



Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**
Social Care **Wales**

Our evidence offer

We've developed our evidence offer to help people involved in care to use evidence to support practice, planning and policy making

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In 2018, we published the [Social care research and development strategy for Wales 2018?2023](#), which sets out our ambition to see evidence embedded in practice, planning and policy making in social care in Wales.

We know this can be challenging. So we've developed our evidence offer to help people providing, leading and designing care and support to reduce these challenges and find ways to use evidence to support practice, planning and policy making.

What we mean by evidence

When we talk about evidence enriched practice, planning and policymaking, we mean that decisions about how to provide care and support are informed by an understanding of:

- the best available evidence about what is effective, drawing from research and data
- the wisdom and experience of practitioners
- the wisdom, experience and views of people who use care and support and their carers.

Diagram showing what makes up evidence enriched policy and practice: data and intelligence, practitioner knowledge, research and the experience and wisdom of people who use care and support and carers. Source Social Care Wales, adapted from Research in Practice

Why we developed an evidence offer

The aim of the evidence offer is to develop the skills, capabilities and connections of people providing, leading and designing care and support in Wales, so they can access and use high-quality evidence.

This will help:

- support local authorities with putting Welsh Government's Performance and Improvement Framework into practice
- support social care workers and employers to meet the Code of Professional Practice

- bring together research and evidence-related activity in Wales in one clear offer
- improve outcomes for people who use care and support and the workforce.

How we developed our evidence offer

To help us build this evidence offer, we consulted with local authority staff, policy makers, and researchers. We also [commissioned research](#) to explore how people providing, leading and designing care and support understand and use evidence. We wanted to find out what stops and what helps people use evidence, and help us understand how we can best provide support.

The research highlighted 12 consistent themes:

- **time:** lack of time and ‘headspace’
- **skills and qualifications:** lack of confidence and skills in finding and using evidence, and carrying out research
- **access:** lack of access to journals, databases and other sources of research and information
- **motivation and mindset:** how organisations use evidence is often shaped by specific people. Relying on individuals often leads to a lack of clear structure for generating and using evidence
- **usability:** people asked for short summaries of evidence that are available in plain language, in one place, with the messages for practice highlighted
- **relationships and collaboration:** discussion with co-workers is critical for frontline practitioners. Good and sustained relationships between researchers and policy makers/practitioners helps promote well-planned research that’s more likely to have impact
- **applicability:** people said evidence would have more impact if it could be easily applied to their work and it’s relevant in Wales
- **legislative and policy context:** knowledge about legislation and policy is seen as crucial for local authority staff
- **trusted evidence:** people struggle with knowing if they can trust research and if it can be applied to their work
- **leadership and culture:** are seen as essential for driving ‘research mindedness’ in organisations and for making time to work with evidence

- **timely evidence:** evidence must be available at the right time, when the questions are being asked
- **funding:** is often seen as a barrier to accessing, searching, quality-checking and understanding evidence, as well as applying it in practice.

Who our evidence offer is for

We've developed our evidence offer to support people and organisations who use evidence. For example, local authorities (including social workers, managers, leaders and commissioners), providers and policy makers.

It will also support people and organisations who create and share evidence. For example, knowledge exchange partners, researchers and policy makers.

Training and development manager:

"We need real examples of research with clear and strong links to practice – this will help us develop our use of research and evidence, and get interest and commitment from teams."

Social worker:

"We need time... and learning and shadowing opportunities to support us. I want somewhere to find research tools."

Researcher:

"I want to get my research out there to make a real difference."

Care worker:

"My job as a care worker is rewarding but intense – I need guidelines and a chance to reflect on what I do."

Commissioner:

"With fewer resources, I need to find effective solutions to the crisis in adult social care to do my job."

Manager of independent care provider:

"I manage a service where we're juggling – I want to know what evidence lies behind what we should or could do."

Our approach: mobilising knowledge

Our approach to mobilising knowledge is through exchange, brokering, co-creation and dissemination.

Mobilising knowledge

We think of knowledge mobilisation as five areas of activity that are a framework for our evidence offer:

Dissemination

We will:

- work with others to prioritise topics and find or produce summaries of evidence and research reports for emerging issues
- promote good quality research for prioritised topics
- work with organisations to secure journal access
- co-design and provide a digital platform to support access to research and evidence.

Exchange

We will:

- promote learning opportunities and resources from partners
- build networks around priority topics
- Collaborate with knowledge exchange partners.

Brokering

We will:

- map research and evidence structures within local authorities, research centres and the third sector
- support networks and collaboration between local authorities, researchers and others
- create an interactive research map
- co-design and provide a digital platform that supports networks and collaboration.

Co-creation

We will:

- engage with local authorities to identify evidence gaps
- facilitate action research to develop evidence enriched practice tools and resources
- develop a menu of resources for supporting co-creation.

Capability and skills building

We will support people to:

- access, use, apply and generate evidence
- create enriched environments for learning, where evidence is valued
- develop their evidence skills through embedding capability and skills building approaches into existing opportunities.

We know that getting evidence into practice can be challenging. Giving people access to evidence, even when it's been summarised and shared, doesn't guarantee its implementation in the real world!

That's why our evidence offer is based on a knowledge mobilisation approach. This is a more active process. It focuses on making evidence and knowledge more accessible, and connecting and relationship building to help people make sense of evidence and apply it to their own worlds. This improves planning, practice, policymaking and outcomes for all.

Developing capability

Developing people's capability to understand, use, bring together and generate research

Dissemination

- website
- presentations
- research papers or reports
- videos and animations
- broadcasting.

Exchange

- workshop
- conferences
- webinars
- discussing on social media
- sharing.

Brokering

- informing
- linkages
- mentoring
- matchmaking
- connecting.

Co-creation

- action research
- dialogue
- co-producing tools and resources
- identifying gaps
- doing together.

Our consultation, research and experience tell us that the social care workforce in Wales needs support and enabling in all five areas, but that real impact is made by brokering and co-creation.

Our formal evidence offer will be realised over three years, in all five areas, but with an early emphasis on brokering and working with partners on co-creation.

Dissemination - broadcasting

We'll support local authorities to prioritise, helping them decide where they need evidence about current issues, or plan for new and emerging issues. We'll commission summaries of evidence and research reports where there are evidence gaps and make sure people have access to them. We'll also promote, good quality research which is relevant for social care in Wales.

We're developing a website to help people who provide social care and support access and use high quality research, data and evidence.

We're working on securing journal access for practitioners and finding a way to signpost to social care research and policy documents relevant for Wales. Along with the social care data portal, this will be integral to the digital aspects of our evidence offer.

Exchange - sharing

Our emphasis will be on collaborating, so we can promote learning opportunities and share knowledge from partners such as ExChange, Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre (CASCADE) and Developing Evidence Enriched Practice (DEEP).

We'll also make formal links with partners across in other UK nations who offer knowledge resources and events, such as the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), Making Research Count, Iriss and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), making sure they're relevant for Wales.

We'll develop and plan knowledge exchange events with partners and support in the planning and delivery of their events.

We'll be proactive in using our networks, website, social media and communication channels to make sure learning opportunities are well known across social care in Wales, and not just for a few well-informed people.

Brokering – connecting people

Helping researchers and practitioners connect is an important priority for us. We've started relationship building by reaching out to all local authorities to build a picture of the structures and processes already in place around research and evidence. We're also contacting academics and researchers across Wales to make connections and support further developments and partnerships.

Relationship building has involved identifying evidence champions in each authority, bringing together research-minded practitioners and leaders to form an evidence community, which shares knowledge and ideas, and encourages evidence enriched practice. We've taken a community management approach to this with members able to network and collaborate on a digital platform which we support and maintain.

We will develop a research support offer, helping practitioners who are beginning academic research or carrying out practice research in their work settings to access support and mentoring. We will co-design an interactive research map to help practitioners and researchers in Wales connect.

Co-creation - doing together

We'll carry out priority-setting exercises with local authorities to identify where they need evidence, also using information and feedback from our community and other networks and Mapping and connecting project.

We'll help research projects develop evidence-informed enriched practice tools and resources. Our emphasis will be on tools and resources that promote co-creation, such as communities of practice, action learning sets and the DEEP programme's approaches.

We're working with SCIE to make sure our evidence offer works well for care providers. To do this, we'll use a positive, strengths-based approach to listen to the voices of frontline care workers and work with partners including ENRICH (Enabling Research in Care Homes) Cymru and DEEP. We'll work with user and carer-led organisations to 'road test'

our evidence offer with people with lived experience, building on the work we've done with carers to hear their views about the use of research and data.

Capacity and capability - skills building

Building the right capacity and capability in the social care workforce underpins our approach and responds to what we heard from people who say they lack confidence in their ability to access, use and create evidence.

We'll develop ways to help upskill workers to get them feeling more confident with research. One of the ways we'll do this is by developing a curriculum for the DEEP programme. This will include:

- building skills for gathering, assessing and presenting evidence
- using evidence to talk and learn together
- putting learning into action
- supporting leaders to create environments for learning.

We're looking at how this curriculum, as well as other capability building initiatives, can be included in existing learning opportunities, particularly the new social work post-qualification framework.

We'll be clear about the skills needed to support the use of evidence so we can identify where there are gaps and address those gaps with opportunities for development. We'll also promote the capacity building initiatives that are already available to social care, including those offered by Health and Care Research Wales and CASCADE.

Our offer in action

We'll hold formal priority-setting exercise with local authorities every three years and we'll review the priority list every year to confirm the priorities for the coming year.

We will also identify emerging themes by:

- looking at the priorities of Welsh Government and its Ministers
- analysing our registration and fitness to practise data
- considering the feedback we get from our evidence community and partners.

How it works

1. Agree the need for a new topic
2. Expert knowledge exchange
3. Review and synthesise evidence
4. Agree and design resources
5. Produce physical resources
6. Provide events, workshops and courses
7. Provide development support
8. Measure the impact

Our evidence offer in action

Other resources

[Using evidence in social services and social care in Wales - Full report](#)

DOCX 734KB

[Social care research and development strategy for Wales 2018-2023 - full version](#)

PDF 952KB

[Social care research and development strategy for Wales 2018-2023 - Implementation plan](#)

PDF 804KB

Our evidence offer aims to support local authorities to implement Welsh Government's [Performance and Improvement Framework for Social Services](#).