

# Social Services in Scotland

a shared vision and strategy 2015 - 2020



The Scottish Government  
Riaghaisas na h-Alba



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# IMPROVING USE OF EVIDENCE

**STAKEHOLDER SCOPING WORKSHOP, 4TH NOVEMBER 2015  
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION CENTRE,  
UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE, GLASGOW**



This report summarises the activities and outputs from the workshop, held on 4th November 2015, to scope actions to improve the use of research and evidence in Scotland's social services. Forty delegates represented: academics; 3rd sector; local authorities; Scottish Government; intermediaries/centres of excellence; health; regulators; and funders (see [Appendix 1](#) for a list of the organisations represented). The introduction sets out the background within the context of the Social Work Services Strategic Forum (SWSSF) vision and strategy.

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## INTRODUCTION

### SOCIAL WORK SERVICES STRATEGIC FORUM VISION AND STRATEGY<sup>1</sup>

*Our vision is a socially just Scotland with excellent social services delivered by a skilled and valued workforce which works with others to empower, support and protect people, with a focus on prevention, early intervention and enablement*

The strategy represents a strong commitment to working in partnership across organisations and with government to deliver this vision for high quality and effective social services, and having in place a social services workforce which is competent, confident and valued.

The strategy:

- Recognises the unique role of social services and the very diverse range of support, services and workforce which comprise this sector;
- Reflects on and reinforces the progress and improvement which has been made since Changing Lives,
- Shares a vision for sustainable social services within the context of current policy drivers and developments and the distinctive Scottish approach to public service reform and transformation; and
- Sets out where additional action is needed to ensure that social services continue to be robust partners in the work to empower, support, protect and ensure better outcomes for people and communities.

The strategy sets out a range of additional actions which partners will take forward to support delivery of our vision. The actions are in cross-cutting areas - relevant to all kinds of social services and the whole social services workforce - where it has been identified that although progress has been made, further specific effort could deliver value. The areas for action are:

- 1 Supporting the workforce – How do we value, inspire and strengthen our workforce?
- 2 Service Quality and Performance – How do we know our social services are performing well?
- 3 Improving use of evidence – How do we better use research and evidence to inform and improve practice and services?
- 4 Promoting public understanding – How do we improve public understanding and confidence in the sector?

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/social-services-workforce/SWSSF/visionandstrategy>

## Improving the use of research and evidence

The creation and use of research and evidence has a central role in the development and improvement of social services and professional practice. We need to know that the support and care which individuals receive is appropriate to their needs, is effective and leads to the right outcomes. We therefore need to develop, coordinate, disseminate and implement research and evidence so that it includes service users and carers, practitioners and managers at every stage as well as informing their choices and supporting improvement of social services.

We have adopted a wide-ranging and inclusive approach in what we consider as research and evidence, and we have found Pawson et al's (2003)<sup>2</sup> classification of types of knowledge in social care useful in this. They identify five types of knowledge

- **Organisational knowledge**  
Generated through governance and regulation activities in the monitoring, review and development of services across the range of government and service organisations and agencies
- **Practitioner knowledge**  
Based on practitioners' experience of working with service users, practitioner knowledge is often unstated and tends to be personal and context specific
- **User and carer knowledge**  
Based on users' and carers' lived experience of services, user and carer knowledge. Is often unspoken and undervalued
- **Research knowledge**  
Generated by empirical inquiries based on predetermined research strategies. We need to acknowledge the wide range of perspectives and paradigms that make up the social services research base
- **Policy knowledge**  
Generated in the broader context of policy development and implementation across government and agencies

An important feature of the strategy will be to draw on different types of knowledge and to 'co-create' evidence by bringing together researchers, practitioners, users of services and policy makers, from setting the research questions to implementation in policy and practice.

While there have been significant developments in coordinating and exploiting research and evidence in supporting evidence-informed practice, there are continuing challenges:

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2 <http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/knowledgereviews/kr03.asp>

- There are clear funding and resource issues for the generation of research and evidence which need to be addressed
- There is a need to develop culture and mechanisms to support research and evidence-informed policy, management and practice in social services organisations
- The capacity and capabilities of the social services workforce need to be developed through staff training and education
- There is a continuing gap between the generation of research and evidence and its implementation in policy and practice
- Finally, there is an important need to breakdown the traditional barriers between stakeholders and find ways to maximise the participation of service providers and ultimately the service users themselves in every stage, including identifying research priorities

Four actions were identified to maximise the potential for effective use of current research and evidence, to identify priorities for new research and to develop new or improved models of knowledge exchange and transfer.

#### IMPROVING USE OF EVIDENCE - ACTIONS

Develop a forum of key stakeholders to develop priorities for a research agenda for all aspects of social services in Scotland. This will include identifying gaps in knowledge and developing resources for identifying and sharing evidence of what works. Ensure that opportunities to explore integrated research options are exploited via integration of adult health and social care.

Adopt a strategic approach to the education of social services workers which identifies and embeds best practice in knowledge exchange, mobilisation, engagement and in research implementation models.

Engage with social services leadership development so that leaders in the sector promote and embed evidence-informed policy and practice across their organisations.

Establish a research and knowledge exchange funding forum to maximise and co-ordinate the use of existing funding opportunities for research, identify new opportunities and promote and support collaborative applications.

## SCOPING THE ACTIONS

The workshop aimed to support the four actions. There were three specific objectives:

- 1 To engage effectively across the sector to co-design how best to deliver the actions to improve use of research and evidence.
- 2 To embed a co-delivery approach, ensuring that funders, research and evidence producing organisations, knowledge brokers, service providers, practitioners and those who access support, contribute to the design and delivery of the actions.
- 3 To scope the four actions, including
  - Identifying specific deliverables for the actions
  - Developing options and recommendations for how these can be delivered
  - Identifying requirements for delivery, such as key partners, resources and evidence needs.

### Programme for the day

The day was planned to include facilitated discussions based on earlier mapping work and examples of research and evidence in practice, that would then inform in-depth roundtable exploration and scoping of the 4 actions (see [Appendix 2](#) for the full programme).

Initial discussions were framed around findings from preparatory work by Scottish Government, including:

- Mapping organisations across Scotland with a stake in improving use of research and evidence for social services
- A questionnaire circulated widely to capture information about organisations' and individuals' perceptions of evidence use

The findings from this work were summarised in three visual displays and were used as prompts for discussion.

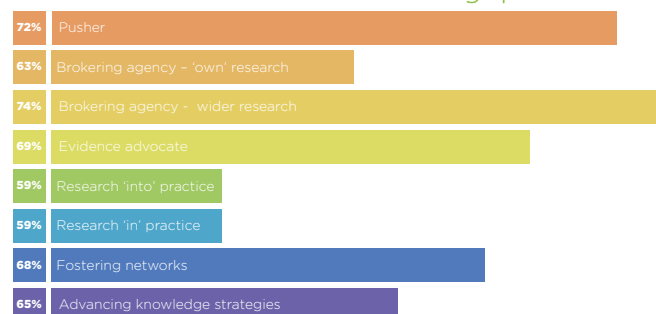
### 1. THE EVIDENCE LANDSCAPE

This visual presented an overview of 65 organisations across Scotland. Information had been gathered from desk research of websites and published information. Organisations were mapped against several sets of variables. The display showed mapping against evidence archetypes (Nutley), types of organisation and reported sources of evidence.

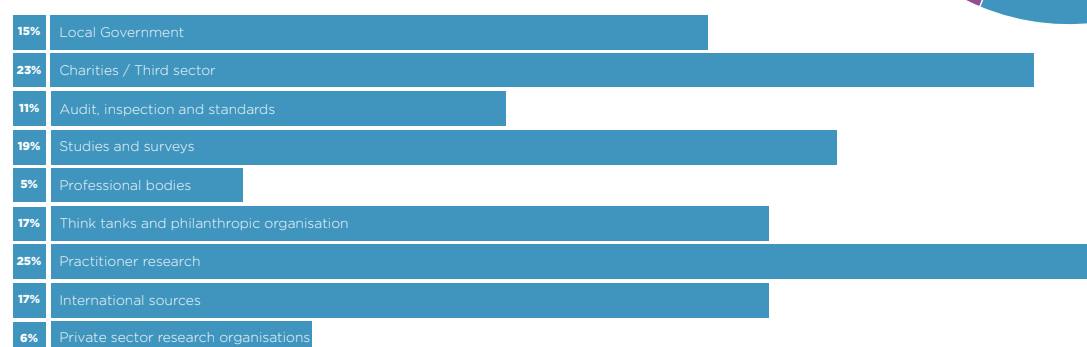


# The evidence landscape

## evidence archetypes



## evidence sources



Delegates added comments, summarised as follows:

- This is a complex landscape with many organisations fulfilling multiple roles
- Better co-ordination is required for sharing of evidence amongst evidence brokers/centres of excellence
- Research agenda should be set by those who use services and support - should be person-centred not service-led
- Better links needed with Health research/evidence
- There should be increased focus on implementation science
- Support is needed for practitioners to navigate the evidence - peer support/ community of evidence champions - requires change of culture
- New skills are required e.g. digital literacy
- How do we get buy-in? Research and evidence has to be more than academics and policy-makers talking to themselves

## 2. CHALLENGES AND ENABLERS

The questionnaire circulated before the event generated a small number of responses, but some thoughtful insights. Reported challenges and enablers for improving use of evidence were mapped against the action planning grid<sup>3</sup>. This uses a framework of 4 quadrants representing: 'knowledge, skills, motivation and culture/environment.

<sup>3</sup> <http://blog.cathy-moore.com/2008/05/be-an-elearning-action-hero/>





It was noted that the highest concentration of barriers and enablers was in the culture/environment quadrant, although in practice, responses are more often focused on addressing perceived gaps in knowledge and skills.

Key issues in improving use of research and evidence included:

### Knowledge

**Enablers:** understanding the context of others' work, case studies of evidence use. **Challenges:** accessing data and evidence, making evidence applicable to own context and/or needs?

### Skills

**Enablers:** linking students/practitioners, promoting reflective practice. **Challenges:** how to develop and fund evaluation, being able to critically assess research and evidence.

### Motivation

**Enablers:** collaborative action approaches, make evidence relevant to local priorities and needs (task and place specific?). **Challenges:** convincing those with ability/remit to apply evidence, policy and funders driving the type of evidence produced, either to confirm policy decisions or to meet funders' agenda

## Culture/environment

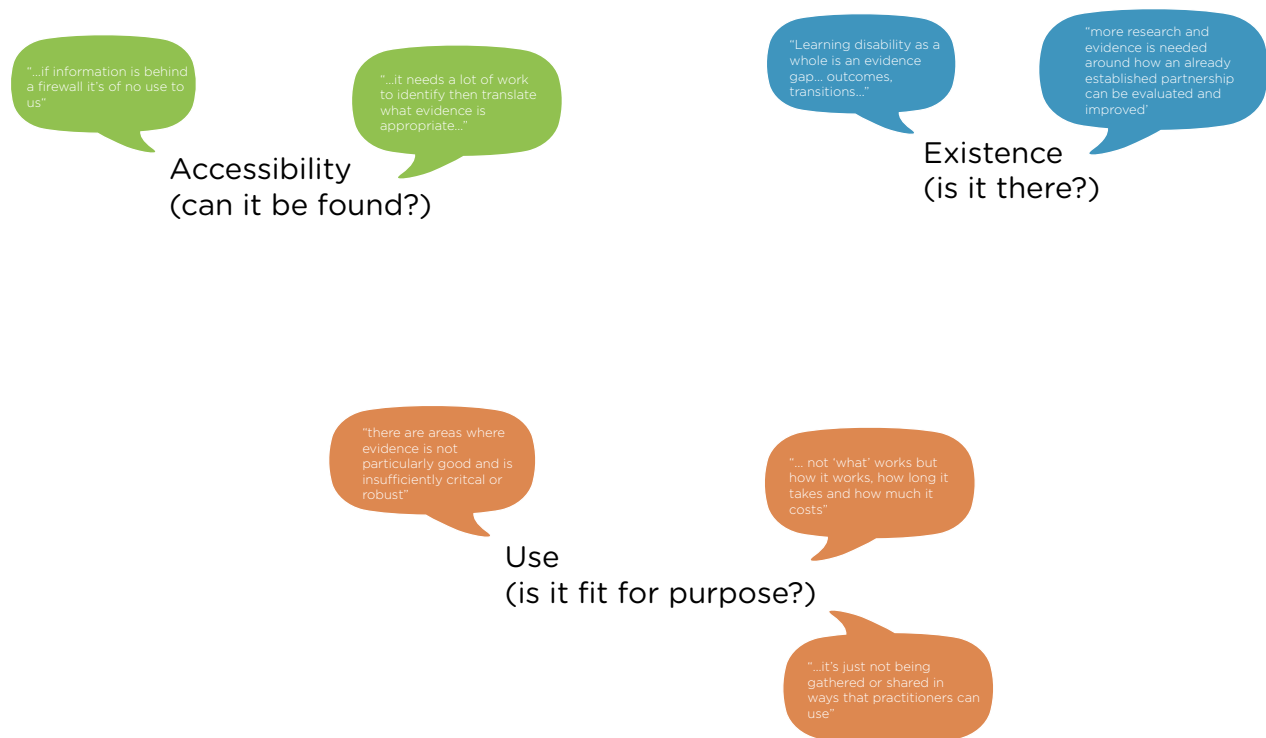
Enablers: Christie recommendations, growing confidence in 3rd sector evidence

Challenges: pace of work/capacity, commissioning processes, pay walls/access

## 3. WHERE ARE THE GAPS

The questionnaire also asked about perceived gaps in the evidence. Responses to this question reported three kinds of gap, where evidence was not: available; accessible; or fit for purpose. This was the prompt for the third discussion.

## Improving the use of evidence: Where are the gaps?



Delegates added comments and examples, including:

### Can we access it?

- Some voices are seldom heard
- Lack of digital skills and literacy
- Poor sharing of data e.g. health/social care
- Finding evidence is time-consuming

## Can we use it?

- Need appropriate message for the audience e.g. language used
- Need more support for engagement- having a wider range of voices heard
- Whose agenda? - e.g. does Self Directed Support work for families or for local authorities?
- Gap in knowing how something works in a local place
- Poor use of stories - these can be powerful
- Organisational data not provided in a useable form to drive/support improvement

## Is it there?

- Social services need wider evidence base, e.g. from health/ housing
- Lack of evaluation evidence - need for investment in evaluation
- Student or practitioner research can be lost
- Gap around implementation - knowledge about theories and processes that support change
- Need to value different types of evidence, such as lived experience and practice wisdom

## Evidence to action examples

In order to focus on the types of activity and intervention that currently work to improve use of evidence, four examples were presented. These spanned various types of evidence and demonstrated different approaches to sharing.

Presentations included:

- 1 [Homeward Bound: Co-designing the Pathway from Hospital to Home](#)  
Stuart Muirhead, Iriss  
People who access support and carers working alongside practitioners, using existing evidence including lived experience and practice wisdom, to develop and test a new pathway
- 2 [Use of Evidence through Quality Improvement](#) in the Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) programme – Dominique Harvey, CELCIS  
Using a Quality Improvement (QI) Model to develop and deliver a permanence improvement programme for looked after children
- 3 [Research Excellence Framework Impact Case Study: Transforming Attitudes to Mental Health](#) – Lee Knifton and Neil Quinn, University of Strathclyde (presented by Andrew Kendrick)  
Using Arts Festivals to access hard to reach communities
- 4 [The Evidence Bank](#) – Lesley Kelly, Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR)

A method of reviewing research evidence with a focus on action, to close the evidence to action gaps

## Discussion of four actions

Delegates each selected one of the four action areas for more in-depth discussion. The aim was to scope the actions and each group was tasked with identifying three priorities to take forward.

Each discussion was captured on a template with questions based on a logic model approach, asking: What changes do we want to see?; what activities need to happen?; what resources are available?; and who needs to be involved?

In the second half of the session, each group moved around the other three tables and heard, discussed and added to, a summary of each discussion.

What resources are currently available to bring to this issue?	Who needs to be involved?
What changes do we want to see? (behaviour/attitudes/structures/policy)	<div data-bbox="582 1223 900 1518"> <p><b>ACTION 1</b></p> <p>Develop a forum of key stakeholders to develop priorities for a research agenda for all aspects of social services in Scotland. This will include identifying gaps in knowledge and developing resources for identifying and sharing evidence of what works.</p> <p>Ensure that opportunities to explore integrated research options are exploited via integration of adult health and social care.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="943 1211 1461 1480">         What kinds of activities need to happen?       </div> <div data-bbox="563 1547 930 1933">         Three priorities to take forward:       </div> <div data-bbox="943 1503 1461 1933">         Wider notes/points:       </div>

Discussion template for Action 1

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

### Action 1

*Develop a forum of key stakeholders to develop priorities for a research agenda for all aspects of social services in Scotland. This will include identifying gaps in knowledge and developing resources for identifying and sharing evidence of what works. Ensure that opportunities to explore integrated research options are exploited via integration of adult health and social care.*

There was much discussion in this group about the best format for a forum. Questions included how to ensure that any forum is representative across the sector and of people who access support and carers. The need for liaison with the health agenda was highlighted and the link with issues of funding, including the power balance in funding decisions. There were also questions about how a forum would be resourced and logistics of set-up and maintenance.

‘Changes we want to see’ included:

- Planning for the longer term/evaluating impact of policy
- All workforce better equipped to access and share evidence, evaluate and identify priorities
- Focus beyond social services
- Better working together - agreement on priorities
- Stronger voice for those who access support/carers
- Inspection redefined around driving change
- Evidence given a central place in decision making and practice - e.g. in joint commissioning of services or using examples/stories to model and motivate change

Comments included:

- Needs a defined focus e.g. better connecting evidence and practice or high profile risk areas and looking at where there are knowledge gaps
- Perhaps not a ‘forum’ but a ‘heat exchange’ - a more open group that meets regularly to exchange learning and ideas around specific issues - important that there would be outputs from each exchange
- Do we need a one-stop shop for evidence?
- Should we promote knowledge exchange rather than trying to co-ordinate all activities?

### Priorities to take forward

- 1 Scope best mechanism for developing priorities for research agenda - membership, shape, structure and format, remit, resources, etc.

## Action 2

*Adopt a strategic approach to the education of social services workers which identifies and embeds best practice in knowledge exchange, mobilisation, engagement and in research implementation models*

This group recognised the need to identify and share models and methods of best practice that span social care but also pull from other areas and sectors. In addition to this, it would be useful to map learning and development opportunities to improve visibility and access to these. Empowering the social care workforce and working to develop a culture of learning across higher education, but also strongly linked with practice, was recognised as crucial. This includes: encouraging reflective discussions; tailoring evidence and knowledge for practice situations; and developing the capacity of practitioners and students to create, access and interact with the evidence.

‘Changes we want to see’ included:

- Better connections across sectors
- More sharing of learning
- Lived experience valued
- Not top down
- Dispersed leadership
- Teachers as facilitators, students as change agents

### **Priorities to take forward:**

- 1 Engage with SSSC to coordinate action with Supporting the Workforce Action on Review of Social Work Degree, and broader activities on the training and development of the social services workforce
- 2 Scope a mapping of the range and levels of training and education of social services workers, and auditing of research and evidence elements
- 3 Develop specific actions to empower students and practitioners to better engage with the evidence

## Action 3

*Engage with social services leadership development so that leaders in the sector promote and embed evidence-informed policy and practice across their organisations*

This discussion recognised the unique role of leadership in culture change. Although leadership at all levels was recognised, the focus was on making the case for change within three groups: newly qualified social workers, middle

managers and Chief Social Work Officers (CSWO). Developing a clear theory of change around the use of research and evidence was identified as important. This could include or draw on a mapping / collection of best practice, evidence of cost savings and practitioner research.

The group suggested there should be an initial focus on qualified social workers and keeping them connected with evidence when they move from education to practice (job for HEIs). During the first year in practice, peer support is crucial and managers / mentors with research experience are important. Evidence champions eg CSWOs / service leaders, could be developed (Social Work Scotland could help support this). Evidence informed practice, change management, implementation science and reflective supervision were all identified as important areas for leadership development.

‘Changes we want to see’ included:

- Value of evidence recognised
- Value of reflective supervision recognised
- Leaders/managers as role models
- Improved skills in collecting and analysing data and using and creating evidence
- Evidence informing service commissioning
- Citizen leadership

### **Priorities to take forward:**

- 1 Engage with SSSC to coordinate action with Supporting the Workforce Action on Leadership
- 2 Scope a mapping of the range of leadership programmes and initiatives across social services (e.g. Step into Leadership, CSWO programme at GCU) and auditing of research and evidence elements

### **Action 4**

*Establish a research and knowledge exchange funding forum to maximise and co-ordinate the use of existing funding opportunities for research, identifying new opportunities and promote and support collaborative practice*

This group recognised the need to improve collaboration amongst knowledge brokers and to increase understanding and knowledge about funding opportunities. Wider engagement to ensure representation would be required in taking forward this action. Activity to support this action was seen as being closely linked with action 1 – identifying research priorities. The possibility of developing a digital resource/repository which supports knowledge exchange for research and evidence in social care to include information on:



- Funding opportunities
- Collaboration opportunities
- Work happening ( and by whom on what)
- Links to practitioner research
- Links to student dissertations ( this was discussed extensively- many feel this is an untapped resource that could be used or highlighted more fully)

It was agreed that unless this was kept up to date it would quickly become redundant and would be of little use. This was not a technology issue, but a human issue.

### **Priorities to take forward:**

- 1 Mapping exercise of range of funder and research and KE networks in Scotland/ UK/international, identifying the focus of funding opportunities (by theme and geography)
- 2 Scope a digital resource/repository which supports development of research and evidence in social services: funding opportunities, collaboration opportunities, etc., and potential limitations: resources to update, accessibility, etc.
- 3 Scope Research and Knowledge Exchange Funding Forum to improve collaboration and openness around funding opportunities , including – membership, structure and format, remit, resources, etc.

## EMERGING ISSUES

Several overarching issues and points of learning emerged across the day's discussions. These will inform the overall direction of this work and the scoping of the four actions.

- 1 Clarify definition of research and evidence – the need for a clear shared understanding of the terms 'research' and 'evidence' was highlighted. This work will be underpinned by a broad definition using Pawson's classification (organisational knowledge, practitioner knowledge, service user and carer knowledge, research knowledge, policy knowledge), this is set out on page 2 of this report.
- 2 Need to value different forms of evidence – associated with the above definition, this work will recognise the value evidence from varied sources and in a range of formats
- 3 Stronger voice for those who access support/carers and valuing of lived experience. Research agenda should be person-centred and not service-led
- 4 Better coordination and sharing of current research and evidence
- 5 Increased focus on embedding research and evidence in policy and practice through, for example, implementation science
- 6 Need to recognise research and evidence agendas beyond social services and improve connections across sectors
- 7 Importance of developing a culture of learning for research and evidence
- 8 Develop a clear theory of change about the use of evidence to be taken forward by leadership
- 9 Develop research and evidence champions at different levels of social services (CSWOs/middle managers/practitioners/service users and carers)
- 10 Need to identify the best mechanisms to achieve the four actions

## NEXT STEPS

The rich discussions during the day and the priorities identified in relation to each of the action areas will now inform the development of an action plan. A research and evidence working group will be convened to provide overview, coordination and advice (representatives will be invited from Service Users and Carers, Social Work Scotland, Iriss, SSSC, Evaluation Support Scotland, CELCIS, What Works Scotland).

The action plan will be prepared by February 2016. As the actions are developed there will be opportunities for workshop participants and others with an interest, to contribute to the work. All progress will be shared in the Iriss [Evidence and Practice blog](#). The report will also be available on the Social Work Services Strategic Forum pages of the Scottish Government website early in the new year.

## APPENDIX 1 – ORGANISATIONS AT SCOPING WORKSHOP

The organisations represented at the stakeholder scoping workshop were:

- [Alzheimer Scotland](#)
- [Barnardos Scotland](#)
- [Care Inspectorate](#)
- [Chief Scientist Office](#)
- [Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland \(CELCIS\)](#)
- [Centre for Research on Families and Relationships \(CRFR\)](#)
- [University of Dundee](#)
- [Glasgow City Council](#)
- [Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland](#)
- [Healthcare Improvement Scotland](#)
- [Joint Improvement Team \(JIT\)](#)
- [Includem](#)
- [NHS Education for Scotland](#)
- **Outcome Focus**
- [Scottish Government](#)
- [Iriss](#)
- [Risk Management Authority \(RMA\)](#)
- [Robert Gordon University](#)
- [Robertson Trust](#)
- [Scottish Social Services Council \(SSSC\)](#)
- [Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability \(SCLD\)](#)
- [Scottish Recovery Network \(SRN\)](#)
- **Strathclyde/Caledonian University Service User/Carer Forum**
- [Social Work Scotland](#)
- [University of Strathclyde](#)

## APPENDIX 2 – WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

### **Social Services in Scotland: A shared Vision and Strategy 2015-2020 Improving Use of Evidence Stakeholder Scoping Workshop**

**Technology & Innovation Centre, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow  
4 Nov 2015**

9.45 - 10.15      **Coffee / Registration**

10.15 - 10.45      **Welcome and scene setting**

**Andy Kendrick**

Professor of Residential Child Care, University of Strathclyde

10.45 - 11.45      **The evidence landscape**

Interactive session presenting findings from questionnaire responses and mapping exercise undertaken by Scottish Government during September / October 2015

- 1 Overview of 65 organisations across Scotland – mapped against evidence activities
- 2 Perceived challenges and enablers to using evidence
- 3 Where is the gap?

11.45 - 12.30      **Examples**

- 4 Evidence Bank (Lesley Kelly, CRFR)
- 5 Evidence into practice (Liz Brabender / Dominique Harvey, CELCIS)
- 6 REF Impact Case Study on Improving Attitudes to Mental Health (Andy Kendrick)
- 7 'Hospital to Home' (Stuart Muirhead, Iriss)

12.30 - 13.15      **LUNCH**

13.15 - 14.15      **Facilitated discussion of 4 Actions**

**Introduction**

**Alan Baird**

Scottish Government Chief Social Work Advisor

- 1 **Develop a forum of key stakeholders to develop priorities for a research agenda for all aspects of social services in Scotland.** This will include identifying gaps in knowledge and developing resources for identifying and sharing evidence of what works. Ensure that opportunities to explore integrated research options are exploited via integration of adult health and social care.
- 2 Adopt a **strategic approach to the education of social services workers** which identifies and embeds best practice in knowledge exchange, mobilisation, engagement and in research implementation models.
- 3 Engage with **social services leadership development** so that leaders in the sector promote and embed evidence-informed policy and practice across their organisations.
- 4 Establish a **research and knowledge exchange funding forum** to maximise and co-ordinate the use of existing funding opportunities for research, identify new opportunities and promote and support collaborative applications.

14.15 - 15.00

### **Sharing across groups**

To identify top priorities and overlaps across groups  
What needs to happen next?  
Who needs to be involved?

15.00 - 15.15

### **Conclusion**

Next steps  
How will we continue to engage?

