LINKING CARE MANAGEMENT AND THE CARE PROGRAMME APPROACH — A LOCAL STUDY

Jane Hughes, Karen Stewart, Kate Weiner and David Challis

P48/September 1999

CONTEXT

Government policy emphasises the importance of integrating the care management arrangements developed by social services departments and the care programme approach (CPA) administered by providers of mental health care in the NHS. It has been suggested that the CPA is a specialist variant of care management for people with mental health problems. Moreover, numerous inquiries into the care received by people suffering serious mental illnesses have stressed both the importance of co-ordinated care provided by health and social services organisations and the consequence which ensure when people slip through the network of care. This small study was commissioned by a social services department to analyse the degree of integration between these two modes of coordinated care.

DESIGN

The design of this study takes account of the fact that the authority has within its boundaries four NHS Trusts that provide care to people who are mentally ill and therefore four different approaches to the administration of the CPA. The study was in three parts. The first step was the identification (by means of a literature review and existing knowledge) and operationalisation of measures of integration. The next step was to access the extent to which existing procedures and documentation contain these measures. This was achieved by interviews with key staff in both the four NHS Trusts and the social services department, an analysis of existing procedures and reviewing documents and data available from another piece of research. ‘The mapping and evaluation of care management arrangements for older people and those with mental health problems’. Finally, a report will be written outlining the strength of existing practice and key areas for development.

FINDINGS

This work is in process, and although not complete, key trends are emerging. One of these is the differing degrees of integration between the CPA and care management arrangements as a result of the differing mechanisms for administering the CPA in each of the four NHS Trusts. Another is the impression of two separate systems of assessing need, and implementing and reviewing care plans which mesh only when one worker fulfils the key worker role in both processes. It is anticipated that the final report will be of value to the social services department who commissioned the work because it will identify ways of further integrating the two systems throughout the authority in partnership with purchasers of health care.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The PSSRU research staff conducting this study are Jane Hughes, Karen Stewart, Kate Weiner and David Challis.

The PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES RESEARCH UNIT undertakes social and health care research, supported mainly by the Department of Health, and focusing particularly on policy research and analysis of equity and efficiency in community care, long-term care and related areas—including services for elderly people, people with mental health problems and children in care. The PSSRU was established at the University of Kent in Canterbury in 1974, and from 1996 it has operated from three sites:

- Cornwallis Building, University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NF
- London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London, WC2A 2AE
- University of Manchester, Dover Street Building, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

The PSSRU Bulletin and publication lists are available free from the unit librarian in Canterbury (01227 837773; email pssru_library@ukc.ac.uk).