

Further information

For further information on the SAP study see the project outline at www.pssru.ac.uk/pdf/newP060.pdf

Two Research and Policy Updates are available:

Update 1:
www.pssru.ac.uk/pdf/MCpdfs/SAPupdate1.pdf

Update 2:
www.pssru.ac.uk/pdf/MCpdfs/R&Pupdate2.pdf

For further information about the programme please contact PSSRU@manchester.ac.uk

Research Programme Summary

Assessment, Performance Measurement and User Satisfaction in Older People's Services

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One of the longstanding features of this programme of research is that studies within it address the care of vulnerable older people both in their own homes and in residential and nursing settings. It has also traditionally had a broad perspective, addressing issues relevant to individual service users and those pertinent to service monitoring and improvement. A selection of these with relevant publications is included, together with more details of the recently completed evaluation of self assessment pilot projects commissioned by the Department of Health.

- In advance of the **common assessment framework for individual social care needs** a systematic evaluation of development and impact of the Single Assessment Process in England has been undertaken. It included the perspective of multiple stakeholders – service users and carers, managers in health and social care and specialist clinicians – and key issues associated with its implementation. These findings are relevant to the composition of the new framework and the process of its introduction.
- With respect to the increasing importance placed on **self assessment of individual social care needs** an evaluation was undertaken at selected sites. To inform the debate about the form and content of self assessment, findings were reported by setting – assessment and care management arrangements, preventative services and occupational therapy services – and included information about the satisfaction of 1,800 people who received a self or professional assessment and 1,500 people who completed self assessments.
- Our study of **performance measurement** looks at variations in the way local social care organisations monitor their activity. It examines the influences on the level of performance of organisations, as rated in national data; how measures are used in local decision making and how this relates to the way these organisations are rated in national performance reporting. It aims to identify patterns of local performance utilisation and to observe what can be learned from other countries about the construction and use of measures to monitor local performance.
- In response to the policy goal of **increasing the competence of the workforce caring for older people with dementia**, a study was undertaken which assessed the degree and knowledge of staff providing direct care to older people with dementia in care homes. It also sought to identify factors which can influence staff confidence in dealing with behaviour associated with the condition. Findings were based on questionnaires completed by 914 care staff in 30 homes.

Selected publications

- Abendstern, M., Clarkson, P., Challis, D., Hughes, J. and Sutcliffe, C. (2008) Implementing the Single Assessment Process for older people in England: lessons from the literature, *Research Policy and Planning*, 26, 1, 33–44.
- Challis, D., Brand, C., Abendstern, M., Clarkson, P., Hughes, J., O'Shea, S., Tucker, S. and Wenborn, J. (2008) Enhancing the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Assessment in Community Care, Executive Summary, PSSRU DPM177, University of Manchester.
- Clarkson, P. (2008) Performance measurement in social care: looking backwards and forwards, *British Journal of Social Work*, doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcn096.
- Clarkson, P., Crompton, S., Challis, D., Donnelly, M., Beech, R. (2007) The Design and Use of Local Metrics to Evaluate Performance: A Comparative Analysis of Social Care Organisations – Literature review and planning document, www.publicservices.ac.uk/research/the-design-and-use-of-local-metrics-to-evaluate-performance-a-comparative-analysis-of-social-care-organisations/.
- Hughes, J., Bagley, H., Reilly, S., Burns, A., Challis, D. (2008) Care staff working with people with dementia: training, knowledge and confidence, *Dementia*, 7, 227–238.
- Sutcliffe, C., Hughes, J., Abendstern, M., Clarkson, P. and Challis, D. (2008) Developing multi-disciplinary assessment – exploring the evidence from a social care perspective, *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, DOI: 10.1002/gps.2069.
- Worden, A., Challis, D., Hancock, G., Woods, B. and Orrell, M. (2008) Identifying need in care homes for people with dementia: The relationship between two standard assessment tools, *Aging and Mental Health*, 12, 719–728.

Enhancing the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Assessment in Community Care

The Department of Health selected local authorities to act as pilot sites for exploring the potential benefits of self assessment in different contexts of community care. For both policy makers in central government and those seeking to implement initiatives in the delivery of adult social care services this study has provided evidence to inform future decision making. Furthermore, for managers in the local authorities in which the pilot projects were based, this evaluation has provided the opportunity to develop and demonstrate data which helped to embed self assessment within existing service structures. In this way the process of establishing self assessment procedures locally has contributed to a greater understanding of its potential and actual utility.

Self assessment is understood to be a process in which a person assesses their own needs without or with only limited professional involvement, with the ultimate goal of determining eligibility for assistance and/or arranging care. Its relevance as a social care practice stems from the fact that it has been

identified as a possible facilitator of more personalised as well as more cost-effective service delivery. However, the current state of the relevant literature suggests that knowledge about virtually every aspect – its very definition, application, scope, effectiveness – is underdeveloped. Accordingly, the aims of the study were to classify and describe self assessment practices, evaluate their impact on user satisfaction and cost-effectiveness, and appraise their management implementation and organisational sustainability.

Guided by selective literature reviews, a multi-method approach was employed with the ultimate aim of empirically triangulating the topic. Data were provided by a combination of service user records held by the authorities, a user satisfaction survey, document research and structured interviews (see box 1). The bulk of the analysis was descriptive and comparative in nature, mapping out the realities of self assessment and placing them in the context of established practices wherever possible. Some statistical modelling was undertaken in order to explore how individual characteristics and assessment modalities might influence user satisfaction. To this end, administrative and survey data could be linked for a subsample of cases. The managers' perspective on self assessment, as elicited in a grounded theory approach, added fruitful qualitative insights to the quantitative analysis.

The main findings include the observation that self assessees are somewhat atypical compared to traditional user groups. Accordingly, a profile emerges of users for whom self assessment may not be viable, such as people with cognitive impairment and in generally poor health.

Furthermore, there is a likely trade-off between efficiency savings and enhancement of the user experience (see Figure 1). Two conflicting goals – delivery of high quality services to a wider group of users and the quest for greater efficiencies in service delivery – cannot be achieved simultaneously, thus requiring the policymaker to strike a feasible balance. Finally, the use of information technology was not as successful or important as anticipated. Related to this is the finding that a service response which has been determined by an assessor is more tailored to individual needs and circumstances.

Box 1 Types of data used in multi-method approach

- A core dataset containing socio-demographic characteristics, health and activities of daily living
- Records on services requested and received by community care recipients
- Response times evaluating the timeliness of assessment and service delivery
- A user satisfaction survey aimed at exploring different dimensions of the user experience
- Assessment pathway information to make authorities' care processes visible and thereby estimate their costs
- Documentary evidence regarding the intended implementation of self assessment practices
- Interview data about the managers' experiences with innovation, implementation and sustainability of new assessment practices

Figure 1 Cost-effectiveness plane (change in cost against change in user satisfaction) for selected projects

