

The PSSRU

The Personal Social Services Research Unit was established in 1974 and now has branches at three UK universities: the University of Kent, the London School of Economics and Political Science, and the University of Manchester.

Its mission is to conduct high quality research on social and health care to inform and influence policy, practice and theory.

Contact details for the staff at the three PSSRU branches are on pages 38–39.

PSSRUlist

To subscribe to this email list for announcements of publications, events and developments at the PSSRU, go to www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/pssrulist.html

PSSRU website

<http://www.PSSRU.ac.uk/>

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The three branches of the PSSRU have been recognised as Investors in People.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

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Introduction

Welcome to the 18th PSSRU Bulletin. The Bulletin aims to provide a window onto the work of the three branches of the PSSRU – at the Universities of Kent and Manchester and the London School of Economics and Political Science. PSSRU mainly carries out research on adult social care and is funded by core grants from the Department of Health and also a range of other sources including research councils, charitable organisations and other government departments.

Over the past year, the national profile of adult social care has continued to grow. At the end of last year the Department of Health announced its intention to publish a Green Paper on care and support by the end of this year, but now looking set for publication in Spring 2009. We have had a change in social care minister and indeed, an elevation of that responsibility from the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Minister of State level.

Reflecting its commitment to supporting good quality research in social care, the Department of Health is setting up a new School for Social Care Research under the auspices of its National Institute for Health Research. The NIHR School will receive funding of £15m over five years in the first instance and will carry out research aimed at improving adult social care practice in England, covering professional and non-professional staff working in both the statutory and independent sectors, unpaid support from carers, and other care and support arrangements. It will operate with a small intramural group of existing social care researcher organisations and a larger body of extramural associates. The directors of each of PSSRU's three branches were involved in the preparatory activities for the research school, and Professor Martin Knapp has been appointed as its inaugural director. The School provides a great

opportunity to push back the frontiers of knowledge in social care.

The last year has seen the publication of some particularly high profile research by the PSSRU and collaborators. The national evaluation of the Individual Budget pilots was published in October. The PSSRU is also taking a lead role in evaluating other key Department of Health policy initiatives in social care, including the development of extra care housing facilitated through the Extra Care Housing Fund, the Partnerships for Older People projects, the Single Assessment Process and Self Assessment, and the Whole System Demonstrators pilots. PSSRU has provided research to cast light on the issue of age discrimination in social care in context of the forthcoming Equality Bill. We are also heavily engaged in providing research and analysis regarding issues of social care funding, which will be at the heart of the new Green Paper in 2009. A summary of the very broad range of PSSRU research at present can be found on pages 6 to 28.

The contributions of the PSSRU to both policy and academia outlined in this bulletin continue to cement the Unit's position as one of the leading providers internationally of high quality and relevant research in adult social care, and 2008 has been a very successful year for the unit.

The Bulletin benefits from the contribution of many people in PSSRU, but I would particularly like to thank my colleagues James Caiels and Nick Smith at Kent for their dedicated and excellent work in editing and organising the material. Once again, Nick Brawn (at the Kent branch) took expert charge of the Bulletin design and typesetting.

*Julien Forder, PSSRU, University of Kent,
September 2008*

About this Bulletin

The PSSRU Bulletin is available to download free of charge from the PSSRU website. The text is available in large print on request.

It records recent developments in the Unit, presents recent findings from each of our main programmes of work, and gives a concise overview of research projects and recent publications with contact information.

We welcome comments on this Bulletin or other aspects of our work.

Other PSSRU publications

A wide range of publications reports the PSSRU's work. Some are mentioned in the articles which follow and listed in the section beginning on page 29.