

# SOCIAL WORK STRATEGY

## INNOVATION SCHEME

2015/2016



*A Strategy for Social Work-  
Embracing Positive Change*



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)



**Health and Social  
Care Board**

# SOCIAL WORK STRATEGY INNOVATION SCHEME

## 1. Introduction

The Innovation Scheme has been set up to support the implementation of the Social Work Strategy. The aim of the Scheme is to encourage the engagement of social workers in designing and delivering innovative changes and improvements in how they practice and provide their services based on their knowledge and experience of what works and what they need to support them to do their jobs.

The purpose of the Scheme is to provide short-term 'seed' funding to support local initiatives to help improve social work practice. These local initiatives will run in parallel with planned larger scale initiatives and will be part of the overall implementation of the Social Work Strategy.

## 2. General Funding Objectives

Funding will be awarded to organisations for the purposes of testing out **new and innovative** ideas and supporting eligible pilots or projects that are consistent with progressing the three broad themes of the Strategy:

- *Strengthening the capacity of the social work workforce;*
- *Improving social work services; and*
- *Building leadership and trust in social work and social workers.*

Funding may also be awarded to roll out new ways of working that have already been piloted on a small scale within the organisation and have proven successful.

## 3. Specific Funding Objectives

Specific priorities for funding will be agreed each year. Specific objectives will be developed against the priorities and these will be used to assess applications for funding alongside the eligibility criteria. ***The funding objectives for 2015/2016 are set out in Appendix 1.***

## 4. Eligibility Criteria

Funding will be awarded for projects that:

- Are based on a clearly demonstrated need for change or improvement in social work practice/service provision;
- Do not duplicate existing activities or initiatives elsewhere;
- Have potential wider application either throughout the organisation or regionally;
- Set out clearly expected outcomes that can be measured against an agreed benchmark;
- Have evaluation built in as an integral part of the process;
- Have clear time lines for completion.

## 5. Funding

Applications are invited for small, medium sized and large-scale projects and funding will be as follows:

Project size	Funding
Small projects	Up to £5000 per project
Medium size projects	Between £5000 - £15,000 per project
Large-scale projects	Up to a maximum of £25,000 per project

Organisations may bid for more than one project but NO organisation will receive more than £25,000 in any year towards a single project or collection of projects under this Scheme. Should the number of successful applications exceed the overall budget, it may be necessary to reduce the allocated amount to individual schemes.

## 6. Organisational Contribution

This funding is intended to be in addition to an organisation's investment (financial or 'in kind') to the improvement and development of social work practice or services. Organisations are therefore expected to match the amount allocated by the Department either financially or 'in kind' (eg staff time) and this should be clearly identified in the application.

## 7. Duration of Funding

Funding will be non-recurrent, and will normally be awarded for one year only. In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to extending funding into a second year subject to agreement by the approval panel.

## 8. Use of Funding

Funding can be used flexibly towards supporting project delivery including:

- Staff release;
- Relevant training costs to support project implementation (eg in Improvement techniques or new way of working);
- Essential equipment and minor capital items;
- Evaluation costs;
- Reasonable overheads;
- Public and personal involvement.

This list is indicative only.

Funding **should not** be used for:

- Normal operational running costs of the service;
- Residential events;
- Promotion of staff;
- Off-set budget deficits.

## 9. Who can apply?

- (a) The HSC Board and HSC Trusts;
- (b) Relevant agencies such as NIGALA and NISCC;
- (c) Voluntary sector organisations that provide social work services/social work interventions;
- (d) Organisations that represent social workers<sup>1</sup>;

Applications will be accepted for projects in service areas/teams that provide a social work service either in a uni-disciplinary capacity or as part of a multidisciplinary arrangement within an organisation.

Applications will be accepted from partnerships/coalitions between two or more organisations.

Applications from Trusts should be endorsed by the Director of Social Work as well as the senior manager responsible for the service area.

Applications from other organisations must be endorsed by the senior person within the organisation responsible for the service.

## 10. How will applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- i. A clear outline of the proposal;
- ii. Demonstration of evidence-based need and/or clear articulation for an improvement project linked to specific funding objectives;
- iii. Avoidance of duplication of existing activity or initiatives;
- iv. Support from Director of Social Work in Trusts, senior personnel within other organisations, or equivalent;
- v. A management plan with specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound objectives and targets;
- vi. Articulation of measurable outcomes and, where available, existing benchmark **or** plan to determine benchmark;
- vii. Articulation of projected cost benefits (or benefits 'in kind') where relevant;
- viii. Identification of suitably qualified, trained or experienced staff to undertake the work;

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<sup>1</sup> Membership organisations such as NIASW, NIPSA or UNISON

- ix. Appropriate means of monitoring and control, including proposed evaluation methods;
- x. Clarity of costing and rationale for proposed budget and identification of organisation's contribution;
- xi. Reasonableness of estimated costs;
- xii. Proposals for sustainability following end of funding; and
- xiii. Proposals for wider application within organisation and/or regionally.

***See Appendix 2 for template for applications.***

## **11. Assessment Process**

Proposals will be assessed by a small approval panel agreed by the Social Work Strategy Steering Group.

- All applications will be acknowledged within 10 working days;
- Initial sift for eligibility and completeness: incomplete applications will be rejected and the applicant(s) will be informed by letter – the onus is on the applicant to ensure that all information and enclosures are provided as detailed on the application form, and in these guidelines;
- Applicant will be informed of the decision by letter.

It may be necessary for those considering the application to request further clarification.

## **12. Prioritisation**

The aim is to support a regional spread and a diverse range of proposals. Account will be taken of the amount of funding requested in relation to total funding available.

## **13. Letter of Offer**

When funding is awarded, the letter of offer will set out the terms and conditions which govern it. In general the award letter will state:

- The amount of funding that has been approved and the year in which it will be paid;
- The purpose of the funding;
- The conditions that apply; and
- Confirmation of monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

## **14. Monitoring**

Applications should set out proposed monitoring arrangements. Monitoring arrangements may vary depending on the project and amount and duration of funding awarded, and will be agreed with the organisation and confirmed when the offer of funding is made.

Monitoring will, in most cases, be the responsibility of the senior person who has endorsed the application.

The aims of monitoring are to:

- ensure that funding is being managed effectively and efficiently for the purpose specified;
- assess the extent to which objectives and targets are being met and outcomes achieved;
- identify barriers to implementation at an early stage; and
- provide feedback, help problem solve and facilitate implementation.

Normally, monitoring will include:

- a progress report in the form and at the frequency specified in the letter of offer (usually every 6 months for projects of one year's duration or more); and
- a final report including an evaluation report and account of expenditure.

Where monitoring arrangements vary these may include:

- visits to organisations; or
- meetings between representatives of the organisation concerned and the Strategy Programme Manager; or
- presentations to the Strategy Steering Group and/or Implementation Group.

## **15. Evaluation of Projects**

Applications should include proposed evaluation arrangements and these will be agreed with the organisation and confirmed at award stage. Each project should have in-built evaluation mechanisms which enable a report to be submitted at its end, identifying achievements, outcomes and the lessons learnt from it. The Social Work Strategy Steering Group reserves the right to secure additional evaluations as it considers necessary.

## **16. Sharing Information from Evaluations**

The Social Work Strategy Steering Group reserves the right to circulate the results of an evaluation to other organisations for information and learning. The Steering Group also reserves the right to recommend the rollout of successful projects either throughout an organisation or regionally.

## 17. How Do I Apply?

### Timetable

<b>27 October 2014</b>	Information and letter requesting applications issued to organisations.
<b>19<sup>th</sup> December 2014</b>	Deadline for receipt of project proposals from organisations.
<b>23 January 2015</b>	Funding decisions confirmed with organisations.

**LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**

## **Appendix 1**

### **FUNDING PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES**

**2015/2016**

Applications for funding in 2015/2016 must meet the following priorities and objectives.

#### **FUNDING PRIORITY 1:**

##### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES**

Using community development approaches and working alongside other agencies and organisations, social workers can help build stronger, self-reliant communities and effective working relationships that promote people's rights, challenge inequalities and improve local supports.

Social workers can utilise their core skills to help individuals and their communities create more flexible individualised solutions, focussing on strengthening what people can do rather than dwelling on what is difficult for them. This helps promote sustainable local communities.

**Applications are invited from organisations against one or more of the following objectives for initiatives or projects that will:**

**Objective 1a:** work alongside individuals and communities to address the challenges and barriers they face and to improve opportunities for their greater participation in society.

**Objective 1b:** work with community groups/champions to develop sustainable community services that help support independence.

**Objective 1c:** Divert people away from statutory services by strengthening access to informal networks of support.

**Objective 1.d:** Promote safety and social inclusion and more engaged local communities.

**Expected Outcomes:**

**An increased focus on community development approaches that facilitate and strengthen local joint working**

**Greater engagement with local communities**

**FUNDING PRIORITY 2:**

**Partnership working**

Social work at its best relies on effective partnerships, particularly with service users. Partnerships with other professions and agencies are equally important in order to meet the multi-factoral nature of people's needs and improve and safeguard their social well-being. Increasingly services are being planned and delivered by multi-disciplinary teams or in collaboration with other agencies and sectors. On occasions, the social worker may be the sole representative of the profession within a multi-disciplinary context.

Social workers take a whole systems approach to responding to need and can act as a linchpin in a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency setting, providing the cohesion to deliver a coordinated and person centred response.

**Applications are invited from organisations against one or more of the following objectives for initiatives or projects that will:**

**Objective 2a:** promote effective partnership working across organisations/disciplines.

**Objective 2b:** pilot/test a partnership working model where social work is the lead profession.

**Objective 2c:** develop effective governance arrangements to support social workers in partnership, multi-disciplinary and inter-agency working.

**Objective 2d:** develop constructive working environments which maximise the contribution that all disciplines bring to service delivery.

## **Expected outcomes:**

**A more confident social workforce in multi-disciplinary settings**

**Greater clarity in the unique contribution that social work brings to multi-agency/multi-disciplinary working**

## **FUNDING PRIORITY 3:**

### **Service user lead initiatives**

There is an increasing emphasis on service users and carers determining how they wish to be supported. This emphasis reflects the profession's values and commitment to being person centred and supporting peoples' autonomy and self-determination.

Service users bring an expertise of their own experience and want to be actively involved in the planning of how their needs are best met.

**Applications are invited from organisations against one or more of the following objectives for initiatives or projects that will:**

**Objective 3a:** actively engage service users and experts by experience in service planning and development.

**Objective 3b:** actively engage service users in person centred care planning and outcome focused interventions.

**Objective 3c:** actively engage service users and experts by experience in service delivery.

**Objective 3d:** have service users and experts by experience play a key role in monitoring and reviewing services.

**Objective 3e:** promote an effective model of partnership working with service users in the planning and delivery of care.

**Objective 3f:** actively recruit, or have service users or experts by experience as part of the recruitment process.

## **Expected outcomes:**

**an increase in the number of service users and experts by experience actively involved in the planning and delivery of services;**

**Increased autonomy for service users and experts by experience in determining how their care is delivered.**

## **FUNDING PRIORITY 4**

### **Advocacy**

Advocacy is a key social work task. It fits well with the core values of social work in terms of enabling people to achieve self-fulfilment. Social workers are in an ideal place to offer advocacy, having built up a relationship with the individual, knowing their needs and expectations and understanding their human rights. Social workers will often act as advocates when supporting individuals through the social work practice continuum. However advocacy can be compromised when practitioners find themselves torn between representing the views of the person accessing support while at the same time trying to manage scarce resources on behalf of the organisation they work for.

**Applications are invited from organisations against one or more of the following objectives for initiatives or projects that will:**

**Objective 4.a:** develop the social work advocacy role that supports individuals to have a strong voice in determining how their needs are best met.

**Objective 4.b:** creates an opportunity for self-advocacy, where individuals can speak up for themselves, with support, either individually or collectively.

**Objective 4.c:** provides creative and responsive advocacy for individuals who do not have capacity or are not able to articulate their needs clearly.

**Expected outcomes:**

**Increased numbers of individuals able to articulate their needs and receive more person centred interventions.**

**Increased capacity for social workers to challenge systems/services that do not meet individual's needs**



## Appendix 2

### TEMPLATE FOR APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THE SOCIAL WORK STRATEGY INNOVATION FUND

1. State which Funding Priority and Relevant Objective(s) application is being made against.
2. Brief description of proposal, including rationale and evidence of need.
3. Aim, objectives and expected outcomes.
4. Timeframe (start and completion dates and any key milestones)
5. Projected costs of proposal against activity.
6. Details of how the Trust will match the funding applied for.
7. Management and monitoring arrangements.
8. Evaluation and reporting arrangements.
9. Consideration of wider application and sustainability following end of funding.
10. Name and contact details of project lead.

All applications must be endorsed by the senior person responsible for the social work service area(s) where the project will be implemented.

All applications from Trusts must be approved by the Executive Director of Social Work.

Completed applications should be returned to:

Noelle Barton, Programme Manager (Social Work Strategy), HSCB, Directorate of Social Care and Children's Services, Linenhall Street, BELFAST BT2 8BS  
**by 5.00pm on 19 December 2014**

**LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**