

# What is social care research?

## Health and Care Research Wales Social care research guidelines

### Introduction

In 2014, Health and Care Research Wales reviewed definitions of social care from a range of UK and international sources. A one-day workshop was also convened to develop guidelines on the question of 'What is Social Care Research?'. The workshop involved a range of stakeholders from England and Wales including research academics, social care practice, and members of the public.

The results of the workshop were collated and condensed into a number of key areas. These were distributed to a subset of workshop attendees for further comments and feedback until a consensus was reached.

It is important to consider the following as guidelines and not a definition of social care research. It is inevitable that some research projects, especially those conducted at the interface of social care and health, will be difficult to categorise as clearly belonging to one category or the other.

### Guidelines

For Health and Care Research Wales to consider research to be 'social care research', the research should broadly focus on at least one of the following:

- The provision of care, support, and personal assistance in the context of interpersonal relationships, whether formal or informal, in relation to: activities of daily living, maintenance of independence, social interaction, enabling the individual to play a fuller part in society, assisting individuals to manage complex relationships, and assisting the individual to access or receive services from a care home or other supported accommodation or to take advantage of educational facilities.
- The provision of: advice; practical assistance in the home; assistance with equipment and home adaptations; visiting and replacement care; meals; or facilities for occupational, social, cultural and recreational activities outside the home.
- The provision of: protection or social support services for children or adults in need or at risk, or those with social needs arising from illness, disability, age or poverty.

- The social needs of people receiving social care, and the services or initiatives addressing those needs, including: prevention of deterioration; promotion of physical or mental health; improving opportunities and life chances; strengthening families; and protecting human rights.
- The organisational systems, infrastructures, care settings, and/or personnel involved in the management and leadership, commissioning, provision, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of care and support services, and/or the interface between; or impact of the above on related systems such as healthcare, education, housing, and the criminal justice system.
- National and/or local policies that affect the ethos, commissioning, organisation, provision, monitoring and evaluation, and delivery of care and support services.
- The improvement of social and community cohesion (rather than the individual).

Useful questions that can help inform whether a research project is social care research include:

- What is the research question?
- Why is the research required?
- What is the purpose of the research and who or what might benefit? (eligible examples could be: service users, service providers, carers, social care practitioners, professionals & non professionals, patients, academics and family).
- What are the social (care) outcomes?
- What is the relevance of the application to Welsh Government social care policy?
- Who might read the research results? (e.g. social care practitioners, policymakers, or academics).