Evidence from Elsewhere:

Gathering, analysing and using other people's evidence

An Evidence for Success supplementary guide

March 2017

Contents:

Introduction

Purpose of this document

Evidence from Elsewhere aims to provide easy to follow, step-by-step guidance and resources to support third sector organisations to gather and use evidence which has been produced by others. This is known as 'secondary evidence'.

This guide has been divided into four parts:

- **Part 1** explores the importance of secondary evidence. It contains information on what we mean by secondary evidence and why it might be useful for your organisation, service or project.
- **Part 2** outlines some of the key steps to help you gather secondary evidence; make sense of it, and then use the learning for your own purposes. It includes some examples from other organisations to help illustrate some of the points.
- **Part 3** has some 'top tips' to help you develop your own approach to gathering, analysing and using secondary evidence.
- **Part 4** contains links to a range of sources for accessing secondary evidence along with additional resources to help you make sense of the process.

The guide also includes a **Glossary** of terms and an **Annex** with templates.

We hope that this guide will help you to embed a culture of using secondary evidence to support various activities across your organisation.

Evidence from Elsewhere details a number of actions at each step of the process but not all of them are necessary all of the time. As you become more confident using secondary evidence you will be able to identify what is relevant to your work and when.

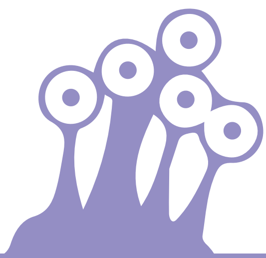
Who is this Guide for?

This guide is for anyone in the third sector who wants to use secondary evidence to inform, influence and improve policy and/or practice (internally or externally) regardless of the level of experience they currently have.

This includes:

- practitioners and service managers in the third sector
- funders and commissioners
- policy makers, researchers and planners.

The guide is primarily aimed at 'learning organisations' who are committed to both sharing their evidence about 'what works', 'what doesn't work' and 'why', and to amending their own practices on the basis of this evidence.



Where this Guide came from: Evidence for Success

In summer 2014, the Knowledge Translation Network (KTN) published its first resource: *Evidence for Success: The guide to getting evidence and using it*[1]. The guide aims to provide easy to follow steps and resources to support organisations to use primary and secondary evidence to inform policy and practice.

Research carried out for *Evidence for Success* identified demand from some third sector organisations for more detailed guidance on particular aspects of generating and using evidence. In response to this, two supplementary guides have been published by the KTN: *Collaborating with academics* (March 2016)[2], which contains some key points to consider when setting up effective links with academics, and this guide, which focuses on how to gather, analyse and use secondary evidence.

Acknowledgements

This guide was written and published by the KTN, which is made up of the following members:

- **Cath Logan** (Big Lottery Fund Scotland)
- **Patty Lozano-Casal** (Evaluation Support Scotland)
- **Cassy Rutherford** (The Robertson Trust)
- **Mark Meiklejohn** (Scottish Government Third Sector Unit)
- **Andrew Paterson** (Community Health Exchange)
- **Lesley Kelly** (Centre for Research on Families and Relationships)
- **Jenny Brotchie** (Carnegie UK Trust)
- **Celeste Berteau** (Life Changes Trust)

Special thanks to Cath and Cassy for writing the guide; to the remaining members of the Network (and past members, Jo McLaughlin and Tara Murphy) for their input and support, and to all the individuals and organisations that took the time to share their knowledge and experience of gathering, analysing and using secondary evidence.

Thank you to the Scottish Government for funding the production of the *Evidence for Success* guides, including *Evidence from Elsewhere*.

Cartoon concepts provided by Mark Meiklejohn. Illustrations provided by Patty Lozano-Casal.

[1]http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/270/
[2]http://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/340/

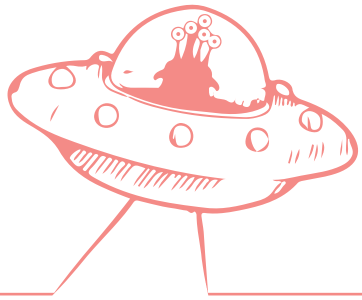
Part 1:
Understanding other people's evidence

Section 1

What is secondary evidence?

Depending on where you look you might find slightly different definitions of primary and secondary evidence. In this guide **'primary evidence'** is defined as anything which is **gathered or commissioned by your organisation about its own activities and approaches.**

This could include evidence generated by self-evaluation (for example, information you have gathered through questionnaires, surveys and observation with your service users), as well as research or an external evaluation you commission others to do about your own organisation, work or client group. It can also include analysis of your own administrative data or records.



In contrast, **'secondary evidence'** is defined as anything that has been **generated by someone other than yourself or your organisation**; for example, a research project led by an academic, an evaluation report published by a third sector organisation, or national statistics published by the Scottish Government. Secondary evidence can support, challenge or extend the primary evidence from your own work making it a valuable tool when trying to inform policy and practice both internally and externally. There is more about why you might use secondary evidence in **Section 2**.

You can get secondary evidence from:

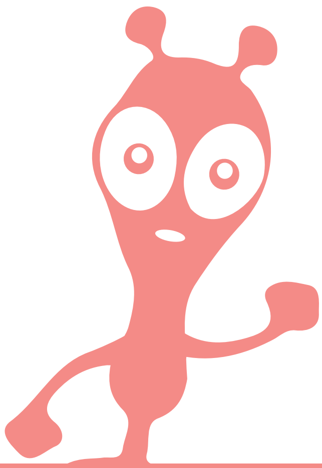
- Academics and other researchers
- Other organisations working in your sector
- Third sector intermediaries
- Government departments or other public bodies
- Producers of statistics including the Scotland's Census, opinion pollsters or academic data centres
- Expert commentators
- Funders
- Staff, trustees, volunteers or service users who might do relevant work outside your organisation.

Primary evidence

Evidence generated by an organisation about its own activities and approaches.

Examples include:

- Self-evaluation
- A practitioner's knowledge
- Commissioned research.



Secondary evidence

Evidence generated by someone other than yourself or your organisation.

Examples include:

- National statistics
- Another organisation's report
- Peer reviewed paper.

You might find secondary evidence in:

- Social media, websites, blogs, vlogs, etc.
- Books, newspapers, peer-reviewed journals, government statistics, annual reports, project reports and evaluations, statistical bulletins, etc.
- Reports of workshops, meetings, conferences and other events
- Conversations with other individuals and/ or organisations.

There are links to useful sources in **Part 4** of this guide.

Don't think you have to go to a library and search the evidence base yourself because that's a big job to do. Try and find other people who've done reviews in the area you're interested in and use intermediaries like our organisation.
Dr Sarah Morton, Centre for Research on Families and Relationships
(From *Evidence for Success*, p.13)

Using a **wide range of sources for secondary evidence** will help make your findings more robust and complete. As the diagram below shows it is in the areas of overlap that you are most likely to find the answer to your question(s).

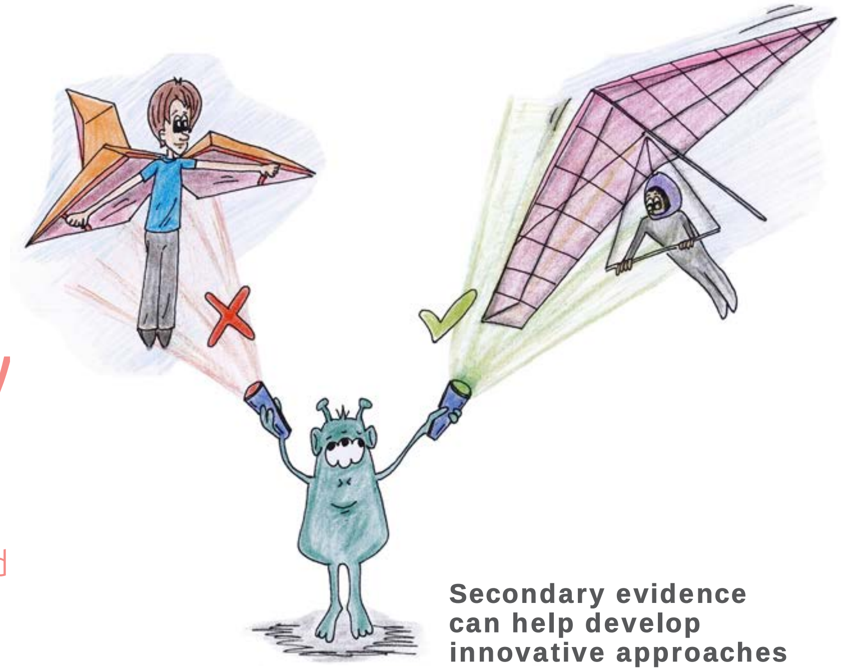
Depending on the policy area and context you are working in you may find it helpful to gather secondary evidence from countries other than Scotland and the rest of the UK. You should take care to choose situations that are similar to the one you are studying and where you can make a strong case that the approach might transfer well.

The key thing is to be clear about what you need secondary evidence for, that is, what question(s) you want it to answer. What you gather; how you gather it, and how you use it will depend on your identified need, as the rest of the guide explains.

Section 2

Why use secondary evidence?

Below are some ideas about how using secondary evidence could benefit you and your organisation. However, this is not an exhaustive list.



Secondary evidence can help develop innovative approaches

Identifying need for your intervention

When you are thinking of developing a service, or deciding whether to continue one, it is important to find out whether there is a need for it and what that need is. Secondary evidence can be a valuable tool in helping you to achieve this. For example, it can help you to understand the demographics of an area; if there are particular challenges facing your target group, and whether or not there are any gaps in current service provision which your intervention could fill.

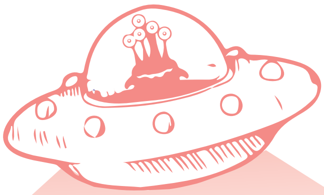
Developing innovative approaches

Using secondary evidence can be invaluable when you are developing a new approach, even if no one has done your exact intervention before. Secondary evidence that relates to a similar approach or to a specific element of your idea (for example, peer mentoring in a slightly different context) might help you to see what works, what doesn't work and why. This will help you to gauge the likelihood of success and realistic outcomes for your own intervention.

Secondary evidence can help identify if there is a need

Applying for funding

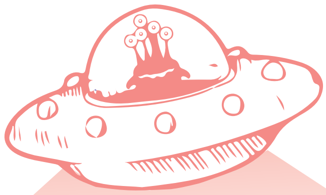
When assessing applications, funders might be looking for reassurance that there is a need for your project and that it is likely to work (or worth testing if it is an innovative idea). Being able to cite relevant secondary evidence which supports your claims may help to strengthen your application. It might also show funders that you have carefully considered the development of your project or approach and that you are adopting good practice from elsewhere.



Spotlight on: *Evidencing new and innovative projects*

As a funder, the Life Changes Trust[3] uses secondary evidence to help us make evidence-informed funding decisions. For example, an application was made to fund the use of dogs as assistance to improve the quality of life and care for people affected by dementia (PABD). Since this is a new and innovative kind of project, no equivalent evaluations existed. Therefore, we created a brief report (internally) which considered the learning from other types of assistance dog organisations and the various available evidence on the health and social benefits of dogs to people affected by dementia. Some of this information was found online; but for some, calls were made to the organisations for more information.

While not a large-scale project, gathering secondary evidence allowed us to see the potential benefits grounded in evidence and learn from comparable examples. This allowed us to be informed and strategic in our decision to fund a 'Dementia Dogs' project.



Spotlight on: *Using evidence in a funding application*

In an application to Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland's Partnership Drugs Initiative (PDI)[4], a project that supported children living with kinship carers combined primary and secondary evidence in a number of ways. For example, it drew on:

- A range of local partners' evidence from conversations with kinship carers about a lack of support in a specific area
- A mix of direct conversations with kinship carers about their needs, and information from other groups who had identified needs and concerns for kinship carers in the community
- Statistical information from the local authority about children and kinship carers.

Together, these different sources of information enabled the organisation to reflect on its own services and explore how it could be adapted to better meet the needs of the kinship carers and their families.

[3]http://www.lifechangestrust.org.uk/
[4]https://www.ltsbfoundationforscotland.org.uk/grant-programmes/partnership-drugs-initiative/

Improving the impact of your work

Secondary evidence can help you to identify which groups could benefit most from your project or service; at what point in their journey you should intervene, and what other factors need to be in place for individuals to achieve positive outcomes. This could help you to maximise the impact of your own work.

It is important to note that if your aim is to use secondary evidence to inform your future work you should also look for evidence that challenges your current way of thinking, as well as supporting it, to ensure that your decision-making process is as robust as possible.

Maximising your ability to influence policy and practice

If your organisation's primary evidence is supported by a wide body of secondary evidence it may carry more weight when you come to use it externally, particularly with regards to influencing policy and practice outside your organisation.

When reviewing secondary evidence you may also identify some gaps in the existing evidence base which your primary evidence could help to answer. This could be of use and interest to decision-makers who are trying to get as full a picture as possible about what works, what doesn't work and why.

Helping identify early indicators of impact for projects or services

Using secondary evidence from longitudinal studies can help you to demonstrate the possible long-term impact of your project by helping you identify early indicators of success within your own work, which you can then evaluate.

Influence policy with secondary evidence

This approach could also help if you are evaluating a preventative service[5] where the thing you are trying to stop from happening can take a long time to evidence.

Helping you to gather stronger primary evidence

It can be useful to consider how the findings from your own work compare to relevant data/evidence that has been generated by other individuals or organisations. This can help to strengthen your organisation's primary evidence by supporting or extending it, and enable you to draw more robust conclusions.

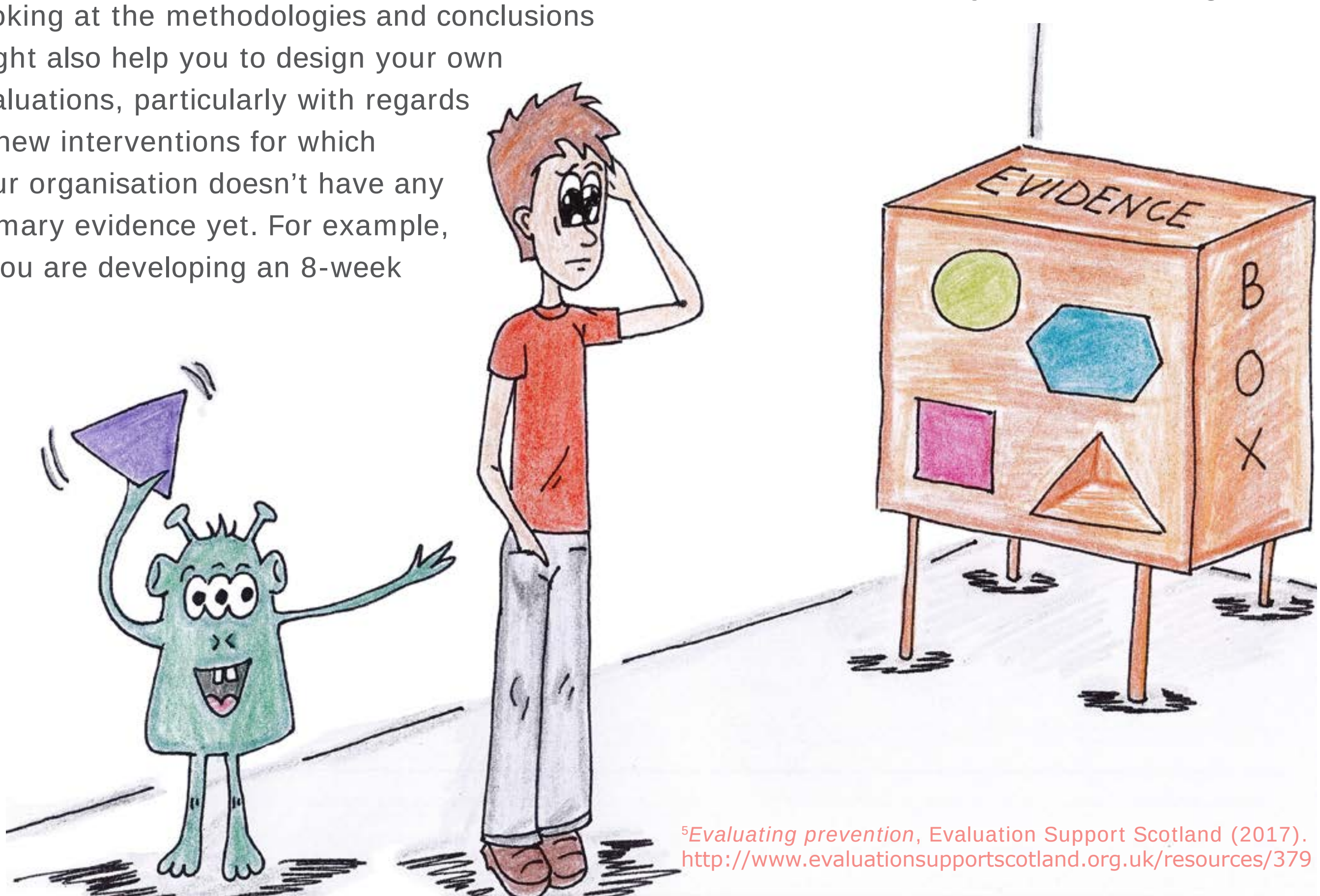
In addition to this, most secondary evidence sources will include information about the methodologies used to generate the data and the conclusions drawn. This may include information about how the data was collected and some of the challenges encountered. You can use this to inform the approaches that you then adopt for gathering your own evidence.

Looking at the methodologies and conclusions might also help you to design your own evaluations, particularly with regards to new interventions for which your organisation doesn't have any primary evidence yet. For example, if you are developing an 8-week youth project, you might want to look at the engagement rate for other similar projects. If the average is 75% of young people will stay with the project to the end, this might be an appropriate target for your own intervention.

Making the best use of your organisation's resources

There is no point in reinventing the wheel. The evidence you need or want may already be in the public sphere and harnessing that will probably require significantly less resource than attempting to generate the evidence yourself. For example, if you are wanting to see what employment rates are like in your local area you might want to use the results from the Scottish Government's Annual Population Survey (APS) rather than surveying local people yourself. This may free up staff time or money in your organisation that can then be directed elsewhere.

Consider how secondary evidence interacts with other evidence you are collecting



[5] *Evaluating prevention*, Evaluation Support Scotland (2017). http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/379

Part 2:

Gathering, analysing and using other people's evidence

The way you gather, analyse and use secondary evidence will depend on what purpose you want it to serve, that is, its intended use.

Nonetheless, there are some key principles which might help you develop your own approach. We have divided these into four key steps, which are shown in the diagram on the following page. The diagram also shows some of the activities involved in each step. Each of these four steps is explained in more detail in the relevent sections of this part of the guide.

It is important to note that the process for planning, gathering, analysing and using secondary evidence is not linear – it is circular and dynamic.

Once the process for using primary and secondary evidence has become embedded in your organisation it is likely that you will go round the cycle more than once for each project or service you deliver. You may also find that you move backwards and forwards between different parts of the cycle.

For example, as you start analysing the information you might find some gaps in your knowledge. It is completely normal and, in fact encouraged, to go back and gather more evidence at this point. This will ensure the information you end up with is as useful as possible.

The important thing is to view this as a process and not a destination.

Use

> Produce relevant outputs
> Share learning internally and externally
> Use the conclusions to inform your organisation's decision-making.

Plan

> Set the question(s)
> Identify your audience(s)
> Confirm timescales for the process
> Identify where to search
> Write list of keywords
> Identify relevant conference/experts/organisations.

Analyse

> Sift through information collated highlighting/tagging what is useful to answer your question (see 'plan' step)
> Identify pieces of evidence that support/contradict your claim(s)
> Identify gaps
> Pull together themes and conclusions.

Gather

> **Online search**
  > Run search
  > Download results for analysis
> **Offline search**
  > Record data/information from conferences/experts/organisations.

Section 1

Planning your approach to secondary evidence

The first thing to do – before you start gathering any secondary evidence – is to develop a suitable plan, including information about why you are gathering the evidence; where you think you will find it, and how you will use it. This will help to ensure the evidence you gather is as useful to you as possible.

When developing your plan for gathering secondary evidence you should consider the following questions:

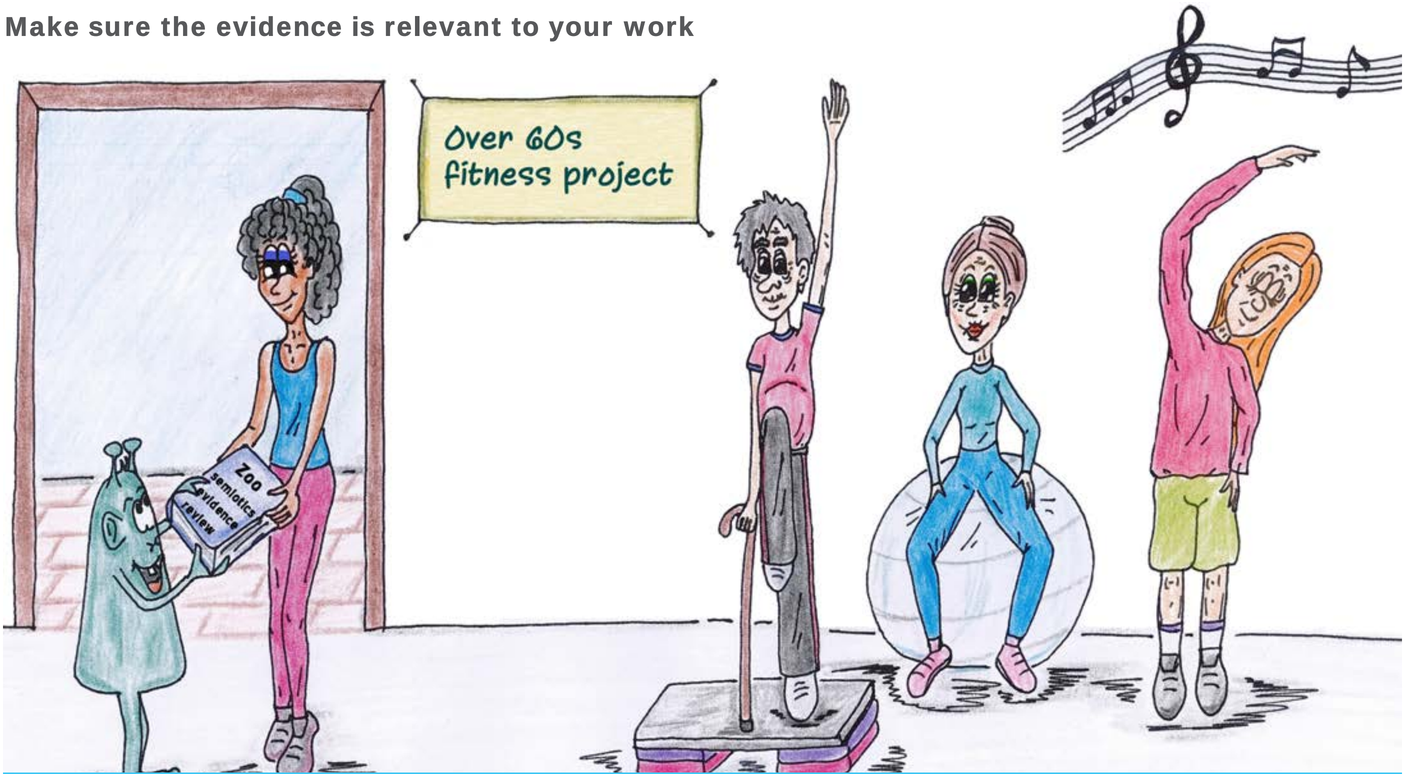
Why do you want to gather and use secondary evidence?

Are you trying to answer a specific question (for example, to help design a new service or to support a funding application) or do you want to develop a long-term plan to help your organisation to stay informed of key changes or developments in a policy area of interest? Knowing this will inform a number of other decisions you make, including the timescales for this work and where you will look to gather the evidence. It will also help you to filter out things that may be interesting but not that useful for your immediate purpose. In some cases being diverted by other types of evidence or a different area of work might be a good thing; it depends on why you are gathering the evidence in the first place and how specific your questions are.

Who is the audience for the findings (internal or external)?

This is important for thinking about what format you will share your findings in at the end. For example, will you be presenting the information at a board meeting, speaking to a colleague or publishing a report that can be shared externally? Consider what resources, including time and skills, you will need to produce different formats; for example, producing a report might take longer than writing a blog about your findings.

Make sure the evidence is relevant to your work



Should other people be involved in setting the question(s) you want secondary evidence to answer?

If you are hoping to use the evidence to influence policy and practice you should consider including the stakeholders you hope to influence when setting the questions. This will ensure that what you gather is also relevant to them.

Where and how will you search for secondary evidence?

This could involve a range of sources including attending conferences, searching academic journals and speaking to organisational contacts. Identifying your main sources early on will help you to develop a timeline for the different activities.

Depending on what level of detail you require and what skills and capacity you have internally, you might want to consider commissioning an external researcher to conduct a secondary evidence review for you.

My main sources of evidence are through personal contacts, identifying academics with a common interest, communities of practice/ professional networks, Twitter, or by building up a body of knowledge over time through ad hoc discovery of relevant evidence.
Coryn Barclay, Fife Council

What are your timescales?

It is important to think about the timescales for each step of the journey: gathering and analysing evidence from elsewhere, and using the findings. The time you allocate to each task is likely to depend on why you are looking for secondary evidence in the first place. For instance, summarising a research paper as background context for your work is quicker than a more detailed analysis of what works in order to design a completely new service. There is more on this in **Section 3**.

Some suggestions for finding secondary evidence:

- **Speak to staff and trustees** in your organisation before you begin. Find out what and who they know.
- **Do an online search.** Go to **Section 2** to find out how.
- **Speak to other organisations** that are working in a similar area about what evidence they have.
- **Attend relevant conferences** or other events.
- **Speak to organisations** such as Idox's Knowledge Exchange or What Works Centres about what you are doing; they may have already done literature reviews in an area that are relevant to your work. There are links to these and other useful organisations in **Part 4** of this guide.
- **Check** whether the Scottish Government or the Scottish Parliament have previously issued a **consultation paper or call for evidence** on your topic or a similar area. The responses to these often offer a good starting point for gathering evidence; they might contain relevant information and help you to identify other organisations you may wish to speak to.
- **Put out your own call for evidence** through intermediaries such as the Scottish Third Sector Research Forum, Voluntary Action Scotland , the Alliance for Useful Evidence or Scottish Community Development Centre.
- **Contact the authors** of any useful papers or reports that you find. They might have some other relevant evidence that you can use. Remember that you might need to pay for some articles. If you think that an article may be of use to you but you cannot afford to pay for it, try contacting the author directly. Many academics will be happy to share their findings if you ask.
- **Look at the references and bibliography** in any useful reports or papers you find. They may lead you to other sources of evidence for your work.

Having clear, realistic and proportionate milestones for your activities will help you to remain focused on the task-in-hand and to avoid becoming swamped in unnecessary secondary evidence. If you aren't sure about how long certain tasks will take seek advice from other organisations.

You also need to consider the resource implications of these activities for your organisation and how they fit alongside the other duties of the person who will be doing the searching. You may need to think about freeing up some time for staff/trustees/volunteers or enlisting the help of an external organisation.

Checklist

- ❑ **Identify what question(s)** you are seeking to answer. Is it something specific or are you doing a more general scoping exercise to see what else is out there?
- ❑ **Consider the audience(s)** for the evidence: Is it for internal or external use?
- ❑ **Identify external stakeholders** and engage with them from the outset. This includes involving them in defining the questions, where appropriate.
- ❑ **Create a plan** for gathering the evidence.
- ❑ **Set realistic deadlines** for each step of the process.
- ❑ **Decide how** you will share the learning; for example, through a funding application, a published report or an oral update in a team meeting.

Don't get lost in your research - work to milestones

Section 2

Gathering secondary evidence

Once you have developed a suitable plan you are ready to begin gathering secondary evidence. Searching online is the most common way of gathering secondary evidence, although not the only way; as previously mentioned in this guide, there are other equally useful ways of gathering secondary evidence like attending conferences or speaking to a colleague.

While searching online can be a useful approach the number of results it produces can sometimes be overwhelming. The box below provides some suggestions on how to conduct an effective online search.

Making online searches useful

Searching for common words (like 'young people') in online search engines like Google, Firefox or Internet Explorer can result in finding lots of data, much of which will be irrelevant. You can limit your search by **being specific**:

> Give the search engine **more relevant words** or, where possible, a **phrase** (in quotation marks) to find results only relevant to that combination of words; for example, 'young people reoffending rates'. If too many/few results are generated, you can refine the word string until you generate a manageable number of results. Adding phrases like 'literature review' or 'systematic review' to the end of your keywords will help you find already existing literature reviews.

> Use **BOOLEAN operators** (i.e. AND, OR, NOT) which help define the relationship among your keywords and make your request more specific. Remember that **different search engines have different rules**. In fact, some search engines:

> Read Boolean terms in one particular order; search terms linked by NOT may take precedence over terms linked by AND or OR

> Support special symbols such as: & for AND, + for OR , - for NOT

> Use different rules for basic and advanced searches.

Taking time to **read the 'help' section** of the search engine you are using may save you hours of time and frustration (*adapted from: https://library.uaf.edu/ls101-boolean*).

General purpose search engines will provide broad coverage of the web. However, if you are looking for information about a specific topic or region you will likely **achieve superior results using a specialty search engine.** For example, Google Scholar will limit the results automatically to published evidence only. There is a link to this in **Part 4** of the guide.

If you are looking at international research, it is important to remember that the American and British **word spellings can be different**. Include both in your search strategy to avoid missing any important sources of evidence.

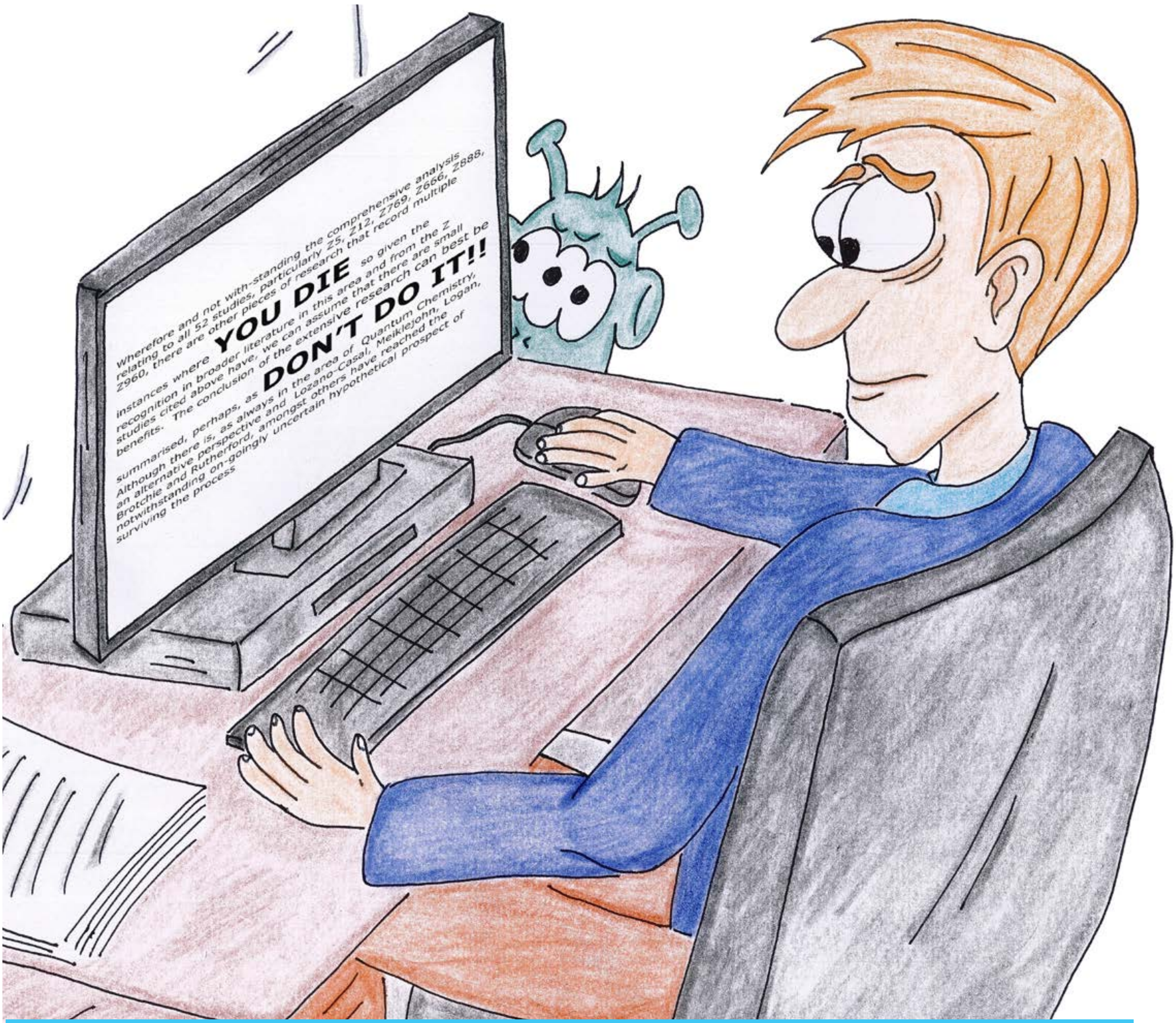
Remember that **different jurisdictions in the UK use different terminology**; for example, 'third sector' in Scotland but 'voluntary sector' in England. Use different but related keywords to make your search more inclusive.

Your search is likely to lead you from one website to another. Bookmarking the sites that you visit will help you to create a record of your searches. Don't forget to note/download any pieces of research that look particularly useful.

As well as helping you to gather secondary evidence more effectively, this section explores what type of system you should have in place to help you **store, analyse and retrieve** all of the evidence you gather. Having a good system in place will ensure you can revisit relevant research in the future and make the process of analysing your information easier.

Developing an easy-to-use system is even more important if you have more than one person looking for evidence. Involving multiple people can be helpful as one might see something that another overlooked. However, you need to make sure that everyone is consistent in how they store the information that they have gathered. This will make it much easier when it comes to analysing the evidence and drawing your conclusions.

Capture the key points



For each piece of evidence you gather, your system should allow you to record:

- Type of evidence (such as, case study, event report or published research).
- Who wrote it or said it (name, organisation and possibly their job title).
- The year the evidence was published (if applicable).
- Where you found it, that is, the web address, name of conference, etc. and where it was originally published. For example, you could have found it in a conference report but the evidence was originally published in a peer-reviewed journal; in this case you should make a note of both.
- Some of the key points (and their page numbers, if applicable). This will save you a lot of time when it comes to analysing the information because you may already be able to spot some trends, and you can quickly see which piece of evidence you found a certain point in. This is explained in more detail in **Section 3**.
- The quality of the evidence; for example, through a traffic light system.

There are many ways to record the secondary evidence you gather; these range from using an electronic spreadsheet to having post-it notes stuck on a wall.

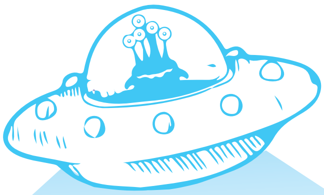
We have included **two templates** in the **Annex** to help you consider different ways to record and analyse the information you gather. You can adapt these to meet your own needs. Both of these templates use a traffic light system so you can quickly identify the relative importance of sources for your purpose.

The important thing is that you find a system which works for you and your organisation: one that meets your needs and is sufficiently flexible to grow with your understanding of the topic or answer.

Consider the following questions when developing your recording system:

- **What is the purpose** of the secondary evidence you are gathering?
- **How much information** do you need to gather and record? Are you recording just information that is useful for your purpose?
- Who needs to **be able to access the information**? Do they need to be able to see the original sources of evidence or will an overview be enough? How long do you need to keep this information for? Are you looking for answers to an immediate question or is this something you may need to revisit in the future?
- Will your system **allow you to add or amend the keywords** you are searching for or to highlight new areas you want to explore?

It is worth noting that you don't always need to gather and analyse secondary evidence yourself, nor do you need to do it in isolation. There are many individuals and organisations that you can commission to do it for you. Although this will free up some of your time you may need to pay for the service and so it is worth considering the pros and cons before you make a decision. If you know of other organisations that have previously commissioned similar types of work contact them for advice.



Spotlight on: ***The Evidence Request Bank Development Project***

Originally developed by the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR) and included by CRFR into What Works Scotland, the Evidence Request Bank Development Project responded to requests for evidence summaries by third and public sector organisations. CRFR reviewed a range of data from international, academic and peer-reviewed research to answer the specific questions they had been set. The aim was that these evidence reviews would then be used to inform relevant policy and/or practice. An example report which was completed for West Lothian Council on transitions to primary school can be found here: http://www.crfr.ac.uk/assets/ERB-Transition-to-primary-school-FINAL.pdf.

An open access article has been published in the journal of *Evidence and Policy* titled "Evidence synthesis for knowledge exchange: balancing responsiveness and quality in providing evidence for policy and practice".

Checklist

- ❑ **Put a system in place** for recording all necessary information gathered.
- ❑ **Develop a consistent approach** to recording the information you need, particularly if more than one person is gathering information.
- ❑ **Make sure the system is flexible** enough to expand if unforeseen information is found to be relevant and needs to be recorded; for example, if you identify new keywords for an online search.
- ❑ **Identify your keywords** before conducting an online search; you might have more than one keyword search planned.
- ❑ **Consider what time and resources** you need and have available to do the gathering and analysis yourself – could you approach/commission others to help?

Section 3

Analysing secondary evidence

Once you have collated enough secondary evidence you need to analyse it in order to:

- **Identify key themes** so that you can draw conclusions and make recommendations for your own work (if applicable)
- **See if there are any gaps** in the evidence you have gathered that you want to go back and try to fill
- **Evaluate the quality** of the evidence you have collected.

The level of analysis that you need to undertake will vary depending on what it is for. In some cases a quick overview will be enough; in other cases you might need to conduct a more detailed analysis of what you have gathered. The more familiar you become with gathering and using secondary evidence the easier it will be to know how much time you should allocate to the analysis. If you are unsure, ask another organisation with experience in this area for their advice.

Although it is often tempting to leave the analysis until the end of the process, doing it as you go will make the process much easier and less intimidating. It will also enable you to see if there are any gaps in the evidence you have gathered so that you can go and look for some additional sources.

Identifying trends or themes

The main reason to analyse the evidence you have gathered is to identify any trends or themes. This is often referred to as 'coding' by social researchers; it involves assigning labels or codes to the evidence so that similarities and differences can be identified. This can either be done manually or through computer software such as Quirkos[6] or NVIVO[7].

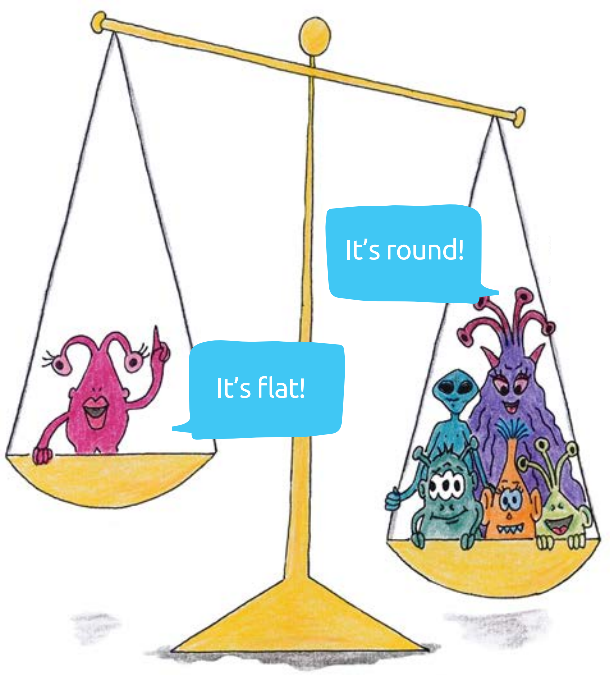
If you are doing it manually, work through the following key actions:

- **Cross-check each piece of evidence** you have gathered with your question(s) and dismiss any that are not relevant. If you have used the traffic light system to rate the quality of evidence while recording it, re-visit those scores to make sure you have been consistent. If useful, re-categorise them and discard any which are no longer relevant.

I can think of instances where I've looked for secondary evidence to inform a very specific need, such as to understand what a reasonable benchmark might be. This required almost no analysis. At the other end of the spectrum, a literature review to explore a broad topic required considerable systematic analysis. So depending on the purpose, looking at secondary evidence might require an effort of ten minutes or ten weeks!
Colleen Souness, The Robertson Trust

[6] http://www.quirkos.com/index.html
[7] http://www.qsrinternational.com/what-is-nvivo

- **Develop some words or phrases** to help you answer your question(s) so that you can draw themes. For example, if you are gathering secondary evidence to help you develop an innovative service you might have general categories such as 'success' and 'challenge' with various sub-headings like 'collaboration', 'funding', 'geography' or anything else which has emerged from your reading. Although it is recommended that you start with a couple of general categories, these should be flexible as you may need to add to them or remove irrelevant ones as you go.
- There are various ways in which you can **code your evidence**. For example, you can use post-it notes stuck to a wall (putting similar ideas together); use different coloured pens to highlight particular pieces of information (green for good, red for challenge, etc.); use code words in the margin, or use **Template 2** in the **Annex**. As always, the main thing is that you **find an approach that works for you**.



Note how much support the evidence has

Do sources agree, or are there differences?

- **Be careful about your own biases** when you are identifying key words or themes for the coding. Try not to only use words which confirm any pre-conceptions you might have had; instead, try and challenge your original thinking. This will ensure that your final conclusions are as robust as possible.
- Get an idea of **how much support** some evidence has compared to others. For example, if a number of sources highlight one finding while only one or two suggest an opposite finding you may want to make a note of this to put the different findings into perspective.
- **Consider the findings** from your secondary evidence review alongside any primary evidence you might have. Are they telling you the same things? Are there contradictions?

- **Don’t be afraid to ask for help** when analysing secondary evidence. It can be helpful to have more than one person involved in analysing the evidence, particularly if the findings are going to be used by more than one person or team in the organisation. Adopting a collaborative approach to the analysis will mean that different perspectives are brought into the process and this might help you to spot different themes and trends.

If you are analysing the evidence alone then it is a good idea to **reach out to others to sense-check your findings**. This will help you to check that your conclusions make sense to other people.

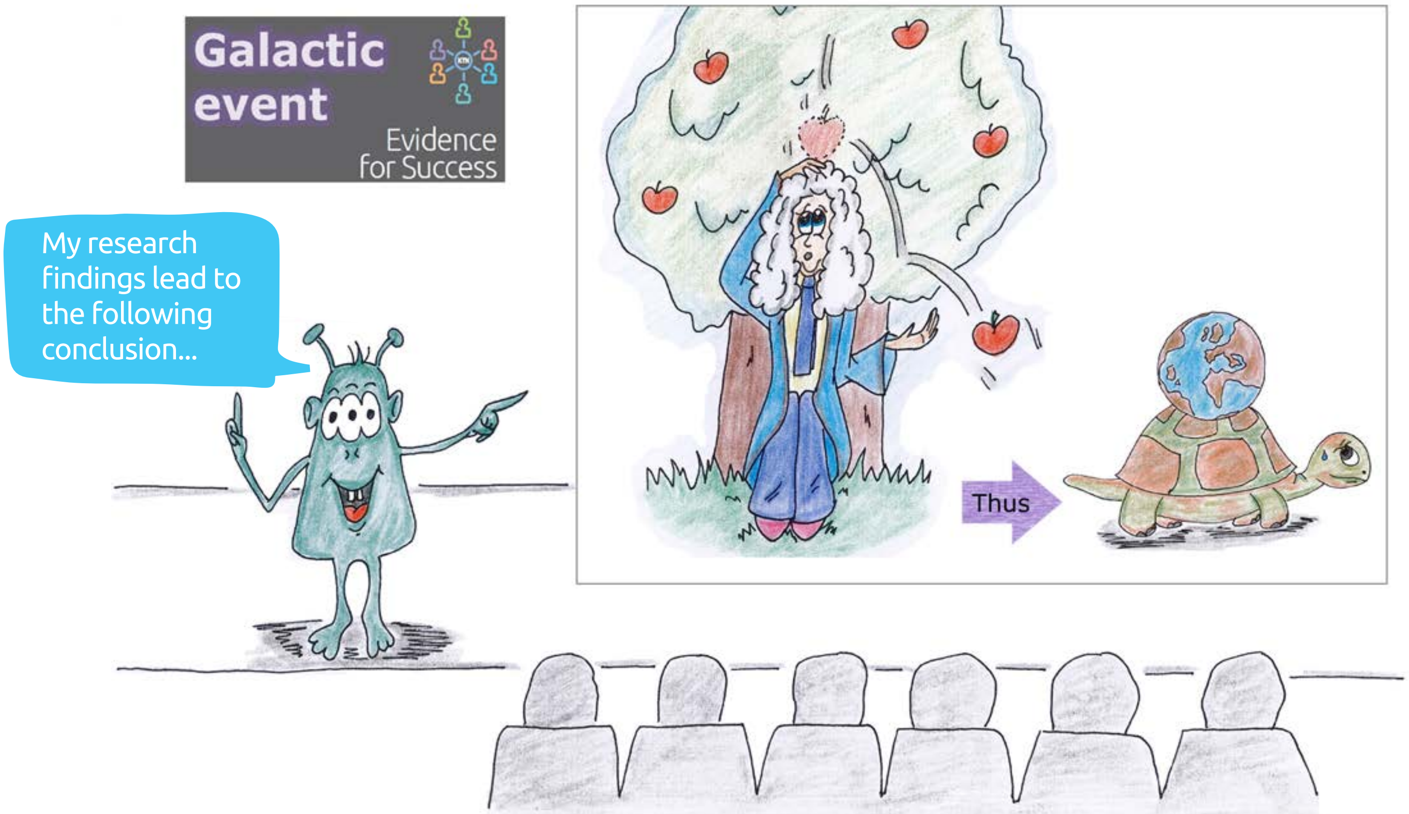
If you don’t have much experience of analysing evidence you might want to **consider seeking some training support.** This will be invaluable if your organisation is serious about using evidence to inform its decision-making. There are also a number of online resources that can help you to develop your skills; for example, Evaluation Support Scotland’s support guide for analysing information[8]. Further links can be found in **Part 4** of this guide.

Assessing the quality of the evidence

It is important to note that not all secondary evidence is accurate or reliable. As a result you need to consider the quality of the secondary evidence you are gathering before you rely on it too heavily. You don’t want to base your decisions on incorrect evidence and conclusions.

Another key part of analysing the evidence you have is to **judge whether you have sufficient ‘good enough’ evidence**.

Make sure the conclusions are accurate and reliable



[8]http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/133

There are a number of different ways to assess the quality of secondary evidence, two of which are detailed below: 'hierarchies of evidence' and 'TREBL framework'.

It is worth noting that the same principles apply for judging the quality of secondary evidence as for judging the quality of primary evidence so ask yourself, 'what would I expect from my primary evidence?'. If you are gathering your own primary evidence in a robust and systematic way you can use your own approach for gauging its quality as a base on which to measure external sources. Also, if you used the traffic light system shown in the templates in the **Annex** for gathering evidence then you have already started the process of analysing the evidence as you record it.

If you would like more help to generate primary evidence please refer to the *Evidence for Success* guide for top tips and helpful resources.

Hierarchies of evidence

Hierarchies of evidence are a way of ranking different methods for generating data according to the strength and quality of data produced. Although there is no single agreed hierarchy, traditionally anecdotal or observation methods have been placed near the bottom. This is because they are seen as largely subjective and there is the possibility that the researcher's own biases will influence what is gathered. For example, if you assume that a project will increase people's confidence you might, subconsciously, only be looking for behaviour changes which confirm that.

In contrast, randomised control trials (RCTs) are usually placed at the top of the hierarchy. RCTs involve randomly selecting people to receive one of several interventions.

The impact of the interventions will then be measured and the results compared with a 'control' group that has either received no intervention (or a placebo). In some studies neither the researcher nor the participant knows which one is the control group and which one is receiving the real intervention. These are called 'double blind studies' and they are frequently considered to be the 'gold standard' of research and evaluation. This is because there are fewer opportunities for the researcher's subjectivity to affect the findings and so the data is considered to be more robust.

However, it is increasingly recognised that there are a number of challenges in using traditional hierarchies of evidence to measure the quality of evidence in social policy. It is also worth mentioning that there are very few RCTs carried out in Scotland.

This is because:

- RCTs are very expensive to run and in many cases the costs incurred for an RCT would not be proportionate to what was being studied.
- Interventions in areas of social policy may have smaller sample sizes than some of those for medical research (for example). The smaller the sample size the less reliable the evidence becomes.
- There is a lack of co-production and participation in the design of the research and evaluation for methods which traditionally sit at the top of the hierarchy such as RCTs. Despite this, they are often seen as essential components of social interventions and so if an RCT was used it might stand at odds with the project being studied.
- There are potentially ethical concerns about withholding an intervention which you can see is effective from a group that might benefit from it, as is the case with the control group in an RCT.

In response to this, a paper written for the Alliance for Useful Evidence highlighted that **what counts as 'good evidence' depends on the context in which you are gathering the evidence[9].** Indeed, as the table below shows, there are questions which third sector organisations and policy makers might be interested in but only some of which could be answered through an RCT.

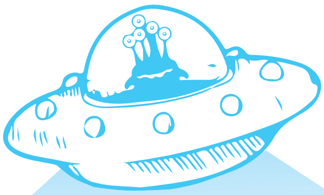
There are other frameworks that you could also adapt and use to assess the quality of your secondary evidence. For example, NPC's *Key Principles for Good Qualitative Research* are that secondary evidence should be valid, reliable, confirmable, reflexive and responsible. The Alliance for Useful Evidence's *Using Research Evidence: A practice guide* provides more detail about different sources of evidence you can use and how you can judge its quality. Go to **Resources** to find out more.

A matrix of evidence to address various aspects of 'does this work?'

Research question	Qualitative evidence	Survey	Case-Control Studies	Cohort Studies	RCTs	Quasi-experimental studies	Non-experimental studies	Systematic reviews
Is doing this work better than doing that?				+	++	+		+++
How does it work?	++	+					+	+++
Does it matter?	++	++						+++
Will it do more harm than good?	+		+	+	++	+	+	+++
Will service users be willing to or want to take up the service offered?	++	+			+	+	+	+++
Is it worth buying this service?					++			+++
Is it the right service for these people?	++	++						++
Are users, providers, and other stakeholders satisfied with the service?	++	++	+	+				+

Petticrew, M. and Roberts, H. (2003) 'Evidence, hierarchies, and typologies: horses for courses'. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 57: 527–529; Table 1, p. 528

[9]Sandra Nutley, Alison Powell and Huw Davies, *'What Counts as Good Evidence? Provocation Paper for the Alliance for Useful Evidence'* (2013), p.16

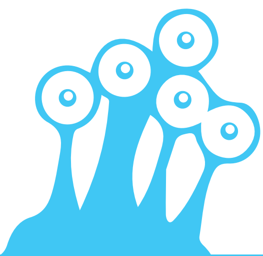


Spotlight on: *Project Oracle's Standards of Evidence*

Project Oracle is a London-based evidence hub which supports the youth sector to produce, use and share high-quality evidence in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people. In order to achieve this it has developed five standards of evidence which organisations can work through. These range from the lowest level of 1 – 'we know what we want to achieve' – to the highest level of 5 – 'we know why and how the change happened and this works everywhere'. Some projects will not want to, or be able to, move through all five standards but Project Oracle asserts that they should all be aiming for Standard 3 – 'we believe there is a change caused by us and we can make this happen consistently'. More information on the Project Oracle's Standards of Evidence can be found here: http://project-oracle.com/what-we-do.

TREBL framework: Is the evidence good enough?

TREBL[10] is an alternative framework to help you consider if individual pieces of evidence are good enough. According to this framework, **good enough evidence should be:**



Transparent – the methods through which the data has been gathered and analysed are clear. Any limitations of the evidence and conclusions, for example small sample sizes, are acknowledged. Knowing this will allow you to see whether the evidence was gathered in a robust and systematic way and whether the conclusions are relevant to your own area of work. If there is a lack of transparency it can be hard to know whether the evidence you are seeing is accurate or not.

Relevant – the evidence you gather is salient to the research questions you set out in your plan; it helps you to know 'what', 'why', 'how' and 'who'. The data you gather and analyse is up-to-date and specific to your context or geographical area.

Enough – as well as considering whether the evidence is 'good enough' you should also think about when you have enough good quality evidence to have a clear understanding or answer to your question(s). The level and amount of information you need will be largely determined by the complexity of the question(s) you are asking.

Believable – consider whether the conclusions drawn from the evidence you gather are accurate and reliable. Can you see how the conclusions and recommendations have been drawn from the evidence provided? Try to link the data and the conclusions to the methodology; if you can't or you find gaps, the evidence may not be believable or reliable.

Legitimate – findings are discussed with key stakeholders in order to identify the legitimacy of the evidence and conclusions drawn from it. Remember that including your stakeholders in evidence gathering, analysis and discussion, whenever possible, may shape how they view the quality of the evidence.

[10] Adapted by Evaluation Support Scotland from Levitt et al. (2010)

Apply this framework as a checklist for each piece of secondary evidence you gather and analyse. You don't always have to evaluate the quality of secondary evidence yourself. Some organisations publish 'evidence reviews' or 'rapid reviews', which collate the key findings from a range of sources and often assess how valid the findings are; for example, by highlighting the robustness of the methodologies. Some links to useful sites for these types of reviews are contained in **Part 4** of this guide.

Checking that the evidence is balanced and unbiased

As well as assessing the quality of the evidence you have gathered, you should also check that the evidence gives the full picture. Each of us will have our own biases, some of which we are aware of and some of which might be sub-conscious. Unless we proactively check whether our evidence is balanced we may end up having only sought out evidence which supports rather than challenges our existing views.

In order to **check whether your evidence is balanced** you should ask yourself the following questions:

- **Have you reached a 'saturation' point** in your search where all of the evidence you find tells you the same and you are not learning anything new? If not, consider gathering a bit more or speaking to an expert, to make sure you are not overlooking something important.
- **Is the evidence you have gathered biased** towards positive findings? Many organisations are reluctant to publish evidence about what didn't work instead of choosing to highlight what did work. Check that your own biases don't have led you to gather only evidence that supports your hypothesis.
- Does the secondary evidence you have **tell different sides of the story** and come from a range of sources? If not, go back to your original plan and see what other sources might help. Challenge yourself to have a range of views. For example, once you have found a particular theme (especially if it is confirming something you already thought was true), try turning it on its head and actively look for evidence that disproves or criticises it.

Checklist

- [ ] **Make sure your question(s) is / are clear** and visible while you are analysing the evidence.
- [ ] **Assess the quality of the evidence** you are using – are you confident about your evidence?
- [ ] **Weigh the support behind the evidence** you have gathered and look out for contradictory information. If there is too much contradiction it might be worth speaking to an expert in that area to see what he/she thinks.
- [ ] **Use a range of evidence** sources.
- [ ] **Sense-check your findings** with a colleague.
- [ ] **Involve others** in the process to get a range of perspectives and expertise.
- [ ] Actively **challenge your bias**.

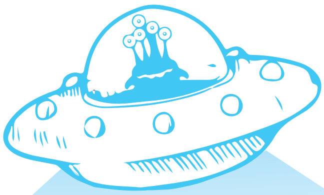
Section 4

Using secondary evidence

Gathering and analysing secondary evidence will require time and resources so there is no point in doing it for the sake of it. Instead, you should always have a clear purpose in mind right from the outset. This won't only shape what you look for and how you gather it but it will also shape what outputs you produce in order to share your learning.

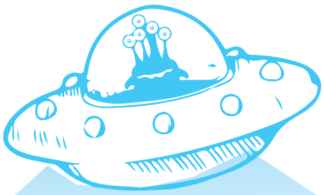
There are many different ways to share your findings; for example, a detailed report, a simple presentation, an infographic or even a quote. Make sure you reference individual sources of information in the body of the text, for example as footnotes, however you are sharing your evidence. This is so others can find the original evidence and see how you have drawn your conclusions. If you are doing a full report don't forget to include a methodology section explaining the methods that you used to find the evidence and bibliography at the end citing all of the sources that you used. Again, this means that people reading your report will be able to go back to the original sources.

Consider your audience



Spotlight on: *'Everyone has a Story'*

Everyone Has a Story was an action learning project that was the first proactively explored thematic gap by the Partnership Drugs Initiative (PDI), aiming to help increase the understanding of recovery needs for children and young people affected by drug and alcohol issues. The action learning emerged from PDI reflecting on the conversations held with funded groups on the feedback they were receiving from children and young people who found it difficult to adapt to their parent/carer's recovery. These conversations were followed up by an information session held to understand more of the potential gap and level of interest in developing a more long-term project that would better understand the views and experiences of children and young people. The information session along with the anecdotal feedback from funded groups supported the initial review of the existing evidence and helped to inform the approach to the action learning and a commitment from the Scottish Government to support the work. Find out more at: https://www.ltsbfoundationforscotland.org.uk/grant-programmes/partnership-drugs-initiative.



Spotlight on: OSCR

OSCR, the Scottish Charity Regulator, monitors press coverage that involves the charity sector or charity regulation in order to identify trends in the reports. Staff then explore whether they have relevant information to respond with or whether further work or evidence may be required. As well as responding to individual media requests, OSCR has also issued statements on particular topics that have generated a lot of media interest; for example, a statement on charity running costs: http://www.oscr.org.uk/hot-topics/charity-running-costs-statement. Ultimately, it is hoped that this use of primary and secondary evidence will help to strengthen public trust and confidence in charities as well as ensuring OSCR's evidence and learning is shared with the public and charities.

Checklist

- ❑ **Be clear about the purpose of the evidence** and how it will help you and your organisation.
- ❑ **Consider the audience(s)** for your evidence. Sometimes a presentation or infographic will make your points more accessible than a full report.
- ❑ **Review your original plan** to see if it is still appropriate for what you are trying to do.
- ❑ **Consider how and when** you will share your findings.

Part 3: Evidence from Elsewhere top tips

This part of the guide provides some tips on how to effectively plan, gather, analyse and use secondary evidence. It isn't an exhaustive list and the tips haven't been listed in any particular order.

Tip #1: Be clear about your purpose

There is a huge amount of secondary evidence available across a range of topics and if you are not clear about your purpose it will be difficult to know what you need. There are four things you should be clear about before you start:

- **Why** you are gathering the evidence
- **What** question(s) you want answered
- **How** you will use the evidence you gather
- **Who** you will share your evidence with, that is, your audience(s).

Tip #2: Develop a realistic plan

To help manage your busy workload you should make sure you have set realistic timeframes for each of the activities. It is also worth remembering that if you are new to this, the processes are likely to take longer at the start, while you get used to them. If you are unsure about how long different tasks will take try speaking to other organisations and see what they say. The amount of secondary evidence you need to gather and analyse is likely to vary according to the purpose it will serve and should be proportionate.

Tip #3: Don't work in isolation

Working with others is really important as it will save time, increase your knowledge base and open up new networks to you. Therefore, before you begin searching for secondary evidence speak to colleagues in your organisation to find out who or what they know and don't forget your board of trustees and volunteers. You should also consider other organisations that may have access to useful evidence. There are links to some of these in **Part 4** of the guide.

Tip #4: Consider the skills in your organisation

Gathering and using secondary evidence can be overwhelming if you have never done it before, particularly when it comes to analysing the information and drawing out key themes. Before you begin it is worth looking at the different skills you currently have in your organisation and identifying any gaps. For example, if no one has experience of analysing evidence you might want to consider whether a training course, external support or collaborating with an academic would be helpful and proportionate to the type of activities you are undertaking. Alternatively, you might find that a colleague or volunteer has some research experience that you were previously unaware of.

Guidance on how to set up effective collaborations with academics can be found in the *Evidence for Success* supplementary guide, *Collaborating with academics*.

Tip #5: Know when enough is enough

There are lots of evidence out there of varying quality. It is important that you recognise when you have enough evidence of sufficient quality. This is not always clear cut and so you may have to go through trial and error before you feel confident knowing when you can (or should) stop. As you are gathering evidence it is important to consider if it is accurate and reliable. There are examples of frameworks for doing this in **Part 2** of the guide.

You should also be proportionate about the amount of evidence you gather. You will never have enough time to find everything about your question but a clear purpose and plan will help you know when you have enough.

Tip #6: Be aware of your biases

Everyone has biases. In fact, humans may experience up to 150 cognitive biases that can distort their thinking. One of the most common types of bias is 'confirmation bias' where we look for evidence that fits with what we believe and overlook evidence that challenges it. Whatever your reason is for gathering and using secondary evidence, it is important that you are aware of potential biases and try to counter them. This will help you to collate a broad range of experiences and viewpoints, and therefore ensure that your conclusions are as robust as possible.

> *Even when we were looking with a specific purpose in mind, we still had to be systematic and transparent about where we looked, and had to resist the urge to 'cherry pick' information to suit. Let evidence be evidence – that way we were open to stumbling upon something far more interesting than the story we thought we wanted to tell!*
>
> **Colleen Souness, The Robertson Trust**

Tip #7: Consider context

Evidence highlighting a successful approach or intervention elsewhere may not be meaningful in a different place, time or set of circumstances. As a result, you should consider whether the evidence is relevant to your context; ignore those which are not.

Tip #8: Use your findings in the right way for you

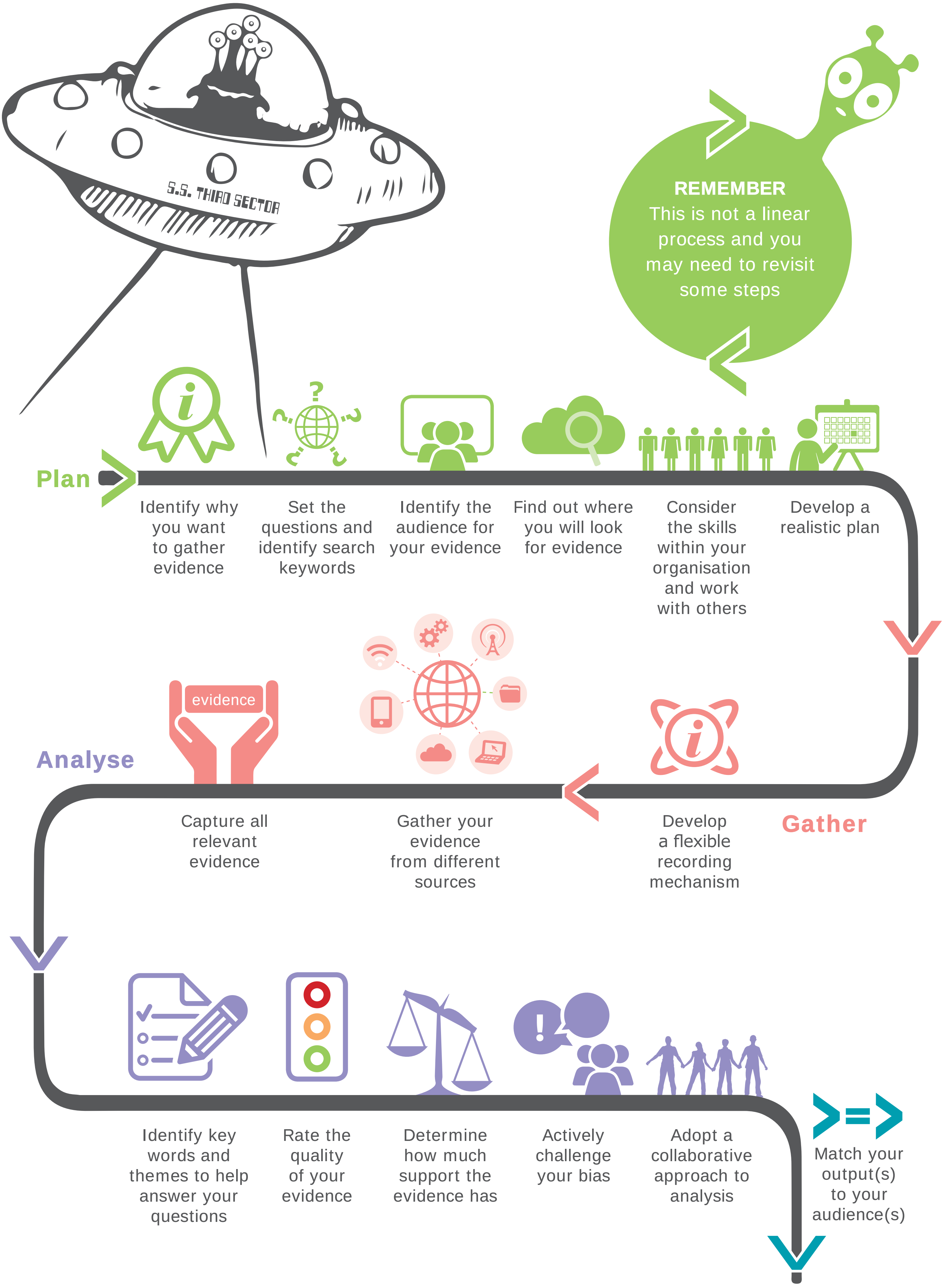
There are many formats and channels for sharing your findings. How you do it will depend on your question and audience. It is important to think about this at the start of the process and as you go so you make sure the way you share your findings is relevant and useful for your purpose. If you are unsure look at how other similar organisations share theirs.

Tip #9: It's not a linear process

In the process of gathering and using evidence you will often find yourself moving between the different stages of the cycle. This can be really useful for ensuring you have a range of findings at the end and is likely to make your own conclusions even more robust. It is also worth noting that in some cases you might come across evidence that raises questions which are different or additional to what you wanted to answer initially. This is normal and you should be prepared to revisit and revise your original questions if that would help, and make changes to your intervention, if appropriate.

Tip #10: Let the infographic be with you

The Evidence from Elsewhere infographic (see opposite) summarises the key steps and advice in the guide so make sure you have it at hand during your research project.



This infographic is available for download from
www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources

Part 4:
Where to find other people's evidence

Secondary evidence can be a crucial way of strengthening your own evidence and maximising the impact you can have on policy and practice. As a result it is worthwhile keeping up-to-date on relevant research in your chosen field(s) (even if you don't have a particular question in mind).

Some of the resources shown below will help you with reactive searches (when you are responding to an identified need for secondary evidence) while some may be useful for adopting more proactive approach to finding secondary evidence.

For example, some useful organisations have a mailing list that you can subscribe to in order to stay informed of their events, publications and blogs.

There are also links to guides which might help you to develop your own approaches to gathering and using secondary evidence. It is important to remember that you can gather secondary evidence from sources other than online searches. Although the links below are only for online resources, asking experts, attending conferences and speaking to your peers might also generate some useful information.

Additional guidance about secondary evidence

Alliance for Useful Evidence – *Using Research Evidence: A practice guide*
This guide provides detailed support on how to find secondary evidence; how to assess the quality, and how to communicate your findings. http://www.alliance4usefulevidence.org/assets/Using-Research-Evidence-for-Success-A-Practice-Guide-v6-web.pdf

New Philanthropy Capital – *Listen and Learn: How charities can use qualitative research*
This paper explains the value of qualitative research and how it can be used to inform a third sector organisation's decisions. It also contains five key principles which underpin good quality research.
http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/listen-and-learn-qualitative-research

Research databases

Administrative Data Research Centre Scotland is led by the University of Edinburgh and it brings together major Scottish research centres in order to analyse large data sets so that they become useful for informing policy and practice. https://adrn.ac.uk/about/research-centre-scotland

The Campbell Collaboration Library of Systematic Reviews (The Campbell Library) provides free access to systematic reviews of evidence across a range of topics in social policy including crime and justice, education and social welfare. http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/lib/?go=browse

Cochrane Library provides access to a number of systematic reviews on various topics relating to physical and public health. http://www.cochranelibrary.com

EPPI-Centre is part of the Social Science Research Unit at University College London. The website includes a number of systematic reviews across different topics and it also provides support and training for organisations wanting to undertake their own evidence reviews. http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms

Ihub is an improvement resource for health and social care. It includes evidence produced by public sector agencies, including NHS Education for Scotland and NHS Health Scotland. http://ihub.scot

Google Scholar is an online, free search engine that lets you look for both physical and digital copies of academic articles from a range of disciplines. http://scholar.google.co.uk

IDOX Knowledge Exchange is the information and intelligence arm of Idox (a supplier of specialist information management solutions and services to the public sector). The Knowledge Exchange provides research and intelligence across 30 public policy areas including housing, and health and social care. http://www.theknowledgeexchange.co.uk

JSTOR is an online database for journals in economics, sociology and public policy. http://www.jstor.org

PubMed is an online database for journals in public health. http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed

Social Services Knowledge Scotland contains links to practical support and published evidence to help practitioners working in social care to improve their practice. The 'Evidence-Informed Practice' page also contains links to other useful websites for accessing published evidence. http://www.ssks.org.uk

Useful organisations

As well as databases there are also many organisations with a remit to produce and/or share good quality evidence around a specific theme. Some of these are listed below although there are many others as well.

Carnegie UK Trust publishes evidence around its four key themes: digital futures; flourishing towns; enabling wellbeing, and fulfilling work. http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk

Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) conducts and publishes research which aims to inform and influence action to improve health and tackle inequality. http://www.gcph.co.uk

Improvement Service (IS) is the national improvement service for local government in Scotland. It produces small pieces of independent research across different social policy topics. http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/index.html

Iriss aims to improve lives through knowledge, evidence and innovation. It provides accessible, free, online resources for the social services sector. http://www.iriss.org.uk

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) is an independent organisation which works to inspire social change through research, policy and practice. It produces a number of accessible briefing papers across a range of topics. https://www.jrf.org.uk

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) is an independent education research organisation. http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research

Parliamentary and Government publications including legislation, national statistics, evidence reviews and collated consultation responses:

- **Scottish Government** http://www.gov.scot/Publications/Recent
- **UK Government** www.gov.uk/government/publications
- **Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe)** produces briefing papers which show the broader context for certain policy decisions. http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/research.aspx
- **POSTnotes** provide balanced and accessible overviews of research within a policy context for Parliamentary use. These cover a range of disciplines including social sciences. http://www.parliament.uk/postnotes

Catch 22 leads on **Realising Ambition (RA)**, a UK-wide Big Lottery Fund programme replicating 25 services aimed at preventing children and young people from entering the criminal justice system. RA aims to: improve the evidence base of what works, for whom and why in avoiding pathways into offending; promote learning about what it takes to replicate evidence-based interventions, and help commissioners to ask the right questions about evidence, practice and impact.
https://www.catch-22.org.uk/services/realising-ambition

Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC), the national lead body for community development, works across sectors and with a wide range of professions to support community engagement and community capacity building in any context and at strategic and practice level.
http://www.scdc.org.uk

University of York: Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) produces research evidence aimed at improving population health and informing relevant policy.
https://www.york.ac.uk/crd

Voluntary Action Scotland (VAS) is the national network organisation that champions, connects and develops Scotland's Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) to support the third sector locally.
http://www.vascotland.org

What Works Network – There is currently a network of nine What Works Centres which aim to provide robust research evidence to guide policy and practice around a particular theme: ageing, crime, early intervention, teaching, health and social care, poverty, economic growth, wellbeing and public service development. The Centres are funded by a combination of government and non-government sources including the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Big Lottery Fund.
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network

Statistical data

You may also want to consider using statistical data sets such as:

- **Annual Population Survey (APS)** which provides information on the labour market, education and training at national and local authority levels.
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Labour-Market/Publications#aps
- **Scotland's Census** which highlights some of the characteristics of Scotland's population.
http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk
- **Office for National Statistics (ONS)** has data on a range of topics including the economy, employment and communities.
https://www.ons.gov.uk
- **Scottish Household Survey** provides up-to-date information about the characteristics, attitudes and behavior of Scottish households and individuals.
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002
- **Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)** is a tool for identifying areas of multiple deprivation in Scotland.
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD
- **Scottish Health Survey** provides a detailed picture of the health of the Scottish population.
http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Health/scottish-health-survey

Glossary

Administrative data – information which is primarily collected for administrative purposes rather than for research or evaluation. For example, attendance records, book keeping or a stock take.

Call for evidence – usually a public invitation for individuals and/or organisations to share their evidence in response to specific questions around one or more policy and/or practice issues.

Consultation paper - a report which is produced at the end of a consultation process and which highlights the key findings and recommendations.

Co-production – the process of delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change.

Evidence – the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid.

Longitudinal study – a research method that involves gathering information from the same subjects repeatedly over a period of time, sometimes over years or decades.

Outcome – the change or difference you hope to make through your activities.

Outputs – the activities or services that an organisation produces. This includes evidence products, such as a written report or a presentation.

Peer-reviewed journals – academic journals which require all articles they publish to be reviewed by a panel of experts working in the same field. This is to ensure that all publications meet certain standards in terms of ethics and data collection.

Qualitative evidence – information about what you do or achieve that explains the nature of the thing you are doing or achieving (usually presented as words). In contrast, quantitative evidence tells you how many, how long or how often you have done or achieved something (usually presented as numbers).

Research – the systematic process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting information (data) in order to increase our understanding of a phenomenon about which we are interested or concerned.

Third sector intermediaries – also called umbrella bodies, membership bodies or network bodies, they support and represent groups of organisations working in the same field; for example, youth work, health, or the arts.

Traffic light system – indicates the status of something using the red, amber and green colours of a traffic light. Green (‘go’) usually denotes a higher status than red (‘stop’).

Annex – Templates for recording secondary evidence

Template 1: (Fill in one per source of information)

Question we want to answer: E.g. *What makes an effective youth-work approach?*

Overview of evidence:

- **When it was produced:** *E.g. March 2015*
- **Who produced it:** *E.g. The Young People's Group*
- **Type(s) of evidence** *E.g. Surveys and observation*

Key findings:

- *E.g. Time required to build trust between the project staff and young people*
- *E.g. Including different types of activities attracts different groups of young people*

Is it 'good enough'?*

E.g. The methods are clear but the project only engaged with 8 young people so quite small numbers

Who else used it: *E.g. Is it referenced in other studies, on websites, etc.*

Where to find it:

E.g. www.pretendwebsite.org.uk

These templates are available for download from **www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk**

Template 2:

Key finding	*E.g. An effective youth-led approach requires time to build up trust between the project staff and the young people*	
When it was produced	*E.g. 2016*	*E.g. 2014*
Who produced it	*E.g. The Young People's Group*	*E.g. A. Writer and A. N. Other*
Type(s) of evidence	*E.g. Surveys, Observation*	*E.g. Systematic Review*
What it said	*E.g. This project didn't factor in time to develop the relationships and so it didn't fully achieve the intended outcomes in the 6 month period*	*E.g. 75% of the studies reviewed confirmed that time to build relationships was a key factor in success*
Is it 'good enough'?*	*E.g. The methods are clear but the project only engaged with 8 young people so quite small numbers*	*E.g. Contains info from over 40 studies with over 5,000 participants*
Who else used it	*E.g. N/A*	*E.g. Referenced in keynote session at conference on young people (2016)*
Where to find it	*E.g. www.pretendwebsite.org.uk*	*E.g. www.pretendwebsite.org.uk*

* Use the TREBL framework to assess the quality of your evidence: **T**ransparent, **R**elevant, **E**nough, **B**elievable and **L**egitimate - Use traffic light system.

The **Knowledge Translation Network** (KTN) was established in 2012 in response to an identified need to support the third sector to maximise the impact of the knowledge and evidence they generate by ensuring it reaches Scotland's service providers and decision-makers. Running parallel to the Scottish Third Sector Research Forum (TSRF), the KTN has two key aims: (i) to share learning about effective knowledge translations and (ii) to promote the use of evidence in decision-making.

The **Scottish Third Sector Research Forum** (TSRF) brings together people from the third sector, Scottish Government and other partners to: (i) promote and share research about or from the third sector; (ii) work collaboratively to identify research questions and meet evidence gaps, and (iii) promote the use of research to improve policy and practice.

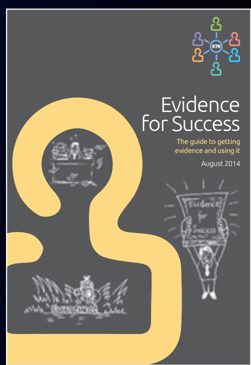
Your evidence could help us to improve this guide further so please share your thoughts with the KTN. Did you find the guide useful? Do you have any comments on how it could be improved?

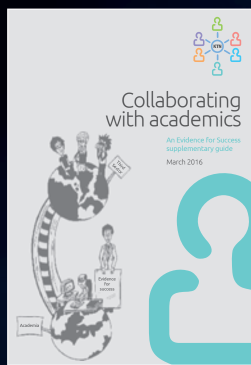
If so, please return any comments or queries to:
info@evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk

Previous KTN publications:

Evidence for Success: The guide to getting evidence and using it (2014)

Collaborating with academics: An Evidence for Success supplementary guide (2016)





Evidence from Elsewhere:

An Evidence for Success supplementary guide

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#evidence4success
#KTNevidence

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