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Brookdale

Supervision of Welfare Services: Use of Self- Reporting Tools by Service Providers

An International Literature Review

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Abstract

Background

The regulatory agencies that oversee welfare services in various countries often suggest, and sometimes require, that the services use designated tools to self-report on the services they are providing. These tools are part of a regulatory agency's toolbox, and they are used for the purpose of supervising service providers, planning supervisory tasks and encouraging service providers to carry out self-evaluation. In Israel, the Quality and Regulation Administration in the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs is responsible for formulating the Ministry's regulatory policy and expanding its supervisory tools. Consequently, the Ministry asked the Quality Assurance Team at the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute to examine self-reporting by service providers in regulatory agencies in other countries.

Objectives

The objective of the review is to compare the usage of self-reporting tools in the supervision of welfare services in selected countries.

Method

The review is based on a variety of information sources: academic publications from the Israeli and international literature, and information from internet sites, official documents and policy papers that are in the public domain. In order to understand the situation worldwide, regulatory organizations in six countries were reviewed: Australia, Ireland, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Finland.

Main Findings and Insights

The review examined three types of self-reporting, each of which has a unique advantage. **Administrative reporting** provides up-to-date information on the characteristics of the services and thus provides a basis for an information infrastructure and for ongoing monitoring to identify changes and plan supervision. **Serious incident reporting** makes it possible to learn about service delivery relative to the official procedures based on a single adverse event, with the goal of protecting service users and preventing a repetition of such events. **Self-evaluation** facilitates a reflective, internal and in-depth examination of the service relative to expected

standards, identifying shortcomings, and drawing conclusions in order to improve the quality of service. It can also enhance the value of external supervision through the possibility of focusing attention on relevant areas.

Alongside the advantages of self-reporting tools, their use also involves several challenges: challenges related to the reliability and quality of the information provided by the service providers; challenges related to the service providers' motivation and willingness to use self-reporting tools; challenges related to the skills and knowledge required of the service providers in carrying out the task of self-reporting; and the challenges related to the limited resources available to regulatory organizations for the analysis of the data they receive. Regulatory organizations must address these challenges in order to optimally exploit the self-reporting mechanism. The review points to four main strategies to accomplish this: ensuring the reliability of information, strengthening the motivation and willingness of the services to cooperate, streamlining the reporting system, and enhancing the benefit derived from the use of information.