

Research Ethics Committee (REC) Chair

About What Works for Children's Social Care

What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) is an initiative that seeks better outcomes for children, young people and families by bringing the best available evidence to practitioners and other decision makers across the children's social care sector. We will generate evidence where it is found to be lacking, improve its accessibility and relevance to the practice community, and support practice leaders to create the conditions for more evidence-informed practice in their organisations.

Research being undertaken by the WWCSC includes evaluation of the DfE Strengthening Families, Protecting Children project to roll out whole system models of social work practice in new areas, as well as evaluation of interventions to improve the wellbeing of social care professionals, devolved budgets and placing social workers in schools. Further details of all our projects can be found at <https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/research/research-projects/>

More information about What Works for Children's Social Care can be found at <https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/>

Role

The Research Ethics Committee (REC) is responsible for reviewing the research proposals of WWCSC to identify ethical considerations and make recommendations on whether to proceed with and/or amend the research. The main purpose of the REC Chair is to provide leadership to the REC. The REC will be responsible primarily for reviewing projects undertaken internally by WWCSC, and occasionally those commissioned to other research agencies where it is not possible for them to be reviewed by their own RECs.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the REC Chair can be categorized as

1. Management of the REC and sub-committee meetings
2. Management and leadership of the REC committee members
3. Support in the development of ethics guidance and processes to ensure practical recommendations for research proposals
4. Providing advice to WWCSC

(1) As a small centre with a limited number of projects, REC meetings will be held on an ad-hoc basis up to four times per year. Studies that are identified as lower risk will be reviewed by correspondence. The REC Chair will oversee the management of these meetings including:



- Ensuring lead reviewers are identified for both new and amended research proposals
- Ensuring that all ethical issues are explored and debated
- Responsibility for the time management of the application process
- Ensuring that during the meetings recommendations are agreed and recorded
- Promoting the courteous treatment of all attendees
- Approving the REC's recommendations, including technical recommendations
- Checking and approving the recorded minutes in a timely manner

(2) The REC will consist of 7-9 committee members. The REC chair will:

- Approve a committee member recruitment plan and assist with the appointment of committee members
- Nominate and support a Deputy Chair, ensuring they are able to take over the duties of the Chair when required.
- Promote the effective working of the committee as a cohesive group
- Provide support and mentorship as required to committee members
- Provide guidance to members regarding potential conflicts of interest and any concerns which might lead to their disqualification
- Address issues of poor performance and/or poor attendance
- WWCSO will be responsible for ensuring the training and development needs of the REC committee members are met

(3) In the first instance, the REC will assess proposals against the ESRC's [framework of research ethics](#). In time, WWCSO will develop bespoke ethics guidance focusing on the need for research to be practical and at the service of young people and social workers. The REC Chair will:

- Make recommendations to WWCSO to improve the guidance and policies for research governance
- Approve the final ethics guidance
- Ensure committee members implement the ethics guidance within the REC review process

(4) The REC will act in an advisory role to WWCSO. The Chair, supported by the wider REC, will be responsible for:

- Providing WWCSO with the REC's agreed recommendations on research proposals
 - NOTE: These recommendations will be made to the Executive Director of WWCSO who will make the final decision on how to proceed. A written response to the REC will be provided where any recommendations are not adopted.
- To feed back to WWCSO on any administrative issues or concerns which affect the efficient running of the REC
- Presenting or providing a written ethics update, or arranging for another member of the REC to do so, for WWCSO and wider meetings when requested
- Signing off the REC Annual Report and presenting a summary of this to the Board, if requested



Person Specification

We are looking for an individual with an interest in and experience of managing ethics issues. This individual should be able to provide evidence of an ability to:

- Chair meetings effectively and provide leadership
- Communicate and engage with researchers to increase awareness and compliance with ethics guidance
- Be pragmatic and fair minded in their approach to addressing ethics issues, showing awareness of risk and complexity

How to apply

To apply, please submit your CV (maximum three pages) and a cover letter to wwcprogrammes@nesta.org.uk by no later than 12 noon on Monday 3 February.

Further Information

- **This appointment is for two years with the possibility of extension.**
- **The REC and the duties of the REC Chair will receive administrative support from WWCS.**
- **Many of the duties of the chair can be undertaken remotely, with occasional travel to WWCS's London office.**
- **A payment of £200/day will be paid for this role, up to a maximum of 15 days per annum. Reasonable expenses will also be reimbursed.**

If you would like to discuss further the role of the REC Chair, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Louise Reid, Head of Programmes & Research by emailing louise.reid@nesta.org.uk