

Creating incentives to improve public services

Innovative policy ideas from LSE researchers inspired radical government reforms that introduced choice and competition to improve key public services

What was the problem?

Many schools, hospitals and social services departments were providing sub-standard services because there was little to motivate

Research Impact: making a difference

of competition in health care and education, awarded Le Grand the Eupolis Prize for Public Policy.

Social Work Practices

and Skills inviting Le Grand to chair the Working Group on Social Work Practices. Its 2007 recommendations were accepted in their entirety by the Labour Government, and pilot Social Work Practices were established in 2008 for children's services.

The subsequent Coalition Government expanded the Social Work Practices programme into adult social care and increased the number of children's Social Work Practices. Le Grand was invited into other areas of the public sector. In their first year, Social Work Practices reduced placement change rates for children, and carers were more likely than those looking after local authority children to feel better supported.

A change to legislation allowed local authorities who were already using external providers to continue to do so, and gave all local authorities greater flexibility around how to look after children in their care. The success of the Social Worker Practices was highlighted in the 2011 report by LSE Professor Eileen Munro, which led to a radical overhaul in child protection services in England.

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