



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



Ymchwil Iechyd  
a Gofal Cymru  
Health and Care  
Research Wales

*Endorsed by Health and  
Care Research Wales*

# Social care research and development strategy for Wales 2018-2023

## A summary



# Overview

This plan sets out the steps needed to achieve our aim:

## Our vision

For Wales to be internationally renowned for its excellent social care research that supports the people of Wales by informing and improving social care policy and practice



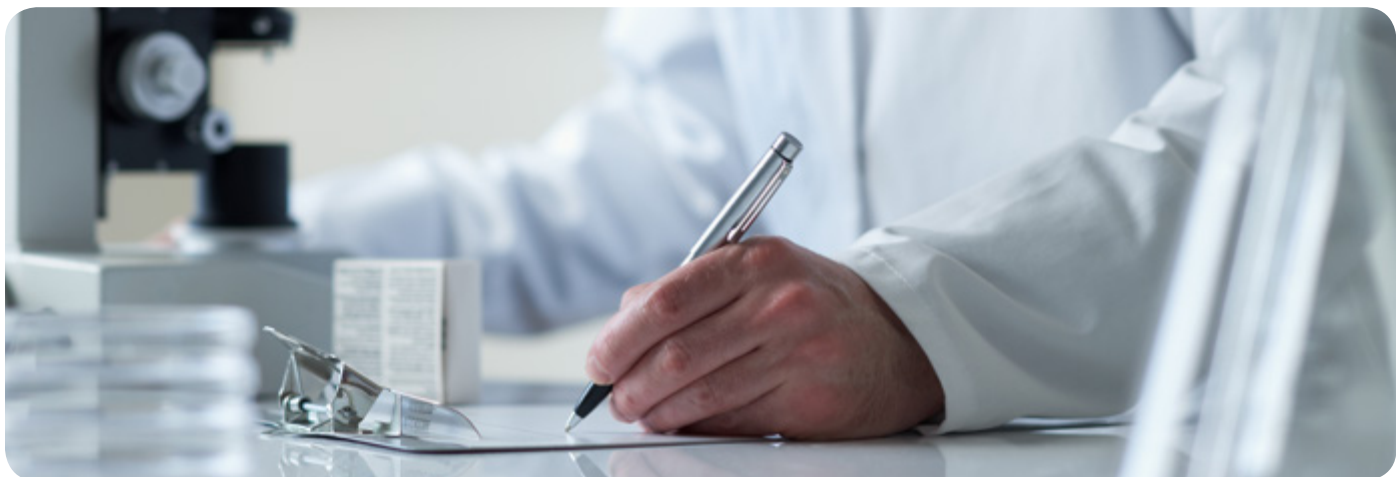
The strategy looks at five areas:



For each area, we have identified a series of actions. All the organisations responsible for putting this plan into practice will work together to make sure these actions are achieved.

By working with the public, people who use care and support, and their carers, we will develop a better understanding of what research is needed.

It will also give us a better understanding of how this research can have a positive effect where it matters.



# Focus area 1 – Involving the public in social care research

## Why is this important?

Working together and giving people a real say over the care and support they receive are two of the five principles guiding Welsh social care law and policy. This plan follows these principles.

This means we will make sure people are involved in deciding:

- what social care research is needed
- the best way to carry it out
- how we use what we learn from the research to make a difference in social care.

Involving people will help us make sure that social care research in Wales is useful and effective.

To help people learn about and take part in research, we will need to:

- raise awareness about social care research
- create opportunities for people to get involved
- support them to get involved
- make sure children, young people and people with additional needs have an opportunity to take part.

## What we will do

**Action 1:** Create a system where people can get involved in deciding what research is needed, how that research is carried out, and how we make use of, and share, the results.

**Action 2:** Help the research and social care sectors involve people in research.

**Action 3:** Look at the best ways of involving people in deciding which areas of social care the research should focus on.

**Action 4:** Work together to decide how to promote the reasons behind, and benefits of, involving people in research.



## Focus area 2 – Research priorities

### Why is this important?

To make sure we make the best use of the limited resources we have, we will develop research projects that look at a few specific areas of social care.

For the next five years, social care research in Wales will focus on:

- home care
- children in care
- dementia.

Looking ahead, we will need to put a system in place to decide the areas that research will focus on in the future.

To make sure we choose the areas of social care that will benefit the most, we need to make sure the public, social care providers and workers, the Welsh Government and researchers are part of this decision.

### What we will do

**Action 1:** Make the best use of limited research resources by focusing on:

- home care
- children in care
- dementia.

**Action 2:** Develop a system where the public, people who work in social care, the Welsh Government and researchers help us decide the areas where research is needed.



## Focus area 3 – Using the information we already collect

### Why is this important?

We already collect lots of information about the care people receive in Wales. This information is useful because it tells us:

- the quality of the care people are receiving
- if care is improving.

This information is collected for lots of reasons. For example, to help with planning and reviewing the care people get.

We can also use this information to see where there are gaps or trends in social care. For example, it shows us what care people need in different parts of Wales and how social care resources are shared.

Information from other areas, such as health, housing and economics, tells us even more about people's needs and issues, and how we can help improve people's lives.

Linking these different pieces of information gives us a low-cost and effective way of seeing the effect social care is having on the people who use it and the public.

The SAIL (Secure Anonymised Information Linkage) Databank provides an excellent way to link these pieces of information. It safely stores information from lots of sources across Wales, including most of the information we have about the health of the nation.

### What we will do

**Action 1:** Give organisations access to information about social care. Bring together social care organisations that have an interest, or a role to play, in collecting and linking this information.

**Action 2:** Work with SAIL to see if we can link social care, education, health and housing information in the SAIL Databank.

**Action 3:** Set up a national data set that holds all the information that's already collected about social care in Wales. Social Care Wales will manage this bank of information.



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<sup>1</sup> [saildatabank.com](http://saildatabank.com)

## Focus area 4 – Involving and developing the workforce and organisations

### Why is this important?

If we are to make Wales a centre of excellent social care research, we need more researchers and people who work in social care to carry out high-quality research.

This will help us develop new and existing researchers, and attract more resources and talent to Wales.

At the moment, there are two reasons stopping people who work in social care from getting involved in research:

- a lack of time
- a lack of research skills.

We need to make sure people who work in social care have the opportunity, the skills and their employers' support to carry out research and use the findings from it.

Social Care Wales will look at how we can give workers the skills they need when we review the training of social workers and develop new qualifications for social care workers.

Most research takes place in universities. But we need clear guidelines for research that takes place outside universities to make sure it is ethical and collects the right permissions from those taking part in studies.

### What we will do

**Action 1:** Develop more researchers who move between research and social care, and social care workers who carry out research.

**Action 2:** Develop more researchers, who are well-known at a national and international level, to carry out high-quality research.

**Action 3:** Help establish better links between research and social care. This will help encourage social care organisations to support their staff to take part in research and use the findings.

**Action 4:** Help develop tools and systems so that people who work in social care can carry out research and use the results in their work.

**Action 5:** Help develop incentives to encourage researchers and people who work in social care to carry out research, drawing on examples from health research.

**Action 6:** Support and show the value of research, and what it tells us, and reflect this in the money given for research.

**Action 7:** Review ethics and permissions systems for researchers.



## Focus area 5 – Sharing and using research

### Why is this important?

There are lots of reasons stopping people who work in social care from doing research and sharing the findings:

- they don't have access to the results of the research
- the research findings are written and presented in a complicated way
- they don't know about the research studies
- the research and its findings aren't relevant or useful to them.

People who work in social care can only use research and share findings if they have access to it, so we need to make sure they can easily access the research and information that's available.

Making sure the results are easy to understand will also encourage more people who work in social care to use and share them.

Researchers need to make sure they share their findings with people who work in social care, too. To do this, we need to establish good links between social care and research organisations. These links will also help researchers plan research that will be useful and relevant to social care.

Health and Care Research Wales and Social Care Wales have developed a system called the *Knowledge mobilisation pathway*. The system helps researchers:

- decide what research is needed
- work with people in social care to produce the research
- share the results.

Organisations that pay for research, such as Health and Care Research Wales, can make sure research is useful and relevant to social care by giving priority to those projects when they are giving out money for research.

### What we will do

**Action 1:** The Wales School for Social Care Research and Social Care Wales will help establish strong links between social care and research. This will help with sharing information.

**Action 2:** Use the *Knowledge mobilisation pathway* to develop new plans. Social Care Wales will develop new plans based upon the research that's available.

**Action 3:** Develop ways to make sure people who work in social care have access to research resources, including those specific to Wales.

**Action 4:** Publish guidance to help social care organisations get their staff involved with research and using the results.

**Action 5:** Help researchers plan research and share findings that are useful to people who work in social care.

