

Transcript

# Scottish Evidence Summit 2018, Part Two

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Iriss

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# Introduction

This transcript was taken from the recording **Scottish Evidence Summit 2018, Part Two** which was recorded at [an event hosted by Iriss and the Alliance for Useful Evidence](#).

## Transcript

### Introduction

#### **Richard Whetton, Head of Partnerships and Collaboration, Police Scotland**

that evidence in policing, is obviously a key part in what we do, evidence-based policing, evidence decision making within policing. These have been mantras across UK policing for a number of years ... and we're very grateful in terms of our relationships in particular our partnerships with academic colleagues, principally the relationship in Scotland is through the Scottish Institute of Police Research, as well as the Centre of Crime and Justice Research Studies.

So, a lot of what we've done over a number of years where we've tried to use evidence is been through those partnership relationships. We run fast as an organisation. So, some of the challenges that we have currently, Rosie and I were talking about this this morning, is the want that we have to have evidence behind some of the work that we do. But we're obviously, we're moving very quickly as a lot of your organisations are, faced by very high demand, and so there's always that tension between wanting evidence to help us make those decision, but also having to make those decisions as we go.

## **Sally Thomas, Chief Executive, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations**

The issues for me in all of this are, legion and many ... but I'm just going to dwell on two or three, partnering and collaborations: as Karen said, it's hard, really hard ... any relationships hard, marriage is hard, friendship's quite hard sometimes – collaborations are really hard. But we want to collaborate more, and further, so universities, think tanks, charitable trusts and foundations, other sectors, key stakeholders, government, our members ... and we need to know more about how to do that really well.

We need to know more about identifying the evidence and how to get it so in our universal credit campaign, what's been really hard is getting our members, our housing association members to give us the information we need. They've got the information but filling that gap between them having it and sending it through to us in a digestible, useable form is really hard. They've got so much else going on and it's important, it's important to everybody but it's still difficult.

What do we focus on? What areas of evidence do we focus on, there's so much that we could do and that we could find out about, you know, how do we prioritise? How do we kind of do that? And what are the methods, approaches, indicators, measures that we use for our different areas of research? How to keep it simple, how to keep it proportionate, how to keep it meaningful ... because for me the only ... yeah it's probably not too great a statement to say the ... well maybe the 'only' is probably going too far – but the main reason for evidence is to make this change things, is to make a difference, is to make something happen that is better than is happening now.

### **Theresa Fyffe, Director, RCN Scotland**

Because we're meant to be moving towards more individualised care, personal centred care and evidence doesn't always take account of the inclusion of individual values and preferences. So, the evidence may be great but actually individuals don't feel they fit into that.

So, for me the message is, evidence-based practice is absolutely essential, but if it doesn't take account of people and individuals ... and that's where I agree with Karen's point about data – we can actually end up trying to fit everybody into that data. and we are all individuals and how we might approach something might be different. Thank you very much.

### **Jim Thewliss, General Secretary, School Leaders Scotland**

As a head teacher, when I start to think about it, I kind of banned an awful lot of things in school – stopped teachers doing an awful lot of things. One of the things that was banned was that within any staff meeting, it was absolutely prohibited to say three things: “we are doing this already are we not?” “Let's not reinvent the wheel”, and “let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater”. Absolutely verboten, you were not allowed to say that. Because what they did was stop conversation, and stop people that had something to contribute to the conversation in relation to their background, their understanding and their knowledge of research, to contribute to what was going on.

### **Susan Taylor, President, Social Work Scotland**

Just a couple of things I want to say, I think this a really exciting time for social work and social care when it comes to evidence and I'm not just saying that because Stuart, and colleagues at IRISS have been promoting this heavily as part of our national strategy, our social services strategy in Scotland. I think it's actually about the fact that for quite a long time we've been seen as the ... I suppose the profession that uses all that fairly woolly

and fluffy research and evidence – and actually it's not always had the credibility, and I suppose status, that other evidence as had.

And I'm delighted to say that because we operate with such western minds in the west, we are clearly in the position where a lot of social science research now is absolutely finding gravitas because of the fact that we're finding that the same evidence is being found in physiological, clinical research. An example of that briefly is attachment and bonding work. If you think about what we know about brain development now ... I learned all of that in the 80's in a slightly different way, but it was very much part of what we learned for many years.

I think what's fantastic about that is that it means that we can come together as professions in a way that we weren't able to do before, and we can start to talk the same language about our understanding of situations that's really valuable for all of us if we're going to talk about collaboration.

All that social science research tells us really clearly people need meaning, purpose, hope and love in their lives. It's really simple, but it's so complex. So, if you think about how do you make sense of those nuggets in terms of what we all do, that's where the challenge lies. So, I get exactly what Karen's saying about the chasm, about the gap between what we understand and what people have to do where they chap at doors, changing really entrenched behaviours, hugely entrenched poverty that's really through generations, whereas abuse and neglect as part of everyday life they experience that's massive. And I meet with 23 year old graduates who are chapping at those doors and actually we've got a big journey to take around leadership at every level to try to help them with that.

I suppose the other thing I just want to say about that is for me in social work terms, evidence has to take many forms. So, to think only about academic research, use of data or research or any kind of findings, fantastic – but it has to be with storytelling, it has to be about people's experience. We really live as human beings, as individuals, as part of families, as part of groups, as part of communities – our networks and the way that we think are all

inter-related. That's why it's tough business trying to change things. So, we need to bear in mind that actually it's really important to think about evidence-based practice, but equally important is practice based evidence. But we need to stop talking interventions and programmes and ways of working that are very professional, and think in human terms – how we bring ourselves to our work, into a workplace. How do we engage with people in a much more ... and a wee bit I suppose is much more about reciprocity than it is about professional power and that's some of what I think what we need to share around evidence.



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