Transforming community health services for children and young people who are ill: a quasi-experimental evaluation

Gemma Spiers,1* Victoria Allgar,2,3 Gerry Richardson,4 Kate Thurland,5 Sebastian Hinde,4 Yvonne Birks,1 Kate Gridley,1 Helen Duncan,5 Susan Clarke,1 Linda Cusworth1 and Gillian Parker1

1Social Policy Research Unit, University of York, York, UK
2Department of Health Sciences, University of York, York, UK
3Hull York Medical School, University of York, York, UK
4Centre for Health Economics, University of York, York, UK
5Public Health England, York, UK

*Corresponding author

Declared competing interests of authors: none

Published September 2016
DOI: 10.3310/hsdr04250

Plain English summary

Transforming health services for children and young people

Health Services and Delivery Research 2016; Vol. 4: No. 25
DOI: 10.3310/hsdr04250

NIHR Journals Library www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk
Plain English summary

There is a national movement to deliver more health care outside hospitals and in community settings. Children’s community nursing (CCN) teams can help to achieve this for children with short- and long-term illnesses. We worked in five sites that had recently started CCN services or were planning to do so. We tried to understand:

- whether or not the services could affect how much hospitals are used, by exploring local statistics before and after the CCN teams started work
- the costs of these services, by gathering information from the teams and using the local statistics to put a cost on hospital activity
- parents’ views of CCN services for their child, by talking to them about their experiences and whether or not these changed over time.

We found a mixed pattern of change in hospital activity. Sites where children’s use of hospitals was higher than national rates seemed more likely to see a reduction after CCN services started. Some types of team seemed to reduce how often children with complex needs went into hospital and how long they stayed. In terms of hospital use, none of the services saved more money than it cost, but we did not assess the value of all the other things the CCN teams did, for example running clinics in the community. Parents valued CCN service input as it helped them manage their child’s health needs at home. These positive experiences relied less on how much support teams offered, and more on what type of support was offered and when.
Criteria for inclusion in the Health Services and Delivery Research journal

Reports are published in Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR) if (1) they have resulted from work for the HS&DR programme or programmes which preceded the HS&DR programme, and (2) they are of a sufficiently high scientific quality as assessed by the reviewers and editors.

HS&DR programme

The Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR) programme, part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), was established to fund a broad range of research. It combines the strengths and contributions of two previous NIHR research programmes: the Health Services Research (HSR) programme and the Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) programme, which were merged in January 2012.

The HS&DR programme aims to produce rigorous and relevant evidence on the quality, access and organisation of health services including costs and outcomes, as well as research on implementation. The programme will enhance the strategic focus on research that matters to the NHS and is keen to support ambitious evaluative research to improve health services.

For more information about the HS&DR programme please visit the website: http://www.nets.nihr.ac.uk/programmes/hsdr

This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HS&DR programme or one of its preceding programmes as project number 11/1015/12. The contractual start date was in June 2012. The final report began editorial review in August 2015 and was accepted for publication in February 2016. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HS&DR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors’ report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

This report presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The views and opinions expressed by authors in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HS&DR programme or the Department of Health. If there are verbatim quotations included in this publication the views and opinions expressed by the interviewees are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect those of the authors, those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HS&DR programme or the Department of Health.

© Queen’s Printer and Controller of HMSO 2016. This work was produced by Spiers et al. under the terms of a commissioning contract issued by the Secretary of State for Health. This issue may be freely reproduced for the purposes of private research and study and extracts (or indeed, the full report) may be included in professional journals provided that suitable acknowledgement is made and the reproduction is not associated with any form of advertising. Applications for commercial reproduction should be addressed to: NIHR Journals Library, National Institute for Health Research, Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre, Alpha House, University of Southampton Science Park, Southampton SO16 7NS, UK.

Published by the NIHR Journals Library (www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk), produced by Prepress Projects Ltd, Perth, Scotland (www.prepress-projects.co.uk).
**Health Services and Delivery Research Editor-in-Chief**

Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone  Professor of Health Services and Implementation Research, Bangor University, UK

**NIHR Journals Library Editor-in-Chief**

Professor Tom Walley  Director, NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies and Director of the EME Programme, UK

**NIHR Journals Library Editors**

Professor Ken Stein  Chair of HTA Editorial Board and Professor of Public Health, University of Exeter Medical School, UK

Professor Andree Le May  Chair of NIHR Journals Library Editorial Group (EME, HS&DR, PGfAR, PHR journals)

Dr Martin Ashton-Key  Consultant in Public Health Medicine/Consultant Advisor, NETSCC, UK

Professor Matthias Beck  Chair in Public Sector Management and Subject Leader (Management Group), Queen's University Management School, Queen's University Belfast, UK

Professor Aileen Clarke  Professor of Public Health and Health Services Research, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, UK

Dr Tessa Crilly  Director, Crystal Blue Consulting Ltd, UK

Dr Eugenia Cronin  Senior Scientific Advisor, Wessex Institute, UK

Ms Tara Lamont  Scientific Advisor, NETSCC, UK

Professor Elaine McColl  Director, Newcastle Clinical Trials Unit, Institute of Health and Society, Newcastle University, UK

Professor William McGuire  Professor of Child Health, Hull York Medical School, University of York, UK

Professor Geoffrey Meads  Professor of Health Sciences Research, Health and Wellbeing Research and Development Group, University of Winchester, UK

Professor John Norrie  Health Services Research Unit, University of Aberdeen, UK

Professor John Powell  Consultant Clinical Adviser, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), UK

Professor James Raftery  Professor of Health Technology Assessment, Wessex Institute, Faculty of Medicine, University of Southampton, UK

Dr Rob Riemsma  Reviews Manager, Kleijnen Systematic Reviews Ltd, UK

Professor Helen Roberts  Professor of Child Health Research, UCL Institute of Child Health, UK

Professor Jonathan Ross  Professor of Sexual Health and HIV, University Hospital Birmingham, UK

Professor Helen Snoooks  Professor of Health Services Research, Institute of Life Science, College of Medicine, Swansea University, UK

Professor Jim Thornton  Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Nottingham, UK

Professor Martin Underwood  Director, Warwick Clinical Trials Unit, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, UK

Please visit the website for a list of members of the NIHR Journals Library Board: www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/about/editors

**Editorial contact:** nihredit@southampton.ac.uk