

DELAYED DISCHARGES FROM HOSPITAL

PSSRU

Outline of a research and development project undertaken by the Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU). This work was commissioned by the Delayed Transfers of Care Steering Group in Stockport (Stockport Primary Care Trust, Stockport NHS Foundation Trust and Social Services Department) in November 2004

David Challis, Jane Hughes and Janette Bateson

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BACKGROUND The Community Care (Delayed Discharges) Act of 2003 placed new duties upon both councils with social services responsibilities and the NHS in respect of communication between health and social care agencies about the discharge of patients and the involvement of patients and carers in this process. In particular it sought to strengthen joint working and encourage clear and timely communication between the NHS and councils; improve assessment and the provision of community care for patients on discharge from hospital; and encourage the development of new services to facilitate this process, prevent unnecessary admission and promote the independence of patients/users.

People over the age of 65 years constitute the largest proportion of patients discharged from hospital. It is therefore important that this legislative change is viewed in the context of the objectives of the National Service Framework for Older People which seeks to provide person centred care, tailor services to individual need and promote the health and independence of older people and the principles and practice enshrined in the Single Assessment Process, together with NHS responsibilities for continuing care.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY The study is designed to inform local managers in both the social services department and the NHS of the characteristics and circumstances of those patients who come within the parameters of the new legislation in order that they can amend and improve the assessment of their needs prior to discharge from hospital and commission appropriate services to facilitate this process.

DESIGN This work will make use of local data collected retrospectively on Stockport residents discharged from hospitals within the Stockport NHS Foundation Trust. A stratified random sampling approach will be used to identify a cohort of people discharged from hospital within the time frame prescribed by the new legislation and those categorised as delayed discharges. The work will be undertaken in two stages.

- In the first stage information relating to patient/user characteristics, demographic information and service receipt details will be collected. Data will be extracted from patient/user records in both the NHS and the social services department for this purpose.

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- The second stage will comprise the analysis of this data in order to identify the most salient factors in both the characteristics and circumstances of patients/users which impede arrangements for their safe and effective discharge from hospital. The findings will be reported to the funders, to inform both practice and service commissioning.
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OUTCOMES

This is one of the first pieces of work to employ an evidence-based approach to explore the operation of the new legislation. Firmly grounded in local practice its findings will, nevertheless, have a resonance for the provision of health and social services to patients on discharge from hospital nationwide.

FURTHER INFORMATION

This work is being undertaken by David Challis and Jane Hughes of PSSRU at the University of Manchester and Janette Bateson of Stockport Social Services Department. For further information please contact Jane Hughes (telephone 0161 275 5229, email Jane.Hughes@manchester.ac.uk).

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 (01 227 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:

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
Site Director: Professor Ann Netten

The London School of Economics
PSSRU
London School of Economics,
Houghton Street, London WC2 2AE
Tel: 020 7955 6238 Fax: 020 7955 6131
Email: pssru@lse.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@man.ac.uk
Site Director: Professor David Challis
