

DIRECT PAYMENTS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY EVALUATION

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In March 2004 the research team was awarded a research grant by the Department of Health for the *Evaluation of the Implementation of the Direct Payments Development Fund (DPDF)* in England. The Direct Payments Development Fund (DPDF) was introduced in 2003 as a funding mechanism to support local authority and community and voluntary sector partners in developing support for direct payment users. The DPDF is expected to act as a catalyst for widening the pool of direct payment users while improving access to, and utilisation of services, improving efficiency in the way that available resources act to improve the welfare of service users. The evaluation seeks to examine the effectiveness of direct payment (DP) implementation methods. We work closely with the National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) and the National Direct Payments Steering Group, and have also collaborated with other researchers in gathering national data (see survey box). The framework for the research is both multi-disciplinary and ‘multi-design’; it draws on both quantitative and qualitative data and methods. It is also ‘multi-level’ in that we seek data from service users, service co-ordinators and councils. The main elements of DP research undertaken by the team include:

1. Outcomes for older people using direct payments

The DPDF provides funds to resource activities led by voluntary organisations providing support to direct payment (DP) users, with the aim of improving user-level outcomes. A key objective for the research is to consider the impact of direct payments on older people. We investigate how these are affected by individual circumstances and how these are mediated by the provision of various forms of support in twelve local authority evaluation sites.

2. Analysis of the DP workforce

Implementing DPs involves a shift in employer responsibility to users, and therefore a loss of the administrative role of ‘traditional’ service providing organisations or agencies. The evaluation examines how the characteristics of employment in the new DP workforce differ from this ‘traditional’ workforce.

3. Evaluation of the impact of the DPDF

The study is also evaluating the success of the DPDF in increasing the levels and scope of support available to DP users, and (b) increasing the pool of DP users. Data from the Direct Payments Survey* will provide the comparative data on local authorities required to evaluate the impact of the DPDF.

5. *Costs of providing DPs and supporting DP service users*

Indicators of costs and intensity of DP support provided and direct payments provision will be drawn from the nationwide DP Survey*. Where possible this data on value from money will be interpreted against the outcome indicator results (cf 1).

4. *Direct payments to mental health service users*

Drawing on understanding for our investigation of direct payments to older people we will be investigating developments in the field of mental health services.

5. *Developing roles and impacts of direct payments in the mixed economy of care*

Direct payments are likely to have profound and probably enduring effects on local social care economies, with ramifications for local authorities. The evaluation is looking at the latter's roles and responsibilities in relation to service users and their caring families, providers, and the social care workforce.

6. *Geographical Variations in DPs*

Statistical modelling has also been undertaken. The research has involved secondary analysis using a range of official data sources to identify the range of local factors which shape both variations in the take up and package intensity of DPs between local authorities.

PUBLICATIONS:

Fernández J.L.; Kendall J.; Davey V.; Knapp M. (*Forthcoming*) Direct Payments in England: An Analytical First Cut at the Evidence on Variation. *Journal of Social Policy*, (36), 1. (January 2007)

Davey V., Fernández J.L., Knapp M., Vick N., Jolly D., Swift P., Tobin R., Kendall J. Ferrie J. Pearson C., Mercer G., Priestley M., (*Forthcoming* 2006) *Direct Payments Survey: A national survey of direct payments policy and practice*. Personal Social Services Research Unit: London School of Economics and Political Science.

The Direct Payments Survey*

The Direct Payments Survey was a national postal questionnaire on direct payments policies and practices undertaken in 2004/05. This collaborative project has been led by the C&P team at PSSRU and combines the work of three multidisciplinary research [teams](#) currently involved in national studies of direct payments. The Direct Payments Survey is backed by the [Department of Health](#), the [Economic and Social Research Council](#) and the [Modernisation of Adult Social Care Initiative](#).

For further details see: <http://www.pssru.ac.uk/dps.htm>