

## **Fact sheet 1: How can I make sure my project/service is evidence based?**

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This fact sheet aims to give you information to help you to understand:

- The role of evidence in the delivery of services and
- The opportunities for evidence input and generation throughout the project cycle.

It will also provide links to other useful fact sheets and documents that relate to evidence.

### **1. Why do we need to gather evidence?**

Gathering evidence will help you to inform the design of your project or service, support any application for funding (where relevant) and show that your project is required in a certain area or to address a problem locally. If you do not have good information about the problem, you will find it almost impossible to design an effective solution. Projects or services that fail are often based on poor evidence. Either the issue has been incorrectly identified or the approach taken has been shown not to work. Both of these problems can be avoided if you base your project/service on solid evidence. An evidence based approach seeks to:

- To improve quality of services for users
- To minimise risk to staff, users, the organisation
- To improve decision making
- To improve effectiveness
- To make best use of resources – cost effectiveness
- To grow and develop as professionals

### **2. What evidence should be gathered?**

Before you start designing your project or service, you need to gather information to tell you more about the problem or issue you want to address. What is it that you need to make a decision about? You will need to show that your project or service is needed by gathering evidence about:

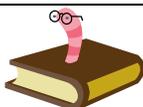
- What is the nature and scale of the issue or problem to be addressed?
  - How many people are affected by the issue? (e.g. is there information available from a local needs assessment, local audit or national modeled estimate?). For more information, see [Factsheet 4: What is the difference between research evaluation & audit?](#)
  - How does your area compare to other areas in terms of this issue? (e.g. is there any benchmarking data or information from an evaluation). For more information, see [Factsheet 2: What sort of evidence is available to me in Wirral Council?](#)
  - What are the main causes and effects of this issue? Are the underlying causes and the impacts resulting from the issue well understood? Or less clear? Or is it contentious? (e.g. is there clinical/professional consensus,

national guidance, published research). For more information, see [Factsheet 2: What sort of evidence is available to me in Wirral Council?](#)

- What evidence is there of a need or desire to address the issue locally?
  - Consider local policies, priorities and targets
  - Consider local knowledge and views of local people. For more information, see [Fact sheet 19: How and why do I involve service users and other stakeholders?](#)
  - Does this project relate to any existing guidance or policy with a clear evidence base (e.g. Central Government Policy or National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines)?
  
- What already works in addressing the issue?
  - It is crucial that you build upon existing good practice and learn from the approaches other organisations have taken. In short, you need to know: 'what works?' (e.g. clinical/professional consensus, national guidance, published research, user experience, evaluation already undertaken). For more information, see [Factsheet 2: What sort of evidence is available to me in Wirral Council?](#)
  - What has been shown to be ineffective? Sometimes knowing what does not work/makes things worse, can help shape future projects/services.

### **3. When should evidence be gathered?**

Evidence should be considered throughout the life of your project or service and is especially important at the outset, when you need to gather evidence to support your proposal (for your project or service) and inform the design & planning of it. You should continue to use evidence to monitor and evaluate progress and to identify any necessary changes to the scale, scope or delivery of the project/service. For more information, see: [Evidence in project lifespan presentation.](#)



#### **More on this topic and further reading**

For more detailed information on the types of evidence to be gathered, the 3 domains of theoretical, empirical and experiential evidence, different types and quality of evidence, national and local sources of evidence, see [Factsheet 2: What sort of evidence is available to me in Wirral Council?](#)

For more information on how to construct a web search, suggested format of an evidence review and considering and interpreting evidence, see [Factsheet 3: How do I prepare a review of existing evidence on a topic?](#)

For more information about evidence based practice visit:  
<http://www.ebnp.co.uk>