

ENHANCING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ASSESSMENT IN COMMUNITY CARE

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 (PSSRU) in Manchester to evaluate the self assessment pilot projects. A number of authorities have received some funding from central government to stimulate innovations in practice designed to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of care to service users. These innovations are set in the context of recognition of the importance of involving users as fully as possible in their own assessments and longstanding concerns about the efficiency of the assessment process. For older people this is set in the context of the introduction of the Single Assessment Process.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY The project aims to evaluate specific projects nominated by the Department of Health designed to assess the capacity to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of assessment processes within community care arrangements. The research will explore the extent to which changes in approaches to assessment can allow the process to be undertaken in a more streamlined way with associated reductions in the bureaucracy and commensurate user satisfaction.

DESIGN This is a two year study beginning in the autumn of 2006. Fieldwork will be undertaken in all the sites hosting the self assessment pilot projects. The research will focus upon different approaches to self assessment and it is planned that in each of the participating authorities there will be two phases in the data collection process.

In the first phase the research strategies to be used in each of the participating authorities will be confirmed, together with details of how the data will be collected. This will require a detailed description of the service initiative designed to improve effectiveness and efficiency in the local authority and the progress made in its implementation. Staff from PSSRU in conjunction with

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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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colleagues in the participating authorities will agree the most appropriate research strategies for the initiative under investigation taking account of progress in implementing the service initiative and the timeframe for the completion of the research.

The second and more extensive phase of data collection will encompass the collection of the data in each of the local authorities within the agreed timeframe. Some of this data will require extraction from existing records and where this is required PSSRU will assist in the development of an appropriate data extraction tool. In other circumstances PSSRU will provide proformas for completion.

Dissemination	Dissemination of the findings will involve a report of the study and journal articles. The report will also be made available on the PSSRU website. Arrangements will also be made with participating authorities for them to receive feedback relating to particular initiatives.
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FURTHER INFORMATION	The grant holders for this study at the University of Manchester are: David Challis, Jane Hughes and Paul Clarkson. For further information please contact PSSRU@manchester.ac.uk (telephone 0161 275 5229)
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