



## Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland*



# Modernising Adult Social Care in Northern Ireland

**Dr Joe Duffy**

**School of Social Sciences, Education and  
Social Work**

**Queen's University, Belfast**

**Dr Gavin Davidson**

**School of Social Sciences, Education and  
Social Work**

**Queen's University, Belfast**

**Dr Subhajit Basu**

**School of Law  
University of Leeds**

**Professor Katherine Pearson**

**Dickinson School of Law  
Penn State University**

**10 May 2017**

# Background

- Research completed by international team for Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland (Duffy, Basu, Davidson and Pearson, 2015).
- Why consider legal reforms to adult social care in Northern Ireland?

Overlaps, Fragmented, Complex, Outdated

# Research Objectives

1. Identify gaps and issues in current legislative framework.
2. Compare existing law and practice in Northern Ireland with law and best practice in other jurisdictions.
3. Recommend changes or identify options for current Northern Ireland framework.
4. Participate in roundtable event with stakeholders to discuss outcomes and recommendations.



# Methodology

1. Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) approach to reviewing literature.
2. Reviewing law and policy in thirteen countries with diverse welfare systems (Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, Republic of Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, India, Canada (Ontario), Australia (Victoria) and the United States (Pennsylvania, Florida and Maine as State examples).
3. Comparing best practices from this REA Review with Northern Ireland's existing adult social care system.
4. Proposing recommendations for reform.



# Key Recommendations

1. Northern Ireland should have a single legislative framework for adult social care with accompanying guidance for implementation. This could either be new or consolidated legislation, based on human rights principles, bringing existing social care law together into one coherent framework.
2. All older people in Northern Ireland, once they reach the age of 75 years, should be offered a **Support Visit** by an appropriately trained professional. This will be based on principles of choice and self-determination and is aimed at helping older people to be aware of the support and preventative services that are available to them.
3. Increasing demands for health and social care reinforce the importance of considering how these services should be funded. All future funding arrangements must be equitable and not discriminate against any group who may have higher levels of need.



# Preventive Visits (Denmark)

- Preventive Visits to older people legally established in Denmark in 1998 (Kronborg *et al*, 2006).
- Aimed at promoting well-being/independence of older people at 75 and preventing hospital/nursing home admissions. Undertaken mostly by community health staff (*ibid*).
- Focused on developing personal resources and offering support – prevention, promotion and early intervention
- Initially two visits per year – municipalities (98) could decide how to organise the visits, the content and which professionals should do them
- Since 2016, one visit at 75, then flexibility between 75-80, from 80 must be annual (Vass, 2015)

# Preventive Visits (Denmark)

- Research studies (meta analyses of RCTs) have generally shown their effectiveness if they are multidimensional (not just health focused) (Stuck *et al.* 2002; Elkan *et al.* 2001; Huss *et al.*, 2008).
- Improved mortality, functioning and reduced care admissions reported with Preventive Visits for older people (Vass *et al.*, 2002; Rostgaard *et al.*, 2011).
- Two thirds of older people accept the offer (Yamada *et al.*, 2012)
- Also ongoing research in Sweden, Norway and other countries.

# Introducing Support Visits in Northern Ireland

- Based on the Danish research and experience the visits should provide:
- “Trustful contact; Structured interview; Overall assessment; Any concrete agreements; and Follow-up...”
- Visits have two dimensions: specific activities during and after the visits, and the atmosphere in which the visits are conducted.” (Age Forum (Denmark), 2006)
- Comprehensive – it should include discussion of information, relationships, networking, health and social wellbeing promotion, signposting, finances, advanced care planning, hopes and dreams
- Annual primary care check-up should also still be available for those aged 75 and over



# Introducing Support Visits in Northern Ireland

- All older people at the age of 75 receive a visit from an appropriately trained professional.
- Provides an opportunity to identify and assess any support needs at an early stage.
- Based on principles of choice, partnership and control.
- Links with current policies in Northern Ireland on co-production, care in the community and person centredness (Transforming Your Care, 2011; Delivering Together, 2016).
- Pilot of Support Visits in one Health and Social Care Trust.
- Conduct research to evaluate effectiveness of Support Visits liaising with academic colleagues in Denmark for advice and support.



# References

- Age Forum (2006) *Older people and preventive home visits*. Odense: Age Forum.
- Department of Health (2016) *Health and Wellbeing 2026 - Delivering Together*. [www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)
- (DHSSPS, 2011) *Transforming Your Care: A Review of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland*. Belfast. Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety
- Duffy, J., Basu, S., Davidson, G and Pearson, K. (2015) *Review of Legislation and Policy Guidance relating to Adult Social Care in Northern Ireland*. Belfast. Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland (COPNI). <http://www.copni.org/publications/>
- Elkan R, Kendrick D, Dewey M, Hewitt M, Robinson J, Blair M, Williams D, Brummell K.. (2001) Effectiveness of home based support for older people: systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ*.323(7315):719–725.
- Huss, A., Stuck, A. E., Rubenstein, L. Z., Egger, M., & Clough-Gorr, K. M. (2008). Multidimensional preventive home visit programs for community-dwelling older adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *J Gerontol A Biol Sci Med Sci*, 63(3), 298-307.
- Kronborg, C., Vass, M., Lauridsen, J., Avlund, K (2006) Cost effectiveness of preventive home visits to the elderly: Economic evaluation alongside randomized controlled study. *European Journal of Health Economics*. Vol 7:238–246.
- Rostgaard, T Glendinning, C., Gori, C., Kröger, T., Osterle, A., Szebehely, M., Theobald, H., Timonen, V., Vabø, M (2011) *LIVINDHOME Living independently at home Reforms in home care in 9 European countries*. Copenhagen. SFI – The Danish National Centre for Social Research
- Stuck AE, Egger M, Hammer A, Minder CE, Beck JC (2002). Home visits to prevent nursing home admission and functional decline in elderly people: systematic review and meta-regression analysis. *JAMA*. 287(8):1022–1028.
- Vass, M., Avlund, K., Hendriksen, C., Andersen, C.K, Keiding, N. (2002) *Preventive home visits to older people in Denmark: methodology of a randomized controlled study*. *Aging Clinical and Experimental Research*. Vol14: 509–515.
- Vass, M. (2015) *Preventative Home Visits to older people in Denmark*. Presentation at “Social innovations for healthy and active life expectancy“ Bruxelles October 14th 2015
- Yamada, Y., Ekmann, A., Nilsson, C. J., Vass, M., & Avlund, K. (2012). Are acceptance rates of a national preventive home visit programme for older people socially imbalanced?: a cross sectional study in Denmark. *BMC public health*, 12(1), 396.



Northern Ireland  
Assembly



Queen's University  
Belfast



The Open  
University



Ulster  
University

## Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland*