

HIPS/16/62 – Developing and evaluating an economic and ethico-legal framework for priority setting in health and social care

Health and Social Care Integration Partnerships (HSCPs), created in Scotland, are collaborations between the NHS and local authorities, with third-sector representation. HSCPs make joint decisions about budgets for primary, community, social and some acute hospital care; thirty-one HSCPs manage approximately £8billion of resources. Decisions about how to allocate resources fairly and efficiently are very difficult, particularly with limited health care resources. There are many competing claims on budgets that could benefit different groups of patients. Frameworks to aid such decisions have been developed separately within disciplines and have never been evaluated. This research is leading-edge; developing the first framework for making difficult decisions that integrates economics, decision-analysis, ethics and law. Uniquely, we will implement and test the framework in two HSCPs to establish barriers and facilitators to its use, but also assess, relative to all other HSCPs, what difference it makes to priority setting processes in practice and to evidence-based shifts in balance of care.