

Priorities for Adult Social Work Research. Results from the James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership for Adult Social Work

JLA PSP final report (2018)

<https://www.jla.nihr.ac.uk/priority-setting-partnerships/adult-social-work/downloads/Adult-Social-Work-PSP-final-report.pdf>

For which topic were research priorities identified?

adult social work

In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

Europe - United Kingdom

Why was it conducted at all?

In 2016, the Social Care Workforce Research Unit at King's College London produced a report which concluded that more research on social work is needed to find out what works best when social workers support people who use services and their carers, to support the adult social work profession to grow and succeed. Robust research evidence is a vital component of good planning and decision making in social work.

What was the objective?

to identify which research would be most useful

What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 10 research questions

How long did the research prioritization take?

March 2011 - July 2018

Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

JLA method

How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: setting up PSP: steering group decided on scope of PSP. Step 2: collecting uncertainties: via survey: participants were asked to submit questions they would like answered by research, 2 separate surveys: one for practitioners and one for people using services and their carers, 2149 questions submitted. Step 3: data processing: out-of-scope questions removed, 1382 questions remained, indicative questions formulated, resulting in 66 questions in longlist, check against published evidence from previous research, 5 questions had been answered and were removed, resulting in 61 unanswered indicative questions. Step 4: interim ranking: survey with list of 61 questions, people asked to choose their top ten questions, top ten questions from carers and people using services pooled together, resulting in final shortlist of 21 questions. Step 5: final prioritization: workshop: before workshop participants were asked to consider how they would rank the 21 questions in order of importance, during workshop 21 shortlisted questions discussed in small groups followed by small group rankings, plenary session to achieve consensus

Which stakeholders took part?

Adult social work practitioners (students, adult social workers, managers and people who train social workers), people who use services and their carers, health and social care professionals who work with adult social workers. Survey: 332 practitioners (35% frontline adult social workers, 23% managers, 5% students, 11% people who train social workers, 27% linked to adult social work in some other way.) and 153 people using services and carers (59% carers, 36% people using services, 5% others). Interim ranking: 632 participants (10% people using services, 13% carers, 77% practitioners). Workshop: carers, people using services, students, social workers, people who train social workers and other health and social care professionals who work with social workers.

How were stakeholders recruited?

The first survey was sent out to the networks via email, newsletters, social media, websites and blogs. Paper versions were also made available. The second survey was distributed to everyone from the first survey who wanted to stay involved, and to all the same networks.

Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders not only participated but were also actively involved in the research prioritization process: They were part of a steering group. The steering group consisted of people using services, carers, social work practitioners, researchers and policymakers. The members oversaw the project, identified partner organizations and participated in the workshop.