HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE: Service reviews and evaluation

A JOINT STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE’S SERVICES

Background
CPA was commissioned to act as consultant and to facilitate the production of a joint agency Older People’s Strategy. All the organisations and agencies, statutory, private and voluntary, that play a role in caring for older people in the health region were brought together to draw up a strategy to set out the shape and organisation of services to meet the needs of older people. The following information was needed to inform the review:
- demographic trends and morbidity information;
- lifestyle surveys;
- description and benchmarking of existing services;
- identification of gaps in service;
- review of national and UK wide policy;
- literature search on reviews/policy/good practice/standards;
- user and carer views;
- visits to existing services;

Critical analysis of views and evidence and identification of gaps in service provision was carried out by a working group whilst a steering group oversaw the project, ensuring corporate and clinical commitment to the project. CPA’s role as external facilitator to the project involved the following tasks:
- assisting in further designing the review process;
- assisting in the collection of specific information;
- reviewing UK wide policy directions, similarities and divergences between Scotland/England/Wales/Northern Ireland;
- assisting in the critical analysis of information obtained;
- highlighting models of good practice elsewhere;
- general facilitation of the review process;
- preparing reports and assisting in writing the draft strategy and action plan.

Outcomes
The strategy has been successfully developed.

NB. This report is not available for distribution.

THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE: A REVIEW

Background
CPA was commissioned jointly by a health authority and its Health Improvement Programme partner agencies (local authority, health trust and voluntary bodies) to undertake a literature review to look at the information needs of older people, then placing its findings in a local context.

Key questions to be addressed included:
- how do the information needs of older people differ from those of other age groups?
what services for which the local health and social care systems are responsible are relevant to older people?

Three elements were identified as involved in responding to a populations information needs:

- the need to know what services are available, how to access those services and what action people themselves can take to improve their situation;
- the local system for health and social care delivery needs to know what information has to be provided to satisfy people’s information needs and the formats in which it should be presented;
- the third element is audit, to ensure that local people are able to inform the local system as to whether what is provided is appropriate and adequate.

Outcomes
The message from the review suggested that information providers need to consider the following points:

- older people are highly receptive to information provided it is given in the right way and in the appropriate format;
- there is a growing body of evidence to show what approaches are successful;
- thought must be given to the particular needs of some groups of older people, particularly those who are vulnerable through physical or mental frailty, social isolation, and language or cultural difference;
- a variety of approaches to the format in which information is presented is essential;
- a variety of outlets/locations where information can be provided is important;
- professionals and front line staff of all kinds should be aware of the important role they play in providing information to older people;
- staff need to be given training opportunities in relation to this role;
- voluntary organisations need to be incorporated into any information strategy which is developed (especially those representing minority ethnic groups);
- older people themselves need to be involved in developing an information strategy that relates to their need for information – they are the people who know what they need information about and what will work best.

NB. This report is not available for distribution.

HOMESHARING FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Background
CPA was commissioned by a local Age Concern group to evaluate the ‘Homeshare’ scheme it was running and from which the local social services department purchased places for its clients. They wanted to know how far the idea of spending the day in the care of volunteers in the volunteers’ own homes appealed to frail and vulnerable older people as an alternative, or in addition, to making use of other more traditional forms of care, such as day centres. Interviews with service users, carers, and staff in the various agencies were undertaken.

Outcomes
Summary of main findings
C the Homeshare scheme provided a high quality form of day care which was viewed positively by users, their carers, homesharers and by statutory workers from social services and the health authority;
C the homesharers were well-motivated and showed great sensitivity to the needs of their visitors;
C the scheme was not fully integrated with the overall pattern of services for older people in the Borough, although it made a significant contribution to the service repertoire;
C it was not possible to compare Homeshare costs with the costs of day centre care run by the social services department because of different costing methodologies;
C the costs of the scheme compared favourably with the costs of a similar scheme run by a social services department in another area;

Main recommendations
C the scheme’s management should explore with the social services department and with the health authority ways of collaborating more closely over the position which the scheme occupies in the service system and over the individual care packages of users in the scheme;
C the scheme should receive more stable funding from the statutory agencies;
early decisions need to be made whether to expand the scheme or not so that implications for management and recruitment can be made;

the internal management and administrative procedures of the scheme need to be strengthened.

Publication:

REVIEW OF DAY SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Background
CPA was commissioned, in conjunction with an independent research consultancy, to undertake a wide ranging review of all day services for older people in a metropolitan borough. In particular, it was to assess current provision and present a series of options about the pattern of day care services in the future. The research made use of the range of available documentary data, as well as a number of qualitative and quantitative research techniques.

Outcomes
Summary of main findings
C day hospital services played an important part in the mix of services available, helping to reduce hospital admissions as well as facilitate early discharge from inpatient care;
C the significant numbers of older people living alone on low incomes in the borough strongly suggested the need for social day care services;
C specialist day care services provided in people's own homes and in day centres and day hospitals were also needed to provide respite for informal carers, many of whom were themselves of pensionable age;
C the need to involve older users and carers in planning and delivering services was an important theme underpinning local policies and strategies;
C problems related to charging policies were apparent: users and carers did not like paying for day care services which were provided via social services when they did not have to pay for similar services provided either by the health service or by leisure services;
C getting the right balance between segregated and integrated services had to be resolved. Some users and carers did not like services being used by people with differing abilities and levels of functioning. These problems are exacerbated where services were understaffed or staff were not appropriately trained.

Main recommendations
- the fundamental principles upon which services for older people should be based include:
  - ease of access;
  - genuine choice-retention of a range of provision;
  - informed users and carers;
  - needs being appropriately and flexibly met;
  - equal access to appropriate services irrespective of cultural difference, physical or mental capacity;
  - services which are non-stigmatising.
- the establishment of a resource centre (different in concept from existing resource centres) in each locality acting as the hub of all day care activity in the locality (day centres, day hospitals, home care, voluntary sector activity);
- an increase in the range of choice available to users and carers so that services match individual needs.

NB. This report is not available for distribution.
REVIEW OF DAY CARE SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE WITH FUNCTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

Background
CPA was commissioned by a London borough council, as part of its Day Care for Older People Review, to look into the need for day care for older people with functional mental health needs. The research used data from different sources and a combination of qualitative research techniques to clarify various perspectives on appropriate and effective day care services for the client group in question, the boundaries between health and social care needs and the optimal use of resources.

Outcomes
Summary of main findings
- there was widespread concern about the lack of adequate and appropriate day care services for older people with functional mental health needs, with an overemphasis on organic disorders. Specialist day care services were provided for this latter client group in three Centres in the borough, but people with functional mental illness were falling through a care gap;
- it was repeatedly emphasised that day care services for older people with functional mental health needs should combine a 'medical' model with the 'social' model of care;
- most of the Social Day Centres in the locality had members with mental health needs. Day Centre Managers felt that they could cope with clients with low to medium dependency, but not with severely depressed people, and those with challenging or aggressive behaviour who were referred elsewhere;
- inadequate and unreliable transport provision was effectively acting as a rationing device, limiting access to social day care for some of the people who required it the most.

Main recommendations
C day care provision, particularly in social settings, should be properly resourced in terms of trained staff, higher staff ratios and suitable premises, so that it formed an effective element in the full complement of community care services;
C all those involved in providing and purchasing such services for older people with functional mental health needs should be clear about the specific aspects of the service from which these clients could benefit.
C tighter definition of day care for people with functional mental health needs and greater clarity about the objectives of such provision would facilitate the process of assessment and appropriate referrals;
C service change/development should be underpinned by values such as:
  - equal access;
  - appropriateness, flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of users and carers;
  - ease of access to services for users and potential users;
  - availability of genuine choices;
  - better co-ordination between different agencies;

NB. This report is not available for distribution.

For further information contact:

Publications Officer
Centre for Policy on Ageing
25-31 Ironmonger Row
London EC1V 3QP

Email: publications@cpa.org.uk
Tel: +44 (0)20 7553 6500
Fax: +44 (0)20 7553 6501

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