

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact:

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Guidance on how to obtain initial approval from Executive Directors of Social Work for the conduct of social work research and related activity in health and social care in Northern Ireland

We are interested in building a relevant research and evidence base relevant to social work services in Northern Ireland, to help improve outcomes for service users and carers.

If you are interested in undertaking social work research related activity **across more than one** of our Health and Social Care Trusts, or if it's focus has a regional dimension, then this guidance is for you.

We have listened to your views when you told us that gaining approval for doing social work research related activity is often complex and confusing, and in many instances has led to lengthy delays and duplication.

A protocol, which is available at: <http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/swresearch/swrprotocol> has been developed to help streamline the process and to speed up approval and decisions. Application for approvals from Executive Directors of Social Work must be completed using the agreed template at Appendix 1 of the Protocol.

Completed applications to be submitted to:

sweidproposal@hscni.net

Who does it apply to?

It applies to any individual or organisation(s) wishing to undertake social work research, evaluation or audit activity in the statutory health and social care sector in Northern Ireland which has a regional dimension.

It does not apply to:

Internal social work research related activity which relates only to one organisation. Health and Social Care organisations will have their own processes for providing approvals for this work.

What does it cover?

It covers both **internal** requests by staff within the Health and Social Care Board or within any of the five Health and Social Care Trusts and **external** requests from statutory, academic, voluntary or independent sector organisations or individuals.

So what happens after I submit my application?

Once your proposal is submitted it will undergo a first sift to identify eligibility. Consideration will be given to completeness of the proposal submission as per the protocol outline.

The Social Care Governance and Training Leads (Health and Social Care Board and Health and Social Care Trusts) have been charged by the Executive Directors of Social Work to facilitate research activity that relates to the social work and social care. Executive Directors of Social Work will ultimately be responsible for the final approval.

Authors of ineligible proposals will be advised within three weeks of the panel meeting.

Eligible proposals will be sent to the Social Care Governance and Training Panel for consideration. This panel also includes staff with expertise in research methodology.

This panel will consider research, evaluation or audit proposals six times per year - usually in:

- January
- May
- September
- March
- July
- November

This should facilitate a timely response by Executive Directors of Social Work in relation to submissions. If there is a reasoned argument for an urgent consideration of the proposal this request will be considered.

Further details on the process can be obtained by accessing the Operational Framework at <http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/swresearch/swframework>