

# Research integrity and research culture in the third sector

Lindsay Judge, Research Director  
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# What do we mean by research integrity?

- 4 key principles
  - Rigour
    - In gathering, storing and sharing data
  - Transparency
    - In research methods
    - Declarations of interest
  - Care and respect for research participants
    - Do no harm
  - Honesty
    - Reporting results
    - Citing other work
    - Admitting to mistakes

# Why is research integrity important?

- Formal reasons
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  - 'Do no harm' to research participants
- Impact reasons
  - RF's impact stems from the quality and replicability of our research

# Putting rigour into practice: An example

Snip of RF Covid-19 survey: May 2020

1	Work status in main job before coronavirus outbreak started (roughly early March)	1. Employed full time 2. Employed part time 3. Self-employed 4. Full-time student + full-time employed 5. Full-time student + part-time employed 6. Full-time student + self-employed 7. Full-time student only 8. Unemployed 9. Retired 10. Not working other	All	This could miss employed/self-employed but on maternity/paternity leave and off sick - problem?  This ignores multi-jobbing
2	Industry of main job before coronavirus outbreak		All previously working (top 6 options in Q1)	What other background info do we want about pre-CV - atypical? hours? Pay?
	Thinking about last week (w/c Monday 20 April), which of these best describes what has changed in the employed/self-employed main job you were doing before	1. I worked for the same employer/in the same self-employed role 2. I did not work in this role because I was off sick 3. I did not work in this role because I was on maternity/paternity leave 4. I did not work in this role because I have been furloughed 5. I did not work in this role because I took unpaid		I'm comfortable with just focusing on change here because we will get a cross-check of their current work status in background questions  Idea is to just focus on change from the pre-coronavirus job they told us about in Q1 here, and get at new work in separate question

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*When designing and fielding surveys....*

Think v hard about what you actually want to know/report

Take advice from survey design experts

Try ask qs that are similar to those in published surveys so can sense check

Think about samples/weighting

Publish the underlying data if possible

# Putting transparency into practice: An example

Snip from RF do file: Oct 2024

```
// this do file merges in vars from FRS datasets to HBAI
// LJ Oct 2024

set more off
clear all

global data "H:\RESEARCH AND POLICY\Housing\Housing & ethnicity note\Data sets"

help merge // worth reading!

*****
*** 1. Find and save out vars from FRS dataset want to merge into HBAI ***
*****

use "H:\RESEARCH AND POLICY\Data\FRS & HBAI\FRS\STATA\FRS 2022-23\stata11\househol.dta", clear
rename *, lower

tab bedroom6, m // take a look and see how many are missing - none here

keep sernum bedroom6 // sernum is the household ref so that is what enables you to link the data;
// add in any other household vars here that you need to bring into the HBAI dataset
gen mainyear=2022

save "$data/FRS_hh_test.dta", replace
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*When undertaking research...*

Replicability is key

Make sure method and assumptions are written down

Have a formal QA process where work is checked by others

Check results with other published work/experts in the field

# Putting care and respect into practice: An example

Snip from RF report on young people with mental health problems: February 2024

But young people's mental health also impacts wider, less tangible aspects of work. Some young people spoke openly about experiences of unfairness or discrimination at work, and a feeling that employers have negative impressions of workers with mental health problems.<sup>39</sup>

"That one-week period [of not facing prejudice] was the only time I got treated like the rest of the staff and not someone dragging them down, and it was a brilliant time, I'd happily work like that again. The money was £11 an hour so it was good money as well, but I would have done it for half that price just so I can actually have a working environment I'm comfortable in, instead what I've had to put up with."

(Young person, not university-educated, with mental health problems)

"I don't wanna be thrown into the category of the mental health persona, and there's a stigma that people with mental health are always doing bad, you'll take off those extra days..."

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*When undertaking qualitative research...*

Be clear with participants about the purpose

Get written consent and file

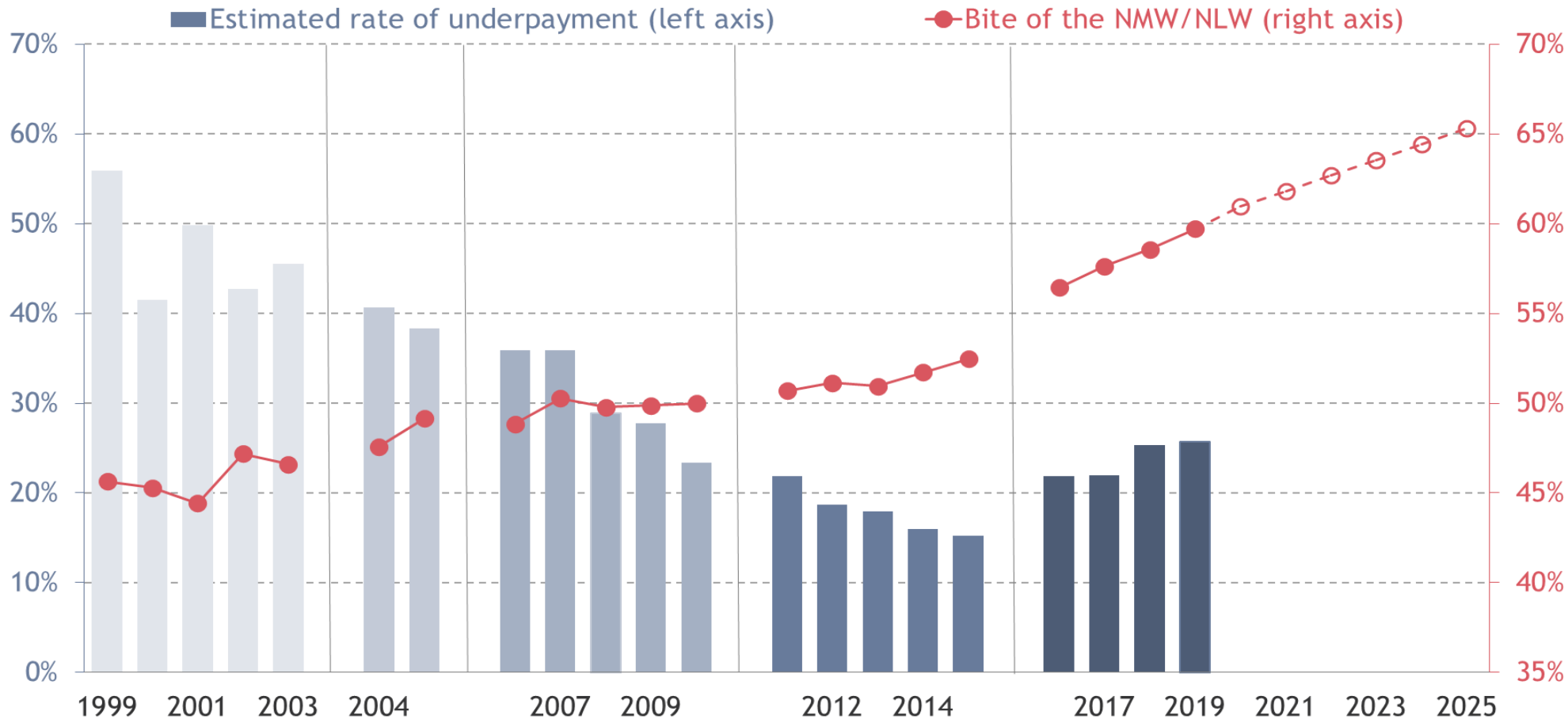
Take advice from experts/seniors

Be sensitive/know when to push and when to stop

Anonymise/store data in secure folder/destroy on competition

# Putting honesty into practice: An example

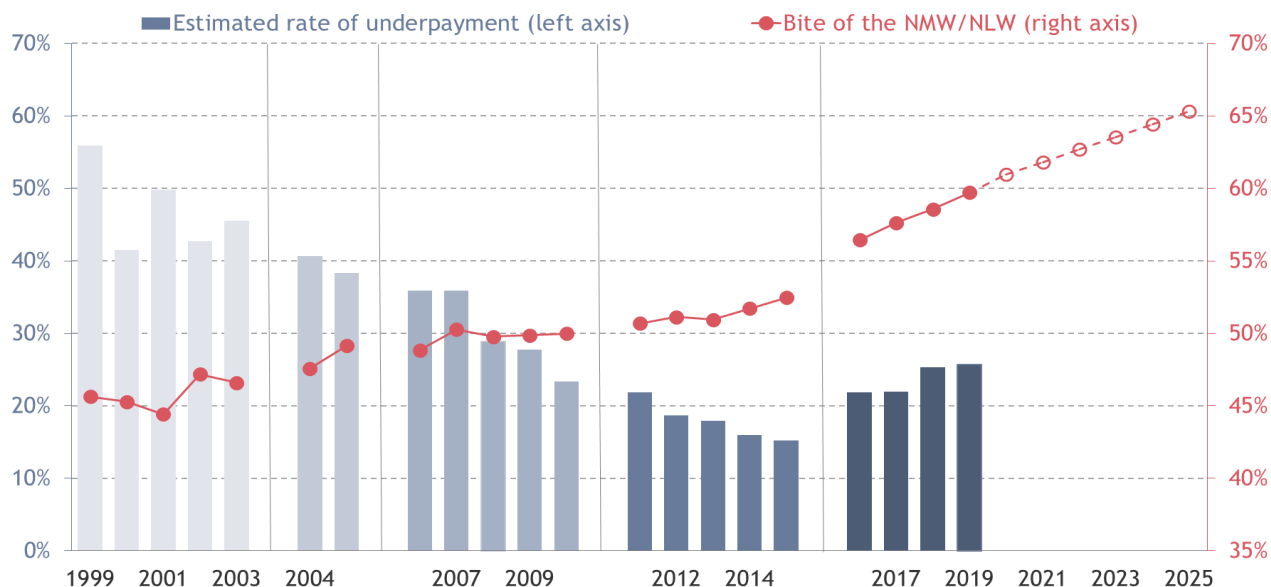
Proportion of workers paid or close to NMW that are underpaid (left axis) and 'bite' (right axis)



Notes: Different methods used to calculate underpayment rates 1999-2002, 2003-2005, 2006-2010 and 2011 onwards. Data for 2016-2018 are for different points in the minimum wage year than all other years, so cannot be directly compared. 'Bite' is NMW relative to median hourly wage for April of relevant year.  
Source: Low Pay Commission analysis of ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2000-2016, RF analysis of ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2017-2019

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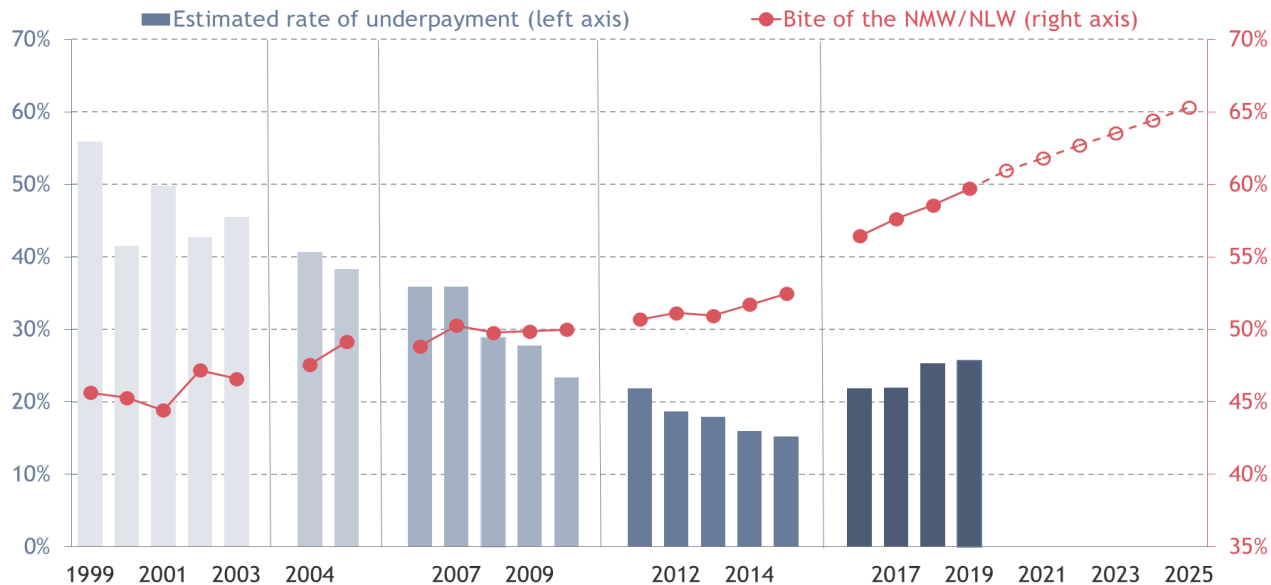


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*When reporting results*

Be very clear about what you are showing

Always include data source

Cite others research i.e. don't claim other's results

Include an annex on method where appropriate

Own any ambiguity

# Making sure things don't go wrong ... And what to do when they do

- Creating a culture of research excellence means...
  - Codifying policies and procedures
  - Explaining why it is important to staff, providing appropriate support
  - Accountability is key - where does responsibility sit
  - The more eyes the better - share, QA, check with externals
- When mistakes are made...
  - Own them immediately - withdraw the research if necessary; if publish a corrected version make clear how and when it was corrected
  - Investigate why the mistake happened - and put in place processes to reduce risk of a repeat
  - Consider if amounts to misconduct and take steps if so

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