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Abstract OT conference 2010 - Poster presentation:

Self-directed care – is there a role for occupational therapists?

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A radical reform to how the individual accesses support for their social care needs has resulted from the Department of Health's strategy; Putting People First – Transforming Adult Social Care (DOH 2007). Originating from the Direct Payments Scheme (DOH 2000), individuals can create personalised support packages, utilising services that meet their own particular needs.

This shift in practise is also being directed at health care provision, with proposals to change access to empower individuals to take responsibility for their own health care requirements. This change stems from the Expert Patient Programme (2007) and potentially provides clients with individual funding to organise and co-ordinate health care. This is not a new concept; in the United States, for example, self-directed care has been in place in the mental health setting since 2002 and initial research findings suggest that client satisfaction with services has improved and clients are also making less use of crisis services (Alakson, 2008). However, the wholesale introduction of this system within the UK is not without its concerns, and these need to be addressed if the proposed changes are to be effective. For example, how will budgets be calculated, should the spending be monitored and if so by whom?

This review of the literature will set the concept of self-directed care within the UK's legislative context and outline potential issues for health care professionals. The aim is to explore the current situation regarding this concept, raise points for potential debate and consider the occupational therapist's position within the system.

References

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