

What Works Centre for Children's Social Care

e-Newsletter no 3

26 March 2018

World Social Work Day on 20 March was a great opportunity to announce major progress and plans on the **What Works Centre for Children's Social Care**.

In his [World Social Work Day blog, Programme Director Greg Wilkinson](#) updates us on what we have learned from initial engagement work, including the challenges of creating a better evidence base – and ensuring the Centre's work leads to real improvement.

As he says: "If we are to do more than merely interpret the world and actually make a real difference to practice, we will need to devise new approaches that ensure good evidence is both taken up and acted upon."

Also on the day, [Education Secretary, Damian Hinds, and children's minister, Nadhim Zahawi, announced a range of measures to improve the profile of social work](#). This included; the recruitment of a founding board and chair for the new Centre, the initial research themes, and plans to work with a number of areas to test how to make evidence useful and usable.

Recruiting the Founding Chair

We are now seeking a Founding Chair. The successful candidate will be an established leader, with a deep commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people, and an understanding of our context. The Founding Chair will guide the development of the Centre's initial strategy, build the board and the executive team, and bring into being the independent and influential What Works Centre. For

details visit the **Gatenby Sanderson website** (link removed as closing date passed). Closing date: 4 May 2018

Research themes

The Centre's initial major research themes will look at two of the most longstanding issues for the sector:

- How to safely reduce the need for children to enter care
- How to improve supervision and decision-making in children's social care

This work will be led by Cascade as the Centre's Research Partner. [Find out more about the research programme.](#)

Cascade is also recruiting a number of posts to support the research programme.

In addition to these long-term research projects, we are also looking at how to share existing research and evidence on other issues.

Testing approaches to accessing and using evidence

We will work with the sector to devise effective approaches to ensuring that evidence is both taken up and acted upon. We will work with a limited number of pioneer sites to develop and test approaches to ensuring that local authorities are well positioned to make the best use of evidence as it becomes available. Further information will be published shortly.

Stakeholder engagement

Our engagement work is ongoing. Since our last update we have established a series of groups to inform and support the development of the Centre including:

- **Children's and Young People's Panel:** Over 50 children and young people aged 13 to 24 applied to join the panel. The first panel meeting on 19 February was attended by 20 young people with a range of experiences of social care, including having been on child protection or child in need plans, young people

currently in care and care leavers. The meeting focused on young people's experiences of social care, and what they thought social workers needed to learn.

- **Practitioners' Panel**, including principal social workers, lead practitioners, frontline social workers, and voluntary sector practitioners from across the country.
- **Voluntary and Community Sector Leaders Group**, with representatives from the key charities working with children and families.