

# OLDER PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS OF CONTROL: THE IMPACT OF SERVICES AND SERVICE SETTINGS IN LONG-TERM CARE

PSSRU

*Outline of a research project*

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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 and Care to investigate alternative settings to care homes, their characteristics and how they affect older people in need of care and support. Central government is committed to increasing the number of people being cared for in non-institutional environments and is promoting Extra Care Housing, as a possible 'alternative option to residential care' (Department of Health, 2002).

The promotion of choice and control for older people is a policy priority spanning the fields of housing, health and social care. There is an increasing requirement for service users' sense of control to be reflected in performance indices. However, it is not yet clear exactly how services and service settings contribute to older people's perception of control. As part of our core housing and care programme of research, we are comparing older people's sense of control in two different care settings and exploring the relationship between perception of control and well-being.

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## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The study aims to:

- Increase our understanding of how services and service settings contribute to older people's sense of control and to investigate indicators that can be used to measure this in the future.
  - Explore how service users' desire for control affects the relationship between perceived control and well-being.
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## DESIGN AND METHODS

Interviews will be conducted with a sample of 200 older people between September and December 2005. Half of those interviewed will be residents of good quality care homes and half will be living in good quality self-contained, extra care housing facilities (also known as very sheltered housing). Two counties in England have agreed to take part in the study. We will be interviewing the care home residents in one authority and the extra care residents in the other, aiming to achieve an equal sample size in each.

In addition to the 200 interviews with residents, we will also be collecting background information about the homes and schemes themselves through structured interviews with managers.

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## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study has received ethical approval and has gone through the local authorities' research governance procedures. Individuals are only being interviewed with their express consent and names will not be recorded alongside findings on the dataset. The research team at PSSRU will receive anonymised data from interviewers. Information about individuals will be stored securely.

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All interviewers will be trained by the PSSRU and will be CRB checked. It will be made clear that responses are recorded on an anonymous questionnaire and will in no way have a negative influence on the services respondents' receive, or on those who provide their services.

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<b>COMMUNICATION OF FINDINGS</b>	Participating authorities, schemes and homes will receive a summary of the final report. The summary will also be made available free of charge, along with the full report, on the PSSRU website. Results will also be made available to residents of the participating schemes and homes in an appropriate format.
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<b>TIMETABLE</b>	Data collection: September–December 2005 Reports: Summer 2006
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<b>FURTHER INFORMATION</b>	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 <a href="http://www.pssru.ac.uk">www.pssru.ac.uk</a> .
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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:

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