

LONG-TERM CARE COORDINATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE AT HOME – EXPLORING THE FLEXIBLE USE OF BUDGETS

PSSRU

Outline of a research project funded by the Department of Health

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BACKGROUND The Department of Health has commissioned the Personal Social Services Research Unit at Manchester to investigate long-term care coordination arrangements for older people living at home. This is one of two studies within the research programme to examine recent developments in care coordination arrangements in the light of the personalisation agenda. It will explore the extent of the flexible use of budgets to achieve personalised care. The other study will investigate the role of independent and voluntary organisations in care coordination for older people and their carers.

Policy guidance envisages that personal budgets will be introduced as a mechanism for allocating resources for care services in a transparent fashion permitting greater choice and flexibility. In advance of this, postal surveys undertaken by PSSRU in 2006 and 2008 revealed that a small number of local authorities had developed innovative arrangements for the flexible use of budgets in older people's services additional to direct payments and individual budgets.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY The purpose of this study is to explore practice and procedures which facilitate the flexible use of resources within local authorities. It will investigate the relationship between this flexible use of budgets and other aspects of care management. Additionally it will explore areas intrinsic to the development of the flexible use of budgets in the sub-set of authorities reporting this innovative practice.

DESIGN This study is in two stages. Information will be taken from two postal questionnaires; one conducted in 2006 and another in 2008. Stage one will utilise data from the 2006 survey and identify from this the first sub-set of authorities that had in place arrangements for the flexible use of budgets and may be regarded as 'early adopters'

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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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of this approach. Baseline exploratory findings will be produced by comparing this sub-set with the remaining authorities on a number of aspects of their care management arrangements. Those authorities who were not ‘early adopters’ but who subsequently reported arrangements for the flexible use of budgets in the 2008 survey will comprise the second sub-set. Stage two will comprise telephone interviews with a sample of managers responsible for service development or commissioning in old age services, to identify salient factors in the development of flexibility in service provision from their experience to date. This sample will be drawn from both sub-sets.

OUTCOMES

It is anticipated that changes consequent upon the introduction of personal budgets will influence organisational processes within local authorities and the composition of the social care workforce. The study will provide current information about the processes and services emerging in local authorities together with implications that these may have for the workforce undertaking a care management role. This information will be of value to policy makers and managers in local authorities.

FURTHER INFORMATION

This work is being undertaken by David Challis, Caroline Sutcliffe, Chengqiu Xie, Jane Hughes, Helen Chester and Siobhan Reilly. For further information please contact Caroline Sutcliffe (telephone 0161 275 5227, email caroline.sutcliffe@manchester.ac.uk).
