



## **Pre-Project Use of Research in Apex Scotland**

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## SUMMARY

This report details the use of research across Apex Scotland and identifies ideas about where improvements can be made. This report represents a baseline picture of research use at the beginning of a project, funded by Apex Scotland and the ESRC. The project is focused on improving the use of research throughout Apex Scotland, and drawing wider lessons from this about how research use can be improved across the third sector, and relationships between research producers (primarily academics) and the third sector can be improved. The project runs from July 2011- July 2012.

## Key findings

These findings are based on a survey of all Apex employees conducted in July 2011. Part one of this report explores these findings in greater depth.

- 77% of respondents 'sometimes', 'often', 'almost always' or 'always' use research to inform their work, whilst 23% 'seldom' or 'never' do
- Under half of respondents (44%) consult research at least once a week
- The most commonly used mechanisms for accessing research are internet searching (81%), websites (73%), consulting reports (56%) and seminars/events (48%)
- Staff were most likely to access research in order to identify ways of improving services (84%), preparing presentations (84%) and designing programmes or services (73%)
- An average of 60% of staff perceived that their research skills were excellent or good in terms of locating, assessing, analysing, interpreting, adapting and applying research
- Respondents were most likely to identify their research skills were poor around assessing research quality (but this only related to 6 out of 46 people)
- Almost three quarters of staff (74%) believed that as an organisation Apex Scotland always or almost always collected and analysed information about the outcomes achieved by the people they
- Less than half of respondents (44%) believed that Apex always or almost always consulted research when developing policies and guidelines
- A high proportion of respondents, 91%, believed that research should 'always'/'almost always' be used in applications for funding, to help evaluate our work and as a source of motivation and ideas
- There is a disconnect between how respondents believed research should be used and their experience of how it is used, for instance, 91% of respondents believed that research should always/almost always be used in applications for funding but 60% of respondents believed it always/almost always was
- 100% of respondents considered that Apex helped employees to use research by providing internet use, and 79% identified that Apex supported use of research by enabling attendance at seminars and training
- Key barriers to research use and access identified by respondents were lack of time (46%), lack of authority to make changes based on research findings (29%) and lack of funding to attend learning events (27%)
- A high proportion of staff believed there were no barriers to accessing (29%) or applying research (38%)
- When asked if there were any issues or topics they would like to know more about to help them do their job over half of respondents (52%) said no

- The key mechanisms staff anticipated would be very helpful in terms of improving their use of research were, evidence summaries on specific topics (59%), short summaries about recent research (56%), links to key websites (46%)

## **Suggestions for improvement**

Based on the survey results and discussions with 8 representatives from Apex (research champions) there are 13 suggestions about how research use could be improved across the organisation. The proposal is to utilise the remainder of the project period (November 2011- July 2012) to explore these suggestions further and try them out in practice. Further information about these suggestions is in part 2 of this report.

*Suggestion 1: Explore using RSS as a mechanism for improving information access and awareness across Apex, circulate information about how to use RSS, provide training on RSS as part of existing meetings/events and support those with an interest in trialling RSS*

*Suggestion 2: Develop a list of useful resources and websites, and suggestions for relevant RSS feeds focused on issues for across Apex and for specific geographic units*

*Suggestion 3: Organise evaluation training by Evaluation Support Scotland, focused on how Apex can demonstrate their impact as an organisation*

*Suggestion 4: Support further improvements to outcome recording, analysis and data sharing, perhaps utilising additional support from Evaluation Support Scotland*

*Suggestion 5: Develop a bank of standard questions and questionnaires about services and key issues, as a resource for staff across Apex to use when seeking feedback and insight amongst clients*

*Suggestion 6: Support a mini-evaluation, perhaps of 'Moving on' at Stranraer, and through this process develop or signpost staff to self-evaluation templates, guidance and checklists*

*Suggestion 7: Explore and trial using the Apex intranet to better share knowledge, perhaps focusing on sharing headline performance data across services and units, and supplementing this with case studies/ interviews exploring why performance has improved and lessons learnt*

*Suggestion 8: Hold six monthly Apex wide knowledge sharing events, which build on internal knowledge and draws on the expertise of external stakeholders*

*Suggestion 9: Develop two example local area profiles about characteristics of the local area and current service provision*

*Suggestion 10: Explore the development of an Apex report, which communicates the purpose and direction of the organisation (building on the annual report and existing documents), and articulates the research and theoretical evidence base underpinning this*

*Suggestion 11: Explore Apex business case and project planning documentation, and if appropriate, add sections to existing templates to ensure there is a clear expectation about linking proposals to the evidence base*

*Suggestion 12: Arrange 2-3 training and knowledge sharing meetings about research for the 8 Apex research champions*

*Suggestion 13: Provide ad hoc research support and advice, across Apex Scotland but particularly focused on supporting the Apex research champions, as a way of demonstrating potential uses of research to this group*

# CONTENTS

SUMMARY .....	2
Key findings .....	2
Suggestions for improvement .....	3
PART 1: RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	6
Introduction .....	6
Survey respondents .....	6
The extent to which work is informed by research .....	7
Frequency of research consultation .....	8
Purpose of research consultation .....	8
Methods of accessing research .....	9
Research skills.....	10
Organisational research use, support and barriers .....	10
Apex suggestions and improving research use .....	12
PART 2: IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS AND NEXT STEPS.....	15
1. Information Management .....	15
2. Outcome Monitoring and Evaluation .....	15
3. Knowledge Sharing and Organisational Learning .....	16
4. Improving local and topical knowledge.....	17
5. Championing and Embedding Evidence Use .....	17
APPENDIX 1: SURVEY RESULTS.....	19
APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE .....	25

# **PART 1: RESEARCH FINDINGS**

## **Introduction**

This report details the current use of research across Apex Scotland and identifies ideas about where potential improvements can be made. This report marks the beginning of a project, funded by Apex Scotland and the ESRC, to improve the use of research throughout Apex Scotland, and to draw wider lessons from this about how research use can be improved across the third sector, and relationships between research producers (primarily academics) and the third sector can be improved. The project runs from July 2011- July 2012.

This report is based on:

- 1) A survey of all employees across Apex Scotland, exploring research use
- 2) Initial meetings with 8 Apex employees who have been selected to help improve research use across the organisation

The survey was conducted in July 2011 and was designed to provide a baseline about attitudes, experiences and practice around research use across the organisation.

The initial meetings with Apex employees were conducted between July and October 2011. Meetings were held with 2 Business Development Advisors, 2 administrators, a Board member, a unit manager, an employment development adviser, and a school service development manager.

This report primarily draws on the survey results, and unless specifically stated the data mentioned in the report derives from the survey, however, the report also draws on findings and suggestions from the meetings with Apex employees.

## **Survey respondents**

The survey was distributed electronically, using SurveyMonkey, to all 150 staff across Apex Scotland. It was completed by 50 people, a third of the workforce, which is a good response potentially demonstrating the level of support for the project.

63% of respondents were female and 38% male,<sup>1</sup> and respondents were a good mix of roles across Apex Scotland, including:

- 3 senior staff (CEO and directors)
- 6 senior managers (head of operations, service managers)
- 8 unit managers
- 5 administrators, accounting and finance officers
- 22 education development advisors
- 2 business development managers
- 3 others (team leader, working with fiscal work orders, arrest referral case worker)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, meaning that sometimes percentages do not add up to 100%, see Appendix A for all results

<sup>2</sup> One respondent skipped this question

At least one response was received from all Apex locations except from Lothian, with the highest response (12 respondents) from Head Office. The locations for all respondents is listed in table 1 below.

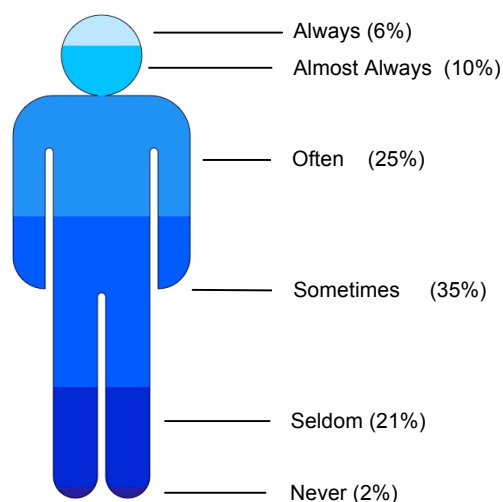
**Table 1: Location of respondents**

Location	No. of responses
Ayrshire	4
Borders	1
Dumfries	4
Stranraer	2
Fife	3
Forth Valley	1
Glasgow	4
Grampian	2
Head Office	12
Highland	4
Lanarkshire	2
Lothian	0
Renfrewshire	3
Inverclyde	2
Tayside	2
Other	3

## The extent to which work is informed by research

When asked about the extent to which their work is informed by research evidence the most common response was that it is “sometimes” (35%), followed by “often” (25%). However, almost a quarter of respondents believed their work was “never” or “seldom” influenced by research evidence (23%), whilst 17% of respondents thought their work was always or almost always informed by research.

**Chart 1: To what extent is work across Apex informed by research evidence**



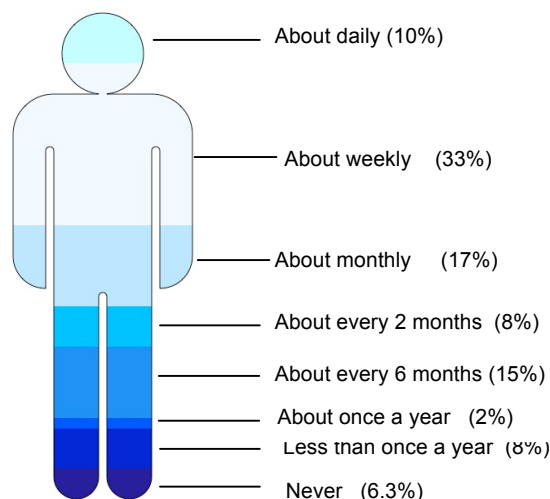
There appeared to be a difference between actual or perceived use of research between men and women working at Apex, with 21% of women, compared to 6% of men, reporting that their work is “always” or “almost always” informed by research evidence. However, the low number of respondents when broken down by gender (28 women and 17 men) means these findings should be

treated with some caution, because when looking at the number of respondents here we are comparing 6 women who identified they always/almost always used research evidence compared to 1 man. It may however, be of interest to explore this further at some point in the future. There is also no clear pattern when breaking down research use by location and interestingly, there was no noticeable difference in the use of research according to the highest level of qualification held by respondents. Across staff of all qualification types respondents were most likely to indicate that their work was 'sometimes' informed by research evidence.

## Frequency of research consultation

The majority of respondents to the survey consult research on a weekly basis (33%), followed by monthly (17%), and about every 6 months (15%). Therefore, 44% of staff are usually consulting research at least once a week. Those who have been at Apex Scotland for less than a year or more than 10 years were slightly more likely to consult research on a weekly basis, but the numbers of respondents when breaking down responses to this level are too small to draw any firm conclusions.

**Chart 2: How often do Apex employees consult research evidence**



## Purpose of research consultation

The survey explored the point at which people refer to research evidence. It revealed that the highest numbers of people referred to research evidence when identifying ways of improving services (84%), preparing presentations (84%), designing programmes or services (73%) and consulting with other professionals (72%). In contrast the highest number of respondents indicated they did not refer to research evidence when evaluating services (33%), requesting resources (27%) and talking to service users (22%). There were also high numbers who were not involved in some activities, and so for whom the use of research was not applicable; such as, commissioning further research or evidence (66% not applicable), developing policies, procedures or protocols (40% not applicable), and evaluating services (35% not applicable).

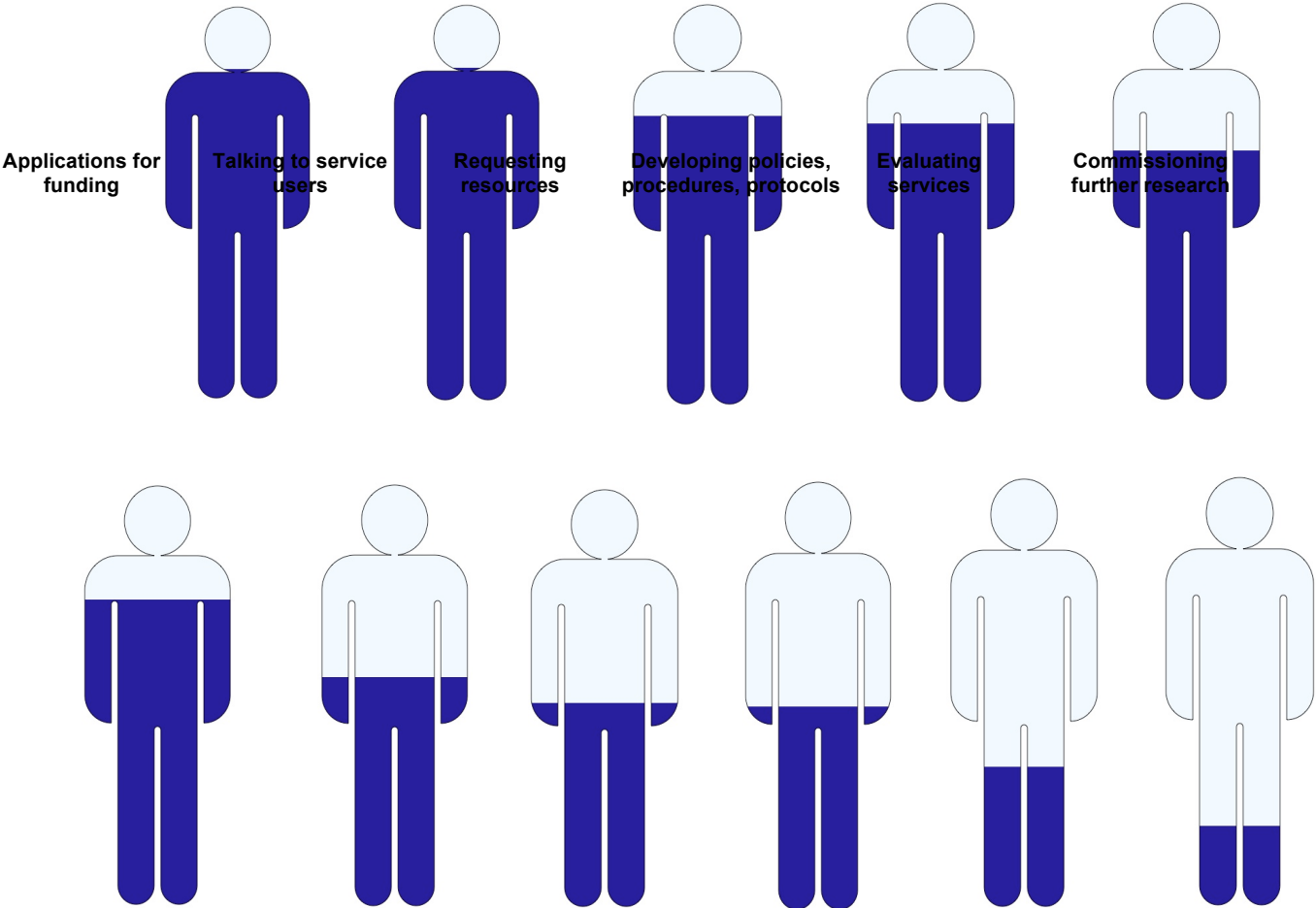
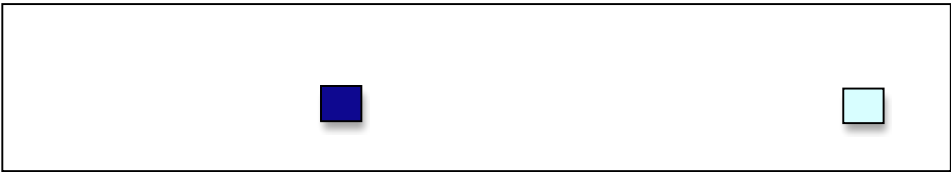
It is somewhat surprising that people were so unlikely to refer to research evidence when evaluating services (33%) or requesting resources (27%), at which stage research can be a useful comparator from which basis to judge performance and to justify resource requests. However, given the high numbers responding 'not applicable' for these activities it is also possible that some of those



Key

indicating that they did not use research when performing these tasks were actually indicating that they were not involved in these activities,

Chart 3: Apex employees referring to research when undertaking different tasks

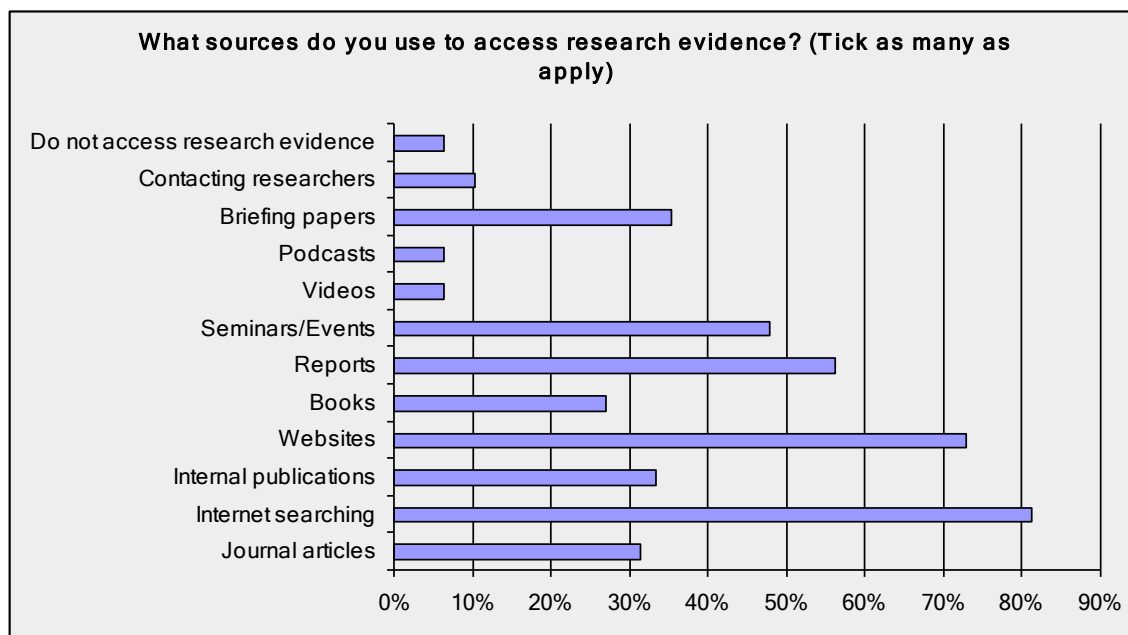


Methods of accessing research

The most commonly mentioned methods of accessing research were, internet searching (81%), visiting websites (73%), consulting reports (56 %), seminars and events (48%). The least well used were contacting researchers (10%), podcasts (6%) and videos (6%). The reasons for the use of different methods to access research were not explored in the survey, so we cannot identify whether these sources were consulted because they were the preferred mechanisms for accessing research or the ones most likely to be available on the topics people were interested in. However, survey questions about the barriers to access to research highlighted the importance of a lack of time and

money, thus hinting that availability of funds was a significant factor in the research sources being used.

**Chart 4: What sources do Apex employees use to access research evidence**



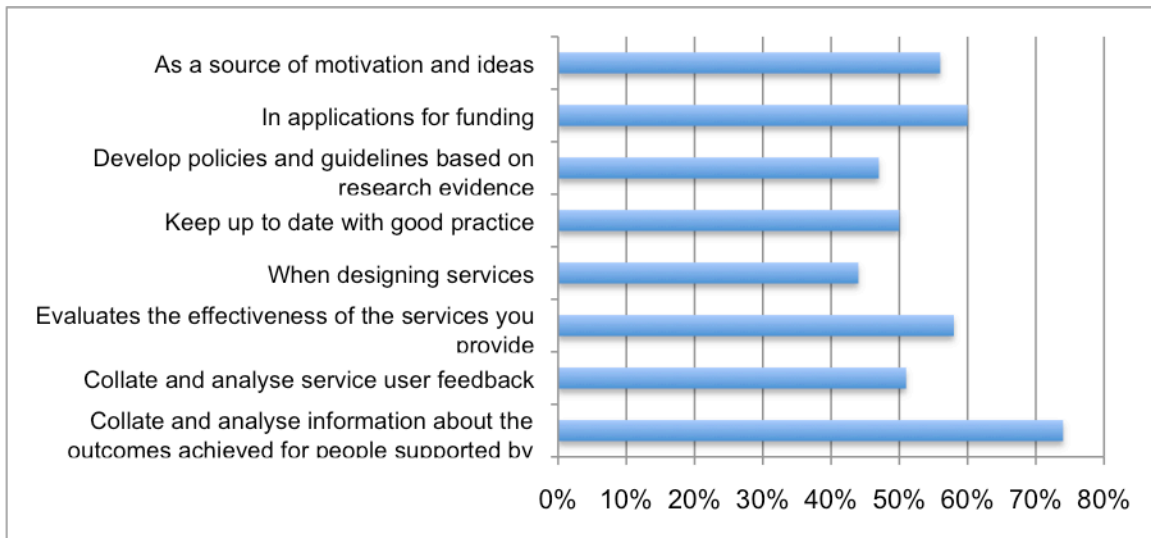
## Research skills

The majority of respondents, at least 24 out of 46 respondents and an average of 60% of respondents, considered that their skills were 'excellent' or 'good' in relation to all specified aspects around using and applying evidence (locating research evidence, assessing research quality, analysing information, interpreting research findings, adapting research findings to your setting and applying research findings to your work). There was little differentiation between assessments of skills across different dimensions of using evidence, with slightly more people considering their skills were 'excellent' or 'good' in relation to locating research evidence and analysing information. The highest number of respondents highlighting where their skills were 'poor' was in relation to assessing research quality (but this related to only 6 out of 46 respondents).

## Organisational research use, support and barriers

Respondents believed that as an organisation Apex always or almost always collated and analysed information about the outcomes achieved for people (76% of respondents). A high percentage of respondents, over 60% also identified that research was always or almost always used in applications for funding. However, less than half of respondents thought that as an organisation Apex Scotland always or almost always consulted research when designing services (44%) or when developing policies and guidelines (46%). Additionally, something the is worth considering further is that just over half of respondents (51%) believed that service user feedback was always or almost always collated and analysed.

**Chart 5: The percentage of survey respondents reporting that as an organisation Apex Scotland always or almost always uses research when undertaking key tasks**

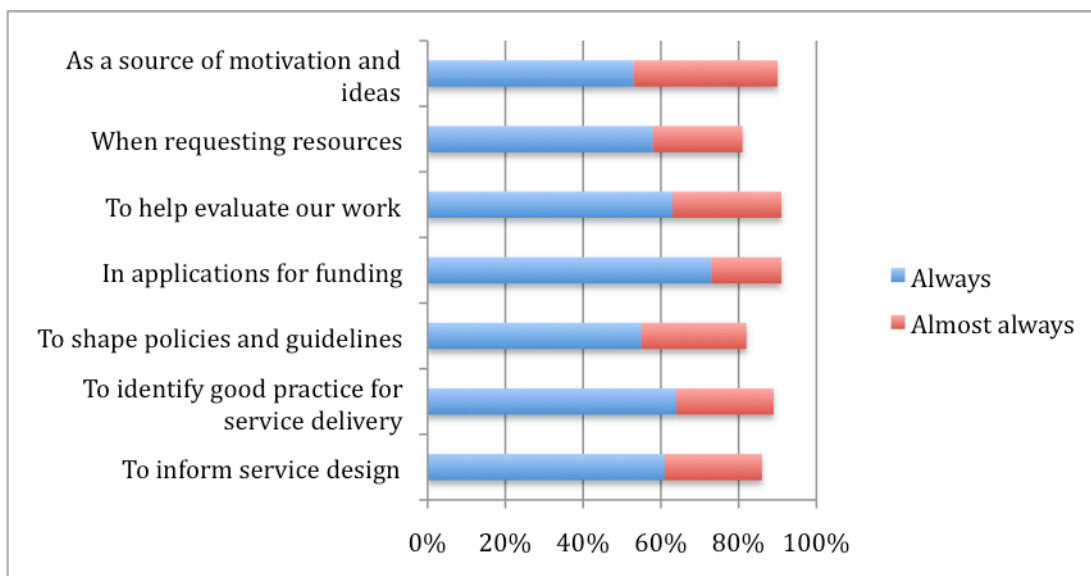


In contrast to actual research use, when asked about the ideal use of research, a high percentage of respondents believed that research should always or almost always be used:

- in applications for funding (91%)
- as a source of motivation and ideas (91%)
- to help evaluate our work (91%)
- to identify good practice for service delivery (89%)
- to inform service delivery (86%)
- to shape policies and guidelines (82%)
- when requesting resources (81%)

The chart below breaks these percentages down by the 'always' and 'almost always' categories'.

**Chart 6: The percentage of survey respondents believing that as an organisation Apex Scotland should always or almost always use research when undertaking key tasks**



Therefore, there is a clear difference when comparing the ideal picture about what should happen with the reality about what actually happens regarding research use. For instance, 91% of respondents believed that research should always or almost always be used in applications for funding, but 60% respondents believed it always or almost always was.

Respondents were asked how their organisation supported them to use evidence. 100% of respondents identified that Apex helped them to use evidence by providing internet access. The other key ways respondents considered Apex to support their use of research was through promoting attendance at seminars / training (79%), highlighting key research findings likely to be of interest (48%), by participating in research (36%).

The key barriers respondents faced in relation to accessing research evidence regarded lack of time and money: lack of time to read and assimilate research (46%), no funding available to attend learning events (27%) and no time to attend learning events (22%). However, interestingly over a quarter of respondents (29%) believed that there were barriers to accessing research. Similarly when respondents were asked about the barriers to applying research to their work, over a third of respondents (38%) believed there were no barriers. Of those who did identify barriers in relation to applying research, the main barriers identified were: lack of authority to make changes to your work/practice based on research findings (29%), resistance to change within the organisation (17%) and lack of knowledge or skills about to apply research evidence (14%).

## **Apex suggestions and improving research use**

When respondents were asked if there were any issues or topics they would like to know more about, to help them do their job, just over half of respondents said no (52%).

Of those who did identify knowledge needs, the areas identified were:

- The impact, effectiveness or savings from the type of work that we, or similar, organisations do (3 respondents)
- Drugs and Alcohol (3 respondents)
- Local service provision: What is available (2 respondents)
- Numbers of ex-service personnel involved in the criminal justice system (2 respondents)
- local statistics/ community information (2 respondents)
- Young people leaving care
- Good Practice
- Community developments
- Anger management
- Evidence base for policy decisions
- Evidence for delivery of services by public sector vs third sector
- Research basis underpinning apex delivery models
- Criminal Justice
- Welfare to Work
- Social Justice
- Youth Justice
- Employability with service users with multiple barriers
- Apex training modules

- Service user perception of interventions used and their success
- Outcomes of service users who engage with voluntary sector compared with statutory/public sectors.
- Getting Offenders into work: What works
- Changing labour market dynamics: how to address this practically. i.e. high unemployment, high expectations,
- Changes in recruitment practice in recent years
- Using technology to overcome barriers to employment
- The effect of criminal record disclosure in recruitment,
- Understanding destinations of Apex clients
- Building self reliance to sustain change"
- Funding policies
- Exclusion rates per secondary school in each local authority in Scotland.
- Return on social investment for youth diversion projects tackling anti social behaviour per local authority
- New innovative teaching methods being used in mainstream education

Not included in the list above were specific skills highlighted by respondents (such as improving interpretation skills) and organisational knowledge needs (such as wanting to know about Apex's strategic plan).

When respondents were asked which mechanisms would be most useful in helping to improve their use of research, a clear majority of respondents (at least 73%) believed that all the outputs listed in the survey would be very useful or useful.<sup>3</sup> Those outputs identified as being very useful by most respondents were:

- Evidence summaries on specific topics (59% )
- Short summaries about recent research publications (56%)
- Links to key websites (46%)

Other suggestions by respondents about how to improve research use included:

- Allow funding to access courses
- Establish formal link with higher education centre including access to training and support, participation in research, involvement in relevant curriculum delivery or as student mentor and placement deliverer
- Attendance at some key conferences
- Distribution of relevant research reports via email

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<sup>3</sup> Evidence summaries on specific topics, Short summaries about recent research publications, Evidence based frameworks / models, Research databases, Research toolkits, Access to key journals, Seminars / Events, Audio and visual feeds and streams, Links to key websites, Online research forum, E-Newsletter about research, E-alerts about journal articles, research events, Research support and advice service)

These suggestions, chime with the discussions with the 8 Apex employees who identified that the following would be research interventions which they would find useful:

- Evaluating the impact of services (to support self-evaluations activities in Glasgow and Stranraer and specifically help conduct an evaluation of 'moving on' in Stranraer)
- Find evidence about fun/educational activities which can be incorporated into the get ready for work courses
- Research what other organisations are doing in relation to School inclusion and how the inclusion unit compares
- Organise training/information about return on social investment approach
- Develop a list of useful resources/websites for research related to Apex's activities
- Event about improving services based on evidence
- Client surveys
- Local services and finding, and context

## **PART 2: IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

Based on the survey data and the detailed discussions with the 8 Apex employees, who have been tasked with assisting with this project and helping to improve research use across the organisation, below are a number of practical suggestions about how Apex Scotland could improve its use of research. The proposal is that these suggestions are explored further and trialled throughout the remainder of the project period, which runs from July 2011- July 2012. It is also the nature of the project that through on-going dialogue between the placement fellow and colleagues across Apex Scotland that other ideas and opportunities will emerge that it would be beneficial to respond to.

### **1. Information Management**

Across the organisation, staff are finding it difficult to keep up to date with relevant information and knowledge, particularly relating to their local context (such as services being provided, funding available). The survey highlighted the high use of internet searching to access this type of information, and the lack of time available to consult research. Given the financial situation, any solution to this issue needs to be low cost and sustainable beyond the placement period, however, the implications of missing out on relevant knowledge, information and research were acutely understood by staff. A simple solution to this issue may be to encourage, promote and support the use of RSS feeds and RSS readers. By subscribing to relevant RSS feeds, staff will ensure they are kept up to date when new content is added. Staff can focus on subscribing to funding feeds, local area feeds or policy news feeds depending on their interests and needs, therefore the solutions can be individually tailored. For further information about RSS see (<http://www.commoncraft.com/video/rss>).

***Suggestion 1: Explore using RSS as a mechanism for improving information access and awareness across Apex, circulate information about how to use RSS, provide training on RSS as part of existing meetings/events and support those with an interest in trialling RSS***

***Suggestion 2: Develop a list of useful resources and websites, and suggestions for relevant RSS feeds focused on issues for across Apex and for specific geographic units***

### **2. Outcome Monitoring and Evaluation**

Evaluation was a key issue where staff identified potential improvements. There was considerable interest in demonstrating the impact services were making, and evaluation was most commonly mentioned as an issue staff wanted to know more about. During a couple of the discussions with research champions, Social Return on Investment was mentioned as a potential approach where they believed further training or information would be helpful. However, on further investigation there was a desire for people to be able to demonstrate their impact on society, rather than necessarily adopting a SROI methodology per se. Additionally, when exploring this issue with Evaluation Support Scotland, they indicated that SROI was such a considerable time and resource commitment that it was not considered by funders to be the most appropriate form of evaluation for projects or programmes, but could be useful when costing the social return on investment at a national level (for instance, costing one form of intervention over another across multiple services). However, it is clear that staff at all levels would benefit from further knowledge about how to evaluate services and demonstrate impact.

***Suggestion 3: Organise evaluation training by Evaluation Support Scotland, focused on how Apex can demonstrate their impact as an organisation***

In discussions several Apex representatives discussed problems around monitoring outcomes, about ensuring monitoring mechanisms were meeting local, organisational and client needs, and around linking outcomes at these levels. There were also issues for some Apex staff about ensuring just one monitoring regime is in place across organisation and about supporting better sharing of outcome data across Apex, particularly between units. Therefore, it is perhaps worth exploring the outcomes monitoring process to explore whether improvements are possible.

***Suggestion 4: Support further improvements to outcome recording, analysis and data sharing, perhaps utilising additional support from Evaluation Support Scotland***

The survey results highlighted that improvements were possible in relation to securing feedback from those supported by Apex services. Just over half of respondents (51%) believed that service user feedback was always or almost always collated and analysed. Interestingly, following general discussions about research use this a couple of Apex staff have requested support about developing client surveys which explore perceptions about key issues and experiences in their lives (homelessness, drug use etc).

***Suggestion 5: Develop a bank of standard questions and questionnaires about services and key issues, as a resource for staff across Apex to use when seeking feedback and insight amongst clients***

Given the appetite and importance of demonstrating impact, it could be useful to develop, or signpost, guidance, templates and/or checklists to support staff undertaking self-evaluation of services/units. As a mechanism through which to develop these supporting tools it could perhaps be useful to work with colleagues to undertake or support a mini-evaluation.

***Suggestion 6: Support a mini-evaluation, perhaps of 'Moving on' at Stranraer, and through this process develop or signpost staff to self-evaluation templates, guidance and checklists***

### ***3. Knowledge Sharing and Organisational Learning***

A key issue emerging through discussions across Apex was the limited opportunities available to share knowledge and to learn from the experiences of other units or services. The forthcoming change in structure is anticipated to lead to improvements here, however, further improvement is perhaps also possible by creating more spaces for reflecting on performance and sharing experiences and knowledge, which focus on sharing learning between Apex staff and drawing on expertise of others (for instance from academic, policy or practice backgrounds). Given the geographical spread of Apex staff it is likely that some of these spaces will need to be online, and any such activity would be likely to be most successful if it fulfilled both a real need and was based on core business activities. Additionally, on occasion it may be useful for staff to come together to explore the current performance and discuss what the organisation can do to improve.

To be successful, these activities really require need to be supported by clear communication about self-reflection and improvement, where units and individual staff look to learn from their colleagues, and this needs to be clearly articulated at all levels of the organisation.

***Suggestion 7: Explore and trial using the Apex intranet to better share knowledge, perhaps focusing on sharing headline performance data across services and units, and supplementing this with case studies/ interviews exploring why performance has improved and lessons learnt***



***Suggestion 8: Hold six monthly Apex wide knowledge sharing events, which build on internal knowledge and draws on the expertise of external stakeholders***

One of the knowledge sharing events each year could be scheduled before the annual lecture, and where possible include a contribution from that year's presenter. Sections of these sessions could be recorded as podcasts, and made available to all staff via the intranet to ensure those unable to attend can still benefit from the discussions.

***4. Improving local and topical knowledge***

One slightly surprising survey result was the high percentage of Apex staff who did not believe there were any topics where further knowledge would be of benefit to their work (52%). This is perhaps partly because there is a lack of awareness about the knowledge available and/or negative experiences about the value of other forms of knowledge, beyond personal experience. Where knowledge gaps were identified this was commonly related to knowledge about the local area, particularly around current service provision, different models being adopted and the effectiveness of these, and the local area profile and characteristics. This was highlighted as a particularly pressing need given the restructuring in Apex to take place early in 2012, thus meaning staff will be working in areas where they are not familiar. Although this activity is not sustainable beyond the life of the placement, it would perhaps be beneficial as an immediate exercise to compile two example local profiles, using these to also highlight where to find relevant data and information. Then if these profiles are found to be useful, staff could take responsibility for developing a profile for their local area and updating these perhaps on an annual basis. Perhaps these local area profiles could also feed into, or complement, the **annual policy review** report produced for the Apex Board meeting.

***Suggestion 9: Develop two example local area profiles about characteristics of the local area and current service provision***

***5. Championing and Embedding Evidence Use***

Core to improving the use of research across Apex Scotland is the need to champion and embed the use of evidence consistently and throughout all levels of the organisation. In order to achieve this there is a need both to ensure decisions are both evidence based and seen to be evidence based across the organisation. One potential approach could be to explore the development of a publication along the lines of Includem's 'framework of intervention', which explains the underpinning values and principles, model of practice of this organisation and the theoretical and empirical evidence on which these are based, see [www.includem.org/file/1203](http://www.includem.org/file/1203). Once this is completed all business case templates and project planning documents could make it a requirement for colleagues to reference this document and the evidence base on which it draws. By clearly articulating that Apex's vision is evidence based, and make it a requirement that decisions reference this evidence base, Apex can further embed research use and make it a clear expectation that activities across the organisation will be evidence based.

***Suggestion 10: Explore the development of an Apex report, which communicates the purpose and direction of the organisation (building on the annual report and existing documents), and articulates the research and theoretical evidence base underpinning this***

***Suggestion 11: Explore Apex business case and project planning documentation, and if appropriate, add sections to existing templates to ensure there is a clear expectation about linking proposals to the evidence base***

As part of this project 8 research champions have been identified throughout Apex Scotland to assist with championing and embedding evidence use across the organisation, and to be a conduit through which the placement fellow can explore ideas and gain understanding about the use of research and mechanisms of improvement. Therefore, throughout the project these individuals will be supported to improve their use of research, through providing training, encouragement and ad hoc support. These individuals could also be key to further championing and demonstrating the potential for using research throughout the organisation, and so depending on the success of the champions, it may be useful to maintain and support this group beyond the project period.

***Suggestion 12: Arrange 2-3 training and knowledge sharing meetings about research for the 8 Apex research champions***

***Suggestion 13: Provide ad hoc research support and advice, across Apex Scotland but particularly focused on supporting the Apex research champions, as a way of demonstrating potential uses of research to this group***

## APPENDIX 1: SURVEY RESULTS

Gender		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Female	62.5%	30
Male	37.5%	18
<b>answered question</b>		<b>48</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>3</b>

What is your age?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
18 - 24 years	2.0%	1
25 - 34 years	24.0%	12
35 - 44 years	32.0%	16
45 - 54 years	26.0%	13
55 - 64 years	16.0%	8
65+ years	0.0%	0
<b>answered question</b>		<b>50</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>1</b>

In which location are you based?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Ayrshire	8.7%	4
Borders	2.2%	1
Dumfries	8.7%	4
Stranraer	4.3%	2
Fife	6.5%	3
Forth Valley	2.2%	1
Glasgow	8.7%	4
Grampian	4.3%	2
Head Office	26.1%	12
Highland	8.7%	4
Lanarkshire	4.3%	2
Lothian	0.0%	0
Renfrewshire	6.5%	3
Inverclyde	4.3%	2
Tayside	4.3%	2
Other (please specify)		3
<b>answered question</b>		<b>46</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>5</b>

How long have you worked at Apex Scotland? (Please tick one)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 6 months	0.0%	0
6 - 12 months	4.1%	2
1 - 2 years	12.2%	6
2 - 5 years	22.4%	11
5 - 10 years	36.7%	18
More than 10 years	24.5%	12
<b>answered question</b>		<b>49</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>2</b>

What is your highest educational qualification?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
None	0.0%	0
O/Standard Grade, GSCE	19.1%	9
Higher/A Level	12.8%	6
HNC/HND	23.4%	11
Degree or equivalent	25.5%	12
Postgraduate	12.8%	6
Professional	6.4%	3
Other (please specify)		4
<b>answered question</b>		<b>47</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>4</b>

To what extent is your work informed by research evidence? (Please tick one)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Always	6.3%	3
Almost always	10.4%	5
Often	25.0%	12
Sometimes	35.4%	17
Seldom	20.8%	10
Never	2.1%	1
<b>answered question</b>		<b>48</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>3</b>

Rate the extent to which you consult research evidence within your current role? (Please tick one)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Daily	10.4%	5
About weekly	33.3%	16
About monthly	16.7%	8
About every two months	8.3%	4
About every six months	14.6%	7
About once a year	2.1%	1
Less often than once a year	8.3%	4
Never	6.3%	3
<b>answered question</b>		<b>48</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>3</b>

What sources do you use to access research evidence? (Tick as many as apply)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Journal articles	31.3%	15
Internet searching	81.3%	39
Internal publications	33.3%	16
Websites	72.9%	35
Books	27.1%	13
Reports	56.3%	27
Seminars/Events	47.9%	23
Videos	6.3%	3
Podcasts	6.3%	3
Briefing papers	35.4%	17
Contacting researchers	10.4%	5
Do not access research evidence	6.3%	3
Other (please specify)		2
<b>answered question</b>		<b>48</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>3</b>

At what point in your work do you refer to research evidence? (Please tick yes, no or not applicable for each item)				
	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Response Count
When designing programmes or services	32	1	11	4
When developing policies, procedures or protocols	19	5	16	4
When talking to service users	25	10	11	4
When identifying ways of improving services	37	3	4	4
In applications for funding	27	4	12	4
When evaluating services	14	14	15	4
When consulting with other professionals	31	7	5	4
When writing reports	30	5	8	4
When preparing presentations	37	3	4	4
When commissioning further research or evaluations	7	6	25	3
When requesting resources	20	11	10	4
<b>answered question</b>				
<b>skipped question</b>				

How would you rate your ability to:					
	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Response Count
Locate research evidence	7	23	12	4	46
Assess research quality	3	21	16	6	46
Analyse information	4	26	14	2	46
Interpret research findings	2	24	18	1	45
Adapt research findings to your setting	4	23	17	2	46
Apply research findings to your work	4	25	13	4	46
<b>answered question</b>					<b>46</b>
<b>skipped question</b>					<b>5</b>

As an organisation does Apex Scotland:						
	Always	Almost Always	Often	Seldom	Never	N
Collate and analyse information about the outcomes achieved for people supported by services	20	11	5	2	0	
Collate and analyse service user feedback	10	12	11	7	0	
Evaluate the effectiveness of the services you provide	13	12	10	6	0	
Consult research when designing services	12	7	15	4	0	
Use research to keep up to date with good practice	11	10	14	5	0	
Develop policies and guidelines based on research evidence	12	8	10	6	0	
Use research in applications for funding	16	10	10	2	0	
Consult research as a source of motivation and ideas	12	12	12	5	0	
						<i>answered ques</i>
						<i>skipped ques</i>

To what extent do you think that research should be used in Apex Scotland:						
	Always	Almost Always	Often	Seldom	Never	Respo Cou
To inform service design	27	11	5	1	0	44
To identify good practice for service delivery	28	11	5	0	0	44
To shape policies and guidelines	24	12	7	0	1	44
In applications for funding	32	8	3	0	1	44
To help evaluate our work	27	12	3	0	1	43
When requesting resources	25	10	8	0	0	43
As a source of motivation and ideas	23	16	4	0	0	43
						<i>answered question</i>
						<i>skipped question</i>

If at all, how does your organisation support you to find and use research evidence? (Tick as many as apply)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
By providing internet access	100.0%	42
By encouraging evidence-informed practice	33.3%	14
By promoting attendance at seminars / training	78.6%	33
By commissioning research	9.5%	4
By participating in research	35.7%	15
By having research literature readily available (for example library, journal subscriptions)	21.4%	9
By highlighting key research findings likely to be of interest	47.6%	20
By allowing time to consult or discuss research	23.8%	10
By encouraging staff to conduct research	26.2%	11
It does not support access to research evidence	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		2
<i>answered question</i>		<b>42</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>9</b>

What barriers, if any, limit your ability to ACCESS research evidence within your organisation? (Please tick where applicable)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
No internet access	0.0%	0
Lack of time to read and assimilate research	46.3%	19
Limited access to the literature	7.3%	3
Lack of research relevant to my needs	4.9%	2
No time to attend learning events	22.0%	9
No funding available to attend learning events	26.8%	11
Lack of knowledge about how to find research	14.6%	6
No barriers exist	29.3%	12
Other (please specify)		2
<b>answered question</b>		<b>41</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>10</b>

What barriers, if any, limit your ability to APPLY research evidence to your work? (Tick where applicable)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Lack of authority to make changes to your work/practice based on research findings	28.6%	12
Resistance to change within the organisation	16.7%	7
Lack of confidence in research findings	7.1%	3
Lack of confidence in researchers and academics	0.0%	0
Lack of knowledge or skills about to apply research evidence (for example statistics)	14.3%	6
Presentation of research evidence too complex	7.1%	3
Presentation of research evidence not detailed enough	2.4%	1
Research on desired topic unavailable	9.5%	4
Don't think research evidence is relevant to my current role	2.4%	1
Need immediate solutions and can't wait for research	7.1%	3
Applying research findings involves too much risk and responsibility	0.0%	0
No barriers exist	38.1%	16
Other (please specify)		3
<b>answered question</b>		<b>42</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>9</b>

In order to do your job better are there any specific issues or topics you would like to know more about?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	47.7%	21
No	52.3%	23
<b>answered question</b>		<b>44</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>7</b>

Would any of the following help to improve your use of research? (Rate how useful each would be)				
	Very useful	Useful	Not at all useful	Response Count
Evidence summaries on specific topics	23	15	1	39
Short summaries about recent research publications	22	16	1	39
Evidence based frameworks / models	17	20	1	38
Research databases	10	28	2	40
Research toolkits	10	25	4	39
Access to key journals	10	22	3	35
Seminars / Events	11	25	3	39
Audio and visual feeds and streams	5	24	5	34
Links to key websites	18	20	1	39
Online research forum	8	23	3	34
E-Newsletter about research	12	23	3	38
E-alerts about journal articles, research events etc	13	23	1	37
Research support and advice service	12	24	2	38
Other (please specify)				1
<i>answered question</i>				
<i>skipped question</i>				



## APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

### Why are we doing this survey?

This survey is to explore the use of research across Apex Scotland. It should take a maximum of 15 minutes to complete and responses will be anonymous.

The survey findings will be used to inform a range of activities designed to support the use of research across the organisation (such as organising events, supporting staff and service users to conduct research etc). These activities will run from July 2011 - March 2012. This project has been awarded funding from the Economic and Social Research Council and will be supported by Claire Lightowler, from the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS). Claire will be working at Apex offices each Friday from July 2011- June 2012. If you want to contact her to discuss either this survey or the wider project around improving research use, of which this survey is part, please do so on [claire.lightowler@iriss.org.uk](mailto:claire.lightowler@iriss.org.uk) or 07872 502621.

#### 1. Gender

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

#### 2. What is your age?

- ☐ 18 – 24 years
- ☐ 25 – 34 years
- ☐ 35 – 44 years
- ☐ 45 – 54 years
- ☐ 55 – 64 years
- ☐ 65+ years

#### 3. Please provide your job title and briefly describe your role in Apex Scotland

#### 4. In which location are you based?

- ☐ Ayrshire
- ☐ Borders
- ☐ Dumfries
- ☐ Stranraer
- ☐ Fife
- ☐ Forth Valley
- ☐ Glasgow
- ☐ Grampian
- ☐ Head Office
- ☐ Highland
- ☐ Lanarkshire
- ☐ Lothian
- ☐ Renfrewshire
- ☐ Inverclyde
- ☐ Tayside

Other (please specify)

#### 5. How long have you worked at Apex Scotland? (Please tick one)

- ☐ Less than 6 months
- ☐ 6 – 12 months
- ☐ 1 – 2 years
- ☐ 2 – 5 years
- ☐ 5 – 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

## 6. What is your highest educational qualification?

- ☐ None
- ☐ O/Standard Grade, GSCE
- ☐ Higher/A Level
- ☐ HNC/HND
- ☐ Degree or equivalent
- ☐ Postgraduate
- ☐ Professional

Other (please specify)

The remainder of this survey asks you about your use of research and your perceptions about how research is used across Apex Scotland. For these purposes research is defined as any systematic investigation to establish facts, further understanding or solve problems.

## 7. To what extent is your work informed by research evidence? (Please tick one)

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Almost always
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Seldom
- ☐ Never

## 8. Rate the extent to which you consult research evidence within your current role? (Please tick one)

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ About weekly
- ☐ About monthly
- ☐ About every two months
- ☐ About every six months
- ☐ About once a year
- ☐ Less often than once a year
- ☐ Never

**9. What sources do you use to access research evidence? (Tick as many as apply)**

- ☐ Briefing papers
- ☐ Books
- ☐ Internet searching
- ☐ Reports
- ☐ Internal publications
- ☐ Websites
- ☐ Seminars/Events
- ☐ Videos
- ☐ Podcasts
- ☐ Journal articles
- ☐ Contacting researchers
- ☐ Do not access research evidence

Other (please specify)

**10. At what point in your work do you refer to research evidence? (Please tick yes, no or not applicable for each item)**

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
When designing programmes or services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When developing policies, procedures or protocols	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When talking to service users	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When identifying ways of improving services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In applications for funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When evaluating services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When consulting with other professionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When writing reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When preparing presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When commissioning further research or evaluations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When requesting resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**11. How would you rate your ability to:**

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Locate research evidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assess research quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Analyse information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interpret research findings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adapt research findings to your setting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Apply research findings to your work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 12. As an organisation, does Apex Scotland:

	Always	Almost Always	Often	Seldom	Never	N/A
Collate and analyse information about the outcomes achieved for people supported by services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collate and analyse service user feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evaluate the effectiveness of the services you provide	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consult research when designing services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use research to keep up to date with good practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop policies and guidelines based on research evidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use research in applications for funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consult research as a source of motivation and ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 13. To what extent do you think that research should be used in Apex Scotland

	Always	Almost Always	Often	Seldom	Never
To inform service design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To identify good practice for service delivery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To shape policies and guidelines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In applications for funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To help evaluate our work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When requesting resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As a source of motivation and ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**14. If at all, how does your organisation support you to find and use research evidence?**

**(Tick as many as apply)**

- ☐ By providing internet access
- ☐ By encouraging evidence-informed practice
- ☐ By promoting attendance at seminars / training
- ☐ By commissioning research
- ☐ By participating in research
- ☐ By having research literature readily available (for example library, journal subscriptions)
- ☐ By highlighting key research findings likely to be of interest
- ☐ By allowing time to consult or discuss research
- ☐ By encouraging staff to conduct research
- ☐ It does not support access to research evidence

Other (please specify)

**15. What barriers, if any, limit your ability to ACCESS research evidence within your organisation?**

**(Please tick where applicable)**

- ☐ No internet access
- ☐ Lack of time to read and assimilate research
- ☐ Limited access to the literature
- ☐ Lack of research relevant to my needs
- ☐ No time to attend learning events
- ☐ No funding available to attend learning events
- ☐ Lack of knowledge about how to find research
- ☐ No barriers exist

Other (please specify)

**16. What barriers, if any, limit your ability to APPLY research evidence to your work? (Tick where applicable)**

- ☐ Lack of authority to make changes to your work/practice based on research findings
- ☐ Resistance to change within the organisation
- ☐ Lack of confidence in research findings
- ☐ Lack of confidence in researchers and academics
- ☐ Lack of knowledge or skills about to apply research evidence (for example statistics)
- ☐ Presentation of research evidence too complex
- ☐ Presentation of research evidence not detailed enough
- ☐ Research on desired topic unavailable
- ☐ Don't think research evidence is relevant to my current role
- ☐ Need immediate solutions and can't wait for research
- ☐ Applying research findings involves too much risk and responsibility
- ☐ No barriers exist

Other (please specify)

**17. In order to do your job better are there any specific issues or topics you would like to know more about?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**18. Can you please list these topics or issues.**



**19. Would any of the following help to improve your use of research? (Rate how useful each would be)**

	Very useful	Useful	Not at all useful
Evidence summaries on specific topics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Short summaries about recent research publications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evidence based frameworks / models	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research databases	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research toolkits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to key journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seminars / Events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Audio and visual feeds and streams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Links to key websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online research forum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E-Newsletter about research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E-alerts about journal articles, research events etc	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research support and advice service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

**20. Please indicate if there is anything not already mentioned that Apex Scotland could do to better support your use of research evidence?**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The results will be used to inform activities to improve and support research use across Apex Scotland, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these activities. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me, Claire Lightowler at [claire.lightowler@iriss.org.uk](mailto:claire.lightowler@iriss.org.uk).