

**Education and Lifelong Learning Committee**

**Educational Research Capacity in Wales: A Review**

**By**

**John Furlong and Patrick White**

**Cardiff Centre for Educational Research School of Social Sciences, Cardiff  
University**

**UCET Cymru**

**BERA**

**Cardiff University**

**The need for a Review**

- Rising expectations about evidence based policy and practice
- The promise of '*The Learning Country*'
- Developments in England

**Developments in England**

**The DfES have:**

- More than doubled research funding;
- Set up new opportunities for teachers to undertake research;
- Established the Eppi-Centre;
- Established CERUK
- Set up the National Educational Research Forum (NERF).

- Funders forum
- Foresight exercise
- Research priorities group
- Work on 'capacity'
- Work on quality
- Promote dissemination and accessibility

## **Undertaking the Review**

- How we worked
- An inclusive definition of educational research
- An inclusive definition of 'capacity'

## **What is educational research for?**

- To provide robust evidence in order to 'guide' policy and practice;
- Enter into the 'policy cycle' at a number of points

## **Research in the 'policy cycle'**

- **As part of policy planning**
- Putting issues on the policy agenda
- Foresight planning
- Reviewing what is already known
- **As part of policy development**
- Piloting new initiatives

- Developing specialised instruments
- **As part of evaluation**
- Finding out what worked, what did not work
- Linking back to policy planning
- Can be used as part of professional development through practitioner or action research;
- Has a key role in the maintenance and development of higher education.

**Key question: How well does educational research in Wales fulfil these various roles?**

### **Capacity to undertake research**

- The majority of HE based educational research currently takes place in schools and departments of education;
- Overall, RAE ratings are not strong;
- Only about one third of staff are formally designated as 'research active';
- Very little training for ongoing career in educational research

### **Funding:**

Funding levels are low compared with UK and OECD

- QR = £1m pa
- Projects = £1m pa
- Other = £500,000 pa
- Comparisons with England = £3.75 or £4.9 m pa

**QR funding – 3% of UK total**

See Annex 1

## **QR funding**

- QR funding comes from
- RAE ratings
- Numbers of 'research active' staff
- Total 'education' RAE staff in Wales 80
- Whole of Wales therefore currently gets less than
- Warwick
- Exeter
- Reading
- Strathclyde
- London Institute of Education

## **Research funding to Welsh HEIs by funding body , 1998-2000**

See Annex 2

## **Educational research projects in Wales 1998-2000 by 'focus topic'**

See Annex 3

## **Educational research projects in Wales 1998-2000 by 'educational setting'**

See Annex 4

**Overall:**

Concerns about the size and fragility of the system

## Capacity to use research

- Research in the policy cycle
- inconsistent
- Linkages and relationships
- weak links and competition
- Practitioner research
- Limited but some important new developments by GTC Wales
- Research in higher education
- greater proportion of teachers in Wales educated up to Masters levels and beyond in HEIs with little or no research culture

## Recommendations – towards a National Strategy

### Increasing capacity to undertake research:

- **Make the most of current strengths and achievements**
  - **Increase participation**
    - Those with little current research profile
    - Other departments
  - **Improve infrastructure**
    - Funders and HEIs
  - **Address gaps in expertise**
    - Funders and HEIs
  - **Develop better networks**
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- **Increase investment**
    - NAFW (£500-700,000 pa) with funding strategy to develop capacity
    - HEFCW – targeted strategic research development
  - **Develop better links with England**
  - **Consider establishing body to discuss research priorities**

### Increasing capacity to use research

- NAFW to lead by example using research in all phases of the 'policy cycle' and set targets for other educational bodies;
- NAFW and GTC(W) to ensure understanding and using research is integrated in every

phase of teacher education and CPD;

- GTC(W) and LEAs committed to increasing capacity in every school and college to use research