Wales School for Social Care Research
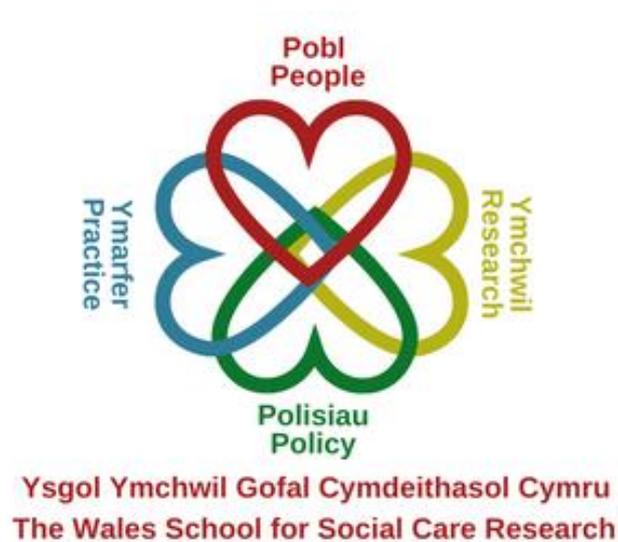
Strategy Document

Ysgol Ymchwil Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru
The Wales School for Social Care Research

Mission:

The Wales School for Social Care Research will contribute to the sustained co-production of excellent social care research that informs and enriches social care policy and practice in Wales in order to have a positive impact on people's well-being across the life course (children, young people and adults).

Contents

Section 1: Introduction

Overview

The document sets out the Strategy for the initial phase of the implementation of the *Wales School for Social Care Research* established by the Welsh Government to contribute to strength in excellent social care research with real world application and positive impact on the well-being of people in Wales. The School is a part of the wider Health and Care Research Wales infrastructure, with the School Hub located in the College of Human and Health Sciences at Swansea University. The School's development is a response to the need for credible and timely social care evidence that responds to ever pressing population and service needs and issues for people across the life course (i.e. children, young people and adults). With an all Wales remit, the School will respond to the cultural and socio-economic uniqueness of Wales and be aligned with the Welsh public policy context.

The Strategy is scoped out within the parameters of guidelines set by Health and Care Research Wales which have established the School's aims and objectives. As these guidelines make clear the *Wales School for Social Care Research* will be an organisation with an all Wales focus, operating at the interface of academia and practice. It will build bridges between social care knowledge production and social care policy and practice, contribute to understandings of critical social care research questions and enhance excellent research that responds to them. Public involvement and engagement permeates all the work of the School in line with values and principles of co-production.

There are other bodies in Wales with aligned responsibilities. Social Care Wales has a legislated responsibility for *"Supporting the development of research capacity and applied research and assisting policy makers locally and nationally in developing best practice".* The School will collaborate closely with Social Care Wales in its work. The Health and Care Research Wales infrastructure includes research centres with social care agendas and research and development support functions. In addition, Welsh universities are engaged in generating social care research, knowledge mobilisation and capacity building and with distinctive expertise (e.g. WISERD (Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research Data and Methods), CASCADE (Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre) and Centre for Innovative Ageing (CIA). The School strategy is based on the premise of working collaboratively with these organisations in order to support and strengthen social care research across Wales. It will not duplicate existing research activity.

This Strategy document has been prepared by Professor Fiona Verity building on the work of the former Director of the School, Professor Judith Phillips.

Reading this document

This Strategy document is a comprehensive overview of the aims, objectives and strategies of the School and will guide the work of the School. It will be accompanied with shorter public documents that communicate the strategic direction of the School.

Strategy Overview

This Strategy document outlines the *Wales School for Social Care Research* mission, values and organisational structure and the plans for the initial phase of operation. It follows the approach suggested in the Huxley Report into Social Care Research to '*move forward on several different fronts at* once' [1 p. 38]. The School will work in three areas:

1. Encourage, promote and facilitate a social care research programme structured around 4 themes.
   a. **Social determinants of care needs** (social, economic and environmental factors impacting on social care);
   b. **Prevention and early intervention** (e.g. community development and community based interventions, social planning, integrated models)
   c. **Social care delivery** (e.g. organisation of delivery, practice, evaluation, partnerships, workforce issues);
   d. **Institutional structures and policies** (e.g. resource allocation, integration, public policy).

2. In collaboration with Social Care Wales, the Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre and existing social care research providers, support research capacity building in social care to strengthen research and strengthen the capabilities of people who do research.

3. Support research knowledge mobilisation and public engagement in social care research in collaboration with the above mentioned organisations.

What will the School offer?

The School will benefit social care practitioners and the social care sector in assisting them in taking forward their research and evidence based practice aspirations, and benefit research providers in supporting them engage with the social care sector in the delivery of research that makes a sustained and tangible difference. This includes care quality, and improvements in identified priority areas. The School's activities will inform improvements in the delivery of quality social care for children, young people and adults as outlined in the *Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act* 2014 with its focus on wellbeing, people, prevention and integration**.**

Background

The clear imperative to continue to strengthen impactful and excellent social care research across Wales is well documented. Numerous reports highlight the need for knowledge to improve policy and practice to better meet growing social care needs and demands and the existing constraints of a poverty of evidence, underfunding and uneven organisational support for social care research [1, 2, 3]. A seminal document is the Huxley Report (2009) entitled *Social Care Research Priorities and Capacity in Wales* which reports on a comprehensive consultation and analysis of social care research in Wales. This report recommended research capacity building in both 'academic and practice settings' leadership for social care research, and increased resources for social care research [1, p.v].

The broader context of demographic and socio-economic pressures and an increasing need for social care alongside increasing expectations, austerity and associated social care budget cuts, time constraints and competing priorities for practitioners create particular challenges in social care. As well, there exists different agendas, priorities and KPIs in social care research between academia (REF driven) and practice (evaluation and good practice driven). This can create a situation that Wiseman calls the 'parallel universes' of universities, policy and practice sectors and the wider public which can impact on effective communication of research and result in miscommunication of areas where new knowledge and ways of working is needed [4]. The School is a response to readdressing this situation and going forward in ways that build on existing practice and research strengths and momentum, as well as create new understandings in social care. It is also noted that there have been new developments in social care research in Wales since the Huxley Report.

Policy context

The *Wales School for Social Care Research* sits in a Welsh Government public policy context supportive of strengthening social care research capacity. Key 'transformational themes' identified by Welsh Government policy [5] include: a citizen and personal outcome focused approach; strengthening 'voice and choice'; rethinking assessment and care management- putting professional practice before excessive bureaucracy; assets and strengths based approaches; the health and social care integration agenda and the development of inter-professional practice; supporting prevention and wellbeing in diverse communities. These themes form part of the cultural context in which the School is located.

These above transformational themes have been incorporated into the major Welsh Government policy frameworks on which this Strategy for social care research builds, including:

- *Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action* (2011) emphasising the need for high quality evidence so that best outcomes can be achieved for service users and carers and the strengthening of social care research as a priority;
- *Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act* 2014 with an emphasis on an integrated social services which is empowering, playing a preventative role, citizen driven and in partnership. The implementation of the Act will have ramifications for the social care sector in Wales;
- *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act* 2015 with a focus on communities and joined up working;
- Prudent Healthcare with an emphasis on creativity, coproduction and an evidence base to policy and practice.

Similar initiatives in the United Kingdom include the NIHR School for Social Care Research in England, a partnership between leading universities funded by the National Institute for Health Research; the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS) and other initiatives in Scotland and the Northern Ireland Social Work Research Strategy (Health and Social Care Board).

Organisations such as Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), Making Research Count (UK collaborative research dissemination initiative), Research in Practice (RiP) and Research in Practice for Adults (RiPfA) also work to build social care research capacity building and service and workforce development. As will be detailed in this Strategy document, the *Wales School for Social Care Research* will explore links and collaborations with these aforementioned initiatives.

Definitions

The key concepts used in the *Wales School for Social Care Research* Strategy document have varying meanings. For the purposes of this Strategy the following definitions are used.

Well-being

The *Social Services and Wellbeing Act* (Wales) 2014 defines wellbeing in the following way:

> "Wellbeing" means well-being in relation to any of the following:
> (a) physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
> (b) protection from abuse and neglect;
> (c) education, training and recreation;
> (d) domestic, family and personal relationships;
> (e) contribution made to society;
> (f) securing rights and entitlements;
> (g) social and economic well-being;
> (h) suitability of living accommodation. [6]

Co-production

The following definition is from the Public Health Wales/Co-Production Wales document 'Seeing is Believing'. In this document co-production is defined as a process *"which enables citizens and professionals to share power and work together in equal partnership, to create opportunities for people to access support when they need it and to contribute to social change".* [7] In enacting a co-production approach the School will draw upon Health and Care Research Wales core principles for engagement and involvement in research. These principles emphasise the importance of meaningful public involvement, based on mutual respect and accountability, and occurring in all phases of a research process. They foreground the need to be transparent in research relationships and for diverse public involvement strategies.

Developing Evidence Enriched Policy and Practice (DEEP)

The work of the School will be informed by the Developing Evidence Enriched Policy and Practice (DEEP) approach. This approach is an appreciative, collaborative and democratic approach to the discovery, exploration and use of research alongside contextual knowledge in service and workforce development.

Research capacity building

Research capacity building is a dynamic process over time, building on what works well in order to strengthen relevant and quality research that does make a difference in policy and practice. This includes producing capacity for research to respond to emergent issues and needs. In the *Wales School for Social Care Research* capacity building will operate at three interrelated levels:

a) *Strengthening* **Individual knowledge and capabilities** to use research evidence in policy and practice, formulate research questions and be engaged in research (e.g. the skills and knowledge of social care workforce, voluntary sector staff, university researchers);

b) *Strengthening* **Organisational capabilities** to generate and sustain social care research environments based in approaches where evidence can inform policy and practice;

c) *Strengthening* **Institutional processes** to support a sustained social care research agenda and effective knowledge mobilisation. (E.g. resource allocation, policies and procedures, links). [9, 10,11]

Section 2 : Mission, Aims and Objectives

Mission

The Wales School for Social Care Research will contribute to the sustained co-production of excellent social care research that informs and enriches social care policy and practice in Wales in order to have a positive impact on people's well-being across the life course (children, young people and adults).

AIM 1: To lead and promote the development of a culture of research-mindedness, evidence-enriched practice, and research activity in social care services in Wales.

OBJECTIVES

1. Building on previous work, develop and progressively roll out a system for enhanced evidence-enriched practice in social care services across Wales.
2. Develop, progressively roll out, and subsequently refine a bespoke national system of research *Knowledge Mobilisation* for social care research spanning academia, policy and practice.
3. Administer a capacity-building programme of research funding grants specifically for social care practitioners, managers, and educators.

AIM 2: To facilitate the development of social care research capacity in both practice and academia through providing leadership.

OBJECTIVES

1. Establish a clear, recognised, and prestigious identity.
2. Collaborate to support enhanced capacity in existing institutional infrastructure, social care researchers and the social care sector to engage with and conduct research.
3. Facilitate collaboration both within Wales and between Welsh, UK and international partners.

AIM 3: To lead by example in facilitating, developing, and championing innovative and fully-embedded public involvement in social care research in Wales.

OBJECTIVES

1. Promote and encourage the active, informed, and innovative involvement of the public in all appropriate aspects of social care research in Wales.
2. Ensure service users, carers and the wider public are fully and actively engaged in all appropriate School activities and governance structures.
3. Develop the evidence base for public involvement in social care research and related activities.
4. Work closely with the Health and Care Research Support Centre to promote, develop and enhance expertise in public involvement in social care research.

AIM 4: To contribute to identification of social care research priorities and knowledge gaps in Wales, and to assist the sector to address those areas.

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a Wales wide system for identifying research priorities and knowledge gaps.
2. Work with the sector, finding ways to address identified knowledge gaps and enhance School activities through knowledge mobilisation, and primary and secondary research.
3. Develop a programme of practice and policy-relevant research (ensuring that it does not duplicate research activity within Health and Care Research Wales Centres and Units).

Section 3: School Model of Operation

The *Wales School for Social Care Research* builds on past initiatives in Wales, is informed by a public policy context and the current state of play in social care research across the social services sector and within research organisations. For instance social care research related activities are being undertaken by a range of organisations (government, voluntary and private social care agencies, service users and carers, the wider public, community based organisations and researchers (both higher education institutions and private researchers).

Given its plural aims and the number of key stakeholders, the *Wales School for Social Care Research* model of operation is critically important. The School will be a catalyst and enabler and draw on principles of inquiry, systems thinking, capacity building, collaboration and engagement, and valuing different forms of knowledge (see Table 1). The School will operate on a hub and spoke model with the Hub based at the College of Human and Health Sciences at Swansea University. Key staff are the Director, Senior Project Officer and Research and Practice Development Officers.

Key stakeholders include:

- The Care Council for Wales (to be Social Care Wales),
- Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW),
- Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA),
- Older People's and Children's Commissioners in Wales and the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales,
- Social care researchers in Wales,
- Local authorities,
- Association of the Directors of Social Services Cymru (ADSS-Cymru),
- The third sector and organisations such as Welsh Council for Voluntary Action and UNISON,
- The Health and Care Wales Research Centres and Units and existing infrastructure within Health and Care Research Wales (H&CRW) and other units funded through Health and Care Wales,
- Involving People Network, Co-production Wales, and Participation Cymru,
- Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE),
- Private sector such as Care Forum Wales,
- Organisations identified in the course of time.

Funds will be allocated to support capacity building activities, and research development processes which include generating understandings of what social care knowledge is needed, supporting practice based research and seeking funds for research. Radiating from the School Hub will be spokes of negotiated collaborative work with many players (i.e. social services sector, service users and carers, the wider public, researchers, community based organisations and the private sector). The Hub will have a developmental role, and will also act as a liaison point for social care agencies and researchers in terms of making accessible research data and methodological expertise, and facilitating links between researchers and social care practice arenas related to children, young people and adults.

In addition to collaborations within Wales, partnerships and shared projects will be developed across the UK to further 'excellent social care research that informs and enriches social care policy and practice in Wales'. For example, the School will explore links with organisations with expertise in research mobilisation such as Making Research Count (UK collaborative research dissemination initiative), Research in Practice (RiP) and Research in Practice for Adults (RiPfA). Comparative studies

and joint applications for external research funds with UK partners will be pursued. In liaison with the Health and Care Research Wales Industry Team, opportunities for applied social care research with the private sector will be pursued.

Table 1: Principles informing the work of the School

- ***Taking an all-Wales approach*** acknowledging the cultural uniqueness and diversity across the country

- ***Valuing different forms of knowledge-*** systematic research, practitioner wisdom and organisational knowledge and the lived experiences of people accessing social care and support and their families

- ***Capacity building*** (individual, organisational and institutional levels)

- ***Engaging and involving the public of Wales*** in social care research using the Health and Care Research Wales core principles for public engagement and involvement

- ***Collaboration and partnerships***

- ***Complexity and systems thinking***

Given the School's developmental approach, a Phase 1 priority is to engage with stakeholders and develop collaborative working arrangements. This will include the following;

1. Engage with and talk to the range of organisations and groups across the social care sectors and research communities about what they do now, and what they see as the needs, issues and ways forward;
2. Establish links and collaborative arrangements to ensure mutually beneficial working;
3. Build on the above to generate action that will progress the School's mission to *'contribute to the sustained co-production of excellent social care research that informs and enriches social care policy and practice in Wales'.*

Section 4: Strategy Areas

Aim 1: To lead and promote the development of a culture of research-mindedness, evidence-enriched practice, and research activity in social care services in Wales.

OBJECTIVES

Building on previous work, develop and progressively roll out a system for enhanced evidence-enriched practice in social care services across Wales.

Develop, progressively roll out, and subsequently refine a bespoke national system of research Knowledge Mobilisation for social care research spanning academia, policy and practice.

Administer a capacity-building programme of research funding grants specifically for social care practitioners, managers, and educators.

The objectives above emphasise enhanced evidence enriched practice, knowledge mobilisation and capacity building for the social care workforce. *The outcome is to develop a workforce that is more research aware and able to use research and evidence in policy and practice.* To action these objectives the School will work in three strategy areas, the details of which are below.

Strategy Area 1: Development of Evidence Enriched Practice (DEEP)
The School will extend and deepen the work of the DEEP project which was developed through a partnership involving the All Wales Academic Social Care Research Collaboration (ASCC), the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS), the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and six practice sites (five in Wales and one in Scotland). This pilot project was led by Swansea University and informed by principles of dialogue, multiple sources of knowledge and collaboration. The project has conducted an appreciative and participatory action research project, which ran for one year in Wales and Scotland[1]. A key success in this approach was that it established and focused on what mattered to participants (older people, carers, staff, organisations and researchers).

From the pilot six key research themes have emerged.

1. Practice models for balanced risk management within the social care sector that allow for positive risk taking and right based approaches to decision making in care.
2. Relationship-based practice - what does it looks like in practice?
3. Models for developing meaningful dialogue between diverse social care stakeholders.
4. Narrative approaches to quality assurance, learning and development, e.g. capturing and sharing 'magic moments'.
5. Overcoming barriers between 'social services' and communities and social enterprise.
6. Meaningful short breaks to support interdependent caring relationships.

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[1] The full evaluation report and 4-page summary can be found at:
http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/developing-evidence-enriched-practice-health-and-social-care-older-people

In addition to the above it has been identified that there is a need for social care service evaluation support, a repository of accessible social care evaluation tools, and access to quantitative data sets that are accessible and relevant to the needs of the social care sector.

Activities

1) **Refining the six research themes.** The School will work collaboratively with the participants of the DEEP pilots held across Wales (each involved social service agencies, community groups, members of the public and university researchers) in refining the identified ideas for research. This will involve collaborative 'incubator sessions' in locations across Wales to undertake the following:

   a. 'hatch' the strategic research questions through the incubator process;
   b. identify existing research literature and gaps in knowledge mobilisation (i.e. need for systematic reviews of evidence, knowledge transfer mechanisms suitable for the audiences, and better utilisation of existing data sets);
   c. identify the best methods for undertaking any additional research, and resource requirements;
   d. Identify research partners;
   e. Support the facilitation of applications for research funds (both to traditional research sources and also exploring matched funding as appropriate).

   In addition to the researchers already engaged in the DEEP pilots, other researchers will be identified and invited to be part of these development processes. The incubators will result in action plans for each research theme. It may be that this results in applications for gaining research funds, partnerships developed with research projects that can be extended (for example being conducted elsewhere in Wales or the UK), or more focused means of research dissemination of existing research evidence.

2) **The School will widen DEEP activities**. As noted earlier, the DEEP programme has been successful in engaging social service workforces in evidence enriched practices. The School will continue the momentum that has been generated and continue to develop on going work in partnership with key organisations in the social care sector. This will occur through development work that takes a flexible and responsive approach to project management and engages with social care research opportunities as they emerge. The School in its role as a bridge at the intersection of policy, practice and research will actively facilitate the engagement of researchers across Wales in the social care research agendas that emerge. This will include associated training and learning opportunities in the DEEP *approach* within service and workforce development.

3) **Support and enhance social care research cultures.** In this work the School will work and support Social Care Wales, Continuing Professional Education and Learning (CPEL) programme across Wales, social care managers and consultant social workers in progressing enhanced research cultures and activities. In the first instance this will occur through discussions about opportunities, research needs and research practices. From these consultations, critical questions and issues will be identified about what is needed to support research engagement and the best role the School may play.

4) **Social care service evaluation support.** The School will develop proposals for the delivery of social care service evaluation support and a repository of accessible social care evaluation tools, with School collaborators. The initial process is to scope what currently is available and identify the gaps. This will be done in collaboration with key stakeholders and will inform a report on ways to further social care evaluation support.

5) **Quantitative data sets.** The School will discuss a role it might play in relation to responding to gaps and requirements for accessible and relevant social care quantitative data. Scoping the School's role will involve discussions with WISERD (i.e. Data and Methods thematic group), the Swansea University Health Informatics Group which undertook a Data Linkage Project relating to the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) Databank, and the Administrative Data Research Centre Wales, led by Swansea University's College of Medicine in partnership with WISERD.

Strategy Area 2: Building Research mindedness in social care sectors

Activities
6) Administer a capacity-building programme where research development funds are allocated to support research capacity building specifically for social care practitioners, managers, educators and students. This will be informed by the outcomes of the discussions with stakeholders such as the Care Council for Wales (Social Care Wales), the organisers of the Continuing Professional Education and Learning (CPEL) programme across Wales, social care managers and consultant social workers. The need for capacity building was a key finding of the 2009 Huxley Inquiry, where it was noted that: 'Many respondents pointed to the need to address infrastructure and capacity issues *before* moving to identify specific themes for research' [1 p.27]. Discussions will also be held with research units/centres that have a role in supporting capacity building such as CASCADE.

There are a number of possible mechanisms for this capacity building such as critical reflection time buy-out, pilot and accelerator projects, mentorship supports and exchange programmes, practitioner research projects, regional practice and research networks etc. These ideas will be refined through discussions with stakeholders. Another early task is to develop the guidelines for the use of funds in this area which will be done in collaboration with Health and Care Research Wales.

7)   Workforce development. The School will work with Care Council for Wales (Social Care Wales and the Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre in relation to workforce development to strengthen professional training in social care research. It will draw on CPEL and consultant social worker routes and link to studentships through the ESRC DTP and H&CRW initiatives. Further partnerships with local government and large third sector organisations are achievable, following the success of such partnerships in the existing ESRC DTP. Emphasis will be on Master's level as well as Doctorate level.

8)   Social Care research community. In collaboration with Health and Care Research Wales, the School will facilitate a community of learning with the All Wales Academic Social Care Research Collaboration (ASCC) students as champions for social care research and links with a wider cohort of research students with shared events and so on.

Strategy Area 3: Research knowledge mobilisation

Activities
9) **Research knowledge mobilisation action strategy.** The School will engage with Health and Care Research Support Centre and Care Council for Wales (Social Care Wales) about the best ways that the School can further research knowledge mobilisation. This consultation will shape an action strategy which may include the following:
- Seminars, training and advice on knowledge mobilisation.

- Facilitation of creative dissemination and implementation of research evidence into practice, specifically through the flagship DEEP project but also through other initiatives.
- Downloadable tools and materials (in addition to published journal articles and research papers, summaries of findings and presentations).
- The development of a repository for research theses and articles.
- Developing IP and commercialisation opportunities in partnership with business.

A communications plan will be developed in conjunction with the communication team at the Health and Care Research Support Centre. The plan will use the following communication tools:

- *Publications:* Peer reviewed journal articles; trade press such as Community Care; summary findings and bulletins depending on audiences;
- *Website:* Accessible to the public the website will contain relevant information for the public, professionals and social care practice organisations; enable partner searches for collaborative research and funding opportunities and address the needs of Centres and Units with queries about social care research. Web based materials will be developed as appropriate and the School will also use social media.

AIM 2

To facilitate the development of social care research capacity in both practice and academia through providing leadership.

OBJECTIVES

Establish a clear, recognised, and prestigious identity.

Collaborate to support enhanced capacity in existing institutional infrastructure, social care researchers and the social care sector to engage with and conduct research.

Facilitating collaboration both within Wales and between Welsh, UK and international partners.

The objectives emphasise the role of leadership for social care research, establishing a high level of visibility as a lead in social care research and research capacity building in Wales and collaborative links across the UK and with international partners.

Strategy Area 4: School visibility

Activities

1) Establish a high level of visibility as a lead and champion of social care research and research capacity building in Wales through communication strategies and engagement with collaborating partner organisations, government departments and civil society organisations. Communication will be an on-going activity and in this the School will work with the communication team at the Health and Care Research Support Centre.
2) Participate in social care research coordination groups.
3) Promote the successes and impact of the School in informing improvements in the delivery of quality social care for children, young people and adults.

Strategy Area 5: Collaborative work

Activities

4) Plan and roll out its work in close collaboration with the Welsh network of key groups and organisations active in evidence based policy and practice and social care research. Key partners will be Care Council for Wales (Social Care Wales) and the research organisations active in children, young people and adult social care research. These include Health and Care Research Wales funded units and centres, and units such as WISERD (Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research Data and Methods), CASCADE (Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre), Centre for Innovative Ageing (CIA). The School will aim to engage with private social care researchers.
5) Act as a catalyst for linked research capacity building and maximising the collective impact of existing resources and commitment.
6) Collaborative relationships will be developed and maintained with similar initiatives in the United Kingdom and joint projects pursued.
7) Strategic collaborations and networking will include links with other international centres of excellence.

Strategy Area 6: Influencing Social Care Public Policy

Activities

8) Through regular reporting, and engagement with Health and Care Research Wales and other mechanisms, inform public policy and resource allocation in the area of social care research. This will include information on the state of play in social care research and priority setting and resource requirements to deliver an on-going programme of excellent and relevant social care research.

AIM : 3

To lead by example in facilitating, developing, and championing innovative and fully-embedded public involvement in social care research in Wales.

OBJECTIVES

Promote and encourage the active, informed, and innovative involvement of the public in all appropriate aspects of social care research in Wales.

Ensure individuals receiving or accessing care or support, carers and the wider public are fully and actively engaged in all appropriate School activities and governance structures.

Develop the evidence base for public involvement in social care research and related activities.

Work closely with the Health and Care Research Support Centre to promote, develop and enhance expertise in public involvement in social care research.

The objectives above emphasise the engagement and involvement of the Welsh public in social care research and charge the School with the role of working collaboratively with the Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre to further developments in this area. This work will result in process and impact outcomes that includes strengthening the evidence base for public involvement in social care research. To action these objectives the School will work in three strategy areas, the details of which are below.

Strategy Area 7: Public involvement in social care research

Activities

1) A reference group will guide the School's work in public engagement in social care research. This will involve participants that include young people and adults. It will be developed in discussion with the following groups:
   - Health and Care Research Support Centre Public Engagement and Involvement Team.
   - Involving People Network.
   - Health and Care Research Wales Public Delivery Board.
   - Co-Production Wales Network.
   - Participants in the DEEP project.
   - Other participants as identified.

2) In collaboration with Health and Care Research Support Centre compile understandings of the current landscape of public involvement in social care research and good practices. The assessment activities will inform a process of prioritising areas where involvement and engagement activities could be further developed, including undertaking research that will strengthen the evidence base for public involvement in social care research and related activities.

3) Develop an ongoing programme of activities reflecting priority setting and the School's ongoing public engagement processes. This will include ways for authentic and active community engagement in research agenda setting and research processes within university settings.

Strategy Area 8: Public engagement in School activities and processes

Activities

4) The School will ensure the public involvement in all appropriate School activities, such as establishing good practices in research knowledge mobilisation, in its communication mechanisms.

Strategy Area 9: Public engagement in research knowledge mobilisation

Activities

5) Work with the members of the above mentioned Reference Group to establish a process for public involvement in the development of the School's research transfer strategy fit for a range of audiences and purposes.
6) Using appreciative and collaborative action learning processes, develop strategies to support social care researchers within Welsh Universities improve their approaches to research knowledge mobilisation and engagement with the Health and Care Research core principles for engagement and involvement in research.
7) Work with Care Council for Wales (Social Care Wales) in knowledge mobilisation, in particular with respect to evidence synthesis production and the work of SCIE.
8) Undertake community conversations for the public to discuss and debate social care issues. These will be held in regional locations across Wales and two times each year and conducted with the Public Involvement and Engagement Team of the Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre.
9) Develop a School website which is an interactive two way medium for the dissemination of research knowledge and the communication of social care research issues and priorities.
10) Other communication strategies will be informed by the requirements to communicate to diverse publics and will be based on the input of the Reference Group.
11) Engage in dialogue with the Public Involvement and Engagement Team of the Health and Care Research Wales Support about lessons to inform ongoing public engagement in research mobilisation.

AIM 4

To contribute to identification of social care research priorities and knowledge gaps in Wales, and to assist the sector to address those areas.

OBJECTIVES

Develop a Wales-wide system for identifying research priorities and knowledge gaps

Work with the sector, finding ways to address identified knowledge gaps and enhance School activities through knowledge mobilisation, and primary and secondary research

Develop a programme of practice and policy-relevant research (ensuring that it does not duplicate research activity within Health and Care Research Wales Centres and Units).

The objectives above emphasise capacity building and the creation of a system for identifying social care knowledge gaps and responding through knowledge mobilisation and a distinctive, quality programme of social care research. It is envisaged that this social care research programme will be structured along the lines of the following themes:

a. **Social determinants of care need** (social, economic and environmental factors impacting on social care);
b. **Prevention and early intervention** (e.g. community development and community based interventions; social planning, integrated models)
c. **Social care delivery** (e.g. organisation of delivery, practice, evaluation, partnerships, workforce issues);
d. **Institutional structures and policies** (e.g. resource allocation, integration, public policy).

The School will encourage, promote and facilitate social care researchers in securing major research grants. In the first phase of its work, the School will undertake a process of consultation with policy, practice settings and researchers using the above 4 theme as a guiding structure. The outcomes of the consultation process will inform a more detailed programme of research and collaborative agreements, and seeking of research funds. As made clear by Health and Care Research Wales this work will not duplicate research activity within Health and Care Research Wales Centres and Units.

The outcomes are to develop a coherent and integrated social care research strategy that feeds into a work plan programme and themes and to establish and support a portfolio of social care research in Wales that is 'internationally recognised' and 'world leading' (REF 3 and REF 4).*

To action these objectives the School will work in three strategy areas, the details of which are below.

Strategy Area 10: Social care research: assessment of gaps and priorities

Activities
1) Through engagement and dialogue with Health and Care Research Wales, in particular through collaboration with the Support Centre and their work on the Research Register, undertake a mapping and analysis of the landscape of current social care research activity across Wales. More specifically this mapping will identify, assess and prioritise areas where new knowledge is needed and how this can build on and enhance existing initiatives.
2) Contribute to processes within Care Council for Wales (Social Care Wales) for assessment of social care research priorities.

Strategy Area 11: Themed social care research programme

Activities

3) Using the above four theme areas as a structure, develop a themed social care research work plan and identify short to medium term projects reflecting the outcomes of the first phase consultation. This includes the outcomes of the incubator sessions conducted through the DEEP project processes.

4) Research development groups will assist in developing research ideas, exploring the type of research required, developing applications for research funds, and ensuring inbuilt public engagement, collaboration, and impact and research mobilisation strategies.

5) Scoping of external issues and funding opportunities to support priorities.

6) Preparation of a detailed report to Health and Care Research Wales summarising the consultation and themed social care research work plan and short to medium term projects.

7) Support and facilitate social care researchers in making applications for funding in national and international calls for funding (RCUK; EU), and through other means such as matched funds from agencies. The School will also respond to Health and Care Research Wales specific calls for engaging expert researchers to work in a consortia model to deliver on research.

Strategy Area 12: Strengthen the methodological repertoire of social care

Activities

8) Collaborate with universities in Wales to add value to the studentships allocated to each individual institution by providing master classes in social care research methods and research leadership and mentorship which draws together expertise from the HEIs and practice based organisations.
9) Support the development of an active social care research student community and events to facilitate their development. This work will link to existing activity being undertaken by research units/centres in Wales and initiatives which have a social care pathway.
10) Strengthen the methodological repertoire of social care researchers though collaboratively identifying the methodological gaps, links with methodological support groups and developing a training work plan for 3 years together with the Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre and other stakeholders as identified.

Summary of Strategy Areas

	Strategy Areas
Aim 1: *Strategy Area 1*	Development of DEEP (Developing Evidence Enriched Policy and Practice)
Aim 1: *Strategy Area 2*	Building research mindedness in social care sectors
Aim 1: *Strategy Area 3*	Research knowledge mobilisation
Aim 2: *Strategy Area 4*	School visibility
Aim 2: *Strategy Area 5*	Collaborative work
Aim 2: *Strategy Area 6*	Influencing social care public policy
Aim 3: *Strategy Area 7*	Public involvement in social care research
Aim 3: *Strategy Area 8*	Public involvement in School activities/processes
Aim 3: *Strategy Area 9*	Public involvement in research knowledge mobilisation
Aim 4: *Strategy Area 10*	Social care research: assessment of gaps and priorities
Aim 4: *Strategy Area 11*	Themed social care research programme
Aim 4: *Strategy Area 12*	Strengthen the methodological repertoire of social care

Monitoring and reporting

An evaluation and monitoring framework will be developed for the *Wales School for Social Care Research* to demonstrate how it will measure that it is achieving its aims and objectives. Possible indicators could include the following:

- Effective linkage mechanisms are in place between stakeholders, social care sectors and research providers.
- Number of research applications and numbers of social care practitioners active in social care research.
- Number of researchers working with practitioners or social care services in dissemination of research and translation into practice.
- Evidence that social care research is impacting policy and practice.

Mechanisms will be established to record research activity and its dissemination. Reports to Health and Care Research Wales will include quarterly and annual reports based on identified KPIs.

The School will conduct an iterative reflection and learning process to understand what is working, key lessons in social care research capacity building and how these can inform the School's on going work. The School's Advisory Group will be involved in this process.

Section 5: Organisational Structure

Governance and coordination

Health and Care Research Wales will be responsible for setting the social care research agenda and monitoring the delivery of the School Strategy with a particular focus on impacts of the School's activities through agreed metrics.

To inform the work of the School an **Advisory Group** will be established made up of stakeholders from the social services sector, research providers and the public. This Advisory Group will advise on the School's direction, activities and opportunities, and impact. They will meet on a regular basis.

In order to ensure coordination and prudent use of resources, the School Director will sit on the following committees/groups.

- Health and Care Research Wales Board.
- Social Care Wales Research Strategic Co-ordination Group.

The School will link closely with the **Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre** (e.g. Research Design and Conduct Services, public involvement and engagement, permissions system, communication activities, training).

The School will link closely with **Care Council for Wales (Social Care Wales)** in its work on research capacity building, knowledge mobilization, and priority setting.

The School will have **network members** or 'friends' who are engaged in School activities to foster and further excellence in relevance social care research. They will receive communication on School activities and invitations to School activities.

Furthermore, stakeholder groups will be established as part of research development and capacity building processes. They will be time limited and include members of the public, individuals receiving or accessing care and support and carers, policy makers and practitioners and researchers.

Staffing

Director: Professor Fiona Verity (0.4FTE)

Senior Project Officer: Richenda Leonard

Research and Practice Development Officer: Nick Andrews

Research Fellow: Dr Alison Orrell

Research and Practice Development Officer: based at CASCADE

Section 6: Implementation Timelines

Phase 1 (April 2016-March 2017)	Outcomes
May-July 2016 **Organisational development** *Implement Governance arrangements* Form the School Advisory Group *School systems and staffing* Employ Senior Project Officer Establish School office Establish School systems and processes Establish School communication systems Develop evaluation and monitoring framework *Hub and Spoke collaborative agreements* Meetings with key stakeholders and negotiate the formation of collaborative agreements. This will occur throughout the year. **DEEP initiatives** Development of DEEP research incubators Development of a program of on-going work including training Identification of social care evaluation support needs	Implementation of School Governance arrangements, School identity and School systems and processes. Establishment of an evaluation and monitoring framework Agreement on collaborative working arrangements with stakeholders. Action plan for the ongoing development of DEEP work.
August–December 2016 **Consultation and mapping of current landscape of public engagement and involvement in social care** Develop action plan for consultation and mapping with Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre Undertake consultation and mapping Identify priorities for an on-going program of action	Report to Health and Care Research Wales on consultation findings, priority setting and a program for ongoing action.

Consultation and mapping of current social care research landscape across Wales	
Develop action plan for consultation and mapping with Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre	
Undertake consultation and mapping	
Identify priorities for an on-going program of social care research	
Identify stakeholders and partners	
Community conversations in regional locations across Wales	
Consultation about how to support and enhance social care research cultures	
Identify methodological gaps in social care research and what can be done. Develop a workforce development plan.	
Develop research knowledge mobilisation strategy for the School	
January-March 2017 **Begin to implement the priority actions arising from consultations and mapping processes.** **Formulate an operational plan for 2017-2018.**	Report to Health and Care Research Wales on a coherent and integrated social care research strategy which will inform the subsequent work of the School.

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