As part of the Social Care Fellowship call 2018, Health and Care Research Wales would particularly welcome applications with the potential to help inform social care improvements in relation to the following priority areas:

- Children who are looked after, and reducing the need for children to enter care
- People with dementia
- Care and support at home.

Applicants should complete the standard Social Care Fellowship application form and comply with the application guidance. Where applications address one or more of the above priority areas, applicants should make this clear in their responses. Applications will be assessed in keeping with the standard assessment processes of the scheme. To help researchers develop and frame ideas, some Welsh Government policy background is provided below.

Please note that the call is not restricted to these priority areas, and that all eligible applications will be considered for funding. A document is included in the Annex, which provides guidelines on what Health and Care Research Wales considers as ‘Social Care Research’.

### 1. Children who are looked after, and reducing the need for children to enter care

Over the past few years, there has been growing concern about the number of looked after children in Wales and the inconsistency in numbers of children in care across local authorities. Research is needed to help explain the reasons behind this variation, and to assist with the development of effective forms of support with the potential to reduce the number of children entering care.

In addition, it is generally accepted that children who are looked after are less likely to achieve good outcomes, when compared to other children, in a number of important areas including educational qualifications attained, health and housing needs, substance misuse, and contact with the criminal justice system. Research with the potential to improve our understanding of this area, particularly by informing service improvements and improved outcomes is also needed.

Key documents in this area include:

- The review by Lord Laming regarding looked after children in the youth justice system:
2. People with dementia

The rising number of people with dementia is a challenge across the world. In Wales, a 31% increase in people with dementia is expected by 2021, with significantly greater increases anticipated in some rural areas. In response to the challenge, Wales aspires to the creation of a society within which support for people with dementia and their carers would be rooted within the fabric and structures of local communities.

Success in this area will require a change in attitudes, with increased awareness, understanding and acceptance of dementia, in order that people with the condition and their carers receive appropriate help and support whilst being treated with dignity and respect.

The National Dementia Vision for Wales identifies four priority areas for improvement:

1. Improved service provision through better joint working across health, social care, the third sector and other agencies
2. Improved early diagnosis and timely interventions
3. Improved access to better information and support for people with the illness and their carers, including a greater awareness of the need for advocacy
4. Improved training for those delivering care, including research

Key documents in this area include:
- The Alzheimer’s Society/Welsh Assembly Government National Dementia Vision for Wales

3. Care and support at home

In 2014-15, over 13 million hours of home care were provided in Wales. It is widely recognised that there are significant challenges in relation to domiciliary care provision, particularly in relation to recruitment and retention, and commissioning of services. Domiciliary care is a vital part of social care providing a huge range of support to vulnerable people in their own homes.

Effective domiciliary care can help people to remain independent at home and prevent the need for residential care. It is vital that domiciliary care workers are enabled to provide the best possible care and support, and to help achieve this, the journey of professionalising workers is well established through mandatory induction, recommended qualifications and workforce development funding.
To support the next stage in this journey, the Welsh Government, together with Social Care Wales, is taking forward an ambitious agenda of action to strengthen domiciliary care over the next five years. This will include the registration of homecare workers in Wales by 2020 in order to work in the social care sector.

Key documents in this area include:

- The report on factors affecting the recruitment and retention of domiciliary care workers:

- The Consultation on the Domiciliary Care Workforce (now closed), which contains additional background information:

- The Care Inspectorate Wales National Review of Domiciliary Care in Wales: [National review of domiciliary care in Wales | Care Inspectorate Wales](http://gov.wales/consultations/healthsocialcare/workforce/?status=closed&lanq=en)
Annex

Social Care Research Guidelines: ‘What is Social Care Research?’

Introduction

In 2014, Health and Care Research Wales reviewed definitions of social care from a range of UK and international sources. A 1-day workshop was also convened to develop guidelines on the question of ‘What is Social Care Research?’ The workshop involved a range of stakeholders from England and Wales including research academics, social care practitioners, and members of the public.

The results of the workshop were collated and condensed into a number of key areas. These were distributed to a subset of workshop attendees for further comments and feedback until a consensus was reached.

It is important to consider the following as guidelines and not a definition of social care research. It is inevitable that some research projects, especially those conducted at the interface of social care and health, will be difficult to categorise as clearly belonging to one category or the other.

Guidelines

For Health and Care Research Wales to consider research to be ‘Social Care Research’, the research should broadly focus on at least one of the following:

- The provision of care, support, and personal assistance in the context of interpersonal relationships, whether formal or informal, in relation to: activities of daily living, maintenance of independence, social interaction, enabling the individual to play a fuller part in society, assisting individuals to manage complex relationships, and assisting the individual to access or receive services from a care home or other supported accommodation or to take advantage of educational facilities.

- The provision of: advice; practical assistance in the home; assistance with equipment and home adaptations; visiting and replacement care; meals; or facilities for occupational, social, cultural and recreational activities outside the home.

- The provision of: protection or social support services for children or adults in need or at risk, or those with social needs arising from illness, disability, age or poverty.

- The social needs of people receiving social care, and the services or initiatives addressing those needs, including: prevention of deterioration; promotion of physical or mental health; improving opportunities and life chances; strengthening families; and protecting human rights.

- The organisational systems, infrastructures, care settings, and/or personnel involved in the management and leadership, commissioning, provision, delivery,
monitoring and evaluation of care and support services, and/or the interface between; or impact of the above on related systems such as healthcare, education, housing, and the criminal justice system.

- National and/or local policies that affect the ethos, commissioning, organisation, provision, monitoring and evaluation, and delivery of care and support services.
- The improvement of social and community cohesion (rather than the individual).

Useful questions that can help inform whether a research project is Social Care Research include:

- What is the research question?
- Why is the research required?
- What is the purpose of the research and who or what might benefit? (eligible examples could be: service users, service providers, carers, social care practitioners, professionals & non professionals, patients, academics and family).
- What are the social (care) outcomes?
- What is the relevance of the application to Welsh Government social care policy?
- Who might read the research results? (e.g. social care practitioners, policymakers, or academics).