

Care Trusts - lessons from the front line

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A new policy paper on the experience of care trusts has just been launched by HSMC. The ground was paved for the establishment of care trusts - a single organisation leading on the commissioning and/or delivery of health and social care services - over ten years ago and the policy paper captures the views of leaders within a number of the current care trusts regarding their experiences of managing this type of integrated organisation.

At the time they were introduced, it was anticipated that care trusts would be better able to provide integrated care and achieve better access, co-ordination and efficiency. There was concern nonetheless that a new organisational structure in itself would not necessarily deliver better working and that the costs of such 'mergers' could outweigh the benefits.

The authors - Robin Miller, Helen Dickinson and Jon Glasby - conclude that this type of structure can provide benefits but only if a history of joint working and trust exists and if there is a clear vision and active engagement of all stakeholders. Those that took part in the research noted that historic differences and tensions between health and social care can still remain and that integrating with one service can lead to a greater distance from another.

'These are important lessons on integrated working for health and social care services as we move into the new policy environment', says Robin.

[Policy Paper 10 - The vanguard of integration or a lost tribe? Care trusts ten years on](#) ([//Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/HSMC/publications/policy-paper-ten.pdf](#)) (pdf; opens in new window)