[2014](#page101)] identified three groups of patterns common to all included stud-ies in their review despite marked heterogeneity namely; cardiovascular and metabolic diseases, mental health conditions, and musculoskeletal disorders. Whilst identification of groups may have some benefit in terms of identifying causal mechanisms between diseases, whether they are useful or meaningful in clinical terms is a matter of debate.

**2.4.4** **Epidemiology**

Sections [2.4.2](#page45) and [2.4.3](#page47) describe the wide variations in definitions and measures of multimorbidity. It is, therefore, unsurprising that there is marked heterogeneity in reports of multimorbidity prevalence. Fortin et al [[2012](#page91)] illustrate this by reporting variations in the prevalence of multimorbidity from 3.5% to 98.5% across 21 studies included in their systematic review. The variation in findings is explained by the vastly diﬀerent populations, settings, data collection techniques, and definitions of multimorbidity used by included studies.

A more recent systematic review concentrating on primary care populations and aiming

39

Chapter 2. Literature Review

to describe prevalence, causes and patterns of multimorbidity [[Violan et al.](#page105), [2014](#page105)] found reports of multimorbidity prevalence between 12.9% and 95.1%. Similar variations in definitions, measures and populations were found. The number of conditions used to estimate multimorbidity prevalence varied between 5 and 335 [[Violan et al.](#page105), [2014](#page105)].

In an attempt to standardise conditions to be considered using international disease classification labels, a more recent paper included 60 conditions [[Calderón-Larrañaga](#page88) [et al.](#page88), [2016](#page88)]. Van den Akker et al [-RN91] highlighted the complications that can arise when attempting to measure prevalence of multimorbidity and suggest that certain decisions made in study design will depend on the specific question being interrogated by researchers (e.g. the number of diseases to include in the measure of multimorbidity or the age-range of the sample). The systematic reviews of Violan et al [[2014](#page105)] and Fortin et al [[2012](#page91)] may reflect the varying decisions made by research teams in study design. Despite the diﬃculties in synthesizing evidence on heterogeneous studies, Violan et al [[2014](#page105)] found strong relationships between multimorbidity and: age, female gender, low socioeconomic status, and mental health across studies in their review.

**2.4.5 Summary**

Multimorbidity is most commonly defined as the presence (or co-occurrence) of two or more long-term conditions in an individual. Debate continues as to the type and number of long-term conditions that should be included to provide a meaningful concept for individuals, clinicians and healthcare organisations. The lack of a standard definition is mirrored in the myriad ways of measuring multimorbidity with various counts, indices, and clusters. Despite this, evidence suggests multimorbidity is increasing in prevalence and has a strong socioeconomic pattern. As a result, policy needs to be tailored to account for the complex needs of the increasing numbers of people with multimorbidity.

**2.5** **Conclusion**

Access to social care varies significantly internationally and is influenced in two main ways; allocation of resources to providers of social care, and how these providers distribute services within local areas. Eligibility criteria are the main means of how services are rationed. Demographic change has resulted in increasing demand on social

40

Chapter 2. Literature Review

care services at the same time as budgets in the UK and Scotland have been drastically cut.

In response, new models of service delivery have been sought by governments. In Scotland, the formal integration of health and social care services has been implemented with the dual aims of increasing eﬃciency and quality of service. Individuals with multimorbidity are high users of both health and social care and are likely to be able to benefit most if integration achieves its aims.

Intuitively, social care can prevent unplanned used of unscheduled health care services but there is little evidence that suggests this is the case. Lack of data, particularly on social care, has made it diﬃcult to understand the interaction between these services. Routinely collected administrative data, along with new methods of linking records across sectors means that it is now possible to address this lack of evidence. One small study [[Porter et al.](#page101), [2016](#page101)] shows that linking individual-level health and social care data shows associations hidden in aggregate statistics.

Measuring multimorbidity is an inexact science with variation in the methods and number of conditions used. Simple counts of diseases or medicines have been shown to be as eﬃcacious a predictor of health care use as more complicated indices. Methods using statistical techniques to cluster regularly co-occurring health conditions may provide new insights into the social patterns of multimorbidity.

These broad issues inform the background of this thesis. Funding for the PhD was provided by the Scottish Government with the specific intention of exploring the possibilities of linking routinely held health and social care data to address these issues. Based on the aims and objectives described in chapter [1](#page11) and the literature reviewed in this chapter the following research questions have been formulated:-

In people over the age of 65 in Scotland:

1. (a) What are the socioeconomic, demographic, and geographic patterns in the use of social care?
   1. Is there an association between multimorbidity status and the amount and type of social care use over time? Does this vary by the patterns described in 1(a)?
2. (a) Is there an association in the use of social care services, multimorbidity status and unscheduled health care use?

41

Chapter 2. Literature Review

(b) Do multimorbidity status and social care use predict mortality?

**2.5.1 Thesis structure**

Chapter [3](#page53) is a methodological chapter with the aim of identifying clinically meaningful clusters of health conditions from a nationally representative dataset. Given the wide approaches to measuring multimorbidity, identifying clusters of individuals with similar multimorbidity profiles could act as a useful control variable in analysis of outcomes. The chapter investigates whether finite-mixture models can identify meaningful clusters from the dataset.

Chapter [4](#page73) discusses the institutions and infrastructure that enable data linkage to take place in Scotland. Each of the data sources used in the linkage is described in detail. This chapter also describes the complex information governance process involved with completing data linkage projects and how a “safe haven” environment is used for data analysis.

Chapter [5](#page76) describes the methods employed to answer the above research questions. A rationale of how the study cohort was chosen is provided along with a description, for each data source, of the methodological techniques used to link to the cohort, the techniques used to clean data, and how summary measures were produced. Statistical methods used to answer each research question are also described.

Social care data for the main linkage project was obtained using the Social Care Survey published by the Scottish Government (as described in chapter [4](#page73)). This is cross-sectional data. In a short stand-alone results chapter, chapter [6](#page78) describes a pilot study based on 10 years of social care data from one Scottish local authority area - Renfrewshire council. The temporal variation in the amounts of home-care individuals received over this 10 year period is analysed to provide some validation of the measure of hours of home care used in the main linkage project.

Chapter [7](#page80) describes the results of analyses related to each research question.

Chapter [8](#page82) summarises the thesis arguments and findings and places them in context

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Appendices

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Appendices

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