

1 Why Research for Social Work?

Introduction

This book seeks to identify research as an underused but essential tool for the busy social worker in undertaking their difficult, demanding and often contradictory tasks within society. For too long research has been ignored by social workers or at best been relegated to an add-on or luxury. There are many reasons why this has been so and some of these will be explored in later chapters. Social workers work with people often at their most vulnerable – children who have been abused, those who have been subject to domestic violence or those suffering chronic mental ill health. Each of these deserves the highest professional expertise from their social workers and this book argues that this is not possible without also including a research-minded perspective. Research can help social workers deliver their practice agenda and in many ways good research and good social work are synonymous. D’Cruz and Jones (2004: 2) write that:

We teach research to social work students because we believe that social work practice is more likely to be effective when social workers are able to draw on and evaluate previous research.

As a social worker, or social work student, you will want to know whether your interventions are making a difference, either positively or negatively. Social work is not a neutral activity. Social work can lead to a positive outcome for the service user or the social worker or it may lead to a negative outcome for one or both of them. To this end it is imperative for social workers to be in a continuous reflective relationship with their practice seeking to find evidence and answers that help them to identify whether their intervention is effective or mere interference. As such the social worker may have to ask:

- Will the care package I commission enable Mr and Mrs Jones to live independently in their own home?
- Is the Council's policy on personalisation working?
- What does the research evidence say about effective residential provision?
- Is there a link between domestic violence and child abuse?

As a social worker there is a need to be able to ask these and similar questions at the individual, your own caseload, the agency and the policy level. The policy level may be both at local service delivery and national in terms of government policy and its impact on practice.

The Notion of the Social Worker and Social Work

The notion of a social worker has been defined in a number of different ways over the years. In 1982 following a series of child abuse tragedies and inquiries, the then UK Conservative Government commissioned Peter Barclay to review the role and function of social workers. In the prelude to the report, Barclay noted:

Too much is expected of social workers. We load them with unrealistic expectations and then complain when they do not live up to them. Social work is a relatively young profession. It has grown rapidly as the flow of legislation has greatly increased the range and complexity of its work. (Barclay, 1982: vii)

Payne (2005) describes three major differing approaches to how we conceptualise social work. These are:

- *Individualism–reformism*: this refers to social work as an activity that aims to meet social welfare needs on an individualised basis.
- *Socialist–collectives*: this approach focuses on promoting cooperation within society in order that the most oppressed and disadvantaged can gain power and take control of their own lives.
- *Reflexive–therapeutic*: this approach is focused on promoting and facilitating personal growth so that people are enabled to deal with the suffering and disadvantage that they experience.

Reflexive Questions

What do you consider social work to be? Is it what social workers do, or is it based on some other ideas about values and skills? What do you consider to be the core of social work? Can only social workers undertake social work? You may want to keep a copy of your answers for consideration later.

Throughout the book you will see reflexive questions like those above. These questions are there to help you to consider, reflect and develop your own views on some of the key issues facing social workers in coming to terms with research and research evidence. You may also want to consider writing your answers down to the different questions in a notebook to keep with this book to act as a reminder of your original thoughts and to see how they develop or change.

Why Research for Social Work?

The International Association of the Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) have agreed on the following definition of social work as they have sought to transcend national boundaries and identify social work within a global economy:

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. (IASSW and IFSW, 2004: 4)

Whilst this is the agreed definition by the different international social work associations, their members do accept that how it will be interpreted will vary between nations and contexts. A respondent to the consultation from Hong Kong proposed additions including an acknowledgement of responsibility and the importance of the collective. This internationalisation of the definition of social work raises questions as to how 'international' social work can be. As Hugman (2010: 150) recognises, this perspective has resulted in two extreme views between those who regard social work as a single entity whose values, skills and knowledge remain the same irrespective of the national context and those who regard social work as being shaped inextricably by the local national context in terms of its legal mandate, culture and welfare system. Social work is now recognised in 90 countries and the truth probably lies within the two extremes. There are obviously international issues that social work is concerned with including – refugees, human trafficking, famine and drought, natural disasters and poverty – and social workers should consider enhancing their local practice by developing a more international perspective.

Horner (2006) criticises the internationally agreed definition of social work for failing to acknowledge the controlling aspects of social work involving the use of statutory powers to intervene to protect vulnerable children and older people. It is notable that the IFSW website acknowledges that social work in the twenty-first century is dynamic and evolving, and that the definition should not be considered exhaustive (IFSW, 2011).

The important point here is that the most widely accepted definition of social work is not written on tablets of stone and is likely to change as society changes. This is not to suggest an 'anything goes' mentality but to be realistic that changes in wider society will result in changes in social work practice. Social work is not a fixed entity. Therefore, what you and I consider to be representative of social work today may not be the position in the future. You might like to keep your answer to the first reflective exercise above and keep it somewhere safe to look at again not only as you finish this book but in a couple of years' time to see whether your view has changed.

What is important for our future discussions is that social work is neither a neutral nor a static activity, it is dynamic and can have positive and/or negative consequences for service users and social workers alike, as such social work represents a value-driven form of welfare practice.

Social Work and the Modernisation Agenda

Within the British context social service departments were created following the introduction of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. This brought together the three separate local council departments – children, mental health and welfare – into a single unitary social work department headed up by a Director of Social Services. Initially, social work was viewed as a generic activity but has become increasingly specialist and fragmented ever since.

Major structural changes occurred in the early 1990s signalled by the introduction of the Children Act 1989 and the NHS and Community Care Act 1990. These two Acts pushed many authorities into separating children and adult services. The Children Act 1989 was one of the first major pieces of social services legislation to be explicitly informed by research (Parker et al., 1991). The introduction of these two Acts increased the fragmentation of the service and subjected it (albeit unevenly) to the disciplines of the mixed economy of welfare. This involved redefining the role of social services from that of provider of services to that of ‘enabler’, ‘commissioner’ or ‘purchaser’ of services. The government also sought to promote a mixed economy of care whereby the ‘commissioners’ and ‘purchasers’ of service were expected to commission or purchase services less from the local authority and more from a mix of public, private and voluntary providers. Included within this was also a broad intention to transform the nature of social services from a welfare agency run by professionals, allegedly too much in their own interests, to a customer-centred organisation run by professional managers. Adams sums up this trend as ‘new managerialism’ whereby ‘managerialism’ is the term used to describe styles of management that put managers in the central role of the organisation. ‘New managerialism’ (Adams, 1998: 44) is the term used to describe management approaches in the public services that were imported from the private sector in the early 1980s, with decisions based on the criteria of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Adams, 2002: 176).

The Labour Party came to power in 1997 and far from retreating on the reformation of local government moved it onto a new level. The Labour government’s big idea can be summed up in the discourse of modernisation. Modernisation has permeated all aspects of central and local government, including social services and health services (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), 1998; Cabinet Office, 1990; Department of Health (DH), 1998b)

as the necessary process for updating services to match the expectations of modern-day consumers. Modernisation emphasises partnership (Balloch and Taylor, 2001; Glendinning et al., 2002) and joined-up thinking (Frost, 2005), whereby traditional boundaries that have been seen as barriers to meeting service users' needs are now addressed by workers working together in partnerships or joint teams. This emphasis on partnerships and joined-up thinking accepted that traditional uni-professional ways of working were not going to address society's 'wicked' problems (Glasby and Dickinson, 2008) like poverty and social exclusion (see Chapter 9 for a fuller discussion on interprofessional practice). Accompanying this was a growth in professional accountability to government through performance indicators and the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) that covered key indicators for all aspects of social service performance.

Besides these developments there has also been an increasing government support for practice based on research evidence particularly visible since the Children Act 1989. Besides individually funding research projects, the Department of Health has also developed a number of research overviews summarised for practitioners and managers including: *Patterns and Outcomes in Child Placements* (1991); *Child Protection: Messages from Research* (1995); and *Caring for Children Away from Home: Messages from Research* (1998b). In recent years this has also spread into other research dissemination activity, including: conferences; the support of Research in Practice (RiP); Making Research Count (MRC); the launch of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) (SCIE, 2011) in England; and the Institute of Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS) (IRISS, 2011) in Scotland. SCIE is an independent company and charity partly funded by government. SCIE is committed to developing and promoting knowledge about good practice in social care and is very much a part of the government's drive to modernise social care. SCIE and IRISS reviews can be downloaded free from the Web addresses listed in the References at the end of the book (IRISS, 2011; SCIE, 2011). SCIE Knowledge Review No. 3 identified the *Types and Quality of Knowledge in Social Care* (Pawson et al., 2003). Pawson and his colleagues produced a five-part classificatory framework for understanding knowledge in social work and social care:

Organisational knowledge: knowledge gained from the governance and regulation activities involved in organising social care.

Practitioner knowledge: knowledge gained by practitioners in their day-to-day work that tends to be personal, tacit and context-specific.

User knowledge: knowledge gained from the experience of using social care services; again this is often tacit and is explored further in Chapter 6.

Research knowledge: knowledge gathered systematically within a planned strategy; such knowledge is mostly explicit and available in reports, evaluations, books and articles.

Policy community knowledge: knowledge that is gained from the wider policy context and may include knowledge in the civil service, think tanks and agencies.

This book is primarily interested in the use of research knowledge, but as the reader will realise, although Pawson et al. (2003) have identified a conceptually distinct framework, there are often overlaps. In particular we will also look at practitioner knowledge and service user knowledge, but will also be aware of the potential for organisational knowledge and policy community knowledge to impact upon social work research.

The accessibility of research for students in social work has led Butler (2003) to comment wryly that:

It is rare to complete a student placement visit to a social services department without at least coming across one of the several Department of Health (DH) 'Messages from Research' (e.g. DH, 2001a) or 'Quality Protects' (e.g. DH, RiP and MRC, 2002) briefings that seek to influence social work practice with children and families through the use of research findings. Central government is actively involved in other ways too: not just in funding and disseminating research but also in various forms of its governance and ordering. It is difficult to remember a time when interest in social work research was so widespread, so urgent and so apparently full of possibilities. (Butler, 2003: 19)

What Butler doesn't tell us is whether these documents were being actively read or whether they were merely available and gathering dust on bookshelves or desks.

At this point it is worthwhile clarifying the distinction between social care and social work, although in many places the terms are now used interchangeably. In this book, social workers refer to those with a professional social work qualification and in the UK context are registered with their national regulatory body. Whilst this group are also part of the wider social care workforce, they represent only a small part, as this is primarily made up of unqualified staff, many of whom work part-time. Skills for Care (Eborall, 2010) estimate that there were 1.75 million jobs in adult social care in 2009 whilst the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC, 2008) estimated that there were approximately 168,340 social care staff in 2007 in occupations covered by the CWDC. Estimating the total of those who work in social care has become increasingly difficult as the boundaries between those who provide social care services in the statutory, private and voluntary sector merge and split and include those who work in their own homes, other people's homes, care homes, day care, hospitals and the wider community. However, the point here is that social care is a major provider of employment in England and the UK in general. In 2009, the General Social Care Council (GSCC) (GSCC, 2010) had over 83,000 registered social workers listed – although not all of these are working as social workers, some will not be employed in social work, some will be taking a career break or are people like myself, social work academics. The number of qualified social workers is a small subset of all those who work in social care. Of this English subset 77 per cent were female, 70 per cent

white and 77 per cent took their qualification in the UK. It is this group of registered social workers working in statutory, voluntary and private social care services that we refer to as 'social workers' in this book.

In the UK, the General Social Care Council (England), the Care Council for Wales, the Scottish Social Services Council and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council have been tasked to register and regulate the activities of all social care workers, beginning with qualified and student social workers. Also from April 2005, it became illegal to use the title of 'social worker' unless someone has an approved social work qualification and is registered with the appropriate regulatory body. In many other countries like America, Australia and Germany, social workers already have protection of title and a governing registration body.

Social work in the UK is presently at a point of contradiction, social work is now an all-graduate profession (with an increasing move towards more and more postgraduate qualifying provision), and the title of social worker is protected for those registered with the requisite care council, with a requirement for continuing professional development to reregister. Alongside these developments, in England the Social Work Taskforce (SWTF) – an expert group set up by the Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families to undertake a comprehensive review of frontline social work practice – reported in 2009, and amongst its stated ambitions was the wish to secure 'a reliable supply of confident, high quality, adaptable professionals into the workforce' and the desire to see a greater use of research and continuing professional development to inform frontline practice (SWTF, 2009: 6).

These aspirations have since been delegated to the Social Work Reform Board to implement and it is too early to see if any of these changes are making any impact upon practice. It will also be interesting to see how the commitment to research will be operationalised as this is yet unclear; but the report's admonishment of academics is not hopeful:

Educators need to share in the real challenges posed in service delivery and avoid any temptation to criticise from the sidelines. (SWTF, 2009: 1.25)

It is rather insulting to suggest that social work educators are not concerned with the 'real challenges' of service delivery and that they should suspend their critical faculties when researching or discussing these with social workers or social work students. It is surely the research and critical analysis of educators in dialogue with social work staff, social work students and service users that can help to identify where service delivery is proving effective or not, and can help ensure the best possible outcomes for service users and carers.

At the same time as these potentially positive moves, we have experienced the fragmentation and dismantling of standalone social service departments,

previously the main employment opportunity for social workers. These standalone social service departments have been replaced by new local authority configurations of education and children's social services, representing a split from adult social services. These arrangements have been further complicated where social service personnel have been merged with health personnel to form mental health and learning disability trusts. In some parts of the country, children's social services staff along with education department personnel and health colleagues are being combined to form children's trusts. It is also interesting to note that a number of social service departments have since recombined their adults and children's services in recognition that the artificial split was causing more structural difficulties than it solved (see Chapter 9). Today, social workers are employed in an increasingly wide range of non-statutory social care agencies. These include those in the private and voluntary sector, multiagency teams, Sure Start, Connexions, Youth Offending Teams, Drug and Alcohol Teams, Mental Health Trusts, Children and Family Court Advice and Support Services (CAFCASS) and an ever-growing number of recruitment agencies. For many of these organisations, social work will not be the major profession or social care the dominant discipline. The majority of social workers in the future may not be employed in monolithic social service departments but in a mosaic or tapestry of welfare provision.

The above relates particularly to England, but England is only one part of the four nations that make up the UK. All four nations organise their social work services slightly differently. In Scotland, the term 'social work services' is used to describe the full range of services, including criminal justice as well as child and adult services. Criminal justice is separate in the rest of the UK. Northern Ireland's social services have developed against a backdrop of a contested nation and civil unrest. 'The Troubles' and political uncertainty have resulted in social services being located under the direction of the Department of Health and Social Services and managed as an integrated service with health by Health and Social Services Boards since 1973. Wales, since devolution, has seen a great deal of policy activity and a divergence from the English context, including a decision not to promote the development of Children's Trusts. A particular issue within the Welsh context has been the promotion of the Welsh language and the need to promote Welsh-speaking services for those whose first language is Welsh. (For a fuller discussion on social work in the British Isles see Payne and Shardlow, 2002.)

This has been a rather long introduction into the state of social work in the UK and its international context. However, this provides the background to how social work research is expected to operate and promote research-minded practice.

You might like to consider what type of setting you work in or would ideally wish to work in?

Why, have you chosen this type of setting? If you have not chosen the 'traditional' local authority department, why have you done so? If you have chosen local authority social work, what do you see as the advantages of such a system?

Reflexive
Questions

What is Research?

Up until now it has been assumed that we all have a shared understanding about what research is. The stereotypical image of the researcher emphasises what one might call the manipulative aspects of the role – designing questionnaires or engaging in statistical analysis, writing incomprehensible reports, detached from reality and living in an ivory tower. Within such a perspective, social work practitioners may experience research as irrelevant and inaccessible and at worst as the process of being manipulated for the researcher's career enhancement.

What is your image of the researcher?
How do you define research?
Who undertakes research?
Which organisations undertake research?

Reflexive
Questions

As Hughes (1990) notes, research is carried out to discover something about the world and is an activity that many of us engage in daily as we seek to find out something that we did not previously know. What makes research different from other ways of finding out is its processes that are characterised as systematic and disciplined. As Becker and Bryman (2004: 14) observe, for something to count as research:

the enquiry must be done in a systematic, disciplined and rigorous way, making use of the most appropriate research methods and designs to answer specific research questions.

This technical definition ignores the value-driven nature of social work. At one level this does not matter and that research should be seen as standing objectively outside the practice milieu. However, to do so would be to privilege the researcher's perspective of the world. Research, like social work, is value-driven. As Rosen has noted:

The selection of a research topic and corresponding method are in many ways a life choice. They are indicative of what the researcher believes as important to 'see' in the world, to investigate and to know. An individual choice of topic and method corresponds to his or her ontological vision, his or her model of being. (Rosen, 1991: 21)

The question of which topic to research is not purely a technical question, but also a philosophical one. In deciding upon a topic to research and the resultant research methodology, the researcher is making a statement about human nature, society and the relationship between the two. Likewise, we need to acknowledge that research sponsors and funders will target funding on particular aspects of social life and organisations and will only allow access to particular aspects of their organisations. It is more likely to be easier to gain access to research how social workers could become more efficient and effective, as opposed to similarly examining the impact of senior managers, lead councillors or management boards.

Coupled with this, there is also the vested interest in organisations to ensure that research reports reflect a positive view of the organisation. Recently I was 'invited' to meet with an assistant director immediately prior to a research report being agreed for publication. The local authority did not like what the report said about their management team or style and felt that the report was too sympathetic and accepting of the views of their frontline staff. The local authority wanted the final pages of the report rewritten before they would agree to their organisation's data being included in the report. Following long and torturous negotiations, a compromise was agreed that allowed both parties to retain their integrity. This can become even more invidious when research commissioners block publication because they do not want the results of the research to be in the public arena. Such checks and balances can be helpful in ensuring accuracy in research, but at the extreme they can also result in compromising and undermining the veracity of the research process and any contributions to knowledge the research may make. Researchers and organisational commissioners need to be clear at the beginning of the research process to identify the parameters around publication. These need to ensure that research publications do not become blocked because the results are not positive whilst researchers also need to be able to convince organisations of their political awareness, accuracy and honesty of their work. This topic is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Research Mindedness

In order to address these difficulties, Everitt et al. (1992) identified 'research mindedness' as a means of enhancing good social work practices. They also

Why Research for Social Work?

suggested that social work and social work research could be conceptualised as interrelated processes. In order to achieve this they identified three principles of 'research mindedness':

- A participatory/developmental rather than a social control model of social work.
- Anti-oppressive values are applied.
- Genuine partnerships are established with those whom social work serves.

These principles are in keeping with our previous discussions on the ethical nature of social work. It emphasises that research subjects are valued in their own right and not purely viewed as objects to be exploited for the further advancement of the researcher. This view recognises that the basis of 'knowing' is shared and should be made explicit between researcher, informant and the research audience. They also argue that subjectivity viewed as personal experience, or worldview, is valued and is seen as integral to the research experience. Everitt et al. (1992) did not make a claim for a definitive methodology but rather some tentative approximations and provisional suggestions.

Social Work Research: A Different Type of Research?

Having identified the nature of social work, research and research mindedness, it is important to question whether there is a distinct form of research that can be termed 'social work research'.

What do you think? Is there a distinct form of research that can be termed 'social work research'? If so, how would you identify whether a research project constituted social work research or just social research?

Reflexive
Questions

It is clear that we have social work academics that conduct social research into social work problems. It is also clear that others, who are not social workers, also research many of these issues, like domestic violence, child protection or disability. It is thus worth asking what makes the difference between a social work researcher and a non-social work researcher? Dominelli (2005) argues that there is a distinctive research approach that can be defined as social work research. In particular she identifies the following key features Dominelli (2005: 230):

- A change orientation.
- A more egalitarian relationship between themselves and those who are the objects of their research.

- Accountability to 'clients'/service users for the products of their work.
- A holistic engagement with the different aspects of the problem(s) of people they are investigating.

None of the above can be viewed as purely exclusive to social work. However, when they are combined they can be viewed as typifying the nature and scope of social work. Social work research thus aims not only to support practice but also to transform it. As Orme and Shemmings (2010: 17) recognise, social work research 'can be *for* social work, *on* social work, or *from* social work that is *by* social workers' (italics in original). Lyons (2000) suggests that the distinctiveness of social work research can be identified by its contribution to knowledge production, knowledge transmission and knowledge application. In other words, social work research's contribution to the social sciences knowledge base, its contribution to social work teaching and learning and, most importantly, its contribution to practice.

Shaw (2007: 663) challenges the focus on the distinctiveness of social work research, suggesting that social work research will be poorer if we overemphasise its distinctiveness and instead challenges us to focus less on 'what makes social work distinctive' and more on 'what might make it distinctively good?' It is the challenge of this book, to help you the reader, to be able to appreciate and utilise how research can help you to become a more effective social worker. Integral to this is how to become a research-minded social worker in order to maximise the benefits of social work research to support critically your practice and to generate potential research questions for the future.

Chapter Summary

The future of social work is both uncertain and exciting. The previous certainties have been stripped away whilst the future remains in the balance. It has been argued that social work and social work research are value-driven activities, which are both contested and contestable. This is why it is so important for you as a social worker to become research minded if you wish to be able to engage in debates about the effectiveness of your practice, to demonstrate the impact of government policies on your cases or to advocate on behalf of some of the most disadvantaged groups within our society. As a social worker it will not be enough to say that you believe something to be true, you need to be able to explain the evidence for your belief whether this is in a contested child-care case or an accommodation review for a service user with a physical disability.

The Organisation of the Book

The book seeks to place social work research within a framework for research-minded practitioners who are able to see the challenges and opportunities provided by a better understanding of research and its potential. Whilst the book is written with a clear direction and format, it can be read from beginning to end or each chapter individually as each is self-contained, focusing on specific aspects of social work research. The reader should use the book in whatever way best suits their purpose – writing an assignment, inquisitiveness or trying to find out some specific piece of information – whilst remembering that the positions taken by the author in this book are just that: positions that the author believes are justifiable but that you the reader are invited to challenge and to critique in order to develop your own position. Research-minded practitioners don't just accept something because it is written in a book but because the supporting evidence justifies the conclusion(s).

The book seeks to ground social work research in practice, its context, concepts and key issues. In order to maximise the benefit of each of the following chapter's, readers should regularly reflect on the following key questions:

How does this help my understanding of social work and research?
What are the implications of this for my practice?
How might I become more research minded?
How do we develop a research mindedness within our team and/or service?

**Reflexive
Questions**

Chapter 2 begins by locating social work as a practice discipline and examines the business of social work research. This lays the foundation for Chapter 3 concerning 'The Philosophy of Social Research' and in particular its major paradigms and how these impact upon research design and the research question. Chapter 4 then returns to the 'Ethical Issues in Social Work Research', part of which we have begun to discuss in this chapter. This chapter explores whether social work research can be seen to have a specific research code and identifies the major ethical issues before, during and after a research project.

The book then moves onto identifying key issues in social work research, beginning in Chapter 5 with a focus on 'Research and Anti-Oppressive Practice', highlighting research considerations in relation to sites of oppression whilst seeking to develop an anti-oppressive research practice. Chapter 6 examines the nature of 'Evidence-Based Practice'. Evidence-based practice is defined and explored from a medical model perspective before assessing its applicability to

probation and social work. The politicisation of evidence-based social work is investigated along with the claims for a hierarchical evidence-base. The next chapter, Chapter 7, considers the growing importance given to 'Getting Research into Practice' and the barriers and drivers in relation to this.

Chapter 8, titled 'Service Users and Research', investigates the trend towards involving service users in research and identifies some of the practical and ethical problems for doing this whilst also seeking to identify when this would be appropriate and when it would not. The chapter also begins to identify when such an approach should be used and begins to examine what are its costs and benefits. Chapter 9, titled 'Interdisciplinary Contributions to Social Work and Social Work Research', identifies the growing importance of interprofessional practice and interprofessional research, especially as this is now an integral part of the requirements for the new social work award. The final chapter, Chapter 10, 'Whither Social Work Research', provides a summary of the previous chapters and then examines the future for social work research.

Suggested Reading

D'Cruz, H. and Jones, M. (2004) *Social Work Research: Ethical and Political Contexts*. London: Sage.

A very readable introduction, grounded in the belief of improving social work practice through the application of research.

Orme, J. and Shemmings, D. (2010) *Developing Research-Based Social Work Practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

A very useful introduction into how research can improve the quality of research and the encouragement of 'reflective research practitioners'.