

MEASURING OUTCOMES OF CARE HOMES (MOOCH)

INVESTIGATING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF RESIDENTS AND THE QUALITY RATINGS OF THEIR CARE HOMES



Introduction

The recent Care Act (2014) has placed responsibility on the local authorities to ensure the quality of services they are commissioning. Councils must ask whether services meet the needs of local people and provide good quality care. As such, local authorities are looking for ways to measure how social care impacts on quality of life. The Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) has developed the Adult Social Care Outcomes Toolkit (ASCOT) to measure this social care related quality of life (SCRQoL) at an individual level and examine how it is affected by services.

The aim of this study is to find out more about the social care-related quality of life of older people living in care homes and understand what factors are related to differences in quality of life. We will be collecting information about residents, staff and family carers, where possible. We will also record information about weekly fees, provider type and the latest quality ratings awarded by the care regulator, CQC.



This project

Will collect outcomes information based on social care related quality of life, in care homes for older adults. Comparisons will then be made to quality judgements made by the CQC under their new inspection regime.



It aims to

- Provide information about the social care-related quality of life of around 300 older people living in care homes in a single local authority in England.
- Examine the impact of the care and support provided by the homes upon residents' quality of life.
- Collect data about the social care-related quality of life of approximately 100 family/friend (unpaid) carers of the care home residents taking part in the research.
- Explore how care home residents' quality of life relates to staff attitudes and motivations and the quality ratings give to homes by the local authority and the care regulator (CQC).



What is the context?

In adult social care the importance of measuring people's outcomes, wellbeing and quality of life to support service evaluation and planning has been emphasised by researchers and accepted by policymakers and service providers for some time. Work in this area has developed considerably with the development of measures of service users' perceptions, experiences and views for research, economic evaluation and monitoring purposes. National desired outcomes frameworks have been developed for adult social care (ASCOT), along with frameworks for the NHS and public health, to help councils and the government benchmark outcomes and measure progress in delivering them against nationally comparable information. The national regulator, the Care Quality Commission, has also implemented a new outcomes focused set of standards and aims to inspect and rate all adult social care services by September 2016.

However, despite this, relatively little is known about the outcomes of individual care home residents and/or that of their family/friend (unpaid) carers. The Adult Social Care Outcomes Toolkit (ASCOT) measures service users' outcomes in eight domains of social care related quality of life (see box below and www.pssru.ac.uk/ascot). It offers a variety of approaches to measuring outcomes including a mixed-method approach to evaluating the outcomes for residents of care homes. The ASCOT mixed-method approach to measuring individual resident outcomes in care homes drew on a large scale study of care homes for older people and people with learning disabilities. It has also been tested with people living with dementia.

The ASCOT outcomes domains

The eight domains of outcome making up the ASCOT toolkit are:

- Food and drink
- Accommodation cleanliness and comfort
- Personal cleanliness and comfort
- Social participation
- Occupation
- Control over daily life
- Personal Safety
- Dignity

How will the project work?

STAGE 1: Development Phase

This stage will finalise project materials, set up a project advisory group to support the research and apply for ethical approval from the national Social Care Research Ethics Committee. (SCREC) The research team will also present the project to provider representatives, forums and events. The Registered Nursing Home Association has already agreed to support this research and its Director, Frank Ursell, is on the advisory board.

STAGE 2: Recruitment

The study aims to recruit 30 homes (nursing and without nursing) from one local authority. We are aiming to recruit around 10 residents in each. In total, we hope to recruit approximately 300 residents. All residents will be assessed for their capacity to consent and a personal or nominated consultee will be asked for their advice should it be necessary. If contact is established with a personal consultee who identifies themselves as a family (unpaid) carer, they too will be asked to complete a questionnaire to measure their own care-related quality of life. All care home staff will be asked to participate in a questionnaire about their characteristics, motivation and job satisfaction. Residents and staff will be given a letter thanking them for their participation in the project with a £10 high street voucher enclosed. Participating homes will be offered £200 (including VAT) to thank them for their time and support and given a summary of the aggregated findings for their home.

STAGE 3: Data Collection

The mixed-methods ASCOT toolkit will be used by the research team to carry out observations and interviews with residents, staff and family members in participating homes. The majority of the observations will be carried out during normal office hours; however, a small number of these

will be made during the weekend. We will also collect information about the participating homes (size, fees, CQC ratings); invite staff to complete questionnaires about their attitudes and motivations; and where we can identify them, we will ask family (unpaid) carers of participating residents to complete a questionnaire about their own social care-related quality of life using the new ASCOT-carer toolkit. Once the home has been sent its thank you letter and summary findings, we will conduct a debrief telephone interview with the home manager to gather feedback on the research and find out more about their reasons for participating. This information will be included in project publications and should be helpful for future care home research.

STAGE 4: Evaluation

The individual ratings of SCRQoL will be compared along with the staff data and CQC ratings to provide useful information about the outcomes of care home residents and understand how this relates to the care home quality ratings given by CQC. Further comparisons will be made between the individual residents' ratings, checking for any differences between observations made in 'office-hours' and those at the weekend and to check for inter-rater reliability between the researchers. If we can recruit enough family (unpaid) carers, we will also examine how having a family member move into a care home affects the quality of life of the carer.

Project Publications

In addition to academic articles and an administrative and methodological report, there will be: traditional printed outputs including executive summaries for practitioners, policy makers and residents/family members involved in the research; conference presentations; and an increased web presence involving the extensive use of social media outputs.



The Research Team

The team brings together a number of academics at the University of Kent's Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU).

Ann-Marie Towers (Principal Investigator), a.towers@kent.ac.uk

Ann-Marie Towers, Research Fellow at PSSRU, University of Kent, will oversee and manage the project. Ann-Marie was part of the core team who developed and tested the Adult Social Care Outcomes Toolkit (ASCOT) and is currently leading a programme of work to support its continued development in the UK and Internationally.

Nick Smith (Co-Investigator), n.j.smith@kent.ac.uk

Nick Smith, Research Officer, will lead on qualitative analysis and some outputs. He will further assist on the, recruitment of homes and participants, collection of evening and weekend data and comparative analysis. Since 2010, he has been the lead on supporting users of ASCOT and has developed and co-authored the ASCOT training courses and materials.

Sinead Palmer, s.e.r.palmer@kent.ac.uk

Sinead Rider, Research Officer, will assist in preparation of materials; set up databases; and recruit homes and participants. She will collect fieldwork data and lead the analysis of staff data and assist with reporting and dissemination for the main project.

Grace Collins, g.collins@kent.ac.uk

Grace Collins, Research Assistant, will assist in the preparation of materials, recruit homes and participants and collect data in the homes. She will also assist in the analysis and write up of the results.

Julien Forder, j.e.forder@kent.ac.uk

Julien Forder, director of PSSRU, will take a strategic role in the project, giving guidance throughout especially with regard to the cost-effectiveness analysis, quantitative analysis and wider policy implications of the findings.

All project team members will contribute to analysis, production of outputs and dissemination of results.

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