

Social care research capacity consultation

There are 7 consultation questions, though some have more than one part. Please read the background information relating to each question and then consider your 'tick box' response. If you do not tick any of the boxes your response will be recorded as '**no opinion**'.

You can expand on your answer in the comments box - this is entirely optional. It would help us if you make it very clear whether your comments relate to an individual country or to the UK as a whole and, if the question has more than one part to it, which part or parts your comment refers to. Once you have made any comments, you can choose whether you want other people to be able to see them on this website.

To help us analyse the responses to this consultation we would like to record some basic information about you. This information will only be used to help us carry out this exercise and will not be kept unless you give us permission to.

Location: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales. **UK**

Sector: Voluntary sector

If you would like to receive further information about this consultation, including a copy of the final report, please give us your name and email address. You can complete the questionnaire without providing this information.

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Can we keep your details so that we can keep you informed about SCIE's work and events?
Yes/no. **Yes**

Social care research capacity consultation – Question 1

1. Developing a UK-wide approach with attention to country-specific issues	The consultation question	Your response
<p>Background</p> <p>Social care policy is the responsibility of each individual country of the UK, but policy and services in each country share many common features.</p> <p>This means it might make sense to develop a social care research strategy for the UK as a whole, which is linked to issues that need to be addressed in each country.</p>	<p>How far do you agree that we need to develop a UK-wide social care research strategy linked to issues that need to be addressed in each country?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>
<p>We welcome your general comments on this question. You might wish to explain your tick box answer. You may also wish to consider;</p> <p>What should be undertaken at the UK level</p> <p>And/ or</p> <p>What should be undertaken in each country</p>	<p>Who would drive a UK wide strategy? A UK wide research strategy could marginalise the devolved nations. Mechanisms for the generation of a social care research agenda in the devolved nations are already in place and instead of agreeing a common agenda it would be better to embrace the opportunities offered by different approaches and perspectives. Useful UK level work is already being undertaken – large scale datasets from survey research that enables cross national and regional comparisons to take place.</p>	

Social care research capacity consultation – Question 2

2. Responsibility for leadership	The consultation question	Your response
<p>Background</p> <p>Unlike in the NHS, responsibility for social care policy and resources is shared between central and local government. This raises the question of who should take the lead in <i>coordinating</i> policy and resources for social care research.</p> <p>In thinking about who should have responsibility for leadership we need to consider what part should be played by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central and local governments • Employers' organisations (e.g. ADSS or ADSW) • Care Councils • Higher Education Institutions (including universities) • Research funders (including charities) • Service user organisations • Carer organisations • National agencies (such as SCIE and SIESWE) 	<p>Do you agree that we need a UK-wide coordinating organisation, in which the bodies listed in the left column should play a part?</p>	<p>___ Strongly agree</p> <p>___ Agree</p> <p>___ Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p>___ Disagree</p> <p>___ Strongly disagree</p> <p>___ Don't know</p>
<p>We welcome your general comments on this question. You might wish to explain your tick box answer. You may also wish to consider the following specific issues;</p> <p>Whether the listed bodies are the right ones to collaborate to</p>	<p>You might find it useful to express your comments using the list below. By ticking the corresponding boxes you could indicate that you think those organisations should collaborate to form one coordinating body. If you think that just <i>one</i> of the listed organisations should take overall responsibility for leadership you should only tick that box.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central and local governments) _____ • Employers' organisations _____ • Care Councils _____ • Higher Education Institutions (including universities) _____ 	

form a coordinating organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research funders (including charities) — • Service user organisations — • Carer organisations — • National agencies (such as SCIE and SIESWE) —
And/ or	
Whether any single one of these bodies should be asked to undertake the main lead role	
And/ or	
Whether there should be separate coordinating organisations in each country of the UK.	

Social care research capacity consultation – Question 3

3. Improving resources	The consultation question	Your response
<p>Background</p> <p>Unlike in the NHS, resources to support social care research are not provided through central government. This raises the question of who should take responsibility for providing resources.</p> <p>‘Resources’ means funds for specific research, but also for building up the research workforce and the supporting structures (such as training and systems for identifying priorities).</p>	<p>(a) Do you agree that <i>all</i> those involved in social care should contribute to providing the resources for research?</p> <p>(b) How far do you agree that those providing or commissioning social care services should allocate a percentage of their budget for research?</p>	<p>___ Strongly agree ___ Agree ___ Neither agree nor disagree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly disagree ___ Don't know</p> <p>___ Strongly agree ___ Agree ___ Neither agree nor disagree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly disagree ___ Don't know</p>
<p>We welcome your general comments on this question. You might wish to explain your tick box answers. You may also wish to consider;</p> <p>Whether some organisations have a greater responsibility for providing resources than others.</p> <p>And/ or</p> <p>Whether there should be a specific target, for investment,</p>	<p>You might find it useful to express your comments using the list below. By numbering them, you could put the organisations in order to show which you think ought to have greater responsibility for providing resources. Please note that your number 1 will be the organisation you think has greatest responsibility for funding social care research.</p> <p>Please use the space below for any other comments. You are welcome to name specific organisations who you think should have particular responsibility for funding social care research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central and local governments • Employers' organisations • Care Councils • Higher Education Institutions (including universities) • Research funders (including charities) 	<p>___</p> <p>___</p> <p>___</p> <p>___</p> <p>___</p>

such as a specific percentage of the budget.

Please make it clear if your comments refer to a specific country or to the UK as a whole

- Service user organisations —
- Carer organisations —
- National agencies (such as SCIE and SIESWE) —

Names of specific organisations

Further comments around question (a)

Central governments have particular responsibility but central government already provide a substantial amount of funding for social care research. Funding councils also have a particular responsibility. The role of local government funding is difficult especially how it might link with central government. Resources will necessarily come from different organisations but central government should play a more coordinated role in supporting social care research.

Wales: There needs to be more research funds available to the devolved assemblies and parliament for nation based research. The Welsh assembly has very little money for national research as most money lies within local authorities in Wales which creates a piecemeal approach.

Further comments around question (b)

There should not be prescriptive targets. It is up to individual organisations to decide which approach is best.

General comments around this issue

Social care research capacity consultation – Question 4

4. Necessary structures	The consultation question	Your response
<p>Background Questions 2 and 3 ask your views on the need for UK-wide structures, with national counterparts, to coordinate development. Question 4 asks you about what kinds of structures would work best.</p> <p>Some developments in national policy suggest a link with health research. Other suggestions are based on the need for a separate identity for social care research.</p> <p>Linked to this, some suggest focusing on relatively few ‘Centres of Excellence’ while others propose a wider distribution of expertise based on ‘Networks of Excellence’.</p>	<p>(a) There are already very well-established structures for health research, and some policy documents suggest using these for social care research. Do you agree this would be a useful approach?</p> <p>(b) Some reports suggest that social care research is distinct and requires separate structures from those operating in health research. How far do you agree?</p> <p>(c) Do you support a structure that relies on relatively few ‘Centres of Excellence’, or on a wider distribution of expertise in ‘Networks of Excellence’?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Don’t know</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don’t know</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly support ‘Centres’ <input type="checkbox"/> More support for ‘Centres’ than for ‘Networks’ <input type="checkbox"/> Should be a combination <input type="checkbox"/> More support for ‘Networks than for ‘Centres’ <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly support ‘Networks’ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don’t know</p>
<p>We welcome your general comments on this question. You might wish to explain your tick box answers. You may also wish to consider;</p> <p>Whether you have examples where either the ‘Centres’ or</p>	<p>Further comments around question (a)</p> <p>Social care research often uses different methods to health research and the structures for health research don’t always fully understand these methods. If the structures for health research were used for social care research medical frameworks, agendas</p>	

<p>'Networks' approach has worked well.</p> <p><u>Please make it clear if your comments refer to a specific country or to the UK as a whole</u></p>	<p>and approaches might be prioritised over other approaches</p> <p>Further comments around question (b)</p> <p>Many research projects are now interdisciplinary involving both health and social care and it would be difficult to have completely separate structures. However there may be a need for social care specific structures re ethics and methodology.</p> <p>Further comments around question (c)</p> <p>The task is not to establish centres of excellence but to create a competitive environment where any centre can become excellent if they understand their market and grasp the opportunities open to them</p> <p>General comments around this issue</p>
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Social care research capacity consultation – Question 5

5. Raising practice awareness amongst social care researchers	The consultation question	Your response
<p>Background</p> <p>Several reports suggest that there could be a better relationship between the research agenda and the priorities of practitioners, providers and user and carer organisations.</p> <p>One way of tackling this is to look at whether the training of researchers could be improved. This would aim to give researchers a better appreciation of the priorities of practitioners and providers.</p> <p>Another approach would be to require that all social care research involves people with experience of working in social work or social care services.</p>	<p>(a) Do you agree that the relationship between the research agenda and the priorities of practitioners, providers and organisations of users and carers should be improved?</p> <p>(b) If so, do you agree that training of researchers is a key way forward?</p> <p>(c) Do you agree that involving people who use or provide social services would improve the relationship between research and practice?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>
<p>We welcome your general comments on this question. You might wish to explain your tick box answers. You may also wish to consider;</p> <p>Whether you have examples of improving the</p>	<p>Further comments around question (a)</p> <p>Research agendas should be driven by the needs of users and providers.</p>	

<p>relationship between the research agenda and the priorities of practitioners, providers and organisations of users and of carers.</p> <p><u>Please make it clear if your comments refer to a specific country or to the UK as a whole</u></p>	<p>Further comments around question (b)</p> <p>The training of researchers is essential.</p> <p>Further comments around question (c)</p> <p>Research needs to be more firmly rooted in user and worker priorities but we need to ensure that involvement is not simply tokenistic.</p> <p>General comments around this issue.</p> <p>Examples of improving the relationship between the research agenda and the priorities of practitioners, providers and organisations of users and carers:</p> <p>England - Gap study undertaken by City University as part of the WWfC project.</p> <p>Consulted practitioners on their resercah needs and then looked at what research had actually been funded by five major UK social care research funders, to see how well this fitted with practitioners' needs.</p> <p>Presentation and summary of results available at: http://www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk/</p>	
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Social care research capacity consultation – Question 6

6. Raising research awareness amongst social care practitioners	The consultation question	Your response
<p>Background</p> <p>Several reports suggest that there could be better capacity amongst practitioners to use the results of research.</p> <p>One way of tackling this is to look at whether the training of practitioners could be improved.</p> <p>Some reports have called for particular attention to improving the research training of social workers on basic qualifying programmes.</p>	<p>(a) Do you agree that the capacity of practitioners to use research should be improved?</p> <p>(b) If so, do you think that training of practitioners is a key way forward?</p> <p>(c) Do you think that there is a need to improve the research training of social workers on basic qualifying programmes?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>
<p>We welcome your general comments on this question. You might wish to explain your tick box answers. You may also wish to consider;</p> <p>Whether you have examples of improving the capacity of</p>	<p>Further comments around question (a)</p> <p>No practitioner should work with clients without a good understanding of the research base underpinning their profession or specialism, training in critical appraisal and a means of keeping their knowledge up to date.</p>	

<p>practitioners to use research. Examples might be from in service training, other continual professional development or from post qualifying training.</p> <p><u>Please make it clear if your comments refer to a specific country or to the UK as a whole</u></p>	<p>Further comments around question (b)</p> <p>Training is a key way forward but this needs to be provided as part of an overall organisational strategy for developing and maintaining EBP.</p> <p>Any training needs to be provided within an organisational culture which supports the development and use of evidence based approaches – beyond and above the training day. Organisations need to develop supporting structures for maintaining and using learning from training (e.g. through supervision process, referring to research use in job descriptions, building evidence into service planning and review).</p> <p>External drivers are also key to maintaining momentum – e.g. developing research skills and use of evidence as part of PQ requirements.</p> <p>Equipping practitioners with research skills does not negate the need for continued production and dissemination of accessible, relevant research summaries and overviews (e.g. SCIE Briefings, NCB Highlights, Barnardo's What Works publications). There remains a high level of need for these.</p> <p>Linked to this, consideration of what is realistic in terms of skills development for practitioners is required.</p> <p>Seeking to create workforce who are sufficiently skilled to able to conduct their own systematic reviews (for example) maybe aspirational but unrealistic given the high pressure environments within which many practitioners work. There is a need to be clear and realistic about the intended purpose and outcomes of any training provision and expectations (of practitioners) resulting from it. This would also help in the identification of other inputs / supports to enable organisations to become more evidence based.</p>	
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There is an additional challenge in balancing EBP as something practitioners need 'expert' help on versus something they can 'do themselves'. There may be resulting potential tensions of the professionalism of research and of managers not taking on fully their responsibilities to measure / evidence their work.

Further comments around question (c)

General comments around this issue.

Examples of improving the capacity of practitioners to use research:

Experience from the What Works for Children? (WWfC) Project

www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk

Training of practitioners and service planners was a key tool used in trying to encourage the use of research in practice in the WWfC project. A key barrier to using evidence in practice is a lack of necessary skills and knowledge about the role and usefulness of research. We identified 4 key skill areas namely the ability to – acquire, assess, adapt and apply research evidence in practice.

This led to the development of a range of resources including a modular training pack for those in social care and allied professions produced by **Barnardo's**, The Evidence Guide. www.barnardos.org.uk/theevidenceguide

This resource has been piloted and used with a range of social care audiences (in both adult and children's services, from students to senior managers) with very positive feedback. Learning points and reflections following this pilot include:

1. Training seems most effective if tailored to the areas of practice covered by participants

	<p>(e.g. relevant examples of research are used) – in mixed groups this is more difficult to both prepare for and deliver.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. 'Demystifying' research is an important part of getting practitioners on board and reducing scepticism of research.3. Levels of skills required (e.g. internet searching) were highly variable.4. Whilst many participants knew of some of the more common sources to search (e.g. social care online) knowledge of Gateways (e.g. SOSIG) and online databases was limited and many had never used them.5. Many were unfamiliar with the process of constructing a search question or 'string' (e.g. using Boolean operators).6. Important to make the link between evaluation of practice and use of research (i.e. not just evidencing 'what you do' but also 'why you do what you do'). <p>(NB: An evaluation of a series of 6 Evidence Guide workshops provided to RiPFA Agencies can be provided if more detail is required).</p>	
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Social care research capacity consultation – Question 7

7. Raising research awareness amongst social care policymakers and managers	The consultation question	Your response
<p>Background</p> <p>Several reports suggest that there could be better capacity amongst social care policymakers and managers of services to use the results of research.</p> <p>One way of tackling this is to look at whether the training of social care policymakers and provider managers could be improved.</p>	<p>(a) Do you agree that the capacity of social care policymakers and managers to use research should be improved?</p> <p>(b) If so, do you agree that training of social care policymakers and managers of services is a key way forward?</p>	<p>___ Strongly agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree ___ Neither agree nor disagree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly disagree ___ Don't know</p> <p>___ Strongly agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree ___ Neither agree nor disagree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly disagree ___ Don't know</p>
<p>We welcome your general comments on this question. You might wish to explain your tick box answers. You may also wish to consider;</p> <p>Whether you have examples of improving the capacity of social care policymakers and managers of services to use research.</p> <p>Please make it clear if your</p>	<p>Managers and policy makers require different skills. Managers require the same skills as practitioners. Managers need to lead by example or it's difficult to see how things will significantly change further down the line. For policy makers the onus may be more on researchers to make their work relevant and applicable, also to find ways of engaging policy makers with the research process.</p>	

<u>comments refer to a specific country or to the UK as a whole</u>		
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Social care research capacity consultation – Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. You can either email your response to webteam@scie.org.uk or post it the freepost address below.

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The consultation closes at the end of September 2006, and SCIE will analyse the results during October and November.

A final report will be available on the SCIE website in December 2006.