Welcome to the first quarterly WCEC Newsletter

FOREGROUND BY CENTRE DIRECTOR, PROFESSOR ADRIAN EDWARDS

Since opening on 1 March 2021, the Wales COVID-19 Evidence Centre (hosted by PRIME Centre Wales), have been busy getting our work programme underway, and we are now delivering the early outputs.

Our first task was to identify the top priorities for the research questions that we need to address. We consulted widely across Welsh Government, NHS and social care boards, patient and public groups, including SUPER, and with various professional bodies, royal colleges etc.

We are working closely with government stakeholders to agree our work programme, including the Welsh Government COVID-19 Technical Advisory Group and its subgroups. The programme is continually being reviewed and updated for emerging priorities.

We are now working with our collaborating partners to undertake the reviews that are needed to inform policy and practice. We are also supporting primary research about COVID-19.

I particularly want to thank everyone who has contributed as stakeholders to the process, and especially the members of the brilliant Core Team, and PRIME colleagues involved in the review teams and knowledge mobilisation. Together we are making a difference. It builds on the excellent platform of PRIME’s track record over 6 years, and demonstrates the essential value of our applied research skills to dealing with the biggest challenge for health and health care that we have all known. Diolch yn fawr.

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With the remit of ‘good questions, answered quickly’, we work with our stakeholders to prioritise questions that are answerable from the research evidence, and which help us to understand the impact of the pandemic on the health and care delivery systems in Wales, ensure that we meet the greatest health and wider needs of communities and people in Wales, and help us to recover and rebuild.

Research questions are prioritised according to relevance (to the current or future COVID-19 context in Wales), importance of the evidence gap (scale, cost, consequence), potential benefits, potential for translation into practice and need for timely information (urgency).

Our initial Work Programme, describes our processes to date (from March 2021), and will be updated as the work programme continues to develop.

We also present a summary of the process, including:
- Our process for consulting key stakeholders in health and care to identify the most important COVID-19 related evidence needs and priorities in Wales – the Stakeholder Research Question Prioritisation Exercise (ScOPE).
- An outline of our Rapid Evidence Review process.
- The research questions adopted onto the WCEC work programme including the stage of progress.
- A timeline for the reviews.

It is important to note that the WCEC work programme is iterative, and the research question prioritisation process is ongoing. We will continue to assess and incorporate research needs and priorities as they are submitted by stakeholder groups.

The work programme will also be informed by ‘horizon scanning’ procedures, so that it is reactive to emerging and changing priorities.

View and download the work programme from the WCEC website.

Priority Research Questions identified via existing priorities, ScOPE and horizon scanning.

Through consultation with stakeholders, we have identified a number of high priority question topics for inclusion in the current WCEC Work Programme. The full list of initial questions for inclusion in our Work Programme and progress to date is outlined in Table 2.

The question topics proposed for inclusion in the initial work programme cover the following broad themes:

**Evidence briefings**

The Wales COVID-19 Evidence Centre (WCEC) is holding fortnightly evidence briefing events to share the findings of each of their reports and discuss knowledge mobilisation and implications for policy and practice with stakeholders.

The briefings are an opportunity for rapid dissemination and knowledge sharing to support evidence-based policy making.

For example WCEC vaccines inequalities RES is referenced in the ‘Advice on Vaccine Passports’ from the Welsh Government Technical Advisory Cell, and also in the face coverings review.
Our reports

RAPID EVIDENCE SUMMARY’ (RES), ‘RAPID REVIEW’ (RR)

The Centre produces reports about the questions that we answer. These reports provide information about currently available research evidence. Often people do not know which are trustworthy sources of information. As a group that is funded by Welsh Government, we want to ensure our processes are transparent and our reports are available for everyone who may find them useful.

We currently produce two types of report: The first report for each question is a ‘Rapid Evidence Summary’ (RES), which is produced in about one week. The aim of the RES is to provide some early information and inform the next stage of our work. If sufficient research information is available, and our stakeholders require further information, then the second stage involves conducting a ‘Rapid Review’ (RR). The RRs are typically conducted in one to two months.

Due to the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic, our reports are produced very rapidly to ensure that they can inform policy and practice in a timely manner. The rapid production of these reports means that while the information is useful, there may be limitations. The RR reports will be published after completion. The earlier RES reports can be made available on request (and prior to completion of the RR if required urgently).

You can view our full list of reports to get the most up to date information about our reports and to download them. Please note as reports are being produced rapidly this list is updated frequently. To ensure you have the latest version please visit the WCEC webpage to check. You can also request the list and reports to be sent directly to your inbox by contacting us at WC19EC@cardiff.ac.uk.

Our recent reports include (click to link):

- The effectiveness of home monitoring using pulse oximetry in people with COVID-19 symptoms to guide future management (RES_00005).
- Vaccination uptake (barriers/facilitators and interventions) in adults from underserved or hard-to-reach communities (RES_00006).
- Face coverings to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (RR_00007).

Infographic to illustrate findings from the rapid review: The effectiveness of alternative education delivery strategies for undergraduate and postgraduate medical, dental, nursing and pharmacy education during the COVID-19 pandemic (RR_00004).
DECEMBER 7, 12:30-15:00

We are delighted to announce that registration is open for the first WCEC symposium:

*The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, children and young people*

7th December 2021, 12:30-15:00 (subject to change).

The aim of this symposium will be to share findings and discuss the WCEC rapid evidence reports around the impact of COVID-19 on education, children, and young people.

This will be a virtual event (Teams webinar). Registration link [here](#). For further information contact: WC19EC@Cardiff.ac.uk

#WalesCovidEvidence

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**WCEC Evidence into Practice Symposium**

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#WalesCovidEvidence

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**Wales COVID-19 Evidence Centre Evidence into Practice symposium – Programme**

**Date:** 7 December 2021  **Time:** 12:30 – 15:00  **Location:** Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:30 – 12:40</td>
<td>Welcome and introduction to the Wales COVID-19 Evidence Centre Professors Adrian Edwards, Director, Wales COVID-19 Evidence Centre</td>
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<td>12:40 – 12:50</td>
<td>Opening - Euned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services</td>
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<td>12:50 – 13:10</td>
<td>Impact of educational and other restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic on children aged 3–11 years - Helen Morgan, Specialist Unit for Review Evidence</td>
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<td>13:10 – 13:30</td>
<td>Supporting learning and wellbeing among 16–19-year-old learners who have experienced significant disruption in their education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic - Deborah Edwards, Wales Centre for Evidence Based Care</td>
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<td>13:30 – 13:50</td>
<td>Alternative education delivery strategies for undergraduate and postgraduate medical, dental, nursing and pharmacy education during the COVID-19 pandemic - Liz Gillen, Wales Centre for Evidence Based Care</td>
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<td>13:50 – 14:10</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>14:10 – 14:30</td>
<td>Infection prevention and control measures applied in education and childcare settings for children - Chukuwu Okolie, Public Health Wales</td>
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<td>14:30 – 14:50</td>
<td>COVID-19 disinfection methods (including ozone machines) in educational settings for children and young people - Judith Ciotanos, Wales Centre for Evidence Based Care</td>
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<td>14:00 – 15:00</td>
<td>Closing – Professor Adrian Edwards, Director, Wales COVID-19 Evidence Centre</td>
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**Meet the team**

The WCEC works with partners: Health Technology Wales, Wales Centre for Evidence-Based Care, Specialist Unit for Review Evidence Centre, SAIL databank, Public Health Wales, Bangor Institute for Health & Medical Research in conjunction with Health and Care Economics Cymru, and the Public Health Wales Observatory.

The Evidence Centre’s Core Team is made up of PRIME colleagues – Dr Natalie Joseph-Williams, Dr Alison Cooper, Dr Ruth Lewis, Dr Micaela Gal and Angela Watkins. We also work with Dr Becki Law, formerly of PRIME and now in Welsh Government. We are joined by Jane Greenwell, Ffion Coomber, and Natasha Hulley to support the administration.

Other PRIME colleagues have important roles in the review teams with which we work, notably the Bangor team (Clare Wilkinson, Annie Hendry and others) and Kate Lifford and Freya Davies in the SURE team at Cardiff.

To enable us to do this work we are joined by Drs Deni Williams (also very welcome to be returning to us), Holly Peters and Joy Macfadzean (continuing in the Division of Population Medicine). Our Knowledge Mobilisation Board is chaired by Andrew Carson-Stevens.