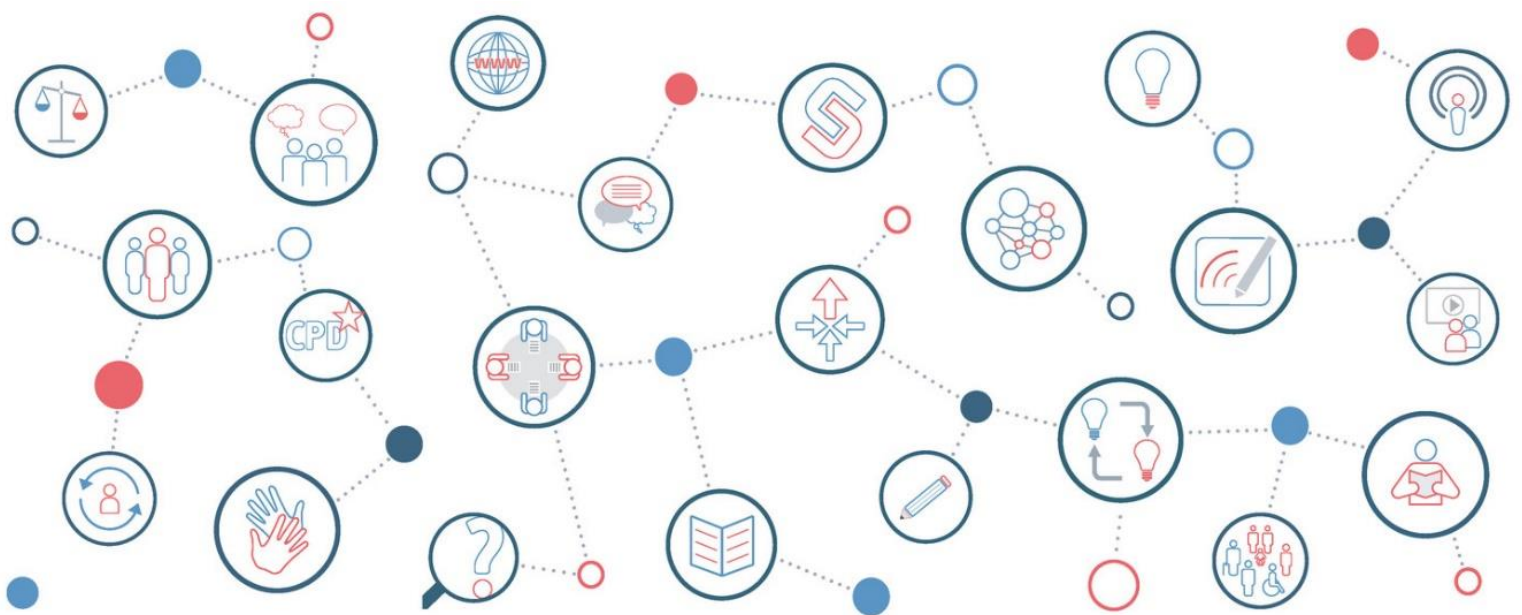


Using Research in Practice

Who is key to growing engagement?



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Introduction

The mission of Research in Practice is to promote the use of evidence-informed policy and practice in social care and health. Our purpose is to help our Partners use evidence from research, practice and lived experience to improve outcomes. Joining our network gives you access to the resources and support to be able to embed evidence-informed practice within your organisation but it requires commitment from key people within your organisation to make it all work. Who is key to growing engagement?

Strategic Champions

The key to embedding evidence-informed practice effectively is to have the support of staff at **every** level of the organisation. The Strategic Champion is usually a senior colleague who can support the Link Officer by encouraging and endorsing use of the resources by all staff, promoting and modelling the use of evidence-informed practice at a strategic level, and communicating strategic organisational needs and priorities.

Our Partner Engagement Team will link with the Strategic Champion, to ensure that we can tailor our offer to your strategic priorities, support you with quality assurance or improvement journeys and discuss the most effective strategies for developing a culture of evidence-informed practice throughout your organisation.

Most of our communication will be with the Link Officer. However, we will share copies of relevant resources with the Strategic Champion and will ensure that they are aware of the full benefits of Research in Practice in order to support the work of your Link Officer.

What does the Strategic Champion role involve?

- Provide strategic support to your Link Officer, Evidence Champions and others in key roles by ensuring they are kept informed of relevant organisational priorities and can connect you with resources that can support strategic planning and decision making.
- Keep the profile and importance of the offer high with wider strategic management colleagues so they can use them to inform their work and can model and advocate for their use within their service areas.
- Remind staff across the organisation to be curious and to use evidence in their direct work.
- Advocate the use of our resources, for example, in staff briefings, policies and practice guidance, service development or improvement.
- Act as a key voice for engagement with Research in Practice resources, model their use and promote the benefits to colleagues.

How can using evidence help me?

- Improve the outcomes and experience of people and communities.
- Provide a strong, defensible, evidence base for strategic decision making.
- Help you to meet your organisations learning and development goals.
- Support emotional resilience and high quality practice throughout the organisation, not just in relation to social work practice, but across roles and service areas.

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Will it make a difference?

There is a huge amount of continued support available from us, but we aim to build capacity from within. Supporting you to embedding the use of our resources into everyday practice in a self-sustaining way. Strategic Champions are vital to ensuring the organisations culture and values enable this to happen. Making sure your colleagues are 'plugged in' to our network by advocating for, and modelling, the use of evidence. Helping your colleagues see the benefits of embedding it in practice will make a real difference to them, and the lived experience of the people they serve.

What sort of person is a Strategic Champion?

The professional background of this person is not important – it is far more crucial that they are committed to driving up the use of robust research evidence in planning, delivering, and evaluating services.

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Link Officers

The Link Officer acts as the vital day to day operational contact between Research in Practice and their organisation. Supported by our Partner Engagement Team, the Link Officer will play a key role in promoting the use of evidence-informed practice across your organisation and ensuring you receive maximum value for money from your partnership with us.

A key part of the Link Officer role is identifying opportunities to connect people across their organisation with Research in Practice resources, ensuring everyone is aware of what is available to them, how to access, and how to use it to their benefit in practice. We will work with you on an ongoing basis to plan different ways to do this, sharing ideas from other partners as well as building on some of what you already have in place.

What does the Link Officer role involve?

- Co-ordinating links with Strategic Champion and other key colleagues.
- Keeping up to date with what is available and ensuring that relevant individuals and groups of staff are aware of what is available, how to access it and how it can benefit them.
- Identifying opportunities to utilise the resources to support organisational priorities and learning needs.
- Thinking Research in Practice and advocating for the use of resources as a first point of call to fulfil requirements for research evidence that will, for example, support defensible decision-making, inform direct practice and meet learning or development needs.
- Maintaining regular contact with our Partner Engagement Team and working with them to plan how you can make best use of the resources on an ongoing basis.

Will it make a difference?

Yes. The Link Officer role is the lynchpin to embedding the use of our resources into everyday practice in a self-sustaining way. So much so that we have an annual Link Officer of the Year Award to recognise their achievements. As the main point of contact with

Research in Practice and the key point of contact within our organisation you are the glue that holds it all together. Making sure your colleagues are fully up to speed and able to make the best use of the available evidence whether this be for strategic, operational or direct work. Helping your colleagues see the benefits of embedding it in practice will make a real difference to them, and the lived experience of the people they serve.

What sort of person is a Link Officer?

Experience tells us that, to be most effective in disseminating and promoting use of the resources, the Link Officer role should be one that:

- Has an overview of the needs and priorities of their organisation in relation to practice.
- Can identify, and influence, a wide range of opportunities to promote the resources and evidence-informed practice across the organisation.

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- Can link with key colleagues across all service areas including safeguarding, transition, mental health, and commissioning.
- Has close connections with learning and development and direct practice, including the Principal Social Worker, Principal Occupational Therapist and Assisted and Supported Year in Employment lead where applicable.
- Is supported and endorsed by their Strategic Champion and key senior colleagues.

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Evidence Champions

Evidence Champions are people who can help with this mission. They are people who:

- Advocate for the use of evidence in their teams.
- Are willing to help colleagues to build capacity for evidence-informed practice and decision making.

How can using evidence help me?

- Improve the outcomes and experience of people you support.
- Support you to feel more confident in your decision making.
- Help you to meet your learning and development goals.

What does the Evidence Champion role involve?

- Provide support to your Link Officer and wider Engagement Team either on an organisation level, or in your local teams.
- Take information about resources, publications, tools and learning events back to your team.
- Email practice issues or research questions to your Link Officer.
- Remind people in your team to ask about evidence.
- Advocate the use of our resources, for example, in team meetings, supervision and case discussion meetings.
- Act as a key voice for engagement with Research in Practice resources, model their use and promote the benefits to colleagues.

Will it make a difference?

There is a huge amount of continued support available from us, but we aim to build capacity from within. Supporting you with embedding the use of our resources into everyday practice in a self-sustaining way. Evidence Champions can act as a bridge to the wider organisation. Making sure colleagues are 'plugged in' to our network by advocating the use of evidence. Helping them see the benefits of embedding it in practice will make a real difference to them, and to the experiences and outcomes of the people they serve.

What sort of person is an Evidence Champion?

You care about evidence. You are the one in a group setting who asks, 'What does the latest research say?' You are keen to bring your practice experience into discussions, and often feed in comments or ideas from people with lived experience.

You see research and evidence as a critical way to improve and deliver services. You see knowledge exchange and learning as the melting pot that can enhance and develop practice. You relish the opportunity to get involved, guide your organisation and build evidence-informed practice.

Evidence Champions are not defined by role, skills, education or knowledge. As long as you passionately care about evidence and are keen on supporting your colleagues to access resources that can help, you can be an Evidence Champion.