

MEASURING AND MONITORING QUALITY OF OUTPUTS OF CARE HOMES

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BACKGROUND

Demonstrating the value of what social care interventions do is a major challenge, but one that it is important to meet if we want to enable public funding to be targeted in a way that delivers value for money. In response to a national review of the measurement of the value of government output, PSSRU is developing an approach to measuring outcome and quality-weighted outputs of personal social services (PSS).^{*} This project is one of a number of projects taking this work forward that have been funded under the ONS led Quality Measurement Framework (QMF) programme. A key aim of the QMF is to develop effective but easily useable methodologies for measuring and assessing the value of the outputs of services or interventions.

Over recent years care homes have provided care for an increasingly dependent population under increasing levels of regulation. To reflect the changing value of what care homes are providing we need measures that reflect both residents' dependency and the quality of what is provided. In order not to overburden services the aim is to use information that is routinely available in the public domain as far as possible. The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) currently has a key role in monitoring, inspecting and reporting on quality of care homes. The intention is, therefore, to develop an approach to monitoring the value of care home outputs that uses information routinely collected and/or generated by the CSCI or its successor organisation.

AIMS

The aims of this study are:

- To develop and validate a method of measuring and monitoring quality of care based on CSCI quality ratings that allow comparison over time, between homes and across client groups.
- To develop and validate a method for monitoring the dependency of residents in a way that can be used to reflect changing value of care home outputs over time.

METHOD

The overarching approach is to independently evaluate dependency, outcomes and quality of care for a sample of residents in a way that can be linked to information routinely reported by or about homes by inspectors. The project consists of three stages.

The first stage (January to September 2007) consisted of investigation and identification of suitable measures of quality and outcomes through literature searches and consultation. It also involved developing a good understanding of the regulatory process to identify both the type of information available under current regulatory arrangements and plans for change.

The second stage (October 2007 to January 2008) consists of a small-scale pre-pilot study of two homes (one for older adults and one for people with learning disabilities) and a pilot study in six care homes (three older adult and three for people with learning disabilities) across two UK regions (North West and West Midlands). From the results of the pilot study, we aim to identify and evaluate whether we appear to be reflecting relative quality and what appears to be missing,

* See Ann Netten, Julien Forder and Judith Shapiro (2006) *Measuring PSS Outputs for Adults*, PSSRU Research Summary 36, available at www.pssru.ac.uk/pdf/rs036.pdf.

both from the perspective of our measures and the current approach to regulation. An important aspect of the pilot will be to ensure that we are clear how user views are incorporated.

The third stage (April 2008 to September 2008) is a larger study of 100 care homes for older people and 100 for people with learning disabilities across four UK regions (London, North West, South East and West Midlands).

OUTPUTS AND DISSEMINATION

The principal output will be a proposed approach to measuring outputs of care homes in a way that reflects the changing value of what is provided over time. This may include recommendations for some amendments to the way that data are collected from or about homes by inspectors. Summaries of the findings will be sent to participating homes. The summary and a full report of the work will be made available on the PSSRU website early in 2009.

RESEARCH TEAM

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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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