

What Works for Children?



Newsletter January 2004

This newsletter is a round up of the activities of the What Works for Children project - a collaboration between Barnardo's, the University of York and City University. The group is funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council to work with practitioners and service planners on using research evidence in practice.

ONE MORE YEAR OF WHAT WORKS FOR CHILDREN!

We are happy to announce that the ESRC has extended our project funding until April 2005 – which means we'll be around a bit longer!

From April 2004 there will be a slight change in the focus of our work, with a narrowing down of research activities at City and strengthening our capacity at the implementation end of our work with Children's Fund Programmes.

A new research assistant will support Sarah in Yorkshire. They will be focusing their work with two Children's Fund Programmes, Leeds and Wakefield, but continue to provide the research request service to all 6 Programmes.

The City University team will become smaller and look at the gaps between research available and research required by practitioners.

WEBSITE EVALUATION



We are currently trying to assess how useful the website has been to its users.

If you would like to take part and tell us what you think please go to:

www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk and click on the link in the featured event box to launch the survey.

Thanks for your time!

RECENT EVENT: SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN York November 5th

79 participants attended our one-day event on 'what works' in providing services to disabled children and their families. Prior to opening the conference, **Helen Roberts** paid tribute to the late Professor Sally Baldwin (1940-2003) who had recently died in an accident in Rome. Sally's work did much to champion the needs and rights of individuals with disabilities.

The summary **Meeting the needs of families with disabled children: What Works & What's promising?** is now available from www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk



Peter Allinson (Barnardo's) chaired the day. **Jan Morrison** (Barnardo's) gave an overview of policy issues and Professor **Tricia Sloper** presented on the research evidence. Of particular interest was research on how parents can be helped to train their children to improve their sleep patterns.

Representing a parent's perspective, **Katie Clarke** (Calderdale Parent and Carers Council) spoke of her personal experience in setting up the CPCC, and their engagement with service providers, emphasising parents as partners in service provision.



Jacqueline Winstanley presented on Bolton MBC's framework for organisational change showing how some organisations have instigated changes to improve childrens' access to play, leisure, and cultural services. **Issy Cole-Hamilton** (Children's Play Council) provided an overview of inclusive play provision, its rationale and the relevant institutions involved.

Following lunch, participants attended workshops on developing inclusive play, the care co-ordination network, and using research evidence in practice.

Overall the day was well received, and over 89% of participants felt their expectations had been met, whilst 86% expressed an interest in attending similar future events. If you would like to receive materials from the conference, please contact sarah.frost@barnardos.org.uk phone: 0113 262 6362, or go to www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk

TEAM NEWS

We're delighted to announce that **Madeleine Stevens** gave birth to a healthy baby girl, Stella, on the 1st of October. While on maternity leave, **Greg Khine** is acting as research assistant on the project. **Alison Moore**, who left us in September, has taken up a post at the University of Cambridge working on a large study about prostate cancer. **Carol Joughin** has gone freelance and is currently providing input into the National Service Framework for Children.

NEW RESOURCE!! Using Research to Inform Practice: A Training Pack (working title)

WWfC recently began work with CEBSS (The Centre for Evidence Based Social Services www.ex.ac.uk/cebss) developing a 'Research Informed Practice' training pack for social care practitioners.

Our work with CF programmes over the past 18 months, has made us increasingly aware of practitioners' learning needs relating to the development of research informed practice. This work confirmed the need for appropriate training and support to foster the appropriate skills and knowledge. Whilst we have already produced a range of resources and tools which are designed to meet these needs (e.g. Evidence Guide, Research Use Self Assessment Tool) we, with CEBSS, saw the need for a comprehensive structured training resource covering all the necessary steps to effectively use research in practice.

The training pack, designed with social care practitioners in mind, will describe the main components in research informed practice – from outlining the need for and benefits to be gained from this approach, through to the practical considerations of implementation. It will address some of the barriers to using research in practice and highlight the enablers. The pack will also include a range of resources, activities and inputs (developed as part of the WWfC project and by CEBSS) aimed at assisting practitioners with the process of finding, assessing, adapting, and applying research evidence in practice.

The pack will be divided into 6 modules each aimed at a particular aspect of developing the effective use of research.

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| MODULE 1: | Using Research in Practice: An Introduction |
| MODULE 2: | Finding Research Evidence |
| MODULE 3: | Appraising and Reviewing Research Evidence |
| MODULE 4: | Adapting, Applying & Acting on Research |
| MODULE 5: | Creating and sustaining an evidence-based culture |
| MODULE 6: | Outcome Focused Evaluation: A Toolkit |

The modules are designed to follow a logical, linear order representing the various stages required for developing effective use of research in practice. Whilst many will benefit from working through the modules sequentially, the modular design also allows individuals to "pick and mix" according to their learning needs, interests, and available time.

The training pack is currently under development and we hope to pilot the materials with practitioners in Spring/Summer 2004. Watch this space and the WWfC website for updates. Please contact Sarah Frost for more information.

PRESENTATIONS: In July **Sarah Frost** and **Kristin Liabo** presented papers at the 2003 Social Policy Association Conference in Middlesbrough, and Sarah facilitated a workshop at the British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Conference. Sarah and **Patricia Lucas**, presented a paper on mentoring at the conference on Evidence Based Policies and Indicator Systems. In September Sarah also presented a paper to the County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority Conference.

In February Kristin and Sarah will be presenting at the Campbell Collaboration Colloquium in Washington DC.

PUBLICATIONS: Roberts, H., Liabo, K., Lucas, P., DuBois, D., Sheldon, T. A. (forthcoming) The lure of the silver bullet: Mentoring to address anti-social behaviour in childhood. British Medical Journal.

INTERNATIONAL: **Trevor Sheldon** and **Helen Roberts** have been part of an international team working on the establishment of a possible Australian Clearinghouse for research work on children and families. Phase I has been completed and Phase II, which is about to start, will review and examine existing alternative models including What Works for Children? The outcome will be a recommended 'Clearinghouse' model appropriate to the needs of the Australian context and in light of international developments.

NEW WEB RESOURCES

New nugget: Cognitive Behaviour Therapy can be effective in managing behavioural problems and conduct disorder in pre-adolescence.

Research Jargon Buster: A glossary of research terms and concepts. It covers research designs, as well as concepts in both qualitative and quantitative research.

All resources are made available at:
www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk

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If you have any questions please contact either:

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