NHS SERVICE DELIVERY AND ORGANISATION R&D PROGRAMME

RESEARCH ON SERVICES TO SUPPORT CARERS FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

MEASURING OUTCOMES FOR CARERS FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

Introduction

In order to provide research evidence to support the implementation of the relevant aspects of the National Service Framework for Mental Health\(^1\) and the National Service Framework for Older People\(^2\), in 2001 the SDO Programme commissioned a scoping report from a team of researchers at the University of York in order to understand the extent and quality of existing evidence in relation to services to support carers for people with mental health problems.\(^3\) The scoping exercise was designed to advise the SDO Programme what further R&D should be commissioned in this area.

Potential applicants are advised to read the three scoping documents referred to here for more detailed information on the scoping report on services to support carers for people with mental health problems. These documents can be downloaded from the SDO Programme website (www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk).

Current call for proposals: Measurement of Outcomes for Carers

The SDO Programme is now inviting proposals to conduct a short piece of research on the measurement of outcomes for carers.

The scoping reports indicate that there is a range of views on what constitutes effectiveness in respect of services to support carers for people with mental health problems. As a prerequisite to carrying out further research on effective services, it is necessary to identify an instrument which can validly and reliably measure the outcome of services from the point of view of carers themselves. Such an instrument is also necessary for practitioners. It will allow providers of services and users of those services to check on the impact of services provided to carers.

As discussed in the scoping reports, there is currently a range of measures used to assess outcomes for carers. The scoping exercise indicates that none of these is entirely satisfactory. Some measures have been developed specifically for carers (such as Carers’ CUES and Caregiver Strain Index) and others, which are of more general application, have been used with carers (such as Malaise Inventory). There may be outcomes for carers which have not been measured by any currently used scales (such as the ability to keep or obtain employment).

The SDO Programme now wishes to commission a review of all relevant outcome measures for carers for people with mental health problems. The review should include recommendations (based on the review) about what further work will be required to develop a robust outcomes measure or measures for carers for people...
with mental health problems. These recommendations might include the further technical development of existing measures; and/or the further testing of existing measures and/or the comparison of different measures with each other.

The review should bear in mind the diversity of carers. Both carers for adults of working age with serious mental health problems and carers for older people with mental health problems should be included. The needs of people from ethnic minorities need to be borne in mind. Similarly, the specific needs of child or young adult carers, as well as carers in less common situations (such as same sex relationships and caring at a distance) should be considered.

Methods
Applicants should clearly outline their proposed methods for identifying relevant outcome measures and for reviewing their suitability. It is expected that applicants will plan to use a variety of methods including: the research team’s prior knowledge; search of electronic databases; and advice from key researchers and practitioners in the field.

Output
A report (1) reviewing the current outcome measures used with carers for people with mental health problems and (2) making recommendations about further work required to develop appropriate and robust outcome measures for this group.

Potential applicants are also advised to consult:

- the National Service Frameworks for Mental Health and Older People, copies of which can be downloaded from the following websites: http://www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/menta1health.htm and http://www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/olderpeople.htm

- the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination Report, ‘Scoping the effectiveness of mental health services’, an executive summary of which can be downloaded from website: http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/crd/report21.htm

- the Thematic Review of NHS R&D funded mental health research in relation to the National Service Framework for Mental Health, a copy of which can be downloaded from the website: http://www.iop.kcl.ac.uk/IoP/Departments/HSR/themrev.stm

The successful applicants may also be required to make a short oral presentation of their completed report to the SDO Programme Board.
Guidance Notes

This project is being commissioned via the SDO rapid response commissioning process. Selected rapid response research teams are asked to submit full proposals using the A4 application form for use with rapid response mode commissioning, which is enclosed with this information pack.

In completing the A4 application form for use with rapid response mode commissioning, teams should follow the guidance notes that can be found on pages 2 and 3 of the form.

The selected rapid response research teams are asked to submit:

- **ONE ELECTRONIC COPY (BY EMAIL);**
- **ONE COPY ON CD OR FLOPPY DISK;** and
- **FIVE HARD COPIES** (including a signed original).

Please note we will not accept faxed submissions or hand written proposals.

Proposals should be sent to:

Ms Kate Thomas  
Commissioning Manager  
National Co-ordinating Centre for NHS Service Delivery and Organisation Research and Development  
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine  
99 Gower Street  
London WC1E 6AZ  
Email: Kate.Thomas@lshtm.ac.uk

The deadline for submission of full proposals is **Friday 15th November 2002 at 1.00pm.** No late submissions will be considered. This deadline applies to the electronic and hard copy versions of the proposals.

Teams should ensure that their proposal complies with the Research Governance Framework, which can be found on the Department of Health website, or via a link on the SDO website under the ‘Call for Proposals’ page.

The successful team will be required to provide proof of research ethics committee approval for their project, if this is required (information regarding this can be found on the SDO website under the ‘Calls for Proposals’ page).

The proposal should cost no more than **£80,000.** Applicants should note that value for money is an important consideration in respect of this research and they should demonstrate that their proposal meets this criterion.

The project should start no later than **13th January 2003** and be completed **within 6 months.**

The exact length and cost of the project should be determined by the applicant, as they think appropriate.
1 Secretary of State for Health A National Service Framework for Mental Health
Department of Health, 1999
2 Secretary of State for Health A National Service Framework for Older People
Department of Health, 2001
3 Arksey, H. et al Overview Report: services to support carers of people with mental
health problems, SDO, 2002
Newbronner, E. et al Consultation Report: services to support carers of people with
mental health problems, SDO, 2002
Arksey, H. et al Literature review: services to support carers of people with mental
health problems, SDO, 2002
4 NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination Scoping the effectiveness of mental
health services NHS CRD, 2001
5 Wright S, Bindman J, Thornicroft G, Butcher M, Thematic Review of NHS R&D
funded mental health research in relation to the National Service Framework for
Mental Health Mimeo, 2000
Addendum
This document was published by the National Coordinating Centre for the Service Delivery and Organisation (NCCSDO) research programme, managed by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. The management of the Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) programme has now transferred to the National Institute for Health Research Evaluations, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC) based at the University of Southampton. Prior to April 2009, NETSCC had no involvement in the commissioning or production of this document and therefore we may not be able to comment on the background or technical detail of this document. Should you have any queries please contact sdo@southampton.ac.uk.