

Evaluation of the Extra Care Housing Initiative

Newsletter

Update from the Personal Social Services Research
Unit at the University of Kent January 2009

PSSRU
University of Kent

INSIDE:

This newsletter gives information about the PSSRU's evaluation of extra care housing for the Department of Health, including:

- Characteristics of residents
- Different approaches to social activities provision
- Costs and outcomes of moving to the Rowanberries scheme in Bradford
- EVOLVE: a study of the physical environment of extra care housing

BACKGROUND

The PSSRU is evaluating 19 extra care housing schemes funded by the Department of Health (DH). The aims are to:

- See how well extra care housing meets the needs of its residents.
- Investigate the impact on residents' health and quality of life.
- Compare extra care with care homes.

The 19 schemes include three care villages, each with around 250 units of accommodation, and 16 smaller developments, with between 35 and 75 units. Seven schemes opened in 2006, eight in 2007 and four in 2008. Although data collection is still underway, there are some interesting results to report.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESIDENTS

By October 2008, 908 people in 16 schemes had chosen to take part in the evaluation. Of those taking part, we know that 553 (61 per cent) had a care need – those without a care need mainly lived in the care villages. Compared with people in care homes, people moving into extra care were on average younger, more likely to be male, less likely to be widowed or living alone, and had lower support needs. However, some residents had similar support needs to those in care homes.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AT THE SCHEMES

A linked study, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), is investigating residents' well-being and social life. It is looking at the approaches the schemes take towards providing social activity, six months after opening. The study is taking part in 13 smaller schemes and two care villages.

Approaches to providing social activities

All schemes described themselves as taking a 'resident-led' approach. However, this approach had been put into practice differently across the schemes. We found that in one scheme the manager organised and ran all the social activities, and residents were asked to give suggestions. There was also a social committee made up of residents' friends and relatives, which residents had been invited to join. In contrast, in another scheme, the residents' committee organised and ran all of the activities, with the manager taking a 'hands off' approach.

The two care villages each had a full-time activities coordinator. Residents had also begun to set up and run some activities and events themselves. Three of the smaller schemes also had a full-time member of staff employed to facilitate social activities, and it was expected that residents would lead some activities in future.

In five schemes, care and support staff had some of their time dedicated to supporting social life. These staff worked with the manager and residents to decide on activities and events. In three of these schemes, residents had begun to lead some activities, either by taking over from staff or setting up activities themselves.

In three schemes, the manager organised and ran some activities, while the residents' committee took charge of others. In one of these schemes, the manager initially set up a programme of activities, but six months after opening the residents committee had taken over: *'We set up this rota... the coffee mornings are still standing strong, but the other aspects of it, people weren't interested or only one would turn up. So I think that's where the tenants themselves have stepped in and said, that's not really what we want.'* (Care team leader)

Social activities

The most common social activities reported were coffee mornings, bingo, quizzes, and arts and crafts. Other activities included gardening, baking, musical groups, and computer games. Below are some quotes about social activities at the schemes:

'We do a games morning on a Friday morning, which is physical games indoors – hopefully as the weather improves we'll move that outdoors. We do indoor bowling, curling, table tennis and crazy golf.' (Support worker)

'I like the quizzes because it keeps your mind active. I like the baking – it's a good couple of hours of exercise for your hands as well, plus you get to eat with everyone else whatever you've made, and that causes a social gathering.' (Male resident)

COSTS AND OUTCOMES OF ROWANBERRIES

With further funding from the JRF we conducted a study at the Rowanberries extra care scheme in Bradford; a 46-unit joint project between Methodist Homes Housing Association and Bradford Adult Services. The aim was to estimate costs before and after residents moved in. We looked at a range of costs, including social care, health care, accommodation and informal care provided by relatives/friends. Residents were also asked about how they felt shortly after moving in and six months later: we asked about their health, the help they needed, what they could do themselves, and their social life.

Outcomes for residents

Residents identified unmet needs before moving into Rowanberries (in areas such as personal care, social participation, control over daily life, meals, safety, accommodation and occupation). Six months after moving into Rowanberries, residents reported better quality of life than in their previous homes, and also fewer needs that were unmet. Two-thirds of residents said they had a good social life, while in their previous homes, half of them reported having felt lonely or isolated. These improved outcomes were associated with an increase in cost, primarily higher costs of accommodation, social care and support.

When we compared what residents reported about the help they needed and their health (physically or psychologically) shortly after moving in with six months later, we did not find any real changes.

Costs

Social care costs increased from £65 per person per week before the move to £190 per week after the move. This increase included higher home care costs, a cost of £50 for support services such as the provision of social activities and 24-hour care staff presence on-site, and an average of £20 per week being spent at the restaurant. Costs to residents' informal carers decreased, from £80 per week before the move to £25 per week afterwards. Health service costs also fell, from £120 per week before the move to £50 per week afterwards. £40 of this decrease was due to reduced numbers of nurse visits. The proportion of residents using hospital services was also slightly lower after the move.

About three-quarters of the cost per person at Rowanberries was paid for by social services and other public funds. While it is difficult to compare figures for before the move, it is likely that people paid more of their own costs before moving into extra care.

The findings suggest that moving into Rowanberries led to both higher costs and improved outcomes. Rowanberries provides more support for residents than they had in their previous homes, meeting their needs better, and it appears that this both costs more and has led to a better quality of life for residents.

EVOLVE: EVALUATION OF OLDER PEOPLE'S LIVING ENVIRONMENTS

This joint project with the University of Sheffield is developing a tool for assessing the physical design of extra care housing, with a view to finding out what design and environment features are associated with well-being and quality of life. During 2009, you may be invited to take part in an interview about the design of your scheme and your quality of life. We value your participation in this interesting study.

COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

- In October 2008 we held a feedback day to report results to the Department of Health and representatives of the schemes, housing associations and local authorities.
- Papers have been presented at the British Society of Gerontology conference.
- Initial reports have been produced for project funders (DH and JRF).
- Results have also been presented at meetings with fellow researchers, policy-makers and providers.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like to read more about the findings from the evaluation you can look at the PSSRU website at www.pssru.ac.uk/projects/echi.htm. The report and a summary of the results on Rowanberries are available as free downloads from www.jrf.org.uk.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all extra care housing residents and staff who have taken part so far. Thank you for giving up your time to be interviewed for the evaluation, and sharing your views and experiences with us so openly and honestly. We value your continued participation very much, as the results from this evaluation should help councils and schemes provide better services in the future. Thanks are also due to our local researchers for all their hard work.

The Housing and Care Research Programme team at the PSSRU includes Ann Netten, Robin Darton, Theresia Bäumker, Lisa Callaghan, Lesley Cox, Jane Dennett, Ketta Holder and Ann-Marie Towers. The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Department of Health or the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. We would welcome comments about this newsletter.

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