



NSW Department of  
Community Services

## **Research, Funding and Business Analysis Division**

# **RESEARCH TO PRACTICE**

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*July 2004*

## **Executive Summary**

One of the greatest challenges for research today is ensuring it is utilised by practitioners and educators to make decisions that are underpinned by the latest evidence and best practice.

Simple dissemination of information is insufficient. It is crucial that strategies that encourage the uptake of research are developed and implemented.

To meet the challenge of not only disseminating information but also encouraging its active use, DoCS is establishing a Research to Practice Program.

An organisational culture that recognises the value of research as a source for innovation in service delivery and focus on policy and practice implications of research and making research accessible and targeted to the needs of DoCS will need to underpin the Research to Practice Program.

The program will be implemented in close collaboration with the rest of the organisation, external researchers and our key stakeholders. In addition to developing high quality research publications and resources by involving staff in the research process and creating opportunities for close interaction to identify their research needs, enhancing DoCS' awareness and exposure to the work of leading national and international researchers, and establishing a Research Network for research across DoCS, stronger links between research, policy and practice will be forged.

## **Purpose and context**

One of the greatest challenges for research today is ensuring it is utilised by practitioners and educators to make decisions that are underpinned by the latest evidence and best practice.

Acquiring a strong evidence-base to inform policy and practice is one of the major roles of the recently established Research, Funding and Business Analysis Division. As well as managing DoCS' Research Agenda, the Division is responsible for a range of key projects including demonstrating and evaluating the benefits of programs and policies, looking at data more closely to better understand key trends and what works on the ground and ensuring research findings are delivered to the field.

To meet the challenge of not only disseminating information but also encouraging its active use, DoCS is establishing a Research to Practice Program.

The purpose of this document is to provide a context and rationale for DoCS' Research to Practice Program, as well as giving detailed information on the individual strategies included in the Program.

## **2. Dissemination and use of research**

In an organisation that focuses on providing services to children and their families it is critical that new knowledge generated through research is applied to practice. To encourage practitioners, policy makers and educators to make use of research, findings must be disseminated in a manner and form that is meaningful, accessible and engaging.

This point is emphasised by the NSW Legislative Council's Final Report on Child Protection Services which states the Department needs to "establish a continuous loop between policy and practice", and recommends the development of "a strategy for the dissemination of research throughout the Department".

Recently there has been a surge of activity in both government and non-government organisations in the UK and elsewhere overseas on the research to practice continuum. A number of reviews have been conducted which look at how the research is used in policy and practice. These reviews have been completed by the Cochrane Collaboration (health care), the Campbell Collaboration (broader social policy), the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (health care), Barnardos UK, and the DfEE Centre for Evidence-Informed Policy (education).

The main issue to come out of the reviews is in relation to dissemination – simple dissemination of information is insufficient and mostly ineffective – it is imperative that strategies encourage a 'pull' for information from the end users. (Davies & Nutley: 2002: 8)

The report published by Barnardos (UK) on the successful integration of research into social welfare in social care practice, is particularly interesting. The Report found that although dissemination of research was seen as important, most organisations did not dedicate any specific resources to it (Barnardos: 2000).

The Barnardos Report also found that while there is widespread recognition of the importance of incorporating research into policy and practice, active implementation of research into policy and practice was very limited. In fact, implementing research should be a reciprocal process – both practitioners and policy makers need to be able to access research information when they need it and to be in a position to influence their organisation's research agenda.

Focus therefore needs to be on the development of effective dissemination strategies which 'bridge the gap' between researchers, policy makers, practitioners and educators through the promotion of more effective and productive interaction between these groups.

## **2.1 Mechanisms for the uptake of research**

When developing a Research to Practice Program, it's essential that the focus is on strategies that encourage the 'uptake' or 'utilisation' of the research.

"It is difficult for program staff, who do not necessarily speak the language of researchers, to sift through the available research and determine the potential impact that research results may have on their programs. Bridging this gap continues to be a critically important challenge." (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services et al, 2003)

The Research Unit for Research Utilisation (RURU) at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, has developed a taxonomy of interventions to enhance the impact research has on policy and practice. These categories describe the mechanisms used in different interventions.

Mechanisms include:

- *Dissemination* – involves presenting or circulating research findings, in written materials and oral presentations. They aim to primarily inform the potential users about research and persuade them of its value.
- *Education* – requires more active participation than simple dissemination. Strategies are often linked to wider learning and professional development opportunities.
- *Social influence* – involves the use of colleagues and role models to inform potential users about research and to persuade them of its value.
- *Collaboration between researchers and users* – aims to enhance research impact by strengthening the links between practitioners, policy makers and researchers.
- *Incentives* – aims to enhance research impact by providing some form of encouragement or reward for activities.
- *Reinforcement* – aims to encourage appropriate evidence-based behaviour by providing feedback and reminder sessions with staff.

- *Facilitation* – aims to help implement research impact intervention and develop evidence-based policy and practice by providing financial, technical, organisation or emotional assistance.
- *Multifaceted initiatives* – encourages evidence-based policy and practice by targeting multiple mechanisms.

(Adapted from Walter, Nutley & Davies: 2003)

These categories are a useful tool in determining how the Department can seek to make research a more valued and integral part of its work with children, young people and their families. In seeking to increase the impact of research on policy and practice there are numerous specific intervention types which we have used in our Research to Practice program in Section 4 – a more extensive listing of possibilities are listed in *Appendix 1*.

As previously mentioned, internationally there is a growing number of both government and non-government organisations, which have recognised the importance of translating research to practice. A listing of these organisations is included in *Appendix 2*.

## **2.2 Improving the dissemination and use of research in policy and practice**

Much has been said about the importance of incorporating research into the core work of the Department - but how can it be done? How can research be communicated more effectively and how can policy makers and practitioners make better use of research to ensure their work is underpinned by sound evidence-based research?

The following section has been adapted from work undertaken by Barnardo's Research and Development Team 2000. It sets out a number of issues for consideration by researchers in the dissemination of research, and by policy makers and practitioners in the course of their work. Many of these activities are already taking place within DoCS. These and others are described in the Research to Practice Program, as outlined in section four of this document.

### **Issues for policy makers and practitioners**

- *The role of leadership and senior management* is crucial: in demonstrating the value of research as a source for new ideas; in accessing and making use of research; in encouraging research by practitioners; and in active collaboration with research producers.
- *Presence of an organisational culture supported by senior management* which recognises the importance of developing evidence-based practice.
- *Facilitation of adequate training and development support* by senior management for their staff.
- *Incorporation of appropriate research skills in basic and advanced courses* would result in practitioners and managers being research-literate and more likely to underpin their practice with sound research.

- *Product or issue 'champions'* who are enthusiastic and have credibility in the organisation can act as a catalyst in promoting integration of available research into practice.
- *Resources linked to research and development need to be protected* and not be the first to be axed in time of resource constraints.
- *Integration of the research and development component in job descriptions* of appropriate senior policy makers and practitioners is more likely to lead to acceptance of research and the promotion of a culture which encourages underpinning policy and practice with sound research evidence.
- *Managers can ensure that time is made available within the practitioners' work routines* to enable them to share learning from participation in research projects, or from training on research skills, with their colleagues.

### **Issues for researchers**

- *Provide accessible summaries of research.*
- *Keep the research report brief and concise.*
- *Publish in journals or publications that are user friendly.*
- *Use language and styles of presentation which engage interest.*
- *Target the material to the needs of the audience:* policy makers and managers preferred summaries, whereas practitioners valued verbal feedback.
- *Extract the policy and practice implications of research* – where possible, this should be done in partnership with practitioners and policy makers.
- *Tailor dissemination events to the target audience and evaluate them* – use feedback to inform future dissemination events.
- *Use the media:* relevant journalists need to be engaged to ensure that research messages can be incorporated into the media's schedules.
- *Using a combination of dissemination methods* was regarded as the best way to maximise effectiveness.
- *Being proactive* by involving staff in policy and practice areas in research dissemination projects.
- *Understand external factors* likely to affect the uptake of research.

### **3. A Research to Practice focus in DoCS**

The challenge to make research findings accessible to policy makers and practitioners is recognised across government agencies both nationally and internationally. Philip Davies in his paper "Is Evidence-Based Government Possible?" argues that it's not only the dissemination of research but the way in which the research is presented, that determines its uptake.

Too often social research is presented in an unclear way with as much, if not more, emphasis given to the caveats and qualifications of research findings (the 'noise' of social research) than to the message and implications of these findings for policy and practice (the 'signal'). Government social researchers often need to 'translate' social science evidence into a language that is useful to the users of evidence, without distorting or misrepresenting the research evidence.  
(Davies: 2004: 17)

Canadian researchers Landry, Amara and Laamary found that research is more likely to be utilised when there is a sustained and intense interaction between researchers and users.

A one-way flow of information and 'traditional' dissemination approaches have not proven to be effective in encouraging the adoption and implementation of new research results. The use of knowledge increases when users consider the research to be pertinent, the research coincides with their needs and results reach users at the right time.

(Landry, Amara & Laamary: 1998: 5,8)

Nutley and Davies also recommend strategies that are flexible and provide research information in a wide range of formats and styles that are tailored to the needs of a specific target audience. In particular, the successful uptake of research findings into both policy and practice, depend on the use of multi-faceted strategies, as they work best in maximising impact, and that "partnership models which encourage ongoing interaction between evidence providers and evidence users may be the way forward" (Nutley, Davies & Walter: 2003: 10).

William Solesbury, the associate director of the UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice at the University of London concurs with these views. He says one-way communication is an inefficient way to use expensive research. He argues, that rather than just putting research results into a report that may never be used, briefings, workshops, training and consultation are more powerful approaches.

Communication also requires particular aptitudes and skills. Some researchers have them; where not, there is scope for commentators, journalists, technologists, policy analysts or reflective practitioners to carry the dialogue.

(Solesbury, W.: 2003: 21)

In the development of our Research to Practice Program we have taken account of the international experience in translating research to practice and in doing so have set out a broad range of strategies (which cover several mechanisms of intervention). These strategies seek to not only raise awareness of current research and encourage research uptake but to promote more effective and productive interaction between researchers, policy makers educators and practitioners.

In implementing the Research to Practice program, the Research, Funding and Business Analysis Division will work collaboratively with other directorates and regions to ensure consistent information is delivered to caseworkers. Research to Practice strategies will be appropriately linked to new and existing initiatives being undertaken within DoCS to avoid duplication and / or confusion and to capitalise on these opportunities.

### **3.1 Aims of DoCS' Research to Practice Program**

- To raise awareness about the importance of research amongst staff and stakeholders.
- To promote more effective and productive interaction between researchers, policy makers, educators and practitioners through the implementation of a number of Research in Practice strategies.
- To disseminate research undertaken by, and for the Department to relevant target audiences.
- To provide information and advice based on the latest research evidence and best practice, for early intervention and prevention, out-of-home care, child protection and parenting.
- To inform and improve consistency of practice.

### **3.2 Strategies under DoCS' Research to Practice program**

The Research to Practice Program will use a range of strategies to disseminate research findings, which are listed below.

- Research Publications and Resources
- Proven/Promising/Trial Initiatives System
- Seminars/Workshops
- Two-Way Forums/Practice Sessions
- Research to Practice Network
- Integration of Research Guidance within KIDS and Business Help

Examples of successful Research to Practice strategies that have been undertaken in DoCS are listed in Appendix 3.

#### **3.2.1 Research Publications & Resources**

##### **3.2.1.1 Research Reports & Literature Reviews**

In accordance with DoCS' Research Agenda, all research projects will culminate in a research report. Each of these reports will contribute to the available evidence-base to inform the Department's core business.

In-depth literature reviews will be undertaken as an important first step in a large research project to help define or refine research questions.

These reports and literature reviews will provide policy makers and practitioners with a high quality evidence-base to inform decisions about policy and practice.

##### *Target audience*

- DoCS' policy makers, practitioners and educators
- Key stakeholders where appropriate

#### *Timeline/frequency*

- Research reports, literature reviews and discussion papers will be written as per DoCS' Research Agenda as well as ad hoc external research projects.

#### *Distribution*

- Staff will be alerted to availability via the weekly 'What's New' email system.
- Electronic copies will be available on the research sections of DoCS' intranet and internet sites (under development) and the *Parenting NSW* website.
- Added to internal/external Resource Order Form where appropriate.
- Hardcopies will be available to staff via DoCS library.

### **3.2.1.2 Research Notes & Statistical Briefs/Bulletins**

Research Notes present the main findings or arguments presented in research reports, discussion papers or literature reviews in clear and succinct way, thereby making the research more accessible and appropriate to the target audience.

Research Notes are approximately one to four pages in length and will be made available electronically and in hard copy.

In the same way, Statistical Briefs and Bulletins will be developed for internal and external audiences respectively. The external bulletins will be published on DoCS' intranet and internet sites for DoCS' staff and community partners.

#### *Target Audience*

- DoCS' practitioners
- DoCS' policy makers
- DoCS' educators
- Key stakeholders
- Parents and carers

The target audience will vary depending on the nature of the content.

#### *Timeline/frequency*

- Research Notes will be written in line with projects identified in the DoCS' Research Agenda and Parenting Strategy.
- Statistical Briefs and Bulletins will be developed as required.

#### *Distribution*

- Staff will be alerted to availability via the weekly 'What's New' email system.
- Electronic copies will be available on the research sections of DoCS' intranet and internet sites (under development) and the *Parenting NSW* website.
- Research Notes/Bulletins will be added to internal/external CCU Resource Order Form where appropriate.

- Research Notes, where appropriate, will be disseminated through external stakeholders' newsletters.
- Some Research Notes will be distributed as part of Community Education Campaign undertaken by the Media and Communications Branch.

### **3.2.1.3 Research to Practice Guides**

Research to Practice Guides will bring together the latest research evidence and best practice strategies in a specific topic area in order to direct or inform practice. The Guides will discuss the implications for practice resulting from research findings and provide practical information for use in practitioners' day-to-day work.

These Guides will be developed in close consultation with the Operations Directorate, taking into consideration, for example, the Practice Improvement Framework. The Guides will be made available in a number of formats.

#### *Primary target audience*

- DoCS' practitioners, policy makers and educators

#### *Secondary target audience*

- Key stakeholders, including practitioners who work with children, young people and their families.

#### *Timeline/frequency*

- The Practice Guides will be produced in line with the DoCS' Research Agenda.

#### *Distribution*

- Staff will be alerted to availability via the weekly 'What's New' email system.
- Electronic copies will be available on the research sections of DoCS' intranet and internet sites (under development) and the *Parenting NSW* website.
- Added to internal/external Resource Order Form where appropriate.
- Hardcopies will distributed to staff via the Operations Directorate and Learning and Development Branch networks.
- Hardcopies will also be available to staff via DoCS' library.
- Practice Guides, where appropriate, will be disseminated through external stakeholders' newsletters.

### **3.2.1.4 Research articles in DoCS' publications**

These will aim to promote the use of research evidence in policy and practice by including articles about the latest research projects/activities and Research to Practice initiatives in *DoCS Vox* and *Inside Out*.

#### *Target Audience*

- DoCS' staff
- Key stakeholders

#### *Timeline/frequency*

- An article in each edition of *DoCS Vox* and *Inside Out*.

### **3.2.1.5 Parenting resources (such as magazines and videos)**

As part of DoCS' commitment to supporting families, the Department launched the NSW Parenting Campaign in 1999, including a series of four parenting magazines. Since the launch, DoCS has continued to develop and distribute parenting resources, all of which have been extremely well received by parents and carers. DoCS' practitioners and other professionals have also found the resources invaluable in their work with families.

DoCS will continue to develop resources about key parenting issues for parents, carers and practitioners. Where appropriate resources will also be developed to address the needs of Indigenous and CALD communities.

Resources will be developed in a range of appropriate formats and will also be disseminated via DoCS' intranet and internet sites as well as the *Parenting NSW* website.

#### *Target audience*

- Parents and carers
- DoCS' policy makers, practitioners and educators
- Key stakeholders

#### *Timeline/frequency*

- The frequency will be dependent upon the nature and scope of the resource(s) being developed, the capacity of the Media and Communications Branch and available budget.

#### *Distribution*

- The distribution strategy will reflect the nature and scope of the resource being developed.

### **3.2.2 Proven/Promising/Trial Initiatives System**

Programs and practices in the fields of DoCS' activities will be evaluated and rated for their effectiveness. They will be identified as either proven, promising or trial initiatives. This will help DoCS' policy makers determine 'what works'. Details of programs being considered by DoCS, such as home visiting by child and family health nurses, will be provided to DoCS' policy makers with a recommendation. This strategy will facilitate results-based decision-making.

#### *Target audience*

- DoCS' policy makers, practitioners and educators
- Key stakeholders where appropriate

#### *Timeline/frequency*

- Reports will be written as per DoCS' Research Agenda as well as ad hoc external research projects.

### **3.2.3 Seminars and Workshops**

The Centre hosts seminars and workshops on specific issues for DoCS' staff and stakeholders. Leading national and international academics, DoCS' research team and experts in child welfare are invited to share the latest research findings, knowledge and best practice.

Where appropriate, sessions are taped and videos and notes distributed for regional staff and placed in DoCS' library.

Seminars will be promoted via DoCS' publications and/or a summary article written for Inside Out and DoCS Vox following the event.

#### *Target Audience*

- DoCS' policy makers, practitioners and educators
- Key stakeholders

The target audience will be dependent upon the nature and scope of the seminar or workshop.

#### *Timeline/frequency*

- Four per year

### **3.2.4 Two-Way Forums/Practice Sessions**

Evidence-based policy and practice is more likely to be adopted by staff if they have input into its development. Two-way forums create valuable opportunities for interaction with key staff to identify their research needs and assist in the development of relevant and engaging evidence-based resources.

Involving staff in the research process and producing tailored information creates greater 'buy in' among staff for the end product. The forums will help to shape the format and content for current and future Research to Practice strategies in the Research to Practice Program.

Interactive sessions with staff should be conducted within local Practice Solutions Sessions and led by Senior Practitioners/Managers.

Regular forums will also be held with other DoCS' staff including Casework Managers, Psychologists and Children's Services Advisers, potentially using the Thursday morning practice sessions.

#### *Target Audience*

- DoCS' practitioners, policy makers and educators

#### *Timeline/frequency*

- 4 half-hour sessions with caseworkers per year.
- Ongoing meetings with DoCS' staff by attending existing meetings/forums.

### **3.2.5 Research to Practice Network Members**

Research Network Members will be enthusiastic and credible people in the organisation who can act as catalysts in promoting the use of research in policy and practice. They are supportive opinion leaders, both expert and peer, who assist by 'selling' new ideas and practices and participate in research as appropriate.

The Deputy Director-General, Research, Funding and Business Analysis will seek nominees to become Research Network Members. It is anticipated that Research Network Members will assist by sharing research findings within their area.

Research Network Members may also have the opportunity for a secondment to units within the Research, Funding and Business Analysis Division to enhance their research skills through participation in research projects.

Speaker's kits including a PowerPoint presentation and handouts will be given to the Network Members for use in the Thursday morning sessions with caseworkers. Copies of these materials will also be made available to staff on DoCS' intranet.

Where possible, caseworkers will also be encouraged to become involved in research projects being undertaken by the Centre. Increasing caseworkers' exposure to research encourages them to also act as Research Network Members within their CSC and professional networks.

Opportunities to assist DoCS' staff pursuing postgraduate studies will also be identified and encouraged where appropriate as will secondment opportunities.

Existing networks and mechanisms such as stakeholder newsletters, biannual Stakeholders forum, DoCS Dialogue and partners reference groups will be utilised as appropriate.

#### *Target Audience*

- DoCS' Regional Managers and key staff
- DoCS' practitioners
- Key stakeholders

#### *Timeline/Frequency*

- Research will be disseminated and sessions held on an ongoing basis.

### **3.2.6 Integration of Research Guidance within KIDS and Business Help**

A longer term strategy could be to include reference and hyperlinks to Business Help topics, policy directions and online research within KIDS.

#### *Target Audience*

- DoCS' Regional Managers and key staff
- DoCS' practitioners
- Practice/accountability review forums

#### *Timeline/Frequency*

- Quarterly updates and refinements

### **3.3 Evaluation**

To evaluate the Research to Practice Program:

- Descriptive data will be gathered in an ongoing manner to document the number of research to practice strategies in a 12 month period, the mechanisms used and the number and type of participants.
- Questionnaires will be distributed at all Research to Practice events for feedback and comment.
- Questionnaires will be disseminated with all Research to Practice resources for feedback and comment.
- Using an action research framework, Research Network Members will be asked to participate in an ongoing process to plan, act and evaluate local research to practice activities.
- Interviews (either individually or in groups) will be conducted with Research Network Members, managers and other DoCS staff to:
  - ascertain their experience and understanding of the Research to Practice Program
  - explore the factors that facilitated or hindered implementation of, or participation in, research to practice strategies.

### **3.4 Partners**

The success of the Research to Practice program is dependent upon a number of partners, including:

- Operations Division
- Governance Directorate
- Communities and Policy Division
- Aboriginal and Multicultural Services
- Media and Communications Branch
- Learning and Development Branch
- DoCS' staff

- External researchers
- Key stakeholders

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## Appendix 1

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### List of intervention types, with examples

Abstracted from Walter, Nutley & Davies: 2003

#### *Written materials*

Presentation of research findings in written formats:

- publication in journals
- bulletins
- summaries
- briefing reports

#### *Oral presentations*

Oral presentations of research findings:

- seminars
- conferences

#### *Alternative formats*

Presentation of research findings using alternative formats:

- videos
- audio tapes
- electronic/online versions

#### *Mass media*

Use of the mass media to present and circulate research findings:

- TV
- radio
- magazines

#### *Research access*

Improving access to research findings:

- circulation of research
  - intra-organisational distribution of research
  - by individuals
  - by information services
- encouraging discussion of research
  - journal clubs
  - e-mail discussion groups
- database access
  - online database access
  - conducting searches for individuals

#### *Research-based guidance*

Preparing and providing guidance for practitioners and policy makers based on research findings:

- good practice guides
- consensus recommendations
- guidelines

#### *Educational materials*

- printed educational materials

#### *Passive/didactic education*

- lectures

#### *Staff development and training*

- continuing professional development
- training staff in critical appraisal skills
- training staff in delivering evidence-based services

#### *Educational outreach*

- academic detailing (face-to-face visits to practice settings by trained individuals to try to change practitioner behaviour)

#### *Interactive education*

- workshops

#### *General education*

Educational approaches, no details or insufficient details given:

- small-group teaching
- educational meetings

#### *Endorsement*

Endorsement for research findings, for research-based guidance or for practice or policy based on research:

- opinion leaders
- product champions
- endorsement by professional organisations (of evidence/research impact activity)

#### *Lobbying*

- top 10 letters to top 10 most influential/relevant policy makers
- lobbying local and national government

#### *Client-mediated interventions*

Attempts to secure evidence-based practice or policy indirectly via influence of clients:

- patient-mediated interventions: research information given to patients through leaflets or counselling

#### *Boundary spanners*

Development of individual roles which span research-user contexts:

- lecturer-practitioners
- policy brokers

#### *Networks*

- research/policy networks
- practitioner networks for disseminating research findings

#### *Provision of expert support*

Expert support for research impact activities:

- research support for practitioners to conduct research or to test out research findings in practice contexts
- information scientists to assist search for relevant research

#### *Research-in-practice*

Testing research findings in local contexts, conducting and applying research, researching current or new practices:

- practitioner testing of or "tinkering" with research
- action research

#### *Research planning*

Planning research programmes and projects to ensure relevance to user communities:

- involving policy makers in defining and managing research programmes
- business plans ensuring future research responds to clients' needs

### Collaboration

Researchers working with user and client communities to enhance the relevance and impact of research:

- partnerships between researchers and users - and the community
- involvement of stakeholders in defining research topics and format

### *Research incentives*

Incentives for researchers to engage in research impact activities:

- research funding criteria - requirements for research impact activity
- providing/increasing budget for research impact activities for researchers

### *Financial incentives*

To use research, or to develop evidence-based policy or practice:

- implicit financial incentives
- fee-for-service
- explicit financial incentives
- bonuses
- withholdings

### *Feedback (alone)*

- peer comparison feedback
- cost information feedback
- audit and feedback

### *Reminders*

- prompts
- alerts

### *Changes in structures*

Structural changes in organisations to try to enhance the impact of research on potential users:

- devolution of research from centre to regions to work alongside practitioners
- researchers working alongside practitioners and policy makers in project teams

### *Office systems*

- office tools
  - chart flow sheets
  - checklists

### *Computer support systems*

- software packages for storing, updating and accessing research information
- software packages to support process of developing and implementing evidence-based programmes for service delivery
- computer support systems for
  - patient reminders
  - provider reminders

### *Use of internet/intranet*

- use of intranets to disseminate research
- use of intranets for managing research/practice projects
- e-mail co-ordination across locations
- e-mail discussion groups

### *Quality improvement initiatives*

- continuous quality improvement (CQI)
- total quality management (TQM)

### *Organisational*

- changes in leadership
- development of communication channels

*Multi-component initiatives*

Use two or more interventions to enhance the impact of research:

- multifaceted interventions
- organisations and agencies developed to support enhanced impact of research on policy and practice

## **Appendix 2**

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Below is a list of overseas organisations that are committed to translating research into practice.

### **Research in Practice – [www.rip.org.uk](http://www.rip.org.uk)**

Research in Practice is a creative partnership between the Dartington Hall Trust, the Association of Directors of Social Services, the University of Sheffield and over 75 local authorities and voluntary child-care organisations. Research in Practice is the largest childcare research implementation project in England. Its role includes a range of innovative strategies to disseminate credible research to improve experiences and outcomes for vulnerable children and families. Strategies include research and policy updates, publications, learning events and a research summary database.

### **Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) – [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org).**

CWLA is an association of non-profit agencies that assist over 3.5 million abused and neglected children and their families each year. CWLA features a Research to Practice initiative. R2P's primary responsibilities are: to discover and methodically review research literature related to the general well-being of children, youth and families; to disseminate information about pertinent research and its implications for practice; to identify and carefully review effective evidence-based programs and practices; to distribute information about successful programs and practices; to support and promote the implementation of well-researched/evaluated programs or practices; and to encourage the use of program evaluation and outcome measurement.

### **Research Unit for Research Utilisation (RURU), University of St Andrews – [www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~ruru/](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~ruru/)**

RURU is part of the Centre for Public Policy and Management and is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. It is a member of the ESRC's Network for Evidence-Based Policy. RURU aims to facilitate the production and use of practical knowledge that will assist in enhancing the role of evidence in public policy and public services. The unit develops resources concerned with examining and improving the utilisation of evidence across key public policy and public services areas.

### **Promising Practices Network – [www.promisingpractices.net](http://www.promisingpractices.net)**

The Promising Practices Network web site highlights programs and practices that credible research indicates are effective in improving outcomes for children, youth and families. The information is offered in three major areas: Proven and Promising Programs, Research in Brief and Strengthening Service Delivery. This project is operated by the RAND Corporation, America's original "think tank" and is founded by four state-based organisations.

### **Social Care Institute for Excellence, England (SCIE) – [www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk)**

SCIE gathers and publicises knowledge about how to improve social care services. It is an independent organisation created in response to the UK Government's drive to

improve quality in social care services across England and Wales. SCIE is funded by the Department of Health and the Welsh Assembly. SCIE's activities include reviewing knowledge about social care, developing practice guides, writing position papers and running an industry conference.

**The Centre for Evidence-Based Social Services – [www.ex.ac.uk/cebss](http://www.ex.ac.uk/cebss)**

The Centre for Evidence-Based Social Services (CEBSS) aims to ensure that decisions taken at all levels of social services are informed by trends from good quality research. CEBSS' member organisations receive support, training and advice from CEBSS about how this can be achieved. CEBSS is a unique partnership between the Department of Health, social services departments across England and the University of Exeter.

**National Centre for Children in Poverty (NCCP), Columbia University, USA – [www.nccp.org](http://www.nccp.org)**

The NCCP identifies and promotes strategies that prevent child poverty and improves the lives of low-income children and their families in the United States. NCCP provides: original research on family economic security and child development; syntheses of academic and policy research in these areas; and tools to make this research easy to understand and use.

**Making Research Count – [www.uea.ac.uk/swk/research/mrc/welcome.htm](http://www.uea.ac.uk/swk/research/mrc/welcome.htm)**

Making Research Count is an innovative, collaborative venture between seven English universities. It offers staff in local authority social services departments (and the NHS and voluntary organisations where joint schemes are running) the opportunity to work in partnership with their academic colleagues to develop evidence-based social work and social care practice and improve the dissemination of research.

**Children, Youth and Family Consortium (CYFC), University of Minnesota, USA – [www.cyfc.umn.edu](http://www.cyfc.umn.edu)**

CYFC addresses critical health, education and social policy concerns to improve the well being of the state's children, youth and families. Working with the community, the consortium connects research, teaching, policy and practice. It seeks to advance greater understanding, shared knowledge and action.

**Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC), University of Worcester, England – [www.worc.ac.uk/crec](http://www.worc.ac.uk/crec)**

CREC is dedicated to raising the quality of children's early education and care. It works collaboratively on early childhood research, evaluation, scholarship, professional development and research related consultancy. Activities include research and evaluation initiatives, developing professional materials and publications as well as informing policy.

**The Cochrane Collaboration - [www.cochrane.org](http://www.cochrane.org)**

The Cochrane Collaboration is an international non-profit and independent organisation, dedicated to making up-to-date, accurate information about the effects of healthcare readily available worldwide. It produces and disseminates systematic

reviews of healthcare interventions and promotes the search for evidence in the form of clinical trials and other studies of interventions. The Cochrane Collaboration was founded in 1993 and named for the British epidemiologist, Archie Cochrane.

### **The Campbell Collaboration (C2) - [www.campbellcollaboration.org](http://www.campbellcollaboration.org)**

The international Campbell Collaboration (C2) is a non-profit organisation that aims to help people make well-informed decisions about the effects of interventions in the social, behavioural and educational arenas. C2's objectives are to prepare, maintain and disseminate systematic reviews of studies of interventions. They acquire and promote access to information about trials of interventions. C2 builds summaries and electronic brochures of reviews and reports of trials for policy makers, practitioners, researchers and the public.

### **DfEE Centre for Evidence Informed Policy and Practice**

The Centre for Evidence Informed Policy and Practice provides a database of current and recent education research as well as promoting a series of systematic reviews of evidence on key policy issues. The aim of the Centre is to make the key lessons from research much more accessible to and useable by policy makers and practitioners such as teachers.

### **NHS Centre for Review and Dissemination - [www.york.ac.uk](http://www.york.ac.uk)**

**The Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) was established in January 1994, and aims to provide research-based information about the effects of interventions used in health and social care.**

It helps to promote the use of research-based knowledge, by offering:

- *Rigorous and systematic reviews of research on selected topics*
- *Scoping reviews which map the research literature*
- *Three databases: DARE, NHS EED and the HTA database*
- *'Hitting the Headlines' an analysis of the evidence behind selected health stories reported in national newspapers.*
- *Publications: CRD Reports, Effective Health Care, and Effectiveness Matters*
- *A dissemination service*
- *An information and enquiry service*

CRD works closely with a number of other health, social research and information organisations as well as with international networks such as the Cochrane and Campbell Collaborations.

## Appendix 3

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### **Examples of successful Research to Practice strategies in DoCS**

Below are some examples of successful strategies undertaken by DoCS to translate research into practice and develop evidence-based resources.

#### **A Guide to Children's Growth and Development**

Following extensive consultation with DoCS' practitioners throughout the State, the Centre developed *A Guide to Children's Growth and Development*. The Guide was produced in response to requests from caseworkers for information about child development. The Guide was presented as an overview and checklist so that the information would be both practical and user-friendly.

Very positive feedback was received from staff and the Guide is now a key resource used in training sessions for DoCS' caseworkers.

#### **Seminars**

Seminars organised by the Centre continue to be very well attended. International experts have included:

- Dr J. Ronald Lally – Dr Lally is a specialist in early childhood development and currently Co-Director of the WestEd Centre for Child and Family Studies in Sausalito, California. He is also one of the founders and is on the Board of Directors of the Washington-based ZERO TO THREE: National Centre for Infants, Toddlers and Families.
- Associate Professor Dorothy Scott OAM PhD – Dr Scott has taught and conducted research mostly in the field of child welfare at the School of Social Work, University of Melbourne. She is a social worker with 30 years experience including residential care, adoption and foster care.
- Dr Clyde Hertzman, MD, FRCPC – Dr Hertzman is a specialist in human development and early intervention programs. He has been on faculty at the Department of Health Care and Epidemiology at the University of British Columbia since 1985.
- Dr Magdalena Janus – Dr Janus is an assistant professor and Chair in Early Child Development at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. She has been involved in a School Readiness to Learn Project at the Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk at McMaster University.

## **Arabic Parent Education Campaign**

As part of the Youth Partnership with Arabic Speaking Communities, the Centre developed a 36 page parenting magazine specifically for the Arabic community. The magazine was extremely popular with a total of 30,000 magazines distributed to over 400 government and non-government organisations throughout South West Sydney.

The Youth Partnership with Arabic Speaking communities was awarded the Premier's Gold Award.

## **Families: building relationships: parenting pre-schoolers**

In collaboration with NSW Health's Centre for Mental Health, the Centre developed a video and brochure promoting parenting practices with preschool aged children. The video introduces parents and carers to a number of basic principles for developing positive approaches to parenting. Around 8,000 copies of the video were produced and distributed to key government agencies and community partners in June. The video has proven to be an extremely useful resource for people working with families.