

**KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION**  
effective practice for children and  
family services

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**LINKING RESEARCH TO  
POLICY AND PRACTICE**

- Practitioners link general findings to particular cases
- Researchers generalise from individual situations

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**WHAT IS RESEARCH?**

- Its function is to EXPLAIN but to do this it might be necessary to describe, chart patterns, clarify concepts, write a natural history etc.

Context is:

- Evidence based practice – the practice of a range of professionals grounded in sound knowledge about the needs of children and families and informed by the best evidence on what is effective

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## WHY IS RESEARCH IMPORTANT

To promote effective practice that produces optimal outcomes for children and families

Increasingly to inform discussions about:

- Costs
- Litigation

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## CONTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH

Policy and practice are influenced by:

- Socio-legal concerns
- Research findings
- Pragmatic considerations
- Users' views

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## TYPES OF RESEARCH

- THEORY – fashions concepts, perspectives
- LARGE SCALE EMPIRICAL STUDIES – test hypotheses, identify factors
- EVALUATIONS OF PARTICULAR SITUATIONS

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**CONNECTIONS BETWEEN  
TYPES OF RESEARCH**

- Types are interconnected

Type 2 needs to be informed by type 1

Type 1 needs to be tested by type 2

Type 3 is OK in context of knowledge  
provided by type 2

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**TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT  
WORK**

- DRAW OUT POLICY/PRACTICE  
IMPLICATIONS – guidance, procedures,
- INDICATORS, CHECK LISTS – aide  
memoire, predictive factors, change  
thinking

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**LINKING R & D**

- DIFFERENT TYPES OF RESEARCH  
ARE RELEVANT TO DIFFERENT  
TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT WORK

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**METHODS OF  
DISSEMINATING RESEARCH  
FINDINGS**

- Publications
- Research overviews
- Dissemination organisations (RIP, SCIE)
- Training materials
- Codes of Practice, guidance, paperwork
- New technology, websites, emails
- Practice tools

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**PRACTICE TOOLS - 1**

- Tools for clinical work with individuals

Paperwork  
Thresholds  
Prediction  
Going Home

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**PRACTICE TOOLS -2**

- Managing and Planning Services

Matching Needs and Services  
Aggregated Data  
Structure, Culture and Outcome

DETAILS: [www.whg.org.uk](http://www.whg.org.uk)

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## EVALUATION

- Development work is rarely evaluated and if it is, rarely to the rigorous standard of the research that informed it
- Need for experiment, quasi-experimental designs, randomised controlled trials etc.

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## NEED FOR EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT WORK

- Development work should be evaluated with the same rigour as the research which informed it
- The findings of the evaluation are used to revise the original research findings
- A creative cyclical relationship between R & D is created

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## CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT WORK

- Based on good quality research of a different kind
- Theory of development work should sustain the theory of the research it takes forward
- Development work should be modest, bearing in mind the other influences on policy and practice

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### Contd.-2

- The context for development work is evidence based practice
- A lot of remodelling is needed to convert research findings into usable development materials
- Non-research staff might be needed
- Development materials should reflect the scepticism intrinsic to research

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### Contd. - 3

- A new type of partnership between researchers, policy makers and practitioners is needed
- A different organisation might be needed to sell the products
- A well conducted development project will generate new research findings
- Elaborateness is not necessarily an indication of good design, rigour or originality

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### FEATURES OF A MODERN CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICE

- Needs-led and evidence-based
- Outcomes focused
- Clear thresholds for services
- Ensuring that provision matches the needs of children and families
- Identifying a single process leading to a continuum of interventions.
- Contexts that support an integrated team approach and a proper balance between investigation and help.

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