

# NATIONAL TRENDS AND LOCAL DELIVERY IN OLD AGE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

PSSRU

*Outline of a research programme undertaken by the Personal Social Services Research Unit [PSSRU] at the University of Manchester and the Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust. This work has been funded by the National Institute for Health Research*

August 2008

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**BACKGROUND** The increasing demand for mental health care attendant upon the phenomenon of demographic ageing presents a particular challenge to the NHS, for such disorders can affect every aspect of a person's functioning, exacerbate physical ill-health and cause significant personal and family distress. However evidence to inform the organisation and delivery of services for this vulnerable client group is - at best - limited and in the absence of such research a number of different, largely unevaluated, models have evolved.

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**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY** The planned programme addresses the urgent need for better evidence on the most appropriate and cost-effective ways to care for older people with mental health problems through series of distinct, but related, projects. It has three main objectives:

- To identify key changing patterns of national variation in the range, delivery and organisation of mental health services for older people;
- To identify whether, how, and at what cost the mix of institutional and community-based services could be more optimally developed in one locality; and
- To explore the costs and benefits of different models of community mental health teams for older people (CMHTsOP).

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**DESIGN** The programme will be conducted over a 40 month period and has five main strands:

- A systematic literature review focusing on the levels and patterns of care, the organisation of CMHTsOP and the provision of specialist mental health support for older care home residents will set the context for, and directly inform, the subsequent work.
- Two national surveys of CMHTsOP at the beginning and end of the programme will identify patterns and progress in the organisation and delivery of services, complementing and linking with the national service mapping initiative.

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- A detailed ‘balance of care’ study of the mix of community and institutional services provided for older people in Manchester. This will explore whether certain groups of clients could be more cost-effectively supported in different settings/by different services. This work will draw heavily on the collection of local data, and will be firmly grounded in the experience of clients, carers and practitioners/clinicians.
  - A natural experiment with economic evaluation will explore the costs and benefits of selected, qualitatively different models of CMHTs/OP identified in the above national survey. This work will involve the collection of detailed information about staff and clients’ experience and outcomes.
  - Two national surveys of care home managers and consultant psychiatrists will investigate the range, characteristics and quality of specialist mental health support for older care home residents.
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## OUTCOMES

The research programme seeks to inform, influence and improve decision-making at both local and national levels. Dissemination will be through a wide variety of methods, including two national conferences; accessible reports; practitioner workbooks; and peer-reviewed articles.

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## THE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

The research is led by a partnership bringing together substantial expertise in the research and practice of care for older people with mental health problems, including:

- PSSRU, University of Manchester (Lead research team)
  - Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust
  - PSSRU, London School of Economics
  - Health Care Methodology, University of Manchester
  - Manchester Mental Health Joint Commissioning Team
  - Patient and community group representatives
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## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact Mark Wilberforce at the University of Manchester, tel: 0161 275 5391 e-mail: [mark.wilberforce@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:mark.wilberforce@manchester.ac.uk)

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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 was established at the University of Kent at Canterbury in 1974 and from 1996 has operated from three sites:

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