

Messages from research: finding the evidence

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Acknowledgements

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Outline

- Brief overview of the work of the Research and Reviews Team at SCIE
- Why we need evidence
- SCIE's approach to gathering evidence
- Some issues in this
- Our response to these

Who are R + R?

- SCIE has two main arms of work:
- **Communications:**
- PR
- Events eg. roadshows,
- Publishing

Who are R +R (2)

- **Knowledge services:**
 - Practice Development Team
 - Knowledge Management Team
 - Research and Reviews Team
- E-Learning

Work of R + R

- Commissioning and Project Management
- Some primary research eg 'minimising risk'
- Lead on particular specialist areas
- Methodological support within SCIE
- Methodological development
- Collaboration with outside stakeholders –
Social work education/users/practitioners/
journals

Some relevant questions

- Why do we need evidence?
- What is evidence?
- How do we get it?
- What do we do with it?

Why do we need evidence?

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Why do we need evidence (2)

- Knowledge is power – knowing what we know and what basis we know it

Why do we need evidence (3)

- We intervene as practitioners, policy makers or managers, in the lives of vulnerable people
- We need to ensure that we know what we are doing and that we are doing more good than harm
- Vulnerable people have the right not to be the ‘victims’ of untested and possibly harmful interventions, however well-intentioned

Recently in the news

6 people in a critical condition in Northwick
Park Hospital

Remember this guy?



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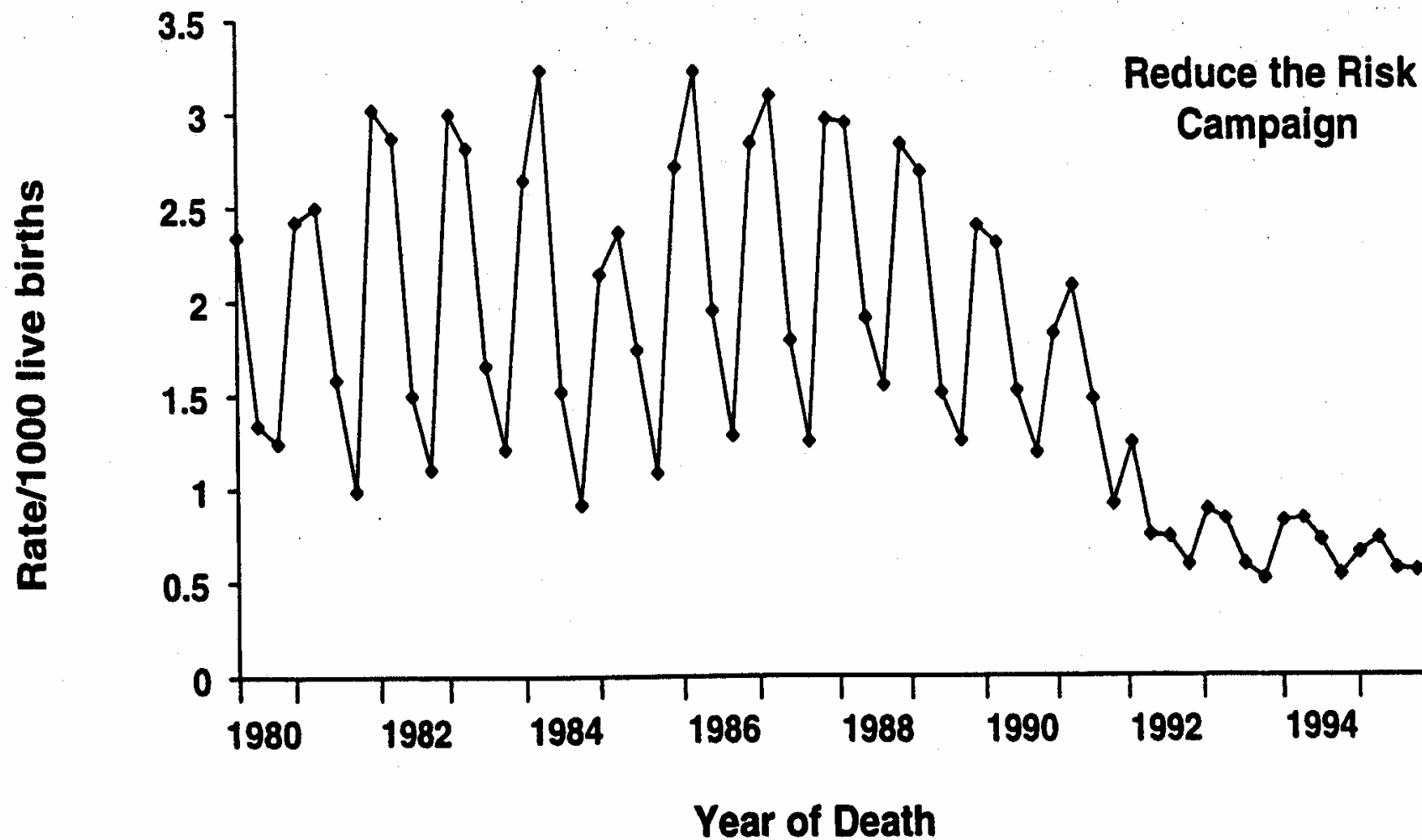
back. There are two disadvantages to a baby's sleeping on his back. If he vomits, he's more likely to choke on the vomitus. Also, he tends to keep his head turned toward the same side—usually toward the center of the room. This may flatten that side of his head. It won't hurt his brain, and the head will gradually straighten out, but it may take a couple of years. If you start early, you may be able to get him used to turning his head to both sides by putting his head where his feet were the time before, each time you put him to bed. Then if there is one part of the room he

I think it is preferable to accustom a baby to sleeping on his stomach from the start if he is willing. He may change later when he learns to turn over.

Extract from publicity prepared for the UK 'Reduce the Risk' Campaign in the early 1990s

“The risk of cot death is reduced if babies are **NOT** put on the tummy to sleep. Place your baby on the back to sleep.....Healthy babies placed on their backs are not more likely to choke.”

Figure 3: Sudden Infant Death (SID) incidence (live birth to one year) by quarter. England and Wales 1980-1995



Int. J. Epidemiol. Advance Access published April 20, 2005

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International Journal of Epidemiology
doi:10.1093/ije/dyi088

Infant sleeping position and the sudden infant death syndrome: systematic review of observational studies and historical review of recommendations from 1940 to 2002

Ruth Gilbert,^{1*} Georgia Salanti,² Melissa Harden¹ and Sarah See^{1,3}

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“Advice to put infants to sleep on the front for nearly half a century was contrary to evidence available from 1970 that this was likely to be harmful. Systematic review of preventable risk factors for SIDS from 1970 would have led to earlier recognition of the risks of sleeping on the front and might have prevented over 10 000 infant deaths in the UK and at least 50 000 in Europe the USA and Australasia.”

Ruth Gilbert et al. Int J Epidemiol, 2005

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More examples

‘Scared Straight’

A good idea with many benefits: reduce offending, occupy prisoners usefully, cheap intervention...

TABLE 1: Effects of Scared Straight Programs on Participants (official data only, direction of first effect reported, N = 7) from Petrosino et al, 2000

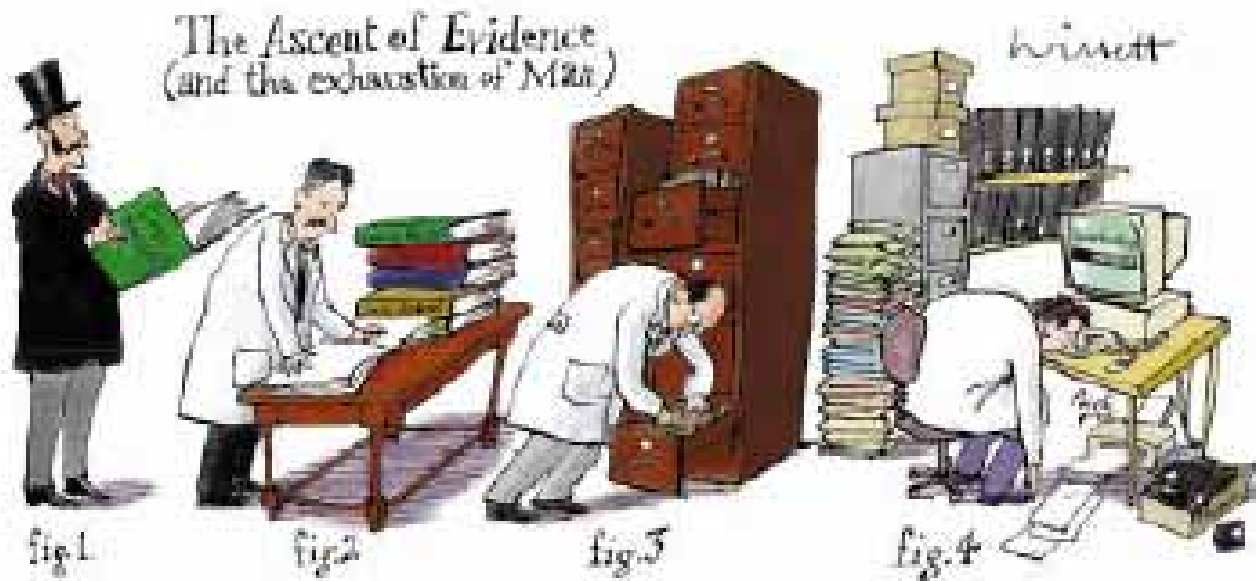
<i>Year, Author</i>	<i>Type of Data</i>	<i>Time Interval</i>	<i>% change</i>
1967, Michigan Dept of Corrections	% delinquent	6 months	+ 26% increase in failure
1979, Greater Egypt Regional Planning & Development Commission	% contacted by police	5 to 15 months	+ 5% increase in failure
1979, Yarborough	% committing new offences	3 months	+ 1% increase in failure
1981, Orchowsky and Taylor	% with new juvenile court in takes	6 months	+ 2% increase in failure
1981, Vreeland	% with officially recorded delinquency	6 months	+ 11% increase in failure
1982, Finckenauer	% with new offences	6 months	+ 30% increase in failure
1983, Lewis	Percent with new arrests	12 months	+ 14% increase in failure



So we do need evidence....


- But... where to get it?

Information overload (1) ?





Information overload (2) ?

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[Advanced Search](#)
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Search:  the web  pages from the UK

Web Results 1 - 10 of about **564,000,000** for [social care](#). (0.09 seconds)

SCIE principles

SCIE's contribution to a modern welfare system is to create effective ways of using knowledge to enhance policy and practice, and to make knowledge the engine for changing services.

The concept of evidence based practice

- Individual experience is not always reliable on its own
- Evidence is the accumulated experience of many
- Evidence needs to be systematically collected to be valid and reliable
- Evidence based practice is the integration of this evidence into practice
- EBP becoming a cornerstone of policymaking in various policy areas in UK and elsewhere

- What is evidence in social care?
- What kind of knowledge do we need??

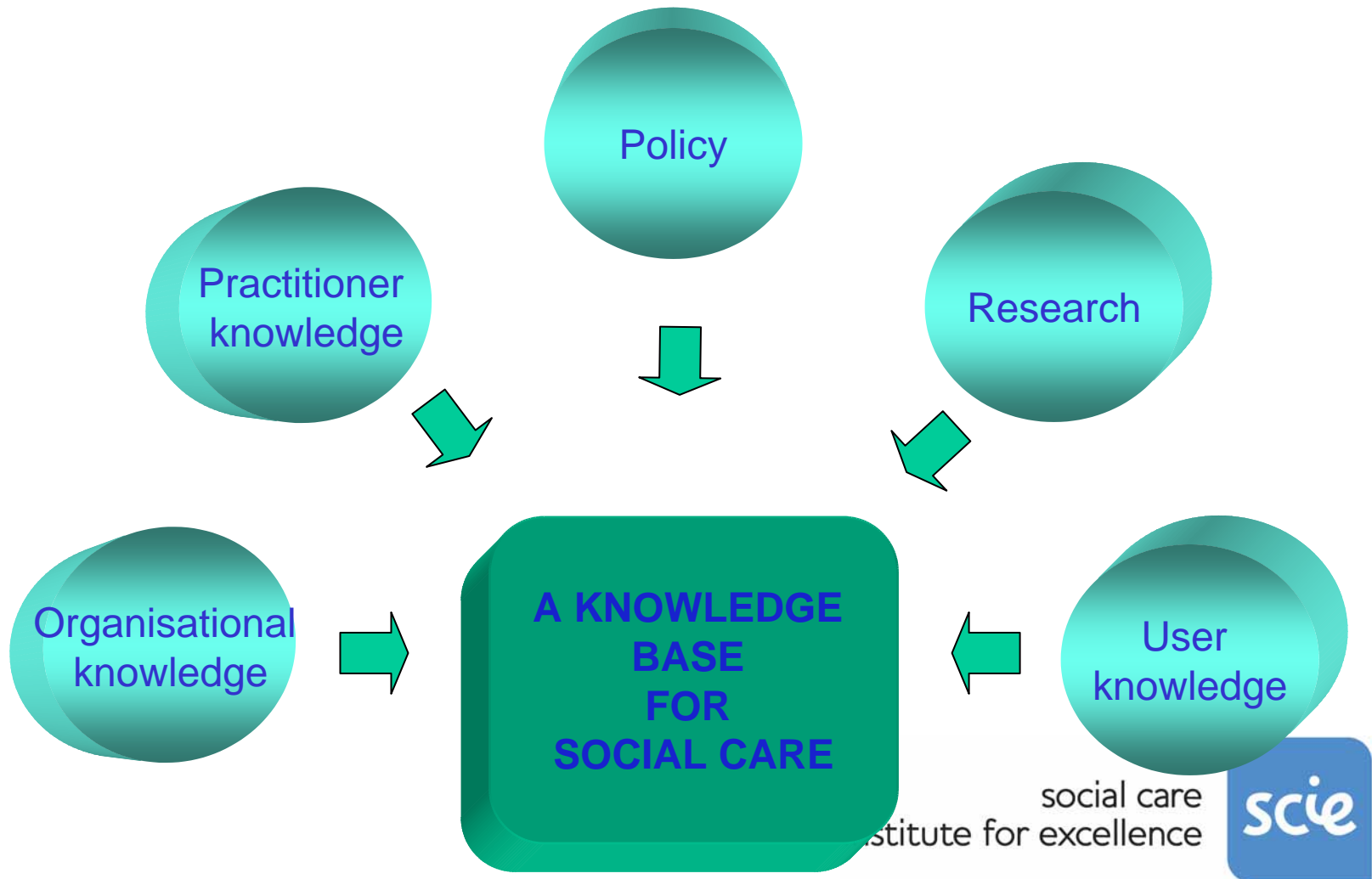
According to those criteria....

- Accumulated experience
- Systematically collected

And also:

- Relevant to the question
- Relevant to the needs of service users

5 sources of knowledge



Main voices..

- Service users and carers
- Practitioners
- Research

Service user and carer views

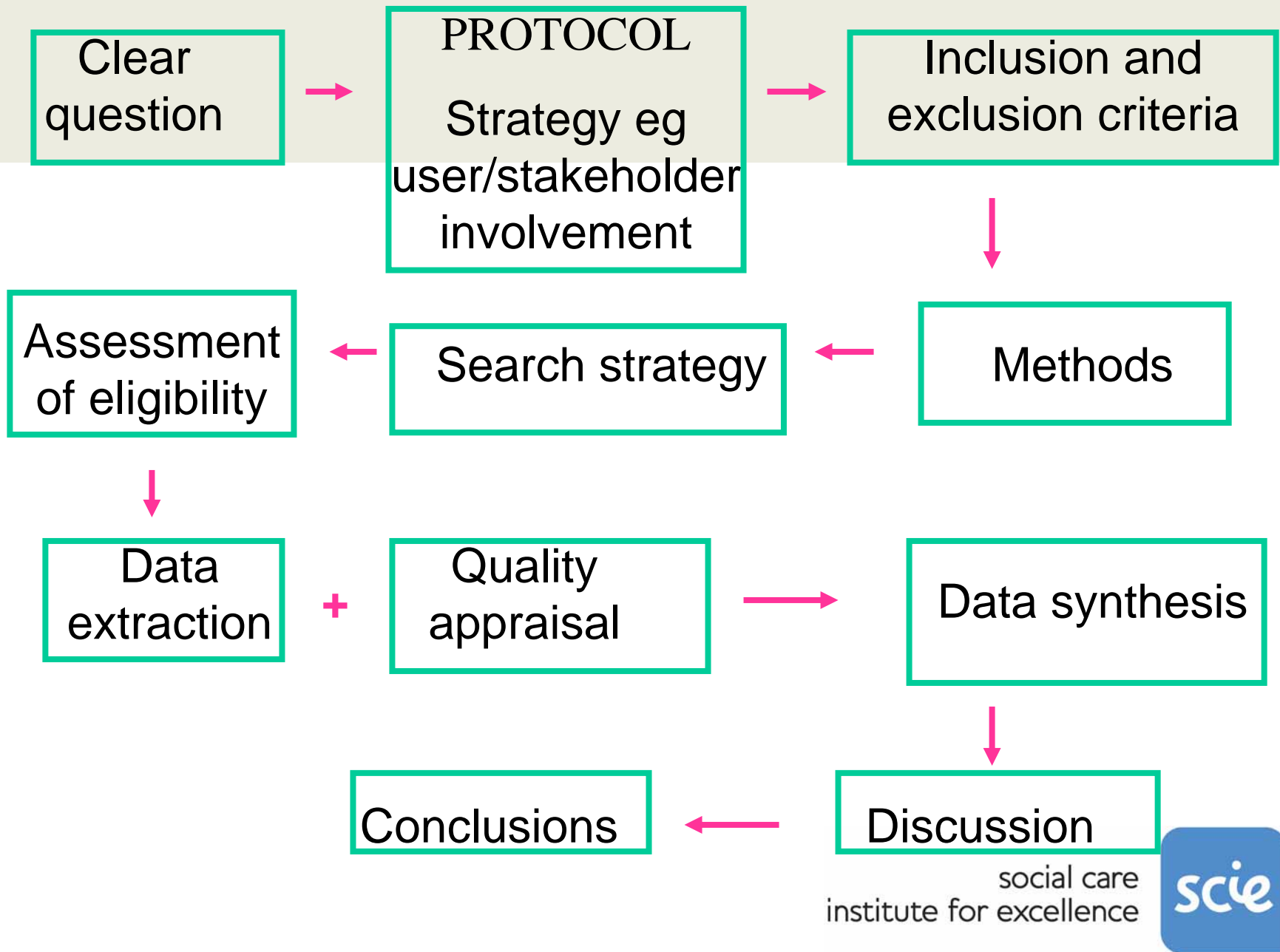
- From research evidence (participant views about services being evaluated)
- Direct input into management of individual SCIE projects
 - : question definition, outcome prioritisation
- Direct input into scoping and prioritising SCIE's work

Practitioner views

- Surveys of practice in field
- From research evidence (practitioner views about services/needs)
- Direct input into management of individual SCIE projects
 - : question definition, outcome prioritisation
- Direct input into scoping and prioritising SCIE's work

Research evidence

- Often synthesised into Research Briefings or Research Reviews
- But: research in social work isn't always geared to generating evidence...
- So: it's not always easy to gather the right kind of research messages...



Issues in evidence for social work

- Well – not all research is empirical. To know what works we need empirical research evidence
- More rigorous evaluation of interventions
- Non empirical research can be useful even if it doesn't tell us what works
- Much research not published in UK so not necessarily relevant

Quality assessment

- What messages we can take from research depend on the quality of the research
- This is because if research is low quality it is harder to believe the results
- Assessment of quality has been focused mainly on empirical research..

An old saying.....

..... Rubbish in.... Rubbish out

What are we doing about this?

Systematic mapping

- A new technique that we are developing that enables us to map out all the published work in a particular field, even if it isn't suitable to include in a research review
- This also enables us to identify the gaps in research, and the questions that need answering

TAPUPAS- a generic standard for appraising knowledge?

- **T**ransparency - is it open to scrutiny?
- **A**ccuracy - is it plausible?
- **P**urposivity - is it fit for purpose?
- **U**tility - is it fit for use?
- **P**ropriety - is it legal and ethical?
- **A**ccessibility - is it intelligible?
- **S**pecificity - does it meet source specific standards?

Research infrastructure

- Compared to other sectors, social work/social care research is under funded
- There is no overall vision of the needs of the research field
- Therefore no strategic planning
- No structure into which to feed identified gaps in research
- Producer led
- SCIE is hoping to take a lead in developing this infrastructure

Reporting quality standards

- We are working with editors of some academic social work journals to try to raise the standards of reporting of research in the academic literature
- This will enable clearer assessments to be made of the relevance and validity of published work, and have a direct impact on the strength of the messages we can take from research

Methodological development

- New guidelines for research reviews (2006)
- Systematic mapping – 2nd pilot (2006)
- Further work on TAPUPAS (2006)
- Further work on methods for involving users and carers in review work (2006)
- Increase in profile of practitioners involved in shaping our projects (2006..)

Onwards and upwards....

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