

Research evidence

How it can help you

Do you need to maximise the impact of your spending?

Do you want to know what works in adult social care?

Do you want to include research evidence in your decision-making processes?

Do you want to learn from others about what has worked?

If you can answer **yes** to any of these questions then keep reading, this briefing is for you.

How are you using evidence?

You will already be using 'evidence' in your decision-making. Evidence can include findings from research, organisational learning, financial reports, local intelligence, feedback from people using your services and their families, practitioners' wisdom, policy direction and so on.

Evidence informed practice means interpreting and personalising this evidence in a way that is sensitive to your specific context, taking into account:

- the culture and values of your organisation
- your organisational business and sustainability needs
- the needs of people you provide care and support to
- local and national policy demands.

At Skills for Care we are particularly excited about research evidence. Research evidence is the result of a formal process of inquiry, which sets out to answer a specific question. It includes things like service evaluations to measure impact, consultation with people who use care and support services or feedback from professionals through surveys or interviews to hear more about their knowledge.

Why should you use research evidence?

Many employers are facing increasing demands on their services from different directions. For example, the Care Act has set out changes to social care services that we will need to meet over the coming years with an increasing emphasis on safeguarding those people who use care and support services. All of this must be achieved in a financially difficult time and when efficiency savings are being made.

Research evidence can help you make the best decisions in this challenging time. It can:

- save you time and money
- increase confidence, integrity and justification in decision making
- contribute to your business case and accountability processes for changes
- build capacity for thinking about practice, to question and challenge with rigour
- support workforce planning and development.

How can research evidence do all this?

Research evidence will be able to help you:

- find out more about what others have learned before implementing changes of your own – you can learn what works and what doesn't
- identify characteristics of good practice when you want to do something different or new
- hear more about potential barriers to success based on what others have experienced
- find out more about the impact of particular approaches or programmes.

Remember good research evidence always requires interpretation and reflection – it does not speak for itself and can't be used in isolation.

When should I think about using research evidence?

Research evidence can help with many tasks and activities but is particularly useful to consider it when you are:

- designing a new service or wanting to make improvements
- deciding how to use your resources
- when you need to review your policies to make sure they reflect current policy
- wanting to find out more about why something has happened.

How can Skills for Care help?

Skills for Care can support you and make it easier for you to use research evidence.

- Check out the research and evaluation section of our website for the latest research reports www.skillsforcare.org.uk/evidenceandimpact.
- Register to get access to existing research findings on our newly extended Research Knowledge Base www.skillsforcare.org.uk/rkb.
- Ask your Skills for Care area team for more help and advice on workforce development research.



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