

Gwynedd Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

Draft Local Research Guidelines

November 2008



Introduction

Research is essential to the successful promotion and protection of children, young people and their families' health and wellbeing, and also to modern, effective services. At the same time, research can involve an element of risk, both in terms of return on investment and sometimes for the safety and wellbeing of the research participants. Proper governance of research is essential to ensure that the public can have confidence in, and benefit from, quality research. The public has a right to expect high scientific, ethical and financial standards, transparent decision making processes, clear allocation of responsibilities and robust monitoring arrangements (Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care, Department of Health 2005).

There are common factors to all good pieces of research involving children, young people and their families and achieving high quality research depends on cooperation between all those involved. Unfortunately many pieces of research are poorly commissioned and undertaken, often resulting in low quality, unusable research which may also duplicate other works.

The Gwynedd Planning and Development Group – Children and Young People's Research on behalf of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership has decided to set out local research principles and standards which should be considered when undertaking local research thus promoting improvements in research quality and ensuring the safety of children, young people and their families when participating in research.

Our Ambition for 2009 - 2011

In the course of developing these guidelines, the Gwynedd Planning and Development Group - Children and Young People's Research has identified a small number of strategic objectives that it would like to see realised during the lifetime of these Local Research Guidelines:

By the end of 2011, we aspire to the following outcomes:

- **That children and young people take an increasingly prominent role in the commissioning, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of research in Gwynedd.**
- **That we conduct, commission and use more research about groups of children and young people that are often unheard e.g. disabled children, ethnic minority children and young carers.**
- **That we will have worked together and with children and young people to share our expertise, develop our skills, evaluate the impact and influence of our work, and filled gaps in our knowledge about children and young people in Gwynedd.**

We hope that researchers working with and on behalf of children and young people in Gwynedd will collaborate with us to realise this ambition.

Defining the Study

Firstly a study must be defined. The following table developed by the NHS National Research Ethics Service should assist researchers in categorising whether their study should be classed as Research, Audit or Service Evaluation.

Research	Audit	Service Evaluation
Systematic investigation designed to attempt to generate knowledge. Includes studies that aim to produce hypotheses as well as studies that aim to test them.	Designed and conducted to produce information to inform delivery of best practice.	Designed and conducted solely to define or judge current practices.
Addresses clearly defined questions, aims and objectives. Quantitative research – designed to test a hypothesis. Qualitative research – identifies/explores themes following established methodology.	Measures against a pre-determined standard.	Measures without reference to a standard.
May involve the investigation of new theories / concepts and may involve carrying out experiments or less objective forms of measurement such as questionnaires, interviews, observation.	Involves only services / practices that are already firmly in use. Does not involve carrying out of experiments or the testing of new concepts / theories. Does not itself introduce any additional elements of choice.	Involves only services / practices that are already firmly in use. Does not involve carrying out of experiments or the testing of new concepts / theories. Does not itself introduce any additional elements of choice.
Usually involves collecting new data, although may include data already collected routinely.	Usually involves analysis of existing data but may include administration of simple interview or questionnaire.	Usually involves analysis of existing data but may include administration of simple interview or questionnaire.
May involve allocating research participants to control / experimental groups. May involve randomisation	No allocation to control / experimental groups. No randomisation involved.	No allocation to control / experimental groups. No randomisation involved.

Research Guide

The following areas should be covered in any proposal to do with research which directly or indirectly involves children, young people and their families.

1. Background and Purpose	1.1	The responsibilities of Researcher and Commissioner should be agreed and noted at the outset.
	1.2	The research proposal should have a clear purpose, including agreed aims and objectives. It should also include why the research is important and what we want to find out.
	1.3	The research proposal should state clearly how the research will be used and to whom it will be reported and disseminated.
	1.4	Consideration should be given to other studies in the same area and how this research will add knowledge.
	1.5	At the beginning of any research, participating children and young people and/or their carers should have a clear understanding of the work’s background, purpose and how it will be used.
	1.6	Responsibility over supervising and monitoring the research should be agreed at outset.

2. Process	2.1	Research methodology should be agreed at outset, including what is the main method used to carry out research? How data will be collected? How will the sample be selected and recruited?
	2.2	A clear and realistic timetable of the research’s start and finish dates should be agreed between Researcher and Commissioner at outset.
	2.3	Commissioner and Researcher should agree on dates for which to provide updates and progress reports and to whom they should be provided.
	2.4	Any equipment used in the data collection process, should be appropriate and accessible to all participants.
	2.5	Research questions directed at children and young people should be piloted in order to ensure their suitability.
	2.6	Consideration should be given to allocating resources at the outset of a project to remunerate and reward children in a way appropriate to the project in question.
	2.7	Researchers should include reference to how they have decided on the size and source of their samples for the research.

3. Ethics	3.1	Attention should be give to equal opportunities, including languages other than Welsh and English.
	3.2	It should be ensured that under-represented groups are sufficiently represented and that the use of established and existing groups is made.
	3.3	Any potential risks of harm to the Researcher and participants should be identified at the outset.
	3.4	An information sheet should be made available and informed consent should be obtained by participants, as well as parents or guardians (if applicable) and the school or service (if applicable) at the beginning of the study.
	3.5	Participants should be informed at the beginning of how they can complain should they be dissatisfied with any aspects of study.
	3.6	Arrangements should be in place in order to deal with any complaints which may arise.
	3.7	Arrangements should be in place in order to deal and respond to any sensitive matters that may arise during the course of the research.
	3.8	Participant should be informed at the outset of their rights to opt out of study at any time.
	3.9	All arrangements and decisions should be made transparent to all.

4. Skills and Knowledge	4.1	The researcher or a member of the research team should have an understanding and interest in children and young people’s research, and in particular have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A knowledge of local child protection policies and procedures. ➤ An ability to communicate to children and young people. ➤ Experience of undertaking research.
	4.2	The language used in the research study should be appropriate and understood by all children and young people participating.

5. Safeguarding and Confidentiality	5.1	If working directly with children and young people, the Researcher must be appropriately CRB checked
	5.2	The Researcher should have a safeguarding children and young people’s policy.
	5.3	All information should be kept confidential in order to safeguard individuals and participants should be informed of this at beginning. However, child protection considerations will normally over-ride the principal of confidentiality, should information arise during a research project that suggests a child’s safety is at risk.
	5.4	Research results should be published on an appropriate spatial and group level in order to ensure participant’s confidentiality.

6. Results and Reporting	6.1	Children and young people who have participated in research should be offered a copy of the report (an appropriately worded summary is recommended) as well as a summary of the actions taken to respond to results.
	6.2	The period for which the results will be retained should be agreed at outset.
	6.3	Children and young people should receive recognition for participating in research.
	6.4	Researchers are encouraged to share their final research findings with other researchers in Gwynedd through dissemination reports and presentations.

Implementing the Guidelines

These guidelines are voluntary advice for researchers and commissioners alike. The Gwynedd Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership sincerely hopes that commissioners and researchers working with and on behalf of children and young people in Gwynedd will find these guidelines useful and constructive for their own practice, whether or not the work they carry out is done on behalf of the Gwynedd Children and Young People's Partnership.

As a Strategic Partnership, it is our own practice that we are able to most directly influence. Therefore, we intend to utilise these guidelines in the following ways:

- When commissioning research work, we will ask prospective research providers to complete a short statement telling us how they intend to respond to the guidelines. This information will be taken into account alongside other factors when awarding work.
- As a Strategic Partnership, we intend to conduct an evaluation on an annual basis of our own practice and to see to what degree we have been successful in meeting the guidelines.
- Over the longer term, we will be inviting individual members of the Strategic Partnership to adopt these guidelines and to use them as part of their own commissioning processes.
- As a Strategic Partnership, we intend to provide support (through mentoring and training) to commissioners and researchers to make use of the guidelines.
- As a Strategic Partnership, we intend to invite children and young people to comment at least once during the next three year period, on how the conduct of research in Gwynedd might be improved, particularly in terms of their involvement in project design and implementation.