

# THE DESIGN AND USE OF LOCAL METRICS TO EVALUATE PERFORMANCE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL CARE ORGANISATIONS

# PSSRU



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Paul Clarkson, David Challis, Sue Crompton, Michael Donnelly and Roger Beech

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**BACKGROUND** The Personal Social Services Research Unit has been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to investigate the measurement of local performance in social care organisations in England and Northern Ireland and how this relates to national performance. The study began in November 2006 and is to last for three years.

The ESRC's Public Services Quality, Performance and Delivery Programme is designed to raise questions concerning how public services are changing and how quality and performance are to be effectively measured. The programme has funded several projects which are evaluating how the situation across the UK compares with other countries and the issues this raises for the future monitoring of performance.

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**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY** The project has four aims: The first is to identify the variations in the way local social care organisations monitor their performance. The second is to examine the relationships between how measures are used in organisations and how these organisations are rated in national performance reporting to draw conclusions about the validity of national mechanisms for measuring performance. The third is to explore the influences on the level of performance of organisations, as rated in national data. The fourth is to observe what can be learned from other countries about the construction and use of measures to monitor local performance.

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**DESIGN** The study is in four stages reflecting the research aims. A literature review will first of all be undertaken to frame the research questions to be addressed, which

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The **Personal Social Services Research Unit** undertakes social and health care research, focusing particularly on policy research and analysis of equity and efficiency in community care and long term care and related areas, including services for elderly people, people with mental health problems and children in care. The Unit's work is funded mainly by the Department of Health.

The PSSRU Bulletin and publication lists are available free of charge from the PSSRU librarian in Canterbury (01227 827773) and on the Internet the Unit Web site can be found at <http://www.PSSRU.ac.uk>. The PSSRU was established at the University of Kent at Canterbury in 1974 and from 1996 has operated from three sites:

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**The University of Kent at Canterbury**  
PSSRU  
Cornwallis Building, University of Kent at  
Canterbury,  
Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NF  
Tel: 01227 823963 Fax: 01227 827038  
Email: [pssru@kent.ac.uk](mailto:pssru@kent.ac.uk)  
Site Director: Professor Ann Netten

**The London School of Economics**  
PSSRU  
Londont School of Economics,  
Houghton Street, London WC2 2AE  
Tel: 020 7955 6238 Fax: 020 7955 6131  
Email: [PSSRU@lsc.ac.uk](mailto:PSSRU@lsc.ac.uk)  
Site Director: Professor Martin Knapp

**The University of Manchester**  
PSSRU  
Dover Street Building  
The University of Manchester, Oxford Road,  
Manchester M13 9PL  
Tel: 0161 275 5250 Fax: 0161 275 5790  
Email: [pssru@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:pssru@manchester.ac.uk)  
Site Director: Professor David Challis

will include material from other public services such as the NHS and local authority services more generally. The stages of the study are:

- First, a national questionnaire survey to those responsible for performance monitoring in all local authority social care organisations in England and all health and social services trusts providing social care in Northern Ireland. The survey will include information on the range of measures used locally, the organisational context and the manner in which performance is measured.
- Second, an enquiry into the way in which patterns of local data use and approaches to performance monitoring relate to whether the organisations are rated as high or low performers nationally. This will be accomplished through multivariate analysis of items from the questionnaire survey and their links to national performance data.
- Third, an examination of the extent to which the performance of organisations, both cross sectionally and longitudinally, are associated with organisational and cultural factors. This will help to identify the local management arrangements which are associated with more successful monitoring. This will be accomplished by multivariate analysis from the questionnaire survey and national data, supplemented by interviews with managers in areas adopting distinctly different arrangements.
- Fourth, an investigation of how the UK top-down approach to measuring performance in this setting compares with a more local approach through a comparison with Japan, which is more ‘bottom-up’ – monitoring the care provided in municipalities (local government). This comparison will take the form of interviews with managers in a selection of organisations in the UK and Japan, selected on the basis of those organisations identified as examples of good practice, above.

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**OUTPUT**

The findings from the study will be disseminated via the reporting systems developed under the ESRC Programme ([www.publicservices.ac.uk](http://www.publicservices.ac.uk)) as well as via brief, accessible summaries of the research. Written information in the PSSRU Bulletin and papers in academic journals will also publicise the work. The findings will also be communicated by presentations at conferences and through PSSRU’s formal links with the Department of Health.

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**FURTHER INFORMATION**

The staff conducting the study are: Paul Clarkson, David Challis and Sue Crompton at PSSRU, University of Manchester; Michael Donnelly at the School of Medicine, Queen’s University, Belfast; and Roger Beech at the Centre for Health Planning and Management, Keele University. For further information please contact Paul Clarkson (0161 275 5674) or email [pssru@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:pssru@manchester.ac.uk).

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