Social Work and Social Care
Bridging the Gap – Research and Practice

Sharing Outcomes from Research Conference

18th February 2016 in Northern Ireland Community and Voluntary Association (NICVA), 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast BT15 2GB
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Innovation Quotes</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>“The more original a discovery, the more obvious it seems afterwards”</td>
<td>“Small opportunities are often the beginning of great enterprises”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arthur Koestler</td>
<td>Demosthenes</td>
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<td>“We cannot solve a problem by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them”</td>
<td>“I can’t understand why people are frightened of new ideas. I’m frightened of the old ones”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albert Einstein</td>
<td>John Cage</td>
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<td>“The best way to predict the future is to create it”</td>
<td>“Almost all really new ideas have a certain aspect of foolishness when they are just produced”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alan Kay</td>
<td>A N Whitehead</td>
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<td>“Nothing is more dangerous than an idea when it is the only one you have”</td>
<td>“You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can’t get them across your ideas won’t get you anywhere”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emile Chartier</td>
<td>Lee Iacocca</td>
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<td>“If I have thousand ideas and only one turns out to be good, I am satisfied”</td>
<td>“Innovation opportunities do not come with the tempest but with the rustling of the breeze”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alfred Noble</td>
<td>Peter Drucker</td>
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<td>“Money never starts an idea; it is the idea that starts the money”</td>
<td>“A problem well stated is a problem half solved”</td>
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<tr>
<td>William J Cameron</td>
<td>Charles Kettering</td>
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<tr>
<td>“No idea is so outlandish that it should not be considered”</td>
<td>“What is now proved was once only imagined”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winston Churchill</td>
<td>William Blake</td>
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Presenters and delegates participating at the event on 18th February 2016
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## Section 1

### Quick guide to the resource

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<td>Patricia McCrory Horizon 2020 (QUB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Brian Taylor Programme Director, Lecturer University of Ulster</td>
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<td>Joanne Wilson, Managing Editor, Cochrane Developmental Psychosocial Partnership and Learning Problems Group</td>
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| • Anne McGlade Social Care Research Lead Health and Social Care Board |       | Page 22   |

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Section 2
sharing learning - outcomes resource

Context and Programme

This resource has been produced based on the outcomes from a social work and social care research conference event hosted on 18th February 2016 entitled “Bridging the Gap – Research and Practice.” Building on the success of two previous annual research conferences (2014 and 2015) hosted collaboratively between the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and the Research and Development Division of the Public Health Agency, (HSC R&D Division) Ruth Carroll Programme Manager, welcomed delegates to the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) in Belfast.

It has long been acknowledged that there remain challenges in developing natural partnerships between research, policy and practice. Whilst resolution will not happen overnight incrementally over the last few years, we have been looking for constructive ways to bridge these gaps. The Outcome Reports from the previous two conferences are available on http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/swresearch/

Ruth reaffirmed that in any research activity Networks are essential. Events and conferences that bring researchers, practitioners, service users and carers and policy makers together across sectors can result in relationships and partnerships that are natural, organic and constructive.

Over 90 delegates including managers and practitioners from across the health and social care sector, service users and carers, academia and the voluntary sector participated. The day had a healthy mix of local keynote presenters and opportunities for experienced researchers and many social work practitioners to present the outcomes of work undertaken in their own areas of practice. The co-chairing of these sessions also facilitated a healthy dialogue and reinforced the importance of service user and carer engagement in the process.
**Programme**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tr>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>Registration and coffee</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>Opening Remarks</td>
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<td>10.00</td>
<td>Health and Social Care Research in NI</td>
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<td>10.15</td>
<td>Connected Health and Social Care</td>
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<td>10:30</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>Engaging with families where there is family</td>
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<td></td>
<td>violence and abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30</td>
<td>What’s on the Horizon (2020)?</td>
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<td>12.00</td>
<td>Understanding and using research in social work</td>
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<td>12.10</td>
<td>Cochrane – Opportunities for Research</td>
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<td>12.30</td>
<td>Lunch and Social Work Innovation’s (2015-2016)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poster Viewing</td>
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<td>1.15</td>
<td>Parallel Oral Presentations/Breakout sessions</td>
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<td>2.15</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee</td>
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<td>2.30</td>
<td>Panel Summary</td>
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<td>3.15</td>
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Conferences are a valued opportunity for staff and service users to come together to discuss and share learning. We are however aware that events, no matter how creative or imaginative, or indeed how well attended, can only reach a certain size of audience. Getting the message from events disseminated to as many colleagues as is possible was therefore an objective of the conference organisers. Consequently this *Outcome Report* which will be confined to some summary comments only, *Video Recording* of the presentations and the *PowerPoint Presentations* is intended to make a contribution to more effective dissemination and sharing of outcomes. Presenters contact details are provided within the PowerPoint presentations. We hope that any individual with an interest in a particular initiative or idea will make direct contact and explore further.

Do also keep abreast of developments on #SWResearchci @HSCBoard & HSC R&D Division @publichealthni
Reflective mode

To get the event off on the right track Fionnuala McAndrew invited delegates to reflect on something that they had heard or read in the news or press over that last week or so that struck them as “valuable, interesting, exciting, absurd or bizarre”. This generated a good buzz and atmosphere around the room as delegates introduced themselves to their neighbour.

A few reflections of what struck our delegates

Looking at politics across the Atlantic
“Reflecting on the media coverage of Donald Trump and the growing momentum for his selection as the Republican candidate…. In a country as described by its founding fathers and restated by Abraham Lincoln as “dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal”….. It is disturbing that someone, who publicly mocks and mimics a person with a disability, can seriously be a contender for the Whitehouse”.

The creation of a lasting and genuine friendship
“A man on his way to work each morning stopped by a young homeless man on the street bringing him a cup of coffee and engaged and enjoyed a chat with him, usually about football.
The following Christmas the man bought two football match tickets, one for himself and one for his homeless friend. His care and attention facilitated the young homeless man to value on himself and encouraged him to get a home for himself. Now the two men meet in the comfort of his house for their coffee and chats”.

A mother’s love
“He was my son and knowing him did enrich my life. He brought joy to my life when he was alive. I know it is terribly hard for the world to hear me even talk about the love I had for him. This is an extract from Sue Klebold’s book “A Mother’s Reckoning”. This was covered in a moving and heartfelt interview by Kirsty Wark on BBC News night with Sue Klebold the mother of Dylan Klebold one of the two teenagers who in 1999 set out to blow up the school. This incident is now etched in the consciousness of the people around the world as the Columbine High School attack.

Misshapen vegetables
“The criminal amount of waste by British farmers of misshapen vegetables because supermarkets and consumers want nice looking, standardised size and sanitised vegetables. Given the levels of poverty, obesity, and ill health in society this is disgraceful. No even worse, it’s verging on criminal, that as a society we destroy hundreds of thousands of tons of vegetables each week”.

Research Conference, 18th February 2016
Key messages from keynote address - presentations

1 Fionnuala McAndrew

In her opening address Fionnuala McAndrew, Director of Social Care and Children (HSCB) firmly established her delight in attending. This was her third annual conference, which she suggested “was now firmly included in our annual programme of collaborative events co-hosted by the HSCB with the HSC R and D Division”. She extended a warm welcome to Professor Ian Young, recently appointed head of the Division and indicated her desire for on-going engagement partnership working.

“By the size of the audience in attendance here today and by the interest expressed by others in attending we are confident that there is growing demand for opportunities for people to come together to discuss research, and share learning that better supports continuous improvement”.

Referencing the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy In Pursuit of Excellence - 2015-2020, which enjoyed a high profile launch in November 2015, hosted by the Office of Social Work (Department of Health and Social Services) Fionnuala reiterated her view that “Strategies are great at setting the vision”. A vision in this instance for the “development of a research and evidence minded culture within social work and social care in Northern Ireland.” She also reinforced her view that “we are on journey, on a road that will have many peaks and dips that will need skilful manoeuvring” as we progress the safeguarding, wellbeing and continuous improvement agendas. Her optimism for the future, and for the on-going engagement by a wide range of stakeholders, many of whom were in attendance, and their commitment to sustain the momentum already established was however clear.

A key feature of both the Social Work Strategy and the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy is capacity building and in this context Fionnuala noted a couple of examples. The Doctorate in Childcare Studies at Queen’s University and the Research Programme at Ulster University to name but two. The latter being the Evidence Informed Practitioner and Organisation Module (EIPO), recently launched in September 2015. She encouraged participation on the latter particularly as it supports one of the outcomes of the Research & Continuous Improvement.
Improvement Strategy. In particular a number of Regional Priorities have already posed questions to which we need answers. These priorities would benefit by being informed by a systematic literature review.

If you are a social worker reading this and interested please contact anne.mcglade@hscni.net or david.bickerstaff@hscni.net

But Fionnuala was keen to articulate that capacity building is not all about training in research but rather that it is much wider. “Hence within our conference theme Bridging the Gap Research and Practice we opened up opportunities for social workers and researchers, across practice, in the statutory, voluntary and academia sectors to share some of the outcomes from their research, evaluation and service development activity”. She expressed her delight at the response to the “Call for Abstracts” which was introduced to facilitate this.

Section 7 of this Outcome’s Report includes presentations for the afternoon session which were peer reviewed and selected by a panel of experts including service users and carers. Fionnuala invited everyone to sit back and engage and listen and take part in the many initiatives introduced into the event to keep it stimulating and interesting including - a reflective note on what you heard - conference bingo – words and their meaning – social work innovations- Poster Displays.

2 Professor Ian Young

Professor Young, Chief Scientific Advisor to DHSSPSNI and Director of HSC R and D Division extended his welcome to delegates reinforcing the importance of partnership and collaborative working. In his presentation he reiterated the position in Northern Ireland whereby the HSC research budget was less than in other parts of the United Kingdom. Even at its peak in 2008 the total budget in comparative terms was 50% less. HSC R & D Research supports partnerships between:

- Trusts;
- Local Universities;
- Participation in networks in UK, Ireland, Europe and Internationally; and,
- Professionals and the public

Aiming for excellence in research the HSC R&D addresses client and
patient needs; ensures that it is nationally or internationally competitive and supports economic development. Developing successful research requires a number of things including benchmarking against international standards; developing linkages and collaborations with the best, competing successfully for national and international funding and demonstrating meaningful impact.

Ian concluded his presentation by reassuring the delegates that there were various funding opportunities available to the social work profession and encouraged further dialogue with the HSC R and D Division.

3 Soo Hun

Soo Hun from the Centre for Connected Health provided delegates with a brief history of the Centre which was established to:

- Provide improvements in patient care through the use of fast track products and innovation in health and social care;
- Improve the patient and client experience, quality and effectiveness of health and social care to all;
- Enable the healthcare system to respond better to the future needs of the population; and,
- Contribute to the advancement of European e-health agenda, work with partners to secure economic gains.

Drawing on the work to date in relation to telemonitoring Sue highlighted a number of items that together constituted progress and outcomes across a range of population needs.

A number of Connected Health initiatives supporting research across various patient groups were outlined which also included an overarching Commissioned Research exercise - Evaluation of Telemonitoring NI Managed Service. This evaluation is being undertaken by Queen’s University. The overall aim is to provide an evidence base for the stated aims of the service. It is anticipated that the evaluation outcomes will be available in April 2016.

The key message from Sue, in concluding her presentation, “was the wealth of opportunities available through Connected Health to support the social care and wellbeing needs of the population”. These include E Health European Union initiatives through a raft of funding opportunities. These have yet to be fully realised and capitalised upon and for this Sue encouraged further engagement by the sector.
Dr Ruth Carroll

Ruth Carroll shared with delegates the key messages from a research study undertaken as her PhD thesis. This focused on one group of people who are often considered as more difficult to reach. The study which adopted a grounded theory approach was finalised and widely disseminated from 2010 onwards, including internationally. The topic on “engaging with families where there is violence and abuse” emerged from a practice issue whilst Ruth was employed as a health visitor. Ruth clarified the difference between involvement – “active involvement of service users or the public in research decisions” and participation “volunteering for research studies as a subject of the topic under study”. She also articulated the principles of engagement that she followed in the conduct of her research study which she offered as learning for others engaged in similar types of research related activity. There are some key learning messages on how to increase levels of engagement with groups that organisations have traditionally been less engaged, often because of complex processes and systems.

Non-judgemental (lack of bias); Anonymous; Trust; Consent; On own terms and Risk managed are all key words when engaging with a hard to reach group. A key element is articulating the relationship with the individual and especially providing reassurance that “What you tell me is important” equals “You are important”.

In terms of actual findings a number of issues emerged. These included:

- Health visiting service varied from ‘brilliant’ to ‘rubbish’ to ‘could have been really good’.
- Trust and engagement are key to effective intervention.
- The intervention depends on the risk, the individual, the relationship.
- Management of ‘risky’ situations.
- Investment in the individual’s situation pays off.
- When a ‘victim’ requests help from a ‘professional’ it is usually a last resort.
- Similarities and differences in victim and perpetrators behaviors.
- Victims do not want to repeat the story over and over again.
- Recovery processes develop from violence and abuse. This can range from to absolute despair to growth and development.
- Trust is a key factor in any relationship – personal and professional.

Drawing on the words of Henry Ford, Ruth left delegates with a positive
message:

‘Coming together is the beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success’.

5. Patricia McCrory

Patricia McCrory from Horizon 2020 outlined its purpose which was to improve the lifelong health and well-being of:
• All children, adults and older people
• High-quality, economically sustainable and innovative health and care systems, as part of welfare systems
• Opportunities for new jobs and growth

Funding opportunities for Health & Social Care - Health 2016/17 include
• Understanding health, well-being and disease;
• Preventing disease;
• Treating and managing diseases;
• Active ageing and self-management of disease;
• Methods and data; and,
• Health care provision and integrated care.

Integration of social aspects: solutions and products that are socially acceptable, directly applicable or marketable and cost-effective
• Human behaviour and choices
• Lifestyles and well-being
• Economic analysis & business models
• Cultural aspects
• Variations across social groups

For topics identified for 2016 – Patricia indicated that Social Sciences input needed.

PM-04-2016 - to:
• Provide the evidence base for the development of policy strategies for prevention, early diagnosis, therapies, health economics as well as addressing health inequalities.
• Wherever relevant, evidence for economic evaluation of interventions should also be included.

PM-21-2016- to:
• Impact should be broad, addressing economic and social benefits and its effect on reducing inequalities.
• The research should identify the facilitators of and barriers to scaling-up.... and include differing social and health systems environments in
Europe or wider.

- Proposals should be multidisciplinary and be inclusive of relevant gender aspects.

**Horizon 2020 SC1, Health Work Programme, 2016-17**

For topics identified for 2017 – Patricia again indicated that Social Sciences input needed. These include:

**PM-07-2017:**

- The interventions should build on but may go beyond existing state-of-the-art knowledge on biological, psychological and social determinants of mental well-being
- E.g., societal, cultural, work life, lifestyle, epidemiological, economic and environmental perspectives.

**PM-10-2017:**

- Preference (for) interventions with high public health relevance and socio-economic impact, e.g., high negative impact on the quality of life of the individual
- And/or are associated with significant costs or where savings can be achieved.
- A cost effectiveness analysis must be included.
- Address gender, socio-economic differentials in health, and other factors that affect health equity.

Check out the PowerPoint Presentation in Section 7 for further detail on all the various funding opportunities.

**6. Professor Brian Taylor**

Brian Taylor shared with delegates some information in relation to a Research Methods Programme at UU. Whilst this programme commenced in 1992, and celebrated a high profile 21st anniversary celebration in 2014, the new post qualifying arrangements and the requirements of the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy influenced decisions to provide two new modules from 2015 onwards.

- This research programme is built on a long standing academic and employer partnership between Ulster University, HSCB, and Trusts, NIGALA (NI Guardian Ad Litem, Probation Board and the Voluntary Sector.
- Management Board oversees recruitment, teaching, examining
- All projects agreed with line management
• Agency Practice Assessor & University Tutor provide support and undertake examining.

The key components of the Evidence Informed Social Worker and Organisation (EIPO) module are the **essential knowledge and skills for using research.** Specifically it involves:

• Shaping an answerable and useful question;
• Understanding types of questions and research;
• Skills in identifying relevant research;
• How do we appraise quality usefully?
• Synthesise & piece together knowledge jigsaw; and,
• Apply knowledge to practice and decisions.

Check out the publicity which was issued as part of the Conference Pack. Information session for social work practitioners hosted at Ulster University, Jordanstown campus – Wednesday 20th April 2016.

The message Brian left with delegates is that is:

“In an uncertain world! There are no panaceas!”

7. Joanne Wilson

Joanne Wilson works as Managing Editor At the Cochrane Developmental, Psychosocial and Learning Problems Group (CDPLPG). This role involves working collaboratively with authors of systematic reviews of interventions, prognosis reviews, and diagnostic accuracy reviews. This session following on very appropriately from the session in relation to systematic narrative reviews as part of the Evidence Informed Practitioner and Organisational Module (EIPO) at Ulster University based on the strength of evidence Joanne described the role of systematic reviews as “**attempts to collate all empirical evidence that fits pre-specified eligibility criteria in order to answer a specific research question. It uses explicit, systematic methods that are selected with a view to minimising bias, thus providing more reliable findings from which conclusions can be drawn and decisions made**” (Higgins & Green 2011). Consequently systematic reviews sit at the top of the hierarchy of evidence as described by Sackett and colleagues.

Joanne coined a lovely phrase from *infobesity to info-savvy* and described the key differential features of a Cochrane Systematic Review when compared with other reviews of evidence. These include:

• Authors adhere to guidelines published in the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions (Higgins & Green 2011).
• Authors prepare reviews according to a structured format, using Review Manager Software.
• Authors update their reviews.
• The review is held in the Parent Database, which is maintained by Cochrane.
• The review is published in The Cochrane Library.
She also outlined the detailed process involved and the six key elements.

Whilst Cochrane Systematic Reviews are not for the faint hearted Joanne, in her closing comment, provided an opportunity to delegates to consider getting involved if interested. There are a range of tasks and levels for involvement which include:

• Author a review
• Comment on a review, either as:
  – a peer referee (someone with content, methodological and/or statistical expertise); or
  – a consumer representative.
• Translator.

All Power Point presentations from the plenary sessions are available in Section 7 of this report, Page27.
HSCB and HSC R&D Division Social Work Research Conference  
18 February 2016  

Bridging the Gap – Research and Practice  
Call for Oral Presentations and Poster Presentations.

HSCB and Research & Development (HSC Division) are pleased to announce their call for Oral Presentations and Poster Presentations for their forthcoming Conference.

The theme of the Conference is:  
Bridging the Gap – Research and Practice  
Professional in Practice (PiP) Accredited Event

Oral and Poster Abstract Guidelines

Abstract Guidelines for Poster Presentations
Using a maximum of 500 words, please give a clear indication of the focus and aim of your presentation. All abstracts should be relevant to the theme of the conference Bridging the Gap: Research and Practice and be informative, concise and address the following for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research study</th>
<th>Systematic Reviews</th>
<th>Innovations and Practice Developments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background and Content</td>
<td>Aim of review</td>
<td>Background and context</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aim of Study</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Aim and objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Search and review methodology</td>
<td>Outline main content</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Processes used</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Summary of findings</td>
<td>Evaluations and outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusions and implications</td>
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<td>Conclusions and implications</td>
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Abstracts should be word documents, typed in ‘Arial’ 14 point font, using 1.5 spacing. All submissions will be peer reviewed for inclusion and of those selected; a number of these will be identified for oral presentation.

The review will take account of relevance to conference title; originality and creativity; perceived impact on social work practice and services and accuracy in presentation.
In response to the Call for Abstracts 12 presenters, inclusive of academics, researchers and social work practitioners, following a peer review process and scrutiny of their application, got the opportunity to present at the conference.

This was a deliberate attempt to provide a platform for the sharing of outcomes from local research, evaluation, and audit and service improvement activity. Practitioners engaged with more experienced researchers and academics to disseminate their work. This also provided a healthy opportunity to facilitate the cross fertilisation of ideas on design and approaches across service areas.

**Priority 4** within the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy states:
- *To increase the engagement, partnership and visibility of social workers in partnership with other professionals in research, evaluation audit activities.*

**We hope to achieve**
- *Organisations will build the capacity of staff for greater dissemination of research locally (including within organisations), nationally and internationally using a range of innovative technologies.*

This event contributed to this priority. See Section 7 Page 27 for details on each of the inputs including the content of the PowerPoint presentations.

Post the event the following comments suggested that the exercise was productive and successful.

“Many thanks for the opportunity to present. It was a pleasure and in our session I was really impressed with those social workers who have undertaken research in their own areas of practice. They are great examples of what the social work research strategy aspires to”! Local academic

“I certainly enjoyed it and I feel that it will provide a useful impetus for those practitioners who are interested in evaluating the efficacy of practice. Local voluntary sector

*I feel sure that the Conference will encourage practitioners to become more research active and perhaps to refresh or update their skills by undertaking further study*. Local voluntary sector
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Title of Presentation</th>
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<td>Chairs Dr Gavin Davidson and Laura Collins</td>
<td>Dr Bernie Kelly, Karen Winter, Sandra Dowling</td>
<td>Queen’s University Belfast</td>
<td>Missing Voices: The views and experiences of disabled children and young people in care</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Catherine Maguire</td>
<td>Probation Board, Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Resettlement outcomes for 18-21 year old males in Northern Ireland</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Diane Boyle</td>
<td>NHSCT</td>
<td>The Roles and Tasks of the Gerontological Social Worker</td>
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<td>Dr Helga Sneddon, (Dr Pauline McClanaghan, Deirdre Mahon)</td>
<td>Outcome Imps</td>
<td>Changing practice at the front-line: Using action research to support social work teams to implement the Life start Growing Child evidence based parenting programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chairs Karen O Brien and Dr May McCann</td>
<td>Brenda Horgan</td>
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<td>Fergal O’Brien, Maureen Devlin</td>
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<td>Dr Lyn McKerr, Dr Julie-Ann</td>
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<td>Helena Mc Elhinney, (Tutors Professor Marlene Sinclair, Professor Brian Taylor)</td>
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<td>The Experiences and Challenges encountered by HSC Professionals around Child Safeguarding Decision Making in Pregnancy</td>
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<td>Dr Martin Canavan</td>
<td>Praxis Care</td>
<td>Dual Diagnosis and ‘Therapeutic Commitment’: Messages from an Evaluation of a Basic Awareness Training Programme</td>
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Conclusion

Speaking to a packed room at the close of a full and varied programme Anne McGlade Social Care Lead (HSCB) paid tribute to all of those who had made it a useful and engaging day. The key note speakers; the panel members; the administrative support from colleagues the HSCB and HSC R and D Division (Liz Conway and Michael Cunningham respectively), the technical and film crew; Campbell Killick who very helpfully recorded the day through photographs; David Bickerstaff and Elaine Fitzsimons from the HSCB. David for his innovative and creative ideas aimed at keeping the event lively and Elaine for help with social media.

In 2014 we made a commitment that the first conference would not be a one off event. Having now hosted the third annual event collaboratively between the HSCB and the HSC R&D Division the organisers remain convinced of their value. Within the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy 2015-2020 we prioritised events, networking and show case opportunities as a way of supporting researchers and practitioners to disseminate the outcomes of research findings. The buzz and the enthusiasm around the room throughout the day was evidence of the value placed on this engagement. The venue at NICVA also proved to be a very suitable venue for facilitating networking and for showcasing research, evaluation and innovation outcomes and initiatives for the benefit of others.

“A great event with good diversity of presentations and good networking” was how one delegate summed up the event.

The inclusion of a number of initiatives including conference bingo, getting your message heard and the display of the Social Work Innovation Award Posters “were all deliberate attempts to keep the event lively and ensure that delegates remained actively engaging and retained active listening throughout the day”. Feedback from delegates’ on the day suggested that this format worked well.

The huge amount of interest expressed in the afternoon sessions which were about showcasing and sharing the learning for the benefit of others was heartening for the organisers as this was the anticipated outcome from our Call for Abstracts. Anne acknowledged all the speakers’ willingness to prepare and share their experiences and knowledge.
On the theme of engagement and dissemination whilst conference and events are considered a valuable experience we are also very aware that such events, no matter how creative or imaginative, or indeed how well attended, can only reach a certain size of audience. It was for this reason that the organisers of the 2016 conference engaged with social media through twitter. Getting as many colleagues involved as is possible in the dialogue about the contribution of research and evidence is important. So keep following us on:

# SWresearchci

We will advise through twitter when and how you can access the video recording of the full conference proceedings and photographs. It is intended that these will be posted on the HSCB and HSC R and D Division websites in due course. Please share this information with your colleagues.

The Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy (2015-2020) has made an impact on setting the vision. This vision is for the development of a research and evidence minded culture within social work and social care in Northern Ireland. In her final comment Anne reiterated Fionnuala McAndrew’s comment from the opening address that one important thing emerging from any event is therefore the “take home message” on something where we can all make difference in our own environs and to our practice. No matter how small we all can play our part and show our commitment to research, evaluation and audit activity within the service for the benefit of service users and carers.

Some reflections on the take home messages are reiterated below drawn from the Word Cloud Feedback Form used by the organisers to capture delegates’ views of the event.

The message that I am taking back……………..

“Make time to consider research and innovative practice to improve outcomes for service users and carers”

“Research and evidence is at last being recognised within my profession”

“Social work is marching towards an evidence based profession”

“Social work needs to be brave in terms of research and learn from how other disciplines forge ahead “
“Research is crucial to ensuring that practice remains innovative and all inclusive”

“Keep up with it and build from the bottom up and top down”

“We are moving in the right direction. If implemented the HSCNI will be much changed”

“We need a culture whereby all social work practitioners and managers know how to use research and some need to undertake it”

“As a manager the importance of encouraging staff to engage in research and critical thinking”

“Consider how to develop national and international research collaborations with a view to do research that will improve practice”

“Engage service users and carers and other customers from the outset of research studies”

Additional Feedback from delegates is summarised in the next section (Section 6).
From the **Word Cloud** used to capture feedback delegates took the time to reflect on the day’s proceedings and provide useful and insightful feedback.

**Opportunities to comment were provided under a number of key word bubbles. These included:**

- *The most interesting thing I heard today….*
- *Today I learned that….*
- *The most relevant thing for practice I heard….*
- *I wish they had….*

**In summary.**

**The most interesting thing I heard today….**
- The importance of relationships and measuring impact
- The opportunities for social workers to undertake research in practice
- The importance of considering research in policy and practice and how to measure this over time
- The different approaches available if one is interested in research
- All of the morning sessions
- The range of local studies that provide a growing evidence base for social workers
- Ensure that the social work profession know how to access this kind of knowledge
- Opportunities for funding and to look at collaborations including opportunities under Horizon 2020. Great to be joined with other countries
- All the speakers in the afternoon session
- Service user and carers views

**Today I learned that….**
- That in the area of research there are major developments and its exciting to see them begin to be implemented in practice. There are options. We just need more support for practitioners to make time to absorb and translate research into practice
- That Horizon 2020 has calls that are particularly relevant to Social Work
- There is so much going on in relation to collaborative research. Lots of innovation and practice developments
- Of the funding opportunities available
- A great deal of valuable work is on-going and the Strategy is alive and
kicking
• There are lots of European Resources to support research but social work is under represented
• Better understanding of the Cochrane opportunities
• There may in the future be an award for a professional doctorate
• Application for research funding is extremely complicated
• Research and practice is a partnership

The most relevant thing for practice I heard….
• That research needs to be good quality if it is to make a difference
• Information and websites in relation research already conducted
• Social work research has a relevant contribution to make to social and economic development
• The value of Systematic Reviews
• Connected Health
• Start with what service users and carers want
• Local presentations really helped to localise research
• Sources for accessing research, getting involved in research and current research projects underway
• The means to involve service users
• Helpful to start shaping research priorities and make contacts with people with whom I rarely meet
• We need to have priorities and create capacity to support research to bridge the gap
• That knowledge transfer is important
• Find ways to engage with wider social work community

I wish they had….
• Left a little longer for afternoon session for parallel session and more time to the oral presentations- fewer with more time dedicated to each presentation.
• Organised the workshops differently so that I had opportunity to attend more instead of just hearing summaries
• More structure on feedback from groups as it was a bit lengthy
• More practitioners engaged in the panel session
• More opportunity to discuss issues with speakers
• More focus on social work research in some presentations
• Given more of a steer for social work issues in relation to the presentation on Cochrane Reviews
• A little more discussion in the plenary session including a question and answer session inclusive of service users and carers
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<td>Paper copies can also be provided on request. Contact Anne McGlade (details on Page 27)</td>
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<td>Check out the website: <a href="http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/swresearch/">http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/swresearch/</a></td>
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<td>Completed applications to be sent to following email address swevidproposal @hscni.net</td>
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<td>Social Work Innovation Awards 2016 - 2017 - Posters</td>
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<td>HSC Knowledge Exchange Network</td>
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<td>HONNI (Health on the Net Northern Ireland)</td>
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