Building a Research Community in Northern Ireland

Context
In 2015 we launched the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy (2015-2020). Our aim was the development of a culture that recognises and values the contribution of research and evidence within social work and social care to support better outcomes for service users and carers.

A review of the strategy was undertaken in (2019) which has identified and acknowledged quite a number of achievements over a relatively short timeframe and made suggestions for moving forward. This review and our recent consultation on the “Protocol for Gaining Initial Support for Social Work & Social Care Research” (2019) have given us impetus for the establishment of a network of interested stakeholders. We hope to build a research community that will foster mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships.

Through collaborative working we hope to build an evidence base relevant to social work and social care in Northern Ireland. Over time this will help us identify the types of research and evidence that will inform practice, explore gaps in our evidence and support the identification of research and evidence priorities. This is in line with the original intentions within the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy (2015-2020) which remains important as we move forward into phase 2.

Our plan
Commencing in autumn 2019 we plan to host a number of initial engagement Network events inclusive of HSC organisations, academia from Higher Education and other organisations employing social workers alongside service users and carers who have some experience of research. The first of these engagement meetings will help set the agenda.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>Registration and coffee and networking</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Setting the scene</td>
<td>Anne McGlade (HSCB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.05</td>
<td>Welcome and Opening Remarks</td>
<td>Marie Roulston (HSCB)</td>
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| 10.10 | Introductions to colleagues and expectations – what I hope to get out of a research community | Shirley Boyle (NHSC)  
All – group work |
| 10.30 | Strategic overview key messages  
Review of Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy | Maxine Gibson (HSCB)             |
| 10.40 | Working in partnership to create an evidence base  
What makes it work? | Helen Dunn (HSCB)  
Lorna Montgomery (QUB) and Catherine Cooke  
Senior Practitioner (NHSC) |
| 10.55 | Group work  
What’s the added value of research to operational practice | Introduction by Tony McAllister  
(South Eastern Trust)  
All – Group work |
| 11.25 | Tea and coffee and Networking                                         |                                   |
| 11.50 | Group work  
What’s the added value of operational practice to research         | Introduction by Brian Taylor (Ulster University)  
All - group work |
| 12.20 | The added value of co-production as a way of working                  | Fiona Templeton and Sonia Patton  
(Service Users)  
Patricia Burns Social Work Practitioner  
(Belfast Trust) |
| 12.30 | Moving forward  
Type of Network  
How do people wish to be involved?  
Next steps - immediate actions  
Action Plan for longer term | All – group work discussion |
| 1.00  | Importance of wider engagement                                        | Geraldine O’Hare (Probation Board NI) |
|       | Thank you and Close                                                   | Anne McGlade (HSCB)               |
| 1.10  | Lunch and Networking                                                 |                                   |