

EVALUATION OF EXTRA CARE HOUSING INITIATIVE

PSSRU

*Outline of a research project funded by the
Department of Health*

**Ann Netten, Robin Darton, Theresia Bäumker, Lisa Callaghan,
Jacquetta Holder and Ann-Marie Towers**

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BACKGROUND

The Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) is a Department of Health funded research centre with a long history of research in the field of care homes for older people. We are developing a programme of research on Housing with Care to investigate alternative settings to care homes, their characteristics and how they affect older people in need of care and support. As part of the programme we are evaluating the Extra Care Housing Initiative. £87 million has already been made available by the government to local authority social services departments and housing associations to create up to 1,500 extra care housing places over 2004–06 and a further £60 million will be allocated for places over 2006–08.

Extra care housing aims to promote independent living. People have private housing, which might be in a block of flats, a group of bungalows or a small village, with meals, domestic support, leisure and recreation facilities provided. Support and care is available 24 hours a day. The housing might be owned, rented, part owned or leasehold.

To date, we have conducted an analysis of the scheme proposals to identify their background and proposed aims, philosophy and characteristics. Here we outline the aims and initial planned stages and activities of the evaluation of the schemes themselves.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Evaluating the Extra Care Housing Initiative is an opportunity to collect research evidence about the process and impact of new approaches to providing accommodation and care for older people. The aims are to evaluate and learn from the extra care schemes from their initial implementation to following older people's experiences and health in the longer term. The objectives are to identify:

- The models and characteristics of extra care housing schemes, their advantages and disadvantages
- Circumstances and factors that influence the feasibility and success of the schemes
- Views, experiences and characteristics of the people who live in the schemes
- Views, experiences and characteristics of care and support staff
- The impact of design characteristics on the success of the schemes
- The role of and interaction with the local community
- Cost-effectiveness of different models
- Long-term outcomes for individuals, such as their health and quality of life
- The role and potential of such schemes in the overall provision of care for older people (including residential care, and day and domiciliary care)

It will not be possible to cover all of these objectives within the current resources of the PSSRU programme in any depth. However, we plan to bid for additional funding to allow us to address all of these issues.

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PLANNED RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The stages below are broad indications of the types of planned activity. Necessarily, later stages are very approximate in terms of scope and timing as they are dependent on the outcome of the earlier stages.

- Interviews with partners/agencies involved to fill any gaps in knowledge and identify any issues of concern.
- Analysis of the planned physical designs of the schemes.
- Informing prospective residents/tenants of research and inviting them, their carers and staff to take part in the research.
- Collecting information about key characteristics of residents/tenants and how these change over time.
- Asking a sample of residents, relatives and carers about their views.
- Asking key members of staff about their views.
- Longitudinal follow-up of residents. One of the important aims of people who move into these types of settings is to prevent the need to move again due to deteriorating health or functional ability. The results will be compared with our analyses of a longitudinal follow-up of residents admitted to care homes. (Bebbington, A., Darton, R. and Netten, A. (2001) *Care Homes for Older People: Volume 2. Admissions, Needs and Outcomes*, PSSRU, University of Kent at Canterbury. Available at www.pssru.ac.uk.)

OUTPUTS

A series of newsletters and research summaries will be circulated to those participating in the evaluation. Full research reports will be made available on our website (see below).

RESEARCH TEAM

The full team working on the evaluation of the Extra Care Housing Funding Initiative includes:

Ann Netten – telephone 01227 823644; email A.P.Netten@kent.ac.uk

Robin Darton – telephone 01227 827643; email R.A.Darton@kent.ac.uk

Theresia Bäumker – telephone 01227 824022; email T.L.Baumker@kent.ac.uk

Lisa Callaghan – telephone 01227 827891; email L.A.Callaghan@kent.ac.uk

Lesley Cox – telephone 01227 823963; email L.A.Cox@kent.ac.uk

Jane Dennett – telephone 01227 827672; email J.Dennett@kent.ac.uk

Jacquetta Holder – telephone 01227 827587; email J.M.Holder@kent.ac.uk

Ann-Marie Towers – telephone 01227 837954; email A.Towers@kent.ac.uk

If you are interested in seeing the type of work we are involved in and the results of our previous research please visit our website at www.pssru.ac.uk.

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. Views expressed in PSSRU publications do not necessarily reflect those of funding organisations. The PSSRU was established at the University of Kent at Canterbury in 1974, and from 1996 it has operated from three branches:

University of Kent, Cornwallis Building, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NF

London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton Street, London, WC2A 2AE

University of Manchester, First Floor, Dover Street Building, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

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