



The Public Services Programme

Quality, Performance & Delivery

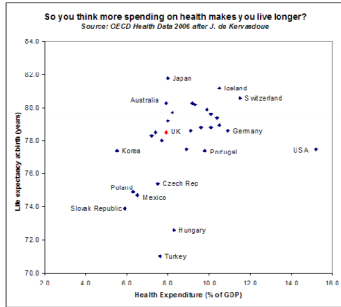
Why research into public service performance?

It's socially important

- Public services are central to the politics of modern democracies.
- Everyone wants good public services but what counts as 'good' is contested and so are reform recipes.

It's intriguing

- We can fill gaps and resolve contradictions (for instance different claims about what the public knows/wants/thinks).
- We can explore paradoxes and unexpected effects or relationships (see graph).



Its 'doable'

- 'Politics is the art of the possible, research is the art of the soluble'.
- Not all questions about public service performance are researchable, but some important ones are. That's what we focus on.

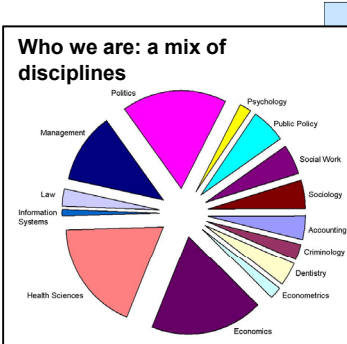
What are we trying to find out?



Like the letters in a stick of rock, the theme of 'performance' in public services runs through everything we do. Questions we are asking include:

- who sees what as public services, who values what kind of performance, and who thinks what kind of measures (such as choice) lead to good or bad performance?
- what are the effects of reforms intended to affect performance, like targets, transparency, incentive-based contracts?
- what are the scope and limits of different kinds of performance metrics and what intended and unintended effects do they have?
- what can we learn about performance by tracing developments over time, by comparing experience across the UK and by comparing the UK with other countries?

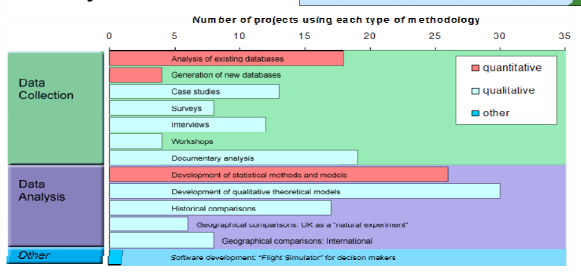
Who are we and how do we work?



Where we are: across the UK

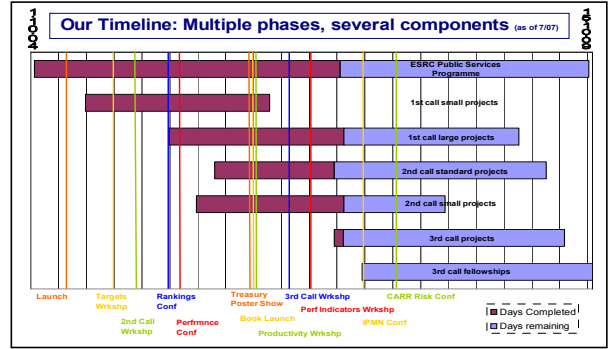
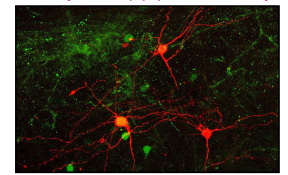


"The way that we do it..."



More than the sum of our parts?

In the same way that neurons connect to produce the brain's exquisite functionality, the Programme's three elements - funded research projects, sponsored events and networking activities - coalesce in dynamic ways such that the whole equals more than the sum of its parts.

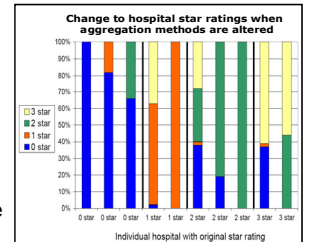


What are our discoveries?

- What we've found out about beliefs, knowledge and attitudes**
 - how far choice (switching providers) comes at the expense of voice (participation) in local authority services
 - how satisfaction with local authority services relates to the expectations people have of those services

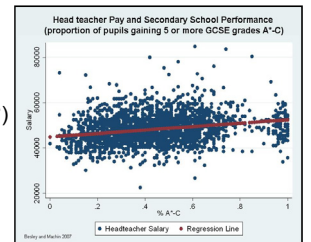
What we've found out about performance measures

- how valid and reliable composite performance indicators are for ranking and rating public services (example: how far composite hospital rankings alter when we make small changes to the weightings of individual items)
- how much difference 'target and terror systems' make to performance in health care (comparing Scottish and English waiting list data since 2001)



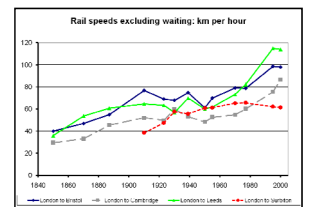
What we've found out about incentives

- the strength as well as the direction of some key incentives (example: how much more work do dentists do when they are paid on fee for service rather than on salary?)
- the unintended or unanticipated effects of some incentive systems in public services (example: what happens when hospitals are given the power to fine social services departments for not finding places for bed-blockers?)



...and what we expect to find out

- how far public attitudes to the management of public services in the four parts of the UK reflect the policies of the different governments
- how litigation relates to the quality of local authority services
- how train speeds have changed over 50 major rail journeys in the UK over 150 years, and what affects changes in train speeds
- how we can assess risks of poor performance by doctors, and more...



Want to find out more?

See our website or call 01865 285967