



Insights for good practice

2

Improving the evidence base
for adult social care practice in England



Evidence-based practice is essential in addressing care and support needs within tightening budgets. More important are the needs of current and future service users and carers.

We hope our pocket-sized research insights will support research engagement with practitioners to help improve social care practice.

Professor Martin Knapp
Director, NIHR School for Social Care Research

These studies represent independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) School for Social Care Research (SSCR). The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NIHR, SSCR, Department of Health, or NHS.

Finding the big issues

Carers	1, 2, 11, 12, 17
Complex and severe needs	5, 6
Dementia	19, 26
Personal budgets	3, 12, 13
Employment	1, 2
Equality and human rights	3, 4, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20
Learning disabilities	10, 18
Mental health	21, 23
Older people	14, 19, 21
Physical disability	7, 8, 17, 20, 26
Support and care planning	1, 2, 4, 22, 24, 25

Find out more about these 26 featured projects at www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk

1. Can we save the Government £1.3bn in benefits and lost taxes annually by supporting carers to stay in work?

'We're looking at ways of helping carers to stay in employment and asking if "replacement care" for the cared-for person is a cost-effective way of doing this.' (Dr Linda Pickard, researcher)

Our unique research examines interventions to cut the numbers – 300,000 people – estimated to have left their jobs because of unpaid caring.

Project: Overcoming barriers: unpaid care and employment in England (follow-on study)
Lead: Dr Linda Pickard, PSSRU, LSE
Contact: l.m.pickard@lse.ac.uk

2. We're finding out what helps carers to stay in their job or get a new one

Employment can mean greater emotional well-being, improved social life, financial benefits and a break from caring responsibilities. Our study shows what councils and the voluntary sector are doing and what works best.

'Just having someone who is willing to spend time with me looking at the issues is a massive help.'
(Former university lecturer and full-time carer)

Project: Improving employment opportunities for carers: identifying and sharing good practice
Lead: Mrs Rachel Marangozov, Institute for Employment Studies, Brighton
Contact: rachel.marangozov@employment-studies.co.uk





3. How can we avoid the price of personal budgets being a greater risk of abuse and neglect?

Our research is looking for good practice to help resolve the tension between freedom to spend your own budget and the dangers of someone taking advantage of your vulnerability.

'Many systems are not yet geared up for large numbers of people who find managing money difficult and may be at risk of exploitation.'
(Professor Jill Manthorpe, researcher)

Project: Risk, safeguarding and personal budgets: exploring relationships and identifying good practice
Lead: Professor Jill Manthorpe, King's College London
Contact: jill.manthorpe@kcl.ac.uk

4. What are the costs and outcomes of various ways to safeguard vulnerable adults from risk and harm?

This is the first UK study to compare different models of adult safeguarding practice. We're focussing on differences in specialisation, inter-agency cooperation, and frontline practices.

Project: Models of safeguarding: a study exploring and comparing models of adult safeguarding
Lead: Dr Martin Stevens, King's College London
Contact: martin.stevens@kcl.ac.uk

'Safeguarding practice has grown organically and there is no clear understanding of the difference made by the approaches taken locally. This study will help us know more about how councils are organising this work and how this affects outcomes.'
(Dr Martin Stevens, researcher)

5. Changing staff practices, rather than restraining adults with complex needs, can hold answers to challenging behaviour

'I was gobsmacked to find, after staff training, that they were able to do so many everyday things, such as making their own sandwiches. I had never imagined them doing so much.' (Staff member for supported accommodation)

Aggression is easily misunderstood: making environments more predictable, honouring routines and activities can transform behaviour. Our research examines how greater staff expertise helps everyone.

Project: Preventing challenging behaviour of adults with complex needs in supported accommodation
Lead: Peter McGill, Tizard Centre, University of Kent
Contact: p.mcgill@kent.ac.uk

6. Active support from staff pays dividends, unlocking the good life for people with complex needs

Nobody is too disabled, too challenging or too autistic to enjoy diverse experiences – they just need more imaginative help. Providing that skilled support does not require more staff and need not cost more money, finds our research.

'Vacuuming is now one of Mark's favourite activities. When you get it out of the cupboard, his face lights up and he follows you to the room that needs doing.' (Elaine, team member, Derbyshire, cited in Ashman et al., 2010.)

Project: Costs and outcomes of skilled support for adults with complex needs in supported accommodation
Lead: Dr Julie Beadle-Brown, University of Kent
Contact: j.d.beadle-brown@kent.ac.uk





7. We're trying to make sure that a longer life is not an emasculated one for these young men

Young men with Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) typically died as teenagers, but now live much longer. Our research asks how more gender-sensitive social care can help.

'I observed a loss of hand function in young men with DMD. How, I wondered, do you masturbate? I didn't ask. But we must follow up these issues. "Why do you keep talking about adults?" one young man asked me. "We're all men" .' (David Abbott, researcher)

Project: Men living with long-term conditions: exploring gender and improving social care
Lead: David Abbott, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol
Contact: d.abbott@bristol.ac.uk

8. How can young physically disabled adults best get control of their lives and manage their services?

Leaving home, getting training, starting college, finding a job – all demand a lot from young people. Our innovative study explores the issues and best practice supporting those who are physically disabled with complex needs.

Project: Taking on and taking over: physically disabled young adults and their care and support arrangements
Lead: Dr Wendy Mitchell, University of York
Contact: wendy.mitchell@york.ac.uk

'We are talking about 18–25 year olds, physically disabled people with complex impairments and health needs requiring sophisticated care. They have a lot to juggle. It can feel scary and overwhelming, but also exciting – if proper support is there.'
(Dr Wendy Blake, researcher)

9. Protecting adults from domestic violence through multi-agency cooperation with social care

'Well-functioning MARACs can prevent homicide and protect victims. It's great the system exists – a decade ago there was nothing like this. It's voluntary not statutory. My hunch is that we could be doing this a whole lot better.'
(Professor Hugh McLaughlin, researcher)

We are conducting ground-breaking research into the effectiveness of MARACs (Multi-Risk Assessment Conferences) that bring together diverse public and voluntary sector agencies to focus on adults facing high risk of domestic violence.

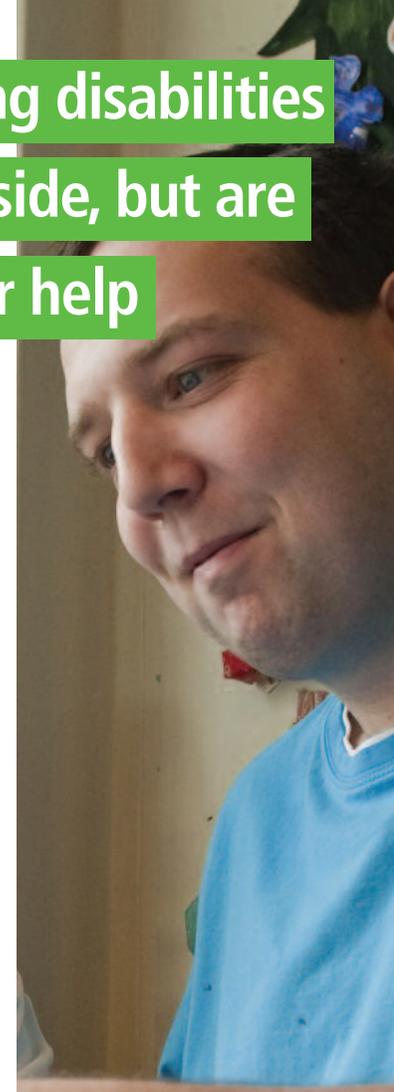
Project: To identify, and assess the effectiveness of social care's contribution to the development of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) and the protection of adults facing domestic violence
Lead: Professor Hugh McLaughlin, Manchester Metropolitan University
Contact: h.mclaughlin@mmu.ac.uk

10. Prisoners with learning disabilities need support on the outside, but are often judged too able for help

Ex-offenders with mild learning disabilities often fall through the cracks between support services. Our ground-breaking research details the costs and benefits of catching them before they fall further.

'I was homeless and an alcoholic, as I was mentally abused at home; they told me I wasn't wanted and that they didn't love me. I got no outside help. I needed more support before I got into that situation.'
(Young offender, potentially with learning difficulties)

Project: Costs and benefits of social care support for ex-offenders with learning disabilities
Lead: Professor Glynis Murphy, University of Kent
Contact: g.h.murphy@kent.ac.uk





11. Many carers are invisible to councils, yet their lives often improve when they are in touch with services

Our research shows that being able to find information and to access services easily are among the key factors associated with a better quality of life for carers.

'We need to focus not just on outcomes for the cared-for person but also for the carer. We need to value carer outcomes in their own right.' (Professor Ann Netten, researcher)

Project: Recent survey evidence about unpaid carers: implications for social care practice in England
Lead: Professor Ann Netten, University of Kent
Contact: a.p.netten@kent.ac.uk

12. Practice is often failing to ensure that carers' needs are well understood when planning service user personal budgets

Our unique study of the roles of carers in personalisation for people with cognitive or communication impairments explores the barriers that may exist to carer needs being taken into account.

Project: Personalisation of carers: the roles of carers in assessment, support planning and managing personal budgets
Lead: Dr Wendy Mitchell, University of York
Contact: wendy.mitchell@york.ac.uk

'You can draw up the most wonderful support plan and then you suddenly find that the carer is shutting various things down, because it does not work for them, or does not work for the family. So you have to include the carer.' (Social worker)

13. Resource constraints are restricting choice and control for people on managed personal budgets

'Choice has been taken away from us ... you're being told who the agency is, what time they're gonna be coming ... the service user ends up fitting in with that agency and the responsibilities of the carer that's already in that area, in terms of what she can do and what times she can make. It's not personalisation.'
(Support planner)

Tight financial pressures inhibit more trusting partnerships between support planners, brokers, agency managers and service users. Greater flexibility would allow people to get more personalised home care, finds our in-depth study of services for people with managed personal budgets.

Project: Personalisation of home care for older people using managed personal budgets
Lead: Dr Parvaneh Rabiee, University of York
Contact: parvaneh.rabiee@york.ac.uk

14. Ensuring access to ICT for older people as care services increasingly rely on it for service delivery

Our research asks: how can we support older people to get on-line and avoid exclusion? We are especially concerned for many people whom we don't know about as they may not currently use social services.

'An elderly, widowed woman wants to learn to use the Internet to communicate with family abroad. But she doesn't like sitting at a computer for hours and feels forced to change her lifestyle.'
(Jacqueline Damant, researcher)

Project: E-inclusion and access to the ICT-care sector of older people in England
Lead: Professor Martin Knapp, PSSRU, LSE
Contact: j.damant@lse.ac.uk





15. Why are people from ethnic minorities less satisfied with social care services?

This is one of the first national studies examining in detail why service satisfaction is consistently lower among black and minority ethnic groups than the white British population.

'All the carer really wants, at the end of the day, is the service which they need, which meets the needs of the person.' (Carer)

Project: Exploring satisfaction with personal social care services among Pakistani, Bangladeshi and White British people

Lead: Dr Margaret Blake, National Centre for Social Research, London

Contact: margaret.blake@natcen.ac.uk

16. We are trying to go beyond cultural stereotypes to gain a sophisticated understanding of experiences with social care

Our in-depth study of south Asian communities in Hampshire questions whether services are culturally appropriate but asks whether expectations are simply different among this group. We are researching best practice for solutions.

Project: Acceptability of, and satisfaction with, social care among South Asian groups: a case study of Hampshire

Lead: Dr Rosalind Willis, University of Southampton

Contact: r.m.willis@soton.ac.uk

'It might be a person with diabetes, who has difficulty walking and needs help with getting up in the morning, washing, cooking and shopping. These are essential tasks. We have to make sure that we are doing them right.'
(Dr Rosalind Willis, researcher)

17. We're interviewing carers of stroke survivors to understand ethnic differences in experiences of social care

'We often don't explore carers' experiences in depth. I interviewed a lovely gentleman in his 80s caring for his wife who was unable to change her stoma bag. Changing it was the only thing he did not want to do. If the district nurse was late, there was often a mess. "I was in the war, dear," he said, "and that was worse than the war".' (Dr Nan Greenwood, researcher)

Some minority ethnic groups are more at risk of suffering strokes. Many stroke survivors live with disabilities. We're comparing the experiences of carers from different ethnicities to understand these different expressions of satisfaction.

Project: A qualitative exploration of ethnic differences in satisfaction with social care amongst older carers of stroke survivors

Lead: Dr Nan Greenwood, St George's University of London and Kingston University

Contact: n.greenwood@sgul.kingston.ac.uk

18. What do people with learning disabilities from ethnic minorities want from social care services?

Our focus on interviewing people with learning disabilities is rare and could provide missing insights, adding to what is already known through work with carers and families.

'Good services can make a positive difference to people's lives. Conversely, if services aren't accessible or appropriate, then people may be marginalised, and their wellbeing may be put at risk.'

(Dr Michael Larkin, researcher)

Project: People with learning disabilities from black and minority groups: an exploration of their experiences and views of social care services

Lead: Dr Michael Larkin, University of Birmingham

Contact: m.larkin@bham.ac.uk





19. Dementia plus sight loss

– what can social care do to offer better support?

The care and support needs of people with concurrent dementia and sight loss remain poorly understood. This pioneering project is designed to identify better responses to such complex needs.

'We hope this work will go some way to help improve the quality of life for people living with both memory loss and visual impairment.'

(Karen Croucher, researcher)

Project: Developing best practice in social care and support for adults with concurrent sight loss and dementia within different housing settings

Lead: Ms Karen Croucher, York University

Contact: karen.croucher@york.ac.uk

20. What are the social care

experiences of people with

physical disabilities from a

Chinese background?

We are talking to people who have had limited research attention. Our work with this under-served group also helps to build a bigger picture about people from minority ethnic groups.

Project: Factors that contribute to the levels of satisfaction with social care for physical disabilities amongst Chinese service users

Lead: Professor Fiona Irvine, Glyndwr University

Contact: f.irvine@glyndwr.ac.uk

'The limited available evidence suggests that many have little contact with social services for disabled people, and lack information on essential services and direct payments.'
(Professor Fiona Irvine, researcher)

21. Observing and understanding the 'lived experience' of care home residents

'Recent care home scandals have highlighted the pitfalls of relying on paper-based monitoring when judging residents' quality of life. Observations and interviews offer a richer picture of residents' lived experiences.' (Ann-Marie Towers, researcher)

We're using structured observations to measure the quality of life for care home residents that is related to their social care. We're exploring how homes use this information to improve residents' day-to-day lives.

Project: ASCOT Feedback Intervention Study (AFIS): exploring the feasibility of an outcomes-focused intervention on care home practice
Lead: Ann-Marie Towers, PSSRU, University of Kent
Contact: a.towers@kent.ac.uk

22. Researching organisational tools in social care that are already revolutionising delivery of healthcare

Our in-depth review is designed to make sure that techniques like total quality management are understood, widely known and we can maintain service quality in difficult times.

'We want to be able to say: "Here's an organisational technique, here's the evidence, here's how it could be used in the social care context and here are some of its limitations".' (Tim Freeman, researcher)

Project: Managing organisational change in social care: a review for practitioners and managers
Lead: Dr Tim Freeman, Birmingham University
Contact: t.freeman@bham.ac.uk





23. From the ground up: using different perspectives to reconfigure adult mental health services

Our research is gathering in-depth knowledge about peoples' needs and service response. This should allow commissioners to refashion health and social care services on a more personalised and efficient basis.

'This work is rare, involving engagement with people and local staff. Starting with them will inevitably question standard orthodoxies about how care is delivered.' (Professor David Challis, researcher)

Project: Optimising adult mental health service configurations across health and social care

Lead: Professor David Challis, University of Manchester

Contact: d.j.challis@manchester.ac.uk

24. Helping commissioners by identifying the economic costs and benefits of key social care interventions

We're drawing together, in an easy-to-use format, cost and benefit information for around a dozen interventions to support commissioners as they weigh up which social care services offer best value.

Project: Examining the economic case for social care interventions

Lead: Professor Martin Knapp, PSSRU, LSE

Contact: j.e.dixon@lse.ac.uk

'Commissioners really need this knowledge. More than ever, in these tough fiscal times, they must allocate resources as effectively and efficiently as possible.'
(Josie Dixon, researcher)

25. How to improve care management and care planning for vulnerable, older people living at home

'The guidance emerging from this work should help service commissioners and providers to assess how well non-statutory agencies are coordinating care.' (Professor David Challis, researcher)

As non-statutory organisations increasingly take over care coordination from councils, we're researching how to maintain and develop high standards.

Project: Care coordination: exploring and in formatting the emerging role of the non-statutory sector in long-term aged care in England
Lead: Professor David Challis, University of Manchester
Contact: d.j.challis@manchester.ac.uk

26. A helping hand: study considers the next steps for occupational therapy services

Our research examines the varied roles currently played by occupational therapists and fresh possibilities for using their vital skills as health and social care integrate.

'For example, in the Netherlands, one study shows occupational therapists helping people with dementia to live independently for longer. We'll review the evidence for this interesting deployment.' (Professor David Challis, researcher)

Project: The changing role of OT services in social care: a scoping study
Lead: Professor David Challis, University of Manchester
Contact: d.j.challis@manchester.ac.uk



We aim to make a difference...

The mission of the NIHR SSCR is to develop the evidence base for adult social care practice by commissioning and conducting world-class research.

We use a broad and inclusive description of adult social care, encompassing:

- the wide range of care and support that is available and used by adults;
- the diversity of services and service providers of adult social care;
- the care and support provided through informal care, self-care and self-funded care.

To find out more about our projects, go to:

www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk

“As a carer, I hope research findings will reach those who commission and provide services and that only the best forms of practice reach me and the person I care for. The School's Insights give us key messages in a simple way to make sure the emerging evidence reaches practice and helps with improving services.”

Jeanne Carlin, SSCR User, Carer, Practitioner Reference Group



School for Social Care Research

NIHR School for Social Care Research
London School of Economics and Political Science
Houghton Street
London
WC2A 2AE

sscr@lse.ac.uk

020 7955 6238

www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk



KING'S
College
LONDON

University of
Kent

MANCHESTER
1824
The University of Manchester

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

The SSCR is a partnership between the London School of Economics and Political Science, King's College London and the Universities of Kent, Manchester and York. It is funded by the National Institute for Health Research.