

# Communication Plan in relation to Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy 2015-2020

*In Pursuit of Excellence in Evidence Informed Practice  
in Northern Ireland*

Supporting the profession and improving outcomes



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## Introduction

The Health and Social Care Board under the leadership of the Director of Social Care and Children is responsible for driving forward the development of a Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy for Northern Ireland.

This work is supported by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety, the five Health and Social Care Trusts and the Research and Development Office of the Public Health Agency. It is also supported by a number of other health and social care organisations who are represented on the Champions' Network

The Executive Directors of Social Work who act as the Project Board will take decisions on major issues including; funding, monitoring and controlling progress and ensuring that implementation of actions takes place.

(Appendix 1 outlines the organisational structure agreed for the Implementation Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy).

This Plan supports a partnership approach amongst all the organisations noted above. Its aim is to ensure a planned, coordinated and consistent approach to effective communications with a wider range of stakeholders who also have an interest in research and evidence as a way to support policy, commissioning and practice. This also includes service users, carers and the public.

The Plan identifies a number of areas of work that are being taken forward as part of the planned communications.

## **1. Objectives**

- To explain why a Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement is necessary and what we hope to achieve (See Appendix 2- Key Priorities).
- To provide information at various stages.
- To highlight the importance being placed on research and evidence in Social Work in the wider context of social care at this time.
- To highlight the collaborative and partnership approach in the implementation of this strategy.
- To provide opportunities for wider involvement by others with an interest in this work.

## 2. Key Messages

- Our vision is that service users and carers will benefit from social work being a more confident profession in the production and use of research, evaluation, audit and engagement in knowledge transfer partnerships to inform policy making and practice.
- The aim is to build a research minded organisational culture. that recognises the important and necessary contribution that undertaking, understanding, critically appraising and applying evidence makes to improving outcomes for service users. This should be supported through a well-developed knowledge transfer process in making sense of what is best practice in services.
- The purpose of the Strategy is to demonstrate, both internally and externally, organisational commitment for the promotion and support of social work research evaluation and audit activity across the wider context of social care service provision. The Strategy will provide confidence that decisions taken at policy, commissioning, service development and practice levels are evidence based, with research evidence worthy of particular attention in the generation of new knowledge.

- Economic, workforce and social changes have all influenced the expectations of professional practice. These changes all demand the use of new research and evidence to identify better ways of working within and between disciplines. It also supports the uniqueness of the social work profession.
- There is a clear link between the work of performance improvement, service development, workforce development and social care governance.
- The Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy will be supported by the development of a process that sets out and agrees a set of regional research priorities.

The Communication Plan also recognises the value of opportunities to work with other organisations, particularly within Health and Social Care, but also externally, to target communication messages and ensure robustness in the dissemination of relevant information.

As the work in relation to the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy develops further messages will be produced.

### **3. Planned activity**

A communication grid is included as appendix 3 with an indicative timeline. Whilst not exclusive the following actions will be taken to ensure communications about:

- The Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy
- Strategy Implementation Phased Plan
- Engagement opportunities.
- Events, workshops and conferences.
- Outcomes from events.
- Research priorities.
- Funding opportunities, as identified by the HSC R&D Division of the Public Health Agency
- Other funding streams.

### **4. Target Audience**

#### **4.1 Internal:**

- Policy leads at Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS).
- Commissioners in the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB).

- Managers, trainers and practitioners in Health and Social Care Trusts and other Health and Social Care organisations and agencies.

#### **4.2 External:**

- Service Users and Carers.
- Academics.
- Professional bodies.
- Researchers.
- Community and Voluntary sector.
- Section 75 Equality groups.

#### **4.3 Communication channels:**

- Email
- HSC R&D Division of the Public Health Agency.
- Newsletters and bulletins.
- Reports.
- Websites coverage.
- Stakeholder engagement.
- Targeted meetings.
- Events - workshops and conferences.



#### **4.4 Online:**

- Health and Social Care Board website and intranet sites.
- Health and Social Care Trust websites and intranet sites.
- Other Health and Social Care websites and intranet sites including Knowledge Exchange Network at the HSC Leadership Centre based at the Beeches.
- Websites and intranet sites of Professional bodies, Patient Client Council (PCC); NI Social Care Council (NISCC), Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litum (NIGALA).
- Established networks and hubs
- Other established networks aligned with the current work of the Social Work Strategy.

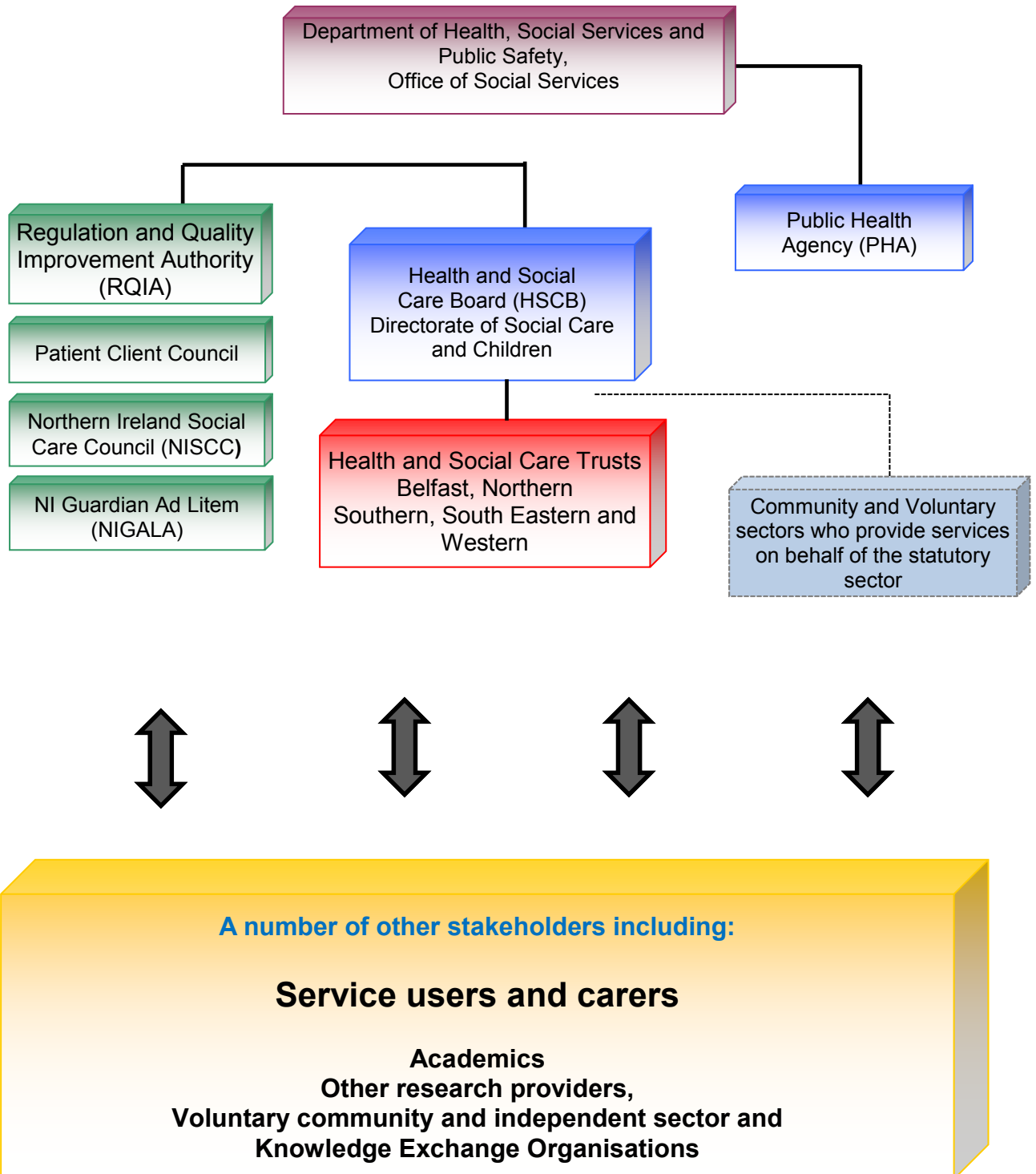
#### **5. Monitoring**

The Communication Plan will be kept under review as part of the work of the Implementation Group to ensure targeted and consistent messaging.

New actions will be added regularly. The plan will be reviewed 6 monthly.

# Appendix 1

## Implementation - Organisation and Governance



## Appendix 2

### Key Priorities associated with the Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy.

No.	Priority
1	To improve outcomes and experiences for service users, carers and society through attention to research and evidence informed approaches to enhance individual and societal wellbeing at policy, commissioning and practice levels.
2	To ensure the body of research and evidence is easily available and relevant to social work in Northern Ireland supporting an overall model of continuous improvement and excellence in commissioning, planning and practice.
3	To increase investment in research, evaluation and audit activity.
4	To increase the engagement, participation and visibility of Social Work practitioners, in partnership with other professionals, in research, evaluation and audit activities.
5	To promote and support a research infrastructure within Northern Ireland which recognises the professional integrity and organisational arrangement for the Social Work profession whilst ensuring any research related activity complies with research ethics and governance standards.
6	To ensure the experience, practice wisdom and knowledge of frontline staff, service users and carers is used to inform proposals for commissioning and investment in research, evaluation and audit activity.
7	To ensure that any research, evaluation or audit activity promotes the principles and practice of personal and public involvement and equality and human rights.

## Appendix 3

### Timelines for communication

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>When</b>
Workshop - Building the momentum - Moving on Event	Social Care Research Lead with support from Champion's Network	June 2015
Workshop outcomes	Social Care Research Lead	July 2015
Phased Implementation Plan	Implementation Group	Initial Plan July 2015
Communications about Implementation Plan post approval using channels of communications	Social Care Research Lead	November 2015
Newsletters awareness raising	Social Care Research Lead	Regular including post launch of Strategy
Progress reports to Project Board	Social Care Research Lead	Four monthly or as required
Updates to Social Work Strategy Steering Group	Social Care Research Lead	Six monthly
Annual Event – showcasing	Social Care Research Lead	Annual
The Communications Plan is a working document and other actions will be added as agreed		