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

Outline of a research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council

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

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.

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.

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 findings from the study will be disseminated via the reporting systems developed under the ESRC Programme (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.

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.