Effective Healthcare Support to Care Homes

The Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) at the University of Manchester has been funded to investigate the forms, content and impact of healthcare support to care homes. Care home residents have multiple and complex needs and providing appropriate access to treatment presents a considerable challenge to the health service. In the UK, the healthcare support that care homes receive varies across the country in terms of both the services available and the personnel providing it. Whilst research has been undertaken about the content of healthcare support in the UK, relatively little is known about how this is organised or its effect on long-term residents’ outcomes, including hospital admission.

**Purpose of the Study**

The study will examine the structure and delivery of healthcare support to care homes and their costs, the aspects of such services that are valued most, and their impact on the health of long-term residents. It will provide evidence for commissioners and assist providers in identifying pathways to service improvement.

**Design**

This is a mixed method study with four stages. Work will be informed by engagement with two stakeholder groups: care home managers and carers. First, using data from a national survey, specialist care home support services will be classified and their operational costs and perceived benefits investigated. Second, a literature review will be conducted to explore the outcomes of specialist healthcare support services for care home residents. Third, utilising data from one large geographical area, approaches to care home support will be identified and secondary data analysis will be undertaken to explore the association between different forms of healthcare support and both emergency hospital admissions and place of death. Fourth, a structured consultation with care home managers and carers will be undertaken to assess the value they place on different aspects of healthcare services for care home residents.

**Dissemination**

There will be a targeted approach to the dissemination. A brief, accessible summary of the findings highlighting key messages from the study will be placed on the School for Social Care Research website. Additionally, an Expert Briefing paper drawing out key practice evidence for those who commission and deliver healthcare support to care homes, as well as care home providers and peer reviewed articles will be produced.

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*October 2016*

**Outline of a research project funded by the National Institute for Health Research School for Social Care Research**
The Personal Social Services Research Unit was established in 1974 and now has branches at three UK universities: the University of Kent, the London School of Economics and Political Science, and the University of Manchester. Its mission is to conduct high quality research on social and health care to inform and influence policy, practice and theory.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The work is being undertaken by David Challis, Jane Hughes, Sue Tucker, Debbie Buck and Vincent Gillan within the PSSRU at the University of Manchester.

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