



News & views

PSSRU special

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BY MARTIN KNAPP, DIRECTOR, PSSRU AND NIHR SSCR



Martin Knapp

The Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) at LSE was set up in 1996 within the Department of Social Policy. In 2001 the Unit merged with LSE Health to form LSE Health and Social Care.

Today the PSSRU is one of the leading social care research groups, not just in the UK, but internationally. It aims to conduct high quality research on social and health care to inform and influence policy, practice and theory. It also has an excellent worldwide reputation for work on mental health economics and policy, and there is substantial interest in our work on long-term care projections to inform discussion about how to respond to the rapid ageing of European populations.

The Unit receives core funding from the Department of Health as well as from a range of other bodies. Research grants exceed £10 million with more than 90 projects underway since 2004.

So what is social care, other than a term that is very difficult to define? Social care aims to reduce, lessen the consequences of, or compensate for disability or disadvantage by supporting families and communities as well as empowering individuals by lessening their dependence, and to improve quality of

life. A key objective is often to support people so that they can enjoy the ordinary, everyday aspects of life experienced by most of the population.

'Personalisation' is one of the buzz words of current social care policy. It describes an important aspiration: to give individuals in need greater choice and control over the care and support they get and who delivers it. The 2007 *Green Paper on Social Care* and the *Putting People First* Concordat for adult social care (introducing personal care budgets, among other things) are just two recent illustrations which emphasise this. PSSRU has been actively contributing to the policy debate around adult social care, examples of which follow in this special issue.

As social care moves further up the Government's policy agenda – demonstrated by a £520 million programme to transform social care and a nationwide consultation on care and support – so there is a need for research-backed evidence on what people want, how it can be provided, what works and what it costs. A School for Social Care Research has been established, funded by the National Institute for Health Research, and co-ordinated from LSE. I am the inaugural director.

The School officially opened on 1 May 2009 with a budget of £15 million over five years, and will conduct and commission studies that can improve care and support, and so improve individual lives.

Announcing the establishment of the School last year, the Care Services Minister said: 'We want to improve the evidence for social care practice so we can be sure that people in this country are provided with better and more effective services in the future.'

'This new National School for Social Care Research will make a major contribution to improving the volume and quality of the research in the English social care sector.'

The new School is an exciting venture and one which matters more than ever because of the dramatic changes in our population, people's rising expectations, the nature of care and the increasing cost of providing it. I hope we will be able to not only set the highest standards of research but also make sure that our findings affect the real world and address the questions to which the public want answers. Our mission is to improve care and improve people's lives.

If you are interested in our work and would like more details, please visit our website at: www.lse.ac.uk/collections/PSSRU

35 years of PSSRU

PSSRU was set up in 1974 with just a director and secretary. In 1975, the Unit comprised four people: director, secretary and two research fellows – with a third research fellow joining early in 1976. In contrast to when we began, there are now just over 100 people across the three branches with another 177 having been through the door.

Professor Bleddyn Davies Groundbreaking social care research

PSSRU was established by Professor Bleddyn Davies at the University of Kent in 1974, and set up 'branches' at LSE and the University of Manchester in 1996.



Bleddyn Davies

Bleddyn had previously lectured at LSE before moving to Kent, and took into PSSRU a number of ideas that he had developed here at the School. These included path-breaking work on territorial justice – efficient and equitable allocations across areas – and exciting new ideas for understanding the meaning of, and links between social care needs, resources and outcomes. Bleddyn was made an OBE in 2001 for services to social science and social policy, and in 2007 was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Public Health Association Gerontological Health Section.

Although he retired in 2002, Bleddyn continues to work actively at the School, the University of Kent, where he holds emeritus chairs, and at the Oxford University Institute of Ageing. PSSRU continues to benefit from his wise advice and keen encouragement.

The Personal Social Services Research Unit at LSE has been involved in a number of influential research studies, many of which have had considerable policy implications, while others – such as work with the BBC on a Care Calculator – have raised public awareness of key research issues. PSSRU at LSE has built on a long tradition of ground-breaking research beginning in 1974, including:

- work on care management influencing the provisions of the 1990 NHS and Community Care Act
- research on the impact of variations in social care services on delayed hospital discharge rates which was instrumental in the Department of Health's decision to allocate £300 million of special funds to local authorities in 2002
- evaluations of a number of UK Department of Health's initiatives, including the high profile 'individual budgets', the Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPPS), and an ongoing evaluation of the £31 million Whole System Demonstrator Programme
- ongoing inputs to the government's forthcoming Green Paper on long-term care by Jose-Luis Fernandez and Julien Forder
- contributions to the National Dementia Strategy,

- the European Commission's Mental Health Pact, the National Service Frameworks for mental health, older people and children, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills Foresight Programme on Mental Capital and Well-Being
- in 2005–06 the Unit, led by Julien Forder and Jose-Luis Fernandez, produced the most comprehensive review to date of options for financing social care for older people in England. Winner of the 2007 prize for best think tank report, our work recommended a more universal system for financing social care and fed into the Treasury's Comprehensive Spending Review and the Social Care Working Group chaired by the parliamentary under secretary for health
- PSSRU's long-term care financing model (a micro-simulation computer model) has informed the 1999 Royal Commission on Long Term Care, the Treasury's Health Trends Review (2002), the Department of Health's study of residential care supply (2002), projections of demand for long term care for older people for the National Assembly of Wales (2005), the European Commission's 2006 public expenditure projections and the OECD's 2005 study of long-term care.

NIHR School for Social Care Research

The School for Social Care Research is a partnership between Professors Martin Knapp, David Challis (Manchester), Caroline Glendinning (York), Jim Mansell (Kent), Jill Manthorpe (King's College London) and Ann Netten (Kent), who are supported by Dr Gill Hastings, senior scientific administrator and Anji Mehta, finances and communications administrator.



Back row l-r: Anji Mehta, Ann Netten, Jim Mansell, David Challis, Caroline Glendinning
Front row l-r: Gill Hastings, Martin Knapp, Jill Manthorpe

Our mission

To develop the evidence base for adult social care practice in England by commissioning and conducting world class research.

Our goals

- to commission and conduct high quality research
- to provide the focus for social care research within NIHR and promote the general development of social care research
- to develop methodological rigour and broaden the methodological repertoire
- to consult widely on research priorities
- to contribute to ongoing efforts to build social care research capacity and improve research awareness
- to disseminate findings and support other knowledge transfer activities

Website:

www.lse.ac.uk/collections/nihrsscr
email: sscr@lse.ac.uk

LSE Health and Social Care

PSSRU is part of LSE Health and Social Care (LSEHSC) which was established in 2000 when PSSRU merged with LSE Health (directed by Professor Elias Mossialos). LSEHSC, chaired by Professor Julian Le Grand, aims to produce and disseminate high quality research and policy analysis in health and social care, and brings together a core team of researchers and academics, promoting and drawing upon the multidisciplinary expertise of 71 staff members, 45 associated academics and a large number of postgraduate students.

The Centre's unique research base contributes to the School's established world presence and reputation in health policy, health economics, social care policy and mental health economics.

LSEHSC holds regular lunchtime seminars every Thursday throughout the academic year, and hosts two annual lectures, one of which is supported by the Merck Foundation.

For further information, visit the LSEHSC website at: www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSEHealthAndSocialCare/

Social Care 2007-08

- 1.75 million working age and older people used social care services.
- £16.5 billion was spent by councils on social care for all adults.
- £3.52 billion was spent by older people not eligible for support.
- 1.5 million people were working in adult social care services in England.
- 18,541 care homes were providing around 450,000 places to adults of all ages (to March 08) and there were 41,897 home care agencies.
- 2001 Census: in England, around 5.2 million adults provided unpaid care, around 1.7 million of whom provided care for 20 or more hours a week.
- Prevalence of common mental disorder: over 16 per cent in adults, and nearly 10 per cent in children in the general population which can rise to 40-50 per cent in highly vulnerable populations.
- Prevalence of severe mental disorders is around 0.4 per cent of the general population.
- Costs of mental ill-health are around £77 billion per year in England, with £49 billion spent on economic costs alone.
- There are currently 700,000 people in the UK with dementia, costing UK economy £17 billion a year.
- Life-time risk of entering residential or nursing home care is around 1/6 for a man and 1/3 for a woman.
- Public expenditure on social care, net of income from user charges, is projected to rise by 329% from £6.6 billion in 2005 to £28.4 billion in 2041 (under base case assumptions).
- Average weekly cost of residential/nursing home in England is £466 for older people, £613 for adults with mental health needs, £750 for adults with physical disabilities and £1,047 for people with learning disabilities.
- The average hourly cost of home care for adults in England is £15.20.

PSSRU Project highlights

PSSRU researchers are working on a number of UK and international studies on social care and mental health economics. Some examples are:

MAP2030

PSSRU is participating, along with LSE Social Policy colleagues and colleagues from other universities, in the **MAP2030** study. This study is being funded by the research councils as part of the *New Dynamics of Ageing* programme to produce high quality analysis to inform scientific and public debate and the development of future long term care and pension policy up to 2030.

The key issues being investigated include projections of family resources and implications of changes in these for the availability of family support and informal care, and the affordability and distribution of costs and benefits of combined policy options for pensions and long term care.

Age discrimination

Eliminating age discrimination in mental health services would require extra expenditure of around £2 billion. This was the finding from a study undertaken by members of PSSRU at Kent and LSE, working alongside researchers at the University of Swansea, for the Department of Health to provide some preliminary analysis in relation to equality in mental health service use. The work involved analysis of patterns of service use and costs to see whether there is any evidence of an explained age difference.

Mental health and stigma

The economic costs of poor mental health are enormous. One in four of us can expect to experience a mental health problem during our lifetimes. This could lead to, for example, lost productivity, deterioration of personal relationships, strain on families, homelessness, and contact with the criminal justice system.

All of these non-health impacts are exacerbated by the social exclusion, discrimination and prejudice that people with mental health problems experience.

Stigma can affect all aspects of life, limiting access to employment and housing, harming social relationships and reducing self esteem. Stigma can also reduce the willingness of public policymakers to invest in mental health.

A recent report by David McDaid, commissioned by the European Commission, provides an overview of what is known about stigma, reflecting on attitudes, practical implications of discrimination and what is known about the effectiveness of different approaches to tackle stigma.

Relying on unpaid care in the 21st century?

The social care system in this country relies heavily on unpaid or informal care.

More than a third of a million people in England currently provide ‘heavy duty’ care for 20 hours a week or more to an elderly parent. The majority are women and the majority are of ‘working age’.

However, a recent report by Linda Pickard, written for the Strategy Unit (Cabinet Office) and the Department of Health, suggests that there will be insufficient numbers of ‘heavy duty’ carers to look after older people in future years and raises questions about long-term care policies that rely heavily on unpaid care in future.

Collaboration with the National Academy for Parenting Practitioners

Researchers at PSSRU, led by Jennifer Beecham (left), are working closely with the National Academy for Parenting Practitioners to explore a range of economic questions about parenting programmes. This includes examining the costs and cost-effectiveness of interventions, identifying broader service and cost implications in the short and longer term, and to look at the mix of interventions a commissioner may consider. See: www.parentingacademy.org



Individual budgets

Maximising user choice and empowerment is one of the current key policy priorities in social care in England. Funded by the Department of Health, the IBSEN project has carried out an evaluation of the individual budget pilots.

These schemes allowed the pooling of a range of sources of support for people with physical and mental disabilities, and provided service users with a range of models for commissioning their support, including direct control of the money available. While suggesting significant potential for the scheme, the results of the study highlighted differences across user groups, with mental health users benefiting the most, relative to current service models.

PROJECTS WITH THE BBC

Care calculator

PSSRU, in collaboration with the BBC, launched a care calculator and a care questionnaire. The aim was to give an approximate idea of the level of social care – both public and private – currently provided in England. A short questionnaire was set up on the BBC website on attitudes to funding arrangements for social care.

Early results from the survey were presented on Radio 4 on 31 January when the then Care Services Minister joined a studio audience along with the LSE team, to discuss care services and their funding. The transcript from the programme can be found on the Radio 4 You and Yours programme website, which was awarded the Democracy in Action category at the New Statesman New Media Awards.

Findings from the survey featured in the 21 May issue of Community Care magazine.

Home care scandal for Panorama

A study commissioned by *Panorama* provided an overview of the UK’s home care industry and featured on the programme’s 9 April transmission.

The study, by Jose-Luis Fernandez and Tom Snell, found that 70 per cent of home care is today provided by the independent sector and is worth £1.5 billion. The figure was a mere two per cent in 1992.

English local authorities spend around £22 an hour providing elderly care, but the independent sector provides it for around half that.

Key awards and achievements of PSSRU members

- Martin Knapp received one of the 1st 100 NIHR Senior Investigator awards, one of two social care researchers ever to do so.
- David McDaid was external advisor to the Canadian National Mental Health Think Tank.
- Martin Knapp was specialist adviser to the House of Lords (Parliamentary) Select Committee Inquiry on the European Commission’s Green Paper on a *Mental Health Strategy for Europe*.
- **SECONDMENTS** 2002-04: Julien Forder advised the secretary of state for health’s strategy unit on social care policy; 2005-07: Andrew Healey worked on economic issues of criminal justice policy for the Home Office; 2007: Jose-Luiz Fernandez advised the Treasury on social care policy; 2007: Adelina Comas-Herrera advised the European Commission, Directorate General of Economic and Financial Affairs on long-term care.
- Raphael Wittenberg has been seconded to the Unit from the Department of Health, where he leads the analytical team for the Social Care, Local Government and Care Partnerships Directorate.
- The Unit has been successful in the first round of NIHR programme grants for applied research with inputs to five large projects.

Two-year project underway

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER IN SOCIAL CARE POLICY RESEARCH PROJECT: LSE/HEIF 4 FUNDED

This two-year project will endeavour to build on the expertise of key members of PSSRU and the Social Care Institute for Excellence to further develop current innovative work on best practice for knowledge transfer in health and other sectors and apply it to social care.

It will develop potential new methods – including techniques from social marketing and viral media – to increase the impact of research.

Various activities are planned which include the production of a best practice guidance paper that can be applied more widely than social care research.

PSSRU in print

Since 1974, PSSRU has produced 3,604 publications and worked on over 460 projects.

PSSRU publications include:

Research Bites

PSSRU cross-branch

annual *Bulletin*

Policy Briefs

Journal papers

Research summaries

Lay summaries



SSCR activities

PREVENTION AND REDUCTION PROGRAMME

How can we best prevent or reduce the development or exacerbation of circumstances that lead to the need for social care?

EMPOWERMENT AND SAFEGUARDING PROGRAMME

How can we best empower and safeguard people who use social care services?

CARE AND WORK PROGRAMME

How can we best equip and support people – practitioners, volunteers, informal carers – to provide optimum social care?

How can we ensure that people who use social care and their carers are enabled and supported in paid work and other types of meaningful activity?

SERVICE INTERVENTIONS, COMMISSIONING AND CHANGE PROGRAMME

What interventions, commissioning and delivery arrangements best achieve social care outcomes?

RESOURCES AND INTERFACES PROGRAMME

How can social care and other public resources best be deployed and combined to achieve social care outcomes?

THE PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE SSCR RESEARCH

- engagement with users, carers and practitioners
- the highest ethical and research governance standards
- the pursuit of scientific excellence ... but proportionate to real-world relevance of the question
- research that has real-world impact
- peer-review processes to ensure high standards and relevance
- visibility and accessibility of information on projects and their findings

THE THEMES UNDERPINNING SSCR WORK

- developing and using robust outcome measures
- understanding ‘process outcomes’ – or how support is accessed and experienced by patients and the public
- examining cost-effectiveness
- recognising cultural, ethnic, socioeconomic and other diversity
- charting and evaluating interfaces between social care, health care and relevant other systems
- understanding the consequences of practice changes for the paid workforce

FUNDING

The SSCR will allocate about 50% of its research budget to commissioned research through competitive tendering.

CONSULTATIONS

The SSCR will actively consult with a wide range of stakeholders in social care about research questions, and translation of findings into a form that can aid the development of practice, in order to identify priorities for topics, methods and processes, throughout the SSCR’s lifetime.

Collaborations

PSSRU has collaborations within LSE, including Social Policy, the Centre for Economic Performance (linked to Professor Richard Layard and colleagues), the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (linked to Dr Tania Burchardt), the Institute of Social Psychology (through Professor Eve Mitleton-Kelly) and BIOS (linked to Professor Nikolas Rose). Dr Tania Burchardt and Professors Howard Glennerster, Julian Le Grand, Mike Murphy and John Macnicol recently joined PSSRU as members.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

PSSRU projects benefit enormously from advice from the Unit’s Service User and Carer Advisory Group, which meets a few times a year. Members of the Group are either users of social care services themselves, or carers.

Contact details

PSSRU is located in Cowdray House on Portugal Street, just behind the Economists Bookshop.

General enquiries should be directed to the Secretariat, J407, Cowdray House

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For further information on staff, research activities, and publications see: **www.lse.ac.uk/collections/pssru**

For information on the Social Policy Department, **tel:** 020 7955 7345

or see: **www.lse.ac.uk/collections/socialpolicy**