



Shifting values: how should we care for older people in society?

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Outline

- Experience -
 - 2000—2005: Expansion phase
 - After 2005: Reforms
- Comprehensive support network
- Achievements
- Challenges
- Lessons for England?

2000—2005: Expansion Phase

Achievements:

- Expansion in service users & reduction in unmet need
- Success in shedding stigma of public care
- Growing sense of entitlement & willingness to pay premiums

Concerns:

- Soaring expenditure requiring increased funding (i.e. taxes & insurance premiums)
- Abuse of services (unwarranted use of home care by less needy)

After 2005: Reforms

- Government measures to ensure sustainability
 - Means-tested accommodation fees in nursing homes
 - Clarified and reduced services for less needy, emphasising 'no-frills', rehabilitation-led preventative services
- Slowed growth of users and of service use, permitting stabilised expenditure

New comprehensive approach

- Municipalities responsible for low-level and preventative support
- Seniors encouraged to offer voluntary support, promoting healthy, active lives & earning credits towards their own insurance premiums
- Extended the system's *scope*, offering comprehensive support to entire older population

System Achievements

- Financial sustainability – world's most generous long-term care system (outside Scandinavia), within controlled, stable increases in expenditure
- Universal coverage fostered higher service quality (and user expectations)
- Promoted prevention and active ageing
- Shift in attitudes towards responsibilities for care (people now prefer public care to family care)

System Challenges

- Maintaining financial sustainability – requires higher premiums/taxes/user-fees **or** cutting services (popular?)
- Unequal service distribution - shortages of nursing homes, burden on family carers remains heavy
- Increased financial burdens on low income groups
- Shortages of care workers

The lessons from Japan?

- Cost control possible, but requires negotiation and trust in system
- Universal entitlement important, reinforcing quality and 'consumerism'
- Clear, agreed definitions of eligibility and service content necessary
- Strong central government control, flexible funding and system structures & clear role and autonomy for municipalities crucial