

Self-Report Delinquency Scale (SRDS)

Translation and Validation for a Welsh Population

Overview

Ensuring that research and evidence is accessible to all people is crucial for promoting equity, inclusivity, and the broad application of scientific knowledge. When research, including tools like measures and assessments, is available in multiple languages, it allows diverse populations to participate in studies, receive accurate information, and benefit from advancements that are often limited to those who speak the original language of the research.

The translation and validation process for a Welsh version of the Self-Report Delinquency Scale (SRDS) is detailed in this document, including numerous barriers encountered during the research.

Outline of the translation activity that was conducted during Phase 1

Phase 1 of the project followed a rigorous step-by-step process of translation and linguistic validation. Certified translators from Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru (the association of Welsh translators and interpreters) were recruited for forward and back translation of the tool, two for the forward translation and two more for the back translation. Translations were completed for three versions of the tool, known as sweeps¹ (sweep 2, 3 and 4). All three versions were collated into one document prior to forward translation from English to Welsh. Once the forward translations were returned, the translations were reviewed and merged into a single document for back translation (Welsh to English). When returned, back

¹ The SRDS was used in a longitudinal study of young people known as the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime. Young people completed a survey annually which were referred to as sweeps. There were six sweeps in the study: sweep 1 (11-12 year-olds), sweep 2 (12-13 year-olds), sweep 3 (13-14 year-olds), sweep 4 (14-15 year-olds), sweep 5 (15-16 year-olds), sweep 6 (16-17 year-olds)

translations were reviewed and compared to the original before a final version was produced for cognitive testing.

Outline of the cognitive testing activity that was conducted during Phase 1

The next step was linguistic validation of the tool using cognitive testing with four Welsh-speaking young people at-risk of reoffending, recruited via a Youth Justice Service. Each young person reviewed the translated tool item by item and were asked for feedback on appropriateness of the language used, any unclear phrasing of items or instances where they could be interpreted differently, and understandability of the response options. The researcher provided verbal prompts for each item to check understanding and appropriateness of the language. The tool was then revised based on the feedback to produce an updated Welsh version for testing in the next stage.

Outline of the planned validation activities for Phase 2

The second phase of the project was to validate the revised Welsh measure. The plan was to recruit two samples² of young people: tertiary sample – a targeted at-risk of reoffending sample via Youth Justice Services (YJS) and other organisations working with young people involved in crime/violence (at least 20 young people); and a primary sample – universal population via schools (at least 40 young people). Only Welsh-speaking young people aged 10–17 years were eligible to participate. The plan was to ask the young people to complete the revised Welsh SRDS measure as well as a Welsh version of a behavioural, emotional, and social skills tool (the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)). A number of different analyses were planned including tests of discriminative validity by comparing the mean scores of both samples, convergent validity using correlations between the SRDS and SDQ scores, and internal consistency using a Kuder–Richardson coefficient for item reliability. Following ethical approval, numerous schools and agencies across Wales were contacted to help with the study. Despite utilising multiple methods of contact (including email, phone calls and visits) and targeting organisations where there

² The YEF work primarily with three types of samples: primary – the general population; secondary – young people who are already at-risk of becoming involved in crime and/or violence; tertiary – young people who have already been affected by violence, offending and/or exploitation. This study was targeting primary and tertiary samples.

was an existing working relationship, very few responses were received. Because of this, both Bangor University and the Youth Endowment Fund agreed not to progress with the validation of the Welsh SRDS, however the translated tool is publicly available to use on the YEF website. The main reasons for not progressing are detailed below.

Barriers to completing the validation activities in Phase 2

Universal sample (primary)

Engaging schools in research is often challenging for researchers but especially so in the current economic and social climate (post Covid-19). Schools were reporting increased financial burdens, pressures related to staff time and were therefore unwilling to take part in the research. This was despite the researchers emphasising the minimal time commitment required of schools.

Another barrier was the topic itself (delinquent behaviour). Schools were concerned about how participating in a study focusing on delinquent behaviour would reflect on them, particularly regarding sending information home to parents in case they interpret it as indicating a challenge with delinquent behaviour experienced in the school. This is particularly salient given the recent media coverage on behaviour in schools across Wales and the UK more broadly. Information sent to schools did emphasise that the purpose of the study was to validate a measure for Welsh-speaking young people and not specifically on delinquent behaviour.

Targeted sample (tertiary)

Similar barriers were noted for the recruitment of the targeted sample. The YJS who participated in Phase 1 reported challenges in terms of staff time pressures which were related to recent national changes in the YJS preventative remit that has led to large increases in referrals. This meant that they could only provide minimal support to Phase 2 of the research. It may have also impacted on the lack of engagement from other YJS across Wales.

For those organisations who did respond to expressions of interest for the study, the main barrier for not engaging was the lack of fluent Welsh-speaking young people involved with their organisation. This included YJS and Pupil Referral Units across Wales.

The Final translated tool is available on the Youth Endowment Fund's website