

Supported accommodation for people with mental health problems: the QuEST research programme with feasibility RCT

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Plain English summary

The QuEST research programme with feasibility RCT

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Plain English summary

Background

There are three main types of mental health supported accommodation in England: residential care, supported housing and floating outreach. Residential care and supported housing services provide on-site support whereas floating outreach services visit people in their own homes.

Methods

We amended existing measures of service quality and satisfaction for use in supported accommodation services and tested them to ensure that they remained valid and reliable. We used them to survey 87 services and 619 service users across England who we followed to see if they moved on successfully to less supported accommodation 30 months later. We also asked staff and service users what they found most helpful, and we tried to recruit service users to a trial comparing supported housing and floating outreach services.

Results

Many people had experienced severe self-neglect (57%) and had been exploited in the past (37%). People in residential care services had the highest needs and those in floating outreach services had less severe problems. residential care was the most expensive service and floating outreach was the cheapest. After accounting for differences between people, those in supported housing had the most independence and a similar quality of life to those in residential care. Service users and staff felt that services should support people to gain independent living skills gradually. At follow-up, floating outreach service users were more likely to be managing with less support than people in supported housing or residential care (and those in supported housing were more likely to manage with less support than those in residential care).

We recruited only eight people into our trial; service users were unhappy with their accommodation being decided by chance and staff felt that people needed to move from supported housing to floating outreach rather than going straight to floating outreach.

Conclusions

All three types of supported accommodation are needed to help people in their recovery. Methods other than trials are needed to compare services.

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