

Where are we now? Strengths and limitations of UK social work and social care research

E. Sharland¹

Abstract: In 2008, the UK Economic and Social Research Council called for ‘a fundamental step change’ in breadth, depth and quality of UK social work and social care research. This paper reports some of the findings from the ESRC Strategic Adviser for Social Work and Social Care initiative, focusing on the appraisal of the existing strengths and deficits of the research field. Discussion begins with highlighting some of the challenges of identifying and characterising both social work and social care research, explaining how these were addressed. It then outlines thematically the core substantive and methodological strengths and limitations of the field identified by key informants from social work and cognate disciplines, drawing attention to disciplinary and interdisciplinary distinctiveness and synergies. Discussion concludes with pointers to the way forward for research growth and excellence, with the argument that a commitment to developing social work and social care research is all the more crucial in times of economic austerity and challenges to social welfare and wellbeing.

Keywords: social work research; social care research; research quality; research capacity

1. Professor of Social Work Research, University of Sussex

Address for correspondence: School of Education and Social Work, Essex House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, BN19QQ. e. sharland@sussex. ac. uk

Date of publication: 18th June 2013

Introduction

In 2008 the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) called for a Strategic Adviser for Social Work and Social Care Research, to guide the way towards ‘*a fundamental step change in breadth, depth and quality of the UK research base in social work and social care*’ (ESRC, 2008a, pp. 1-3). The call was supported by other stakeholders, and set against the backdrop of strong policy drivers towards improving the research evidence base in the field (for example: Scottish Executive, 2005; Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health, 2006; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006). Alongside were increasingly powerful academic drivers towards strengthening research quality and impact (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2009), recognition of ‘pockets of excellence’ but scope for improvement in social work research (RAE, 2009) and apparently low rates of social work applications or success with ESRC funding opportunities.

This paper discusses some of the findings from the author’s work as Strategic Adviser for Social Work and Social Care Research, September 2008 to October 2009 (Sharland, 2010). Whilst the core focus of the work was on development of capacity for academic research excellence, this required first an appraisal of the existing strengths and deficits of the research field. This is the focus of the present discussion. The paper begins with situating the Strategic Adviser initiative in context, highlighting some of the challenges that lay at its heart when seeking to characterise and improve UK social work and social care research. The paper then outlines the methodology chosen for the Strategic Adviser initiative, and follows with critical discussion of some its key findings. Concluding reflections suggest some ways forward.

Identifying social work and social care research: Challenge and opportunity

Prior to the ESRC call for a Strategic Adviser, several leading social work academics had argued for research capacity development in this field (Shaw et al. 2004; Marsh and Fisher, 2005; Fisher et al. , 2007; ESRC, 2008b). By 2008, the most comprehensive statement of the case was the Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee’s (JUCSWEC) Social Work Research Strategy in Higher Education (2006). Collectively, these efforts had highlighted social work’s status as an emergent academic research discipline, with a small research community drawn mainly from practice, an older than average demographic profile, a weaker than desirable social science base (due to insufficient research focus in social work education), and beset both by structural barriers and cultural tensions – a ‘cycle of resistance’ – between research and practice. The same advocates had also drawn attention to long standing under-investment in social work research and infrastructure, especially striking in comparison with health.

Alongside, there had been (and continues) lively debate within the social work academy about the nature and quality of social work research, and whether it can claim to be distinctive from the many cognate disciplines upon which it draws (Shaw and Norton, 2007; Smith, 2009; Shaw et al, 2010; Gredig et al, 2012). Not least, these debates have raised the distinction between the 'subject' and the 'object' of research – that is, who does it and what are the problems, communities, practices, interventions and services they examine. However the subject/object distinction all too often becomes obscured in common parlance, especially when the terms 'social work and social care research' become married in one composite phrase. Nonetheless, the starting point for members of social work academies calling for research capacity development was clear: that social work is rightfully ambitious to take a disciplinary lead in research on, in, or for the practice and policy field of social work and quite possibly social care too. They were confident too that social work researchers should have much to offer to related and interprofessional policy and practice fields, such as health and criminal justice. What was needed was the wherewithal.

In contrast, the ESRC explicitly called for the Strategic Adviser to include, but not to prioritise, social work, as either subject or object, in the social work and social care research frame. The invitation was to examine how a widely cast, loosely defined, but apparently poorly evidenced, practice and policy field, captured in one breath as 'social work and social care', might better be informed by a distinctly wider, more heterogeneous and altogether more excellent disciplinary and interdisciplinary research community:

The Council is adopting a fairly wide definition of social work and social care which includes not only adult care but the whole range of what used to be described as personal social services, including aspects of children's services and criminal justice provision. Applicants are therefore welcome from any discipline, but must command a strong commitment to innovative, interdisciplinary approaches to strengthening the research base in social work and social care. (ESRC, 2008a, p.1)

There were some conundrums to be addressed here. Though the term 'social care' means little elsewhere, in the UK it is commonly enough used in everyday language to refer to the range of (non-health and mainly non- or semi-professional) practices and services helping and empowering vulnerable people to lead their lives. Nonetheless, as the ESRC acknowledged, even as a policy and practice field this is amorphous – it is difficult if not impossible to delineate the 'object' range that researchers, if able and willing, might explore and inform. More challenging, even in the UK (and even for the ESRC's internal audit purposes), 'social care' is not a recognised academic research discipline, nor is it a self-recognising research community. So deciphering what are the strengths and deficits of social care research, let alone the capacity needs of social care researchers, was something of a paradox from the start. Nonetheless, embedded in the Strategic Adviser Commission was the conviction that social care as well as social work research were in need of a boost, that social work research

and researchers were insufficiently developed, and that more established cognate disciplines (with stronger research credentials) do not – or not enough – engage in this field.

So, epistemologically and practically this was a challenging brief. Politically too, it meant navigating some choppy territorial waters of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, a voyage described more fully elsewhere (Sharland, 2012). At the same time, this was also a unique opportunity to gather a range of voices not commonly and not yet brought together, to speak to the state of UK social work and social care research (however understood) and capacity for excellence. The objective was to arrive at strategic recommendations for strengthening both.

Methodology

Within the 13 month time frame available for the Strategic Adviser initiative, this would not be a thoroughgoing review of the research base, nor a representative survey of its would-be research community. Instead, it was intended first to capture knowledges and argument already in the public domain about research quality and capacity in these fields, and then to move forward the discussion and strategic thinking, through consultation with key informants. They were selected to represent the vantage points of their various disciplinary and stakeholder communities. Each was invited to consult with their own reference group, and to contribute insights from their own communities, which could be idiographically informative, if not statistically generalisable.

Work began with a review of the existing literature on research quality and capacity, and informal discussions with key stakeholders, to produce a resource paper synthesising evidence and arguments to date. This paper provided the baseline for a phased consultation. First, 20 key informants from the social work academy, selected from diverse higher education and country contexts and at varying career stages, responded to an on-line, semi-structured questionnaire. This asked them to reflect on the evidence and arguments of the resource paper, and from there to offer their own appraisal of research quality and capacity needs and to propose strategies for progressing. Supplementary input from additional social work sources, including the JUCSWEC Research Sub-Committee, was also gathered. Second, 15 leading academic researchers from cognate disciplines – among them social policy, psychology, public health, economics, sociology and criminology – along with two research funders, were selected to participate in the consultation. For all the reasons discussed, choosing which disciplines should be represented and by whom was no small challenge. In the event, those selected were chosen for their research interests, judged by the Strategic Adviser and the project Steering Group to be most relevant for social care, and for their recognised accomplishment and knowledge of their own fields. These

informants too were asked first to read the resource paper and then to participate in semi-structured interviews. Interviews allowed space for conversation to orientate those less familiar with the field and current challenges. At a third and final stage, all 37 consultants were invited to comment on a draft report, their feedback being incorporated into the final report and recommendations to the ESRC.

Where are we now?

The Strategic Adviser initiative did not expect to achieve a unanimously agreed characterisation of the social work and social care research base or strategies to strengthen it. What was intended, and largely achieved, was to arrive at a composite picture on which all consultants had made their mark and at strategic recommendations among which all should recognise their voice. What follows sketches that part of the picture that depicts the strengths and deficits of the research field as best it was understood. Looking at this, it is helpful to hold in mind the distinction drawn by Shaw and Norton (2006) between intrinsic (inner science) and extrinsic (outer science) research quality. The former refers to the inherent qualities of research in itself, its rigour, epistemic and methodological fitness for purpose; the latter concerns its value either for use or for other purposes.

Substantive strengths and limitations

‘Practice nearness’

Most social work respondents, and some others, identified ‘practice nearness’ as a distinctive strength of social work research. This need not necessarily denote research directly embedded in practice, but alluded to its connectedness to, relevance for, communicability and credibility to practice, and to purposes of practice improvement. In this sense ‘practice nearness’ referred partly to inner science – the authenticity of research to practice realities – and also to outer science – either its direct utility or its contribution in line with social work values towards, for example, promoting social justice, participation and empowerment.

‘Interstitial’ qualities

Many key informants highlighted how social work research at its best can interrogate

key interstices at the heart of practice; some argued similarly for broader social care research. These interstices include: between public and private, individual and social, structure and agency, as well as between different professional and interprofessional domains, and between policy and practice. Some of the best exemplars of inner and outer science in social work research, for example, focused on micro-level complexities of day-to-day practice, critically set in organisational and socio-political contexts to identify both situated and transferable mechanisms for change. However, absence of the same interstitial qualities was commonly raised as a shortcoming too. Social policy research, for instance, that had informed care management or direct payment policy development, was criticised by social work informants for its lack of engagement with lived experience of service users and practice. Conversely, cognate informants saw social work research as all too often insular, insufficiently engaged with 'bigger picture' policy, public and political contexts or agendas.

Integration of disciplinary knowledges and skills

Some of the best illustrations offered of 'interstitial' research also brought together knowledges and skills from more than one discipline. Among social work research exemplars integrating theory and evidence from cognate disciplines were, for example: studies using participant observation to examine day-to-day practice in children's social services; use of health and policy evidence in research on adult mental health care; and use of standardized instruments from psychology or psychiatry to assess outcomes of social work interventions. Again, the added value was seen to be both to intrinsic and to extrinsic research quality. But the converse was also true. Several informants observed that, especially by comparison with North America, Australia and Europe, in UK social work and social care research there is less cross-fertilisation between disciplines than there might be, with countless research questions ripe for, but bereft of, cognate discipline engagement.

Contribution to other fields

Echoing the findings of the RAE 2008 (2009, p.5), social work informants and some others were keen to highlight the places where social work research makes distinctive contributions to related and wider fields, increasingly and appropriately in contexts of growing service integration. Particularly highlighted were, for example, research on health and social inequalities among service users; work on the effectiveness of parenting programmes for improving health as well as social outcomes for children and families; and social work research investigating interprofessional or integrated services, education and knowledge transfer. Here too, however, social work and cognate discipline informants recognized that there is more potential than is realized

for some of the intrinsic qualities of social work research – including the depth of its understandings of professional relationships and systems – to bring extrinsic added value to other domains. Again, this seems better achieved in North America than in the UK.

Critical theoretical interrogation

Several social work and cognate discipline informants reflected on the need for more diverse, more sophisticated and more imaginative use of theory in both social work and social care research. This would enhance inner epistemic quality. Extrinsically, too, they argued that critical use of theory can be key to making sense in one context of research findings generated in another. Respondents expressed frustration with social work's 'same old, same old' recourse to old favourites – attachment and ecological theories among the most often cited – and too few forays into, for example, social and cultural theory to explore patterns of social experience, or theories of change to explain how, not just whether, interventions work. Several also observed that in 'applied' fields such as both social work and social care, research funding and drivers are often instrumental, towards establishing evidence for policy and practice decision making. This may increase research utility in the narrowest sense, but at the expense of inner science criticality and intellectual rigour, and ultimately of outer-science sense-making too.

Research scope, vision and visibility

Its funding base not only promotes instrumentality in UK social work and social care research, but also leaves it commonly piecemeal, small-scale, local and short term. This is especially true for social work. Where informants called to mind illustrations of, for example, larger scale evaluations of social and related service programmes, longitudinal studies of care and wellbeing outcomes, or transnational comparative research studies of social problems and welfare interventions, these were rarely social work studies, nor even included social work. More often they were exemplars of social or health policy research, or came from psychology, epidemiology, occasionally health economics or sociology. In contrast, UK social work research was seen to be often parochial, rarely extending its gaze beyond national or local welfare contexts or regimes. This in turn can compromise its inner and outer science potential to contribute to disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, innovation, impact, and – also important – visibility. A recurring complaint and concomitant recommendation from cognate discipline informants was that both social work and social care research need to 'think bigger and think wider' and to announce their own 'big questions' to the wider research community, to encourage visibility and engagement.

Methodological strengths and limitations

Turning to the methodological status of social work and social care research, it was all but impossible for respondents to appraise the strengths and limitations of social care research, simply because the field is so difficult to characterise with any coherence. Easier for most was to paint the picture for social work, offset against a rather generalised landscape of other empirical social sciences. Inevitably, consultants' responses echoed wider paradigmatic debates about the status of research evidence and the kinds of approaches best suited to explore social problems and experience, practice or policy and their outcomes. Within the social work discipline, of course, much of this has been articulated through animated debate about evidence based practice (for diverse viewpoints, see for example Webb, 2001; Shaw, 2003; Trinder and Reynolds, 2003; Thyer and Myers, 2011; Taylor, 2012). Notwithstanding, key informants to this initiative were broadly agreed in favour of drawing on diverse research methodologies and eschewing rigid adherence to 'knowledge hierarchies' (Popay and Roen 2003). Their appraisal of the current state of social work research went along the following lines.

Social science base

The overriding message was that social work research in the UK is as yet less firmly grounded than cognate disciplines in social science methodologies, and likewise less grounded than health disciplines in scientific methods. It was here that the most forceful arguments for interdisciplinarity were put. Many social work respondents pinpointed the shortfalls in social work education and professional culture that give rise to fragile social science skills and capacity (ESRC, 2008b), and were keen that social work researchers should learn with and from others to remedy this. But they were keen too to acknowledge existing methodological strengths, where social work research can already lay claim to distinctive excellence not to be lost in the interdisciplinary mix.

Qualitative research

None disputed that qualitative research is the mainstay of UK social work research. Many informants pointed to exemplars where rich qualitative work captures the lived experience of service users, carers and practitioners, brings depth understanding of how policies and practice are played out in situated contexts and digs down to discover how interventions bring about change. Much of this work draws on interview or group work methods well honed in social work practice. But some too draws effectively on methodologies borrowed from elsewhere: among the illustrations

were participant observation, narrative methods and thematic documentary analysis, brought for example from anthropology, sociology or cultural studies. Especially close both to social work values and to extrinsic social work research value for ethical purposes were well recognized strengths in participatory research methods, and those exploring sensitive topics with hard to reach groups. Here there were several exemplars cited of fine work foregrounding the voices of vulnerable and marginalized people, discussing difficult or taboo experiences, sometimes seeking to empower participants through and beyond the process.

This said, both social work and cognate informants also drew attention to limitations in qualitative social work research. In particular, there is very considerable scope for expansion of methodological repertoire. Social work researchers tend to stick with the familiar – interview and focus group methods. Instead, or in addition, informants argued for use of more innovative and more imaginative techniques – autobiographical and biographical methods, visual methods and discourse analysis, to name a few. Very noticeable too is the dearth of longitudinal qualitative research, whether descriptive or evaluative, that would allow examination of outcomes and change over time. So while deficits in qualitative social work research may compromise primarily its inner science, redeeming them will add value to outer science as well.

Quantitative research

Almost without exception, key informants echoed the finding of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise that '*Quantitative research in social work is small in volume but of high quality.*' (RAE, 2009, p. 11). Social work respondents in particular referred to notable exemplars, which included: use of birth cohort studies or child protection registers to examine child care, safeguarding and wellbeing outcomes; quasi experimental evaluations using standardised instruments to measure intervention outcomes; large scale programme evaluations such as Sure Start; and cost effectiveness evaluations of residential or community based care services. Nonetheless, the plea for improved and increased quantitative research was resounding. This was not an appeal towards the 'hierarchy of evidence' that places quantitative above qualitative research findings. It was a call for 'horses for courses', recognising there are some social work (and social care) research questions that require sophisticated attention to scale and to measurement, for inner and outer science quality. Here too, there were striking, unfavourable comparisons with the USA, where social work training includes quantitative social science methods (ESRC, 2008b) and social work researchers are capable and confident to use them.

The range of quantitative methodologies and methods that consultants identified for improvement in UK social work research, along with the texture of their critique, cannot be captured in detail here (see Sharland, 2010b, for full discussion). But the following sketches the picture broadly along two cross-cutting axes.

Firstly, informants highlighted the dearth of large scale quantitative work that allows population level enquiry, statistical generalisation and comparison across country and welfare regime contexts. Whether or not for comparative purposes, many consultants argued that social work research needs to make more use of cross sectional and/or longitudinal surveys, to examine patterns of social problems and needs, interventions and outcomes over time. More specifically, some key informants also made the case for increased use of existing large data sets. Social work research is notable for its minimal input into and use of, for example, the British birth cohort studies, the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, or the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England. This lack of engagement is self fulfilling, since if social work (or social care) questions are not asked in these surveys, they cannot be answered. Equally tantalising and frustrating, for some informants, was the wealth of case record and service data – increasingly systematised and in theory accessible (governance permitting) – but as yet little mined for research.

The second axis for quantitative research improvement was for purposes of evaluation. Here too the emphasis was on inner science rigour, but with it the argument for much enhanced extrinsic value – in other words, that our interventions are only as effective and robust as the science that has tested them. Most respondents acknowledged that randomized controlled trial, experimental or even quasi-experimental designs are often difficult to achieve in this field, for reasons of ethics, practicality, funding, and simply by virtue of the complex problems and interventions to be examined. Nonetheless, there are missed opportunities, especially for naturally occurring experiments or, for example, manipulation of intervention sequence. Here too some good illustrations were brought to light, among them small scale evaluation of outcomes for substance misusers offered different treatment modes, or larger scale evaluation of parenting programmes for young or vulnerable parents. But the overriding message was that social work evaluation research is all too often flimsy, questionable in design, with findings correspondingly questionable. Consultants highlighted two further issues in particular. The first was the need for robust measurement of outcomes, preferably using standardized instruments, against pre-intervention baselines, including medium to longer term follow up, and where possible contrasted with controls or comparators. The second was for evaluation of cost effectiveness, cost benefits and the sometimes perverse costs of intervening in the lives of vulnerable people, at public expense and in hard economic times.

Multi-method, integrative research

Some consultants set greater store by improvement of quantitative methodologies, some by qualitative – and interestingly the difference of emphasis did not follow disciplinary lines. But few were so wedded to one paradigm or another that they did not argue for productive combination of the two. One way or another, most

favoured a methodological mix, either integrated within the same study or collectively between studies, as best suited the research questions and opportunities available. Models suggested were as varied here as they are in the broader methodological literature. They included using quantitative and qualitative data: to triangulate, to complement or to validate each other; to add depth or to contextualise; and to test or to generate theory and explanation. Here too there were some fine exemplars cited, among them examination of integrated children's services through large scale analysis of case records illuminated by focus group and interviews; use of in-depth interview and observational data to validate standardized measures of vulnerable adults' needs and outcomes; and use of semi-structured interviews with social work educators to scrutinise evidence of broader patterns of change in professional education. Nonetheless, respondents of all backgrounds were persuaded that much greater potential exists than is yet realised for social work research to integrate mixed methods to achieve the intrinsic and extrinsic quality desired and deserved.

Concluding comments: Where next?

Inevitably, this sketch of the state of contemporary social work and social care research is partial. It reflects the distinctive character of the consultation initiative that generated it, complete with the challenges of appraising a research field (social care) that is difficult to delineate let alone to characterise, alongside a research discipline and field (social work) that may be broadly easier to distinguish, but is emergent, draws on cognate disciplines but is keen to sustain its own identity. . Notwithstanding, quite a rich picture emerges, displaying some clear substantive and methodological strengths, along with clear scope for development. It was the latter – pointing the strategic directions forward – that was the primary task for the Strategic Adviser initiative, with findings and recommendations discussed fully in the final project report (Sharland, 2010). Suffice it to say here that answering the question 'Where do we go next?' was no less a challenge – probably more – than 'Where are we now?', with the answer more challenging still. Put briefly, given the range and diversity of disciplines to be engaged, career stages at which intervention is required, and capacity needs apparent at individual, institutional and cross institutional levels, the report argued for a multifaceted programme of research capacity development for social work and social care. This requires not just infrastructure but leadership and vision, from within social work and among cognate disciplines, to carry it forward. We need to maximise and develop disciplinary strengths along with interdisciplinary synergies, to grow research confidence, capability and critical mass, and to nurture a culture that treasures both the inner and outer science qualities of social work and social care research. This in turn takes money – not sufficient, but necessary – and in times of austerity this may seem 'a big ask'. For its part, in response to the Strategic

Adviser recommendations, the ESRC has confirmed a commitment to ‘take a lead in bringing stakeholders together to explore the full potential of an initiative to strengthen capacity for excellence in social care research’ (ESRC, 2010). Hit by cuts to their own budget, their financial investment has been modest; but they have nonetheless funded the Researcher Development Initiative from which this Special Issue emerges, and another since. Alongside, there are other positive signs of investment in this field, including from the National Institute for Health Research (England) both within and beyond their School of Social Care Research.

There are already good signs of strength in this field, and ripeness for development. Especially in, rather than despite, times of austerity, high quality, high impact social work and social care research should be central to addressing contemporary social, welfare and health challenges. This, surely, is the most powerful argument for further investment sooner, not later, to continue and grow the momentum for change. The costs of neglecting social work and social care research and capacity are far greater than the costs of nurturing them, and the potential benefits from research growth and excellence are incalculable.

References

- Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health (2006) *Options for Excellence: Building the Social Care Workforce of the Future*. Leeds: Department of Health
- ESRC (2010) *ESRC Response to the Final Report from the Strategic Advisor for Social Work and Social Care*, www.esrc.ac.uk/images/ESRC_Response_SW_and_SC_tcm8-4649.pdf
- ESRC (2008a) *Strategic Adviser for Social Work and Social Care Research: Commissioning brief*. Swindon: ESRC
- ESRC (2008b) *An Audit of Baseline Resources for Social Work Research: Finances, staff, teaching*. Swindon: ESRC
- Fisher, M., Francis, J. and Fischer, C. (2007) *Social Care Research Capacity Consultation. Using Knowledge in Social Care Report 16*. London: SCIE
- Gredig, D., Shaw, I. and Sommerfeld, P. (2012) Mapping the social work research agenda. in M. Gray, J. Midgley and S. Webb (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Social Work*. London: Sage
- Higher Education Funding Council for England (2009) *Update on the Research Excellence Framework* <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2008/cl342008>
- Macdonald, G. (2003) *Using Systematic Reviews to Improve Social Care*. London: SCIE
- Marsh, P. and Fisher, M. (2005) *Developing the Evidence Base for Social Work and Social Care Practice*. London: SCIE
- Research Assessment Exercise (2009) *RAE 2008 Unit of Assessment 40 Subject Overview Report: J40 Social Work and Social Policy and Administration*, Bristol, RAE. <http://www.rae.ac.uk/pubs/2009/ov/>
- Scottish Executive (2005) *Changing Lives: Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review*.

- Edinburgh: The Scottish Executive
- Sharland, (2010) *Strategic Adviser for Social Work and Social Care Research Main Report to the ESRC Training and Development Board*. http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Main_report_SW_and_SC_tcm8-4647.pdf
- Sharland, (2012) 'All together now?' Building disciplinary and interdisciplinary research capacity in social work and social care. *British Journal of Social Work*, 42, 2, 208-226
- Shaw, I. (2003) Cutting edge issues in social work research. *British Journal of Social Work*, 33, 1, 107-120
- Shaw, I., Briar-Lawson, K., Orme, J. and Ruckdeschel, R. (Eds.) (2010) *The Sage Handbook of Social Work Research*. London: Sage
- Shaw, I. and Norton, M. (2007) *The Kinds and Quality of Social Work Research in UK Universities: Using Knowledge in Social Care Report*. London: SCIE
- Shaw, I., Arksey, H. and Mullender, A. (2004) *ESRC Research and Social Work and Social Care*. London: SCIE
- Smith, R. (2009) *Doing Social Work Research*. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill
- Taylor, B. (2012) Editorial. *British Journal of Social Work*, 42, 4, 593-599
- Thyer, B. and Myers, L. (2011) The quest for evidence based practice: A view from the United States. *Journal of Social Work*, 11, 1, 8-25
- Trinder, L. and Reynolds S. (Eds.) (2000) *Evidence-based Practice: A Critical Appraisal*. Oxford: Blackwell Science
- Welsh Assembly Government (2006) *Health and Social Care Strategies*. <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/health/strategies/strategies/?lang=en>