Welcome

The 25th November 2015 marked a momentous occasion for Social Work in Northern Ireland with the launch at Stormont Hotel of the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy and Social Work Innovation Scheme. Described by Sean Holland (Chief Social Work Officer and Deputy Secretary) as a first for Northern Ireland the Strategy was referred to as a landmark in the on-going professionalization and professionalism of Social Work. Its production supports the promotion of a culture of evidence informed practice; quality; service users’ outcomes and the delivery of research evaluation and audit across services (see page 2).

The partnerships and working relationships established as part of the developmental phase will continue as we progress through implementation. Our initial approach as described in the Strategy itself centres on two activities: Communication and Visibility. This newsletter contributes to these activities.

Note:
A date for your diary:
18th February 2016 “Bridging the Gap, Research and Practice. A call for Abstracts is now open. See page 11.

Please share information for publication, in this Newsletter, (Issue 5). Please forward to: anne.mcglade@hscni.net. Anne McGlade, Social Care Research Lead.

“Focus on the journey not the destination”.

In this issue:
Introduction and Welcome...1
Social Work Research Strategy Launch and Social Work Innovation Scheme.......2-5
PPI public Involvement in Research... 6
Evidence Informed Practitioner and organisation (EIPO Module) .....6-7
Personal Public Involvement (PPI) in Research...7
Application of Research Methods in Social Work...8-9
Opportunities for research in HSC R&D Division, Public Health Agency (PHA)...9
New Book to support Research and Evidence...10
Dates for the diary....11.
Showcasing of Strategy...12.
Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy and Social Work Strategy Innovation Showcase on 25th November

Social work research, evidence and innovation in Northern Ireland took centre stage at an event at Stormont Hotel. Hosted by the health and social work organisations and chaired by Sean Holland, 150 delegates engaged in the launch of the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy (2015-2020), and had the opportunity to enjoy and learn from a range of Social Work Innovations developed and implemented by social work professionals across Northern Ireland. Fionnuala McAndrew Director of Social Care and Children also launched the Innovation Awards for 2016-2017. http://wwwknowledge.hscni.net/Resources/ContentDetail/819

In profiling the importance of research and evidence for underpinning practice and service provision the Permanent Secretary, Richard Pengelly, launched the Strategy 2015-2020. “It is with great pleasure that I present the 5 year Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy. This Strategy has as its aim the promotion of evidence—informed practice and decision-making which will in turn improve the quality and effectiveness of social work services delivered to service users and their families.

Reflecting on the Showcase of Innovations I am further reassured by the motivation and commitment of all involved. It is heartening, in these difficult financial times to learn how relatively small investments in innovative practice can improve quality and service delivery”. From my contact with Social Workers I am reassured that it is a profession that constantly reflects on effectiveness and has at its core the need to use skills to find creative solutions. Details are available on the Social Work Strategy Website: http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/socialworkstrategy/
Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy and Social Work Strategy Innovation Showcase on 25th November

Professor Ian Young, Chief Scientific Advisor (DHSSPS) and recently appointed Director of Health and Social Care Research and Development referenced the importance of collaboration and partnerships in research between Health and Social Care organisations, local universities, participation networks in the U.K, Ireland, Europe and internationally. Partnerships between professionals, service users, carers and the public were also highlighted. With a focus on clinical application he reiterated the many opportunities and funding streams available locally, nationally and internationally open to Social Work researchers. He reinforced the commitment of the HSC R+D division to build capacity and support excellence in research. Find details on www.research.hscni.net.

“People change lives, not policies or strategies, and the love stories of each of us are at the heart of what changes those lives for the better”.

Anne Hendry, National Clinical lead for integrated care (Scotland).

Reshaping care for older people was the theme of the presentation by Anne Hendry, National Clinical Lead for Integrated Care (Scotland). She reinforced the importance of community capacity building and the importance of “linking personal narratives and strategic objectives, and, measuring what is important to older people”.

Linking her presentation to the need for evidence she reinforced the importance of promoting intergenerational working by developing the evidence base for effectiveness and sharing good practice. She also stressed the importance of “including older people as volunteers in the design and delivery of care services”.


Talking Points Personal Outcomes Approach (www.jitscotland.org.uk)
Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy and Social Work Strategy Innovation Showcase on 25th November

The exciting journey that we have all been on over the last couple of years in developing the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy has benefited from the engagement and involvement of many individuals and organisations all of whom have reinforced the importance of generating a culture of research mindedness within social work.

At the event we were delighted to have inputs from Marie Roulston, Executive Director of Social Work in the NHSCT, who on behalf of the Association of Executive Directors, (Brendan Whittle, Paul Morgan, Cecil Worthington, Kieran Downey, and Fionnuala McAndrew) welcomed this Strategy and offered on-going support in its implementation. “It is an exciting time for Social Work in Northern Ireland and as an Association of Executive Directors we will endeavour to ensure that research and continuous improvement is embedded into the organisational and practice activity aims all of our organisations. We will work with our staff, our service users’ and all of our partners to implement the strategy and encourage all of us to think innovatively as to how we can improve the outcome for all of us”.

Older people are valued as an asset, have their voices heard and are supported to enjoy full and positive lives in their own homes and communities.

Anne Hendry, National Clinical lead for integrated care (Scotland).
Support for the Strategy and acknowledgment of the inclusive approach adopted in its development was offered by John Devaney, who on behalf of both Universities, Queen’s University (QUB) and Ulster University (UU) also offered commitment to on-going engagement and support as the work rolls out to the next phase.

A personal account of the individual and organisational value of engaging in research training and research activity was provided by David Hamilton a Senior Social Worker for Looked after Children team in South Eastern Trust. David was drawing on his experience of undertaking the Research Methods module at UU and of applying these skills to research in practice and in subsequent award winning innovations in the areas of participative practice with children with mental health needs and young people in care.

Delegates were also privileged to listen to Sonia Patton who articulated what really matters to service users in research. Sharing her personal journey she explained how she used her experience both as a patient and her skills and experience from her day job, that of buyer, negotiator, data analyser, and auditor to inform Personal and Public Involvement in Research (PPI) in cancer research for the benefit of others. She shared the many benefits for both service users and researchers when genuine PPI research is evident in the whole process of the research agenda. This, Sonia urged, needs to be more than a tick box exercise but rather a partnership approach.
Evidence Informed and Practitioner and Organisation (EIPO)

The post qualifying Research Methods programme 2015-2016 is a unique partnership arrangement between Ulster University and Social Work Practice organisations in Northern Ireland.

After celebrating the successes of 21 years of the Application of Research in Social Work Module a new Evidence Review and Research Project Module has been designed. The Evidence Informed Practitioner and Organisation (EIPO) module commenced in September 2015. The tutors on this course are Professor Brian Taylor UU (Ulster University) and Anne McGlade (HSCB). This course is intended to contribute to the promotion of a culture of continuous improvement with a focus on outcomes and learning from practice.

It is a hugely creative course that supports the vision of the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy. In September 2015 eleven social workers from across the health and social care trusts and voluntary sector commenced their challenging, but exciting journey, of learning and continuous professional development. This includes identification and retrieving of relevant research; appraising its quality, synthesising findings into a coherent message and dissemination. All of these activities are founded on developing the skill to shape answerable practice and policy questions.

1. Identify the need for evidence
2. Locate the evidence
3. Appraise the evidence
4. Adapt and apply the evidence
5. Evaluate the outcome
Evidence Informed and Practitioner and Organisation (EIPO)

The EIPO course is very much a learning curve for all involved; tutors, practitioners, mentors and assessors. Together we will help shape it for forthcoming years so that we continue to build the capacity of our social workers and future leaders to inform professional practice and organisational development in social work. For any further details contact Professor Brian Taylor: bj.taylor@ulster.ac.uk or Anne McGlade anne.mcglade@hscni.net. Subsequent editions of the newsletter will provide details on the new Research Project Module.

Personal Public Involvement (PPI) in Research

Personal Public Involvement (PPI) in research is carried out with me or by members of the public rather than “to”, “about” or “for”.

INOVLE (Service User organisation).

For further details on INVOLVE please see website: http://www.invo.org.uk/ or via podcast on http://www.hscboard.net/swreserach/

Sonia Patton, Service user.

I’ve gained some learning, increased my confidence and influencing skills in research and gained friends and respect.

The successes of candidates on the research methods course at UU for over 21 years to the end of December 2014 are forever recorded “in the stars”.

An acknowledgement of the efforts of those who successfully completed the course 2014-2015 cannot go unmarked. These practitioners are Jason Caldwell (South Eastern Trust), Shirley McCafferty (Southern Trust), Paul Gilhooley (South Eastern Trust), Diane Boyle (Northern Trust), Jane McCullough (South Eastern Trust), and Catherine Maguire (Probation Board). A huge congratulations to all of you. We hope you are getting your publications ready for the wider sharing of knowledge.

Hosted by the Western Trust St Columb’s Park House was a delightful venue for the 22nd annual award ceremony on December 8th of the post qualifying “Application of Research Methods in Social Work Course”. Kieran Downey, on behalf of the Association of Directors welcomed colleagues to the West, and acknowledged the immense value and contribution of this course and the partnership arrangement that has been maintained between the HSC social care sector and Ulster University to support the use of research and evidence in practice. In congratulating the successful applicants Kieran used the opportunity to highlight the importance of our new Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy 2015-2012 for supporting the profession in pursuit of better outcomes for service users and carers.
For those unfamiliar with St Columb’s Park House, this is a 18th century manor house situated in parkland on the Waterside of Derry/Londonderry. St Columb’s Park Reconciliation Trust was established in 1994 as a centre for reconciliation. It was renovated for a second time in 2012.

In this picture are some of the graduates, their colleagues and teaching staff.

Opportunities for research in HSC R&D Division, Public Health Agency (PHA)

Enabling Research Awards - HSC R&D Division’s Enabling Research Awards (ERAs) are designed to support researchers in their acquisition of funding through National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Evaluation, Trials and Studies (NETS) research programmes.

National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC) - HSC R&D Division remains committed to supporting researchers to benefit from NETSCC opportunities. Northern Ireland has a significant number of researchers and research groups with the necessary expertise and track records necessary for the development of competitive applications. HSC R&D Division offers Enabling Research Awards to support researchers in their acquisition of funding through eligible NETSCC-managed research programmes.

Check out details on www.research.hscni.net

This just-published book is written from the premise that all social workers need to be able to understand and use research, although not all social workers need to know how to conduct research. The focus of the book is on shaping a question that can be answered by research or evaluation; identifying relevant research using bibliographic databases effectively and efficiently; appraising and synthesising research; and discussion of issues in implementing a more 'evidence-based' or 'evidence-informed' culture amongst individual social workers and in organisations where we work. The book includes appraisal tools for surveys, qualitative research, and (quasi-)experimental studies.

The three authors bring a range of relevant expertise: Brian Taylor is Professor of Social Work at Ulster University; Campbell Killick is Research Officer (Social Work) in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust; and Anne McGlade has lead role for social care research at the Health and Social Care Board for Northern Ireland. The book is written to support the launch of the NI Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy.

Learning and innovation go hand in hand. The arrogance of success is to think that what you did yesterday will be sufficient for tomorrow!

Delegates at the 25th November launch enjoy a picture with one of the authors, Professor Brian Taylor.
Dates for Diary

DARE: Decisions, Assessment, Risk and Evidence

Seminar Series 2016

Date: Thursday 11th February 2016 How do social workers seek and use information to make decisions? Dr Niamh Flanagan, School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice University College Dublin.

Date: Thursday 10th March 2016 How do people with dementia and family members conceptualise and approach risk? Mabel Stevenson, Risk Communication in Dementia Project, Ulster University.

Annual Research Conference

Date: Thursday 18th February 2016 (09:30-16:00) NIVCA, 61 Duncairn Gardens Belfast BT15 2GB. Bridging the Gap – Research and Practice. To register please email: michael.cunningham@hscni.net.

Further details available on www.research.hscni.net or http://www.hscboard.net/swreserach/

DARE: Decisions, Assessment, Risk and Evidence

In Social Work

Date: Tuesday 5th July and Wednesday 6th July 2016 Templeton Hotel, Templepatrick Northern Ireland.

Plenary Speakers: Professor Dr Gerd Gigerenzer, Dr John Fluke, Professor Mandeep K. Dhami.

Further information on DARE 2016 including a call for abstracts will be added to the website: www.sosci.ulster.ac.uk/irss/dare
UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at the National University of Ireland, Galway are focussed on knowledge creation around ‘what works' in the real world of practice and on utilising community based approaches to working with and for young people. The Strategy was highlighted to European delegates attending the Galway International Winter School “Child Rights in Practice and Research-Realising Children’s Rights through Empowering Parents and Families”. Hosted by the Child and Family Research Centre in NUI Galway the conference was organised by Eurochild, in cooperation with Unesco Chairs Global Network, Council of Europe and Unicef Office of Research and was held in Galway on 1-4 December. Delegates from 17 European countries including academics, researchers, Government representatives and practitioners heard presentations from a range of international academics and researchers. Each country had the opportunity to present on significant developments in their jurisdiction and the input from Ireland included the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy.

The **Children's Research Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland** supported by Atlantic Philanthropies, Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister aims to:

> Support the research community in Ireland and Northern Ireland to better understand and improve the lives of children and young people, by creating and maintaining an inclusive, independent, non-profit network through which information, knowledge, experience, learning and skills can be shared.

On the 10 December delegates at the 4th annual conference of the Children’s Research Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland heard about the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy during one of the keynote addresses. The conference was entitled *Better Outcomes for Children: Are we there yet?*

If you would like further information on similar upcoming events check out:
http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/
http://www.childrensresearchnetwork.org/