

Building a Research Community and
Social Work and Social Care Research Evidence
- Supporting Continuous Improvement in Service Outcomes
Strategy 2020-2025

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UNTIL 2025



LEADERSHIP
ENGAGEMENT
BETTER OUTCOMES
CREDIBILITY

NETWORKS
PARTNERSHIP
INVOLVEMENT
RESEARCH
PRIORITIES
SECURING
INVESTMENT

INSPIRING
COMPETENCE
CAPACITY
KNOWLEDGE
TRANSFER



In 2021 the Social Work and Social Care Research Evidence, Supporting Continuous Improvement in Service Outcomes- Strategy 2020-2025 was published.

The purpose of the implementation plan is to outline the steps that are going to be taken to make the strategy a reality. The Building a Research Community Core Group will be instrumental in driving this work forward. The Northern Ireland Social Work Leadership Network is responsible for governance and accountability.

The implementation plan is based on the same underlying principles outlined in the research community and the strategy itself: equality, inclusion and equality of participation, openness and transparency as well as research rigor, integrity, quality and honesty. It will also ensure that the products from the work will developed on the basis of empowerment, collaboration and co-working.

Contents

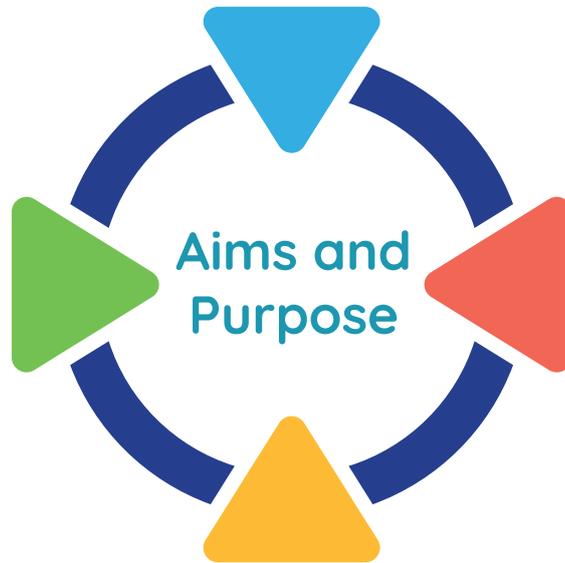
Introduction	4
Overarching aims of the Research Community	5
Aims and Purpose	5
Principles and values	6
Our Goals	7
Our Research and Continuous Improvement	
Strategy 2020-2025	8
Governance, organisational and accountability	9
Summary – what steering group members will do	10
Conclusion	11
Notes to be read in conduction with the implementation plan	13
The Implementation Plan	14
Appendix 1	34

Introduction

In the autumn 2019 and into early 2020 a regional initiative was commenced. This work, crossing organizational boundaries and inclusive of service users and carers culminated in the establishment of a Research Community¹ and the publication of the Social Work and Social Care Research Evidence-Supporting Continuous Improvement in Service Outcomes - Strategy 2020-2025².

This document outlines the plan for taking the work of the strategy forward. It has been developed by the Building a Research Community Group. The collaborative approach adopted from the inception of this work will continue as an integral part of our approach as we go forward.





The overarching aims of the Research Community are:

- To develop a sustainable research community and associated infrastructure in Northern Ireland that connects the needs of the social work profession*, other professional practice, academic, service users and carers.
- To develop and launch a revised Social Work and Social Care Research Evidence- Supporting Continuous Improvement in Service Outcomes - Strategy for 2020 and onwards.

*Includes social work practice within statutory, not for profit and private organisations.

The overall purpose is:

To embed and implement a culture of research and evidence that supports decision making and outcomes in social work and social care services and outcomes for service users and carers.

This Implementation Plan outlines the steps and actions that we need to do to ensure that our aims and vision become a reality. The work should not be perceived to be a single event followed by immediate implementation. Rather it is a learning process that will take time and like any learning process requires a degree of flexibility. Our journey may therefore be one that moves and evolves to reflect other changes in the wider environment where organisations and individuals have less control.



Principles and Values

The strategy is based on the principles of equality, inclusion, equal participation, openness and transparency as well as research quality, rigor and honesty. Work emerging from the strategy will be produced based on; collaboration, empowerment and research for all, service user and carer involvement, excellence, effectiveness and the efficient development and use of best available robust evidence.

The ambition is to build a research community that will foster mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships. Through collaborative working we hope to build upon our 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. A number of key features are typical of the Research Community;

Connectivity, engagement and partnership;



A broad range of research methods;



A quest for usefulness applicability and theoretical understanding;



A focus on social change, and work with a wide range of stakeholders in the research process.

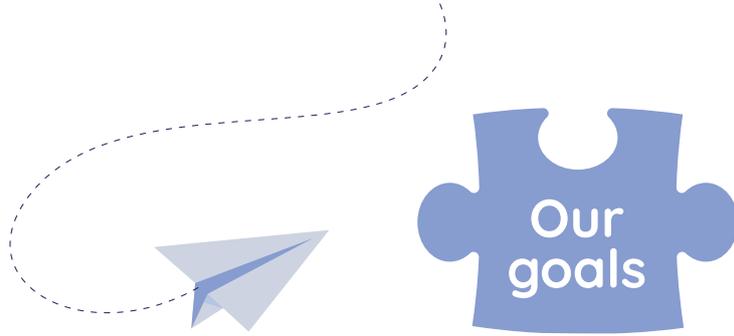


Ownership;



A concern for social justice;





- Promote and undertake collaborative working that facilitates learning and the sharing of outcomes across organisations and programmes.
- Develop agreed priorities for the conduct of research and evidence.
- Develop the support systems necessary to identify and respond to funding calls and be prepared to source other resources.
- Establish opportunities (locally and wider) that enable a higher volume of quality research relevant to social work and social care in Northern Ireland.
- Create a network recognising and valuing the active involvement of service users and carers.
- Strengthen and maintain existing alliances and building new ones where appropriate.
- Build a collaborative network that support better alignment of policy and practice with academic discourses.
- Develop collective ownership to drive forward the research agenda at different levels.



Our Social Work and Social Care Research Evidence- Supporting Continuous Improvement in Service Outcomes - Strategy 2020-2025 has five focus areas.





Governance, organizational and accountability

A framework document³ was developed and approved for taking forward the work of the Social Work and Social Care Research Evidence- Supporting Continuous Improvement in Service Outcomes – Strategy 2020-2025. See Figure 1 which outlines the groups and individuals required for leadership, organization and governance arrangements. For effective delivery a number of working groups or work streams may be required to take actions forward, report progress and keep activity under regular review. This will ensure that there are robust governance and accountability processes in place so that partners are clear on their respective roles and responsibilities.

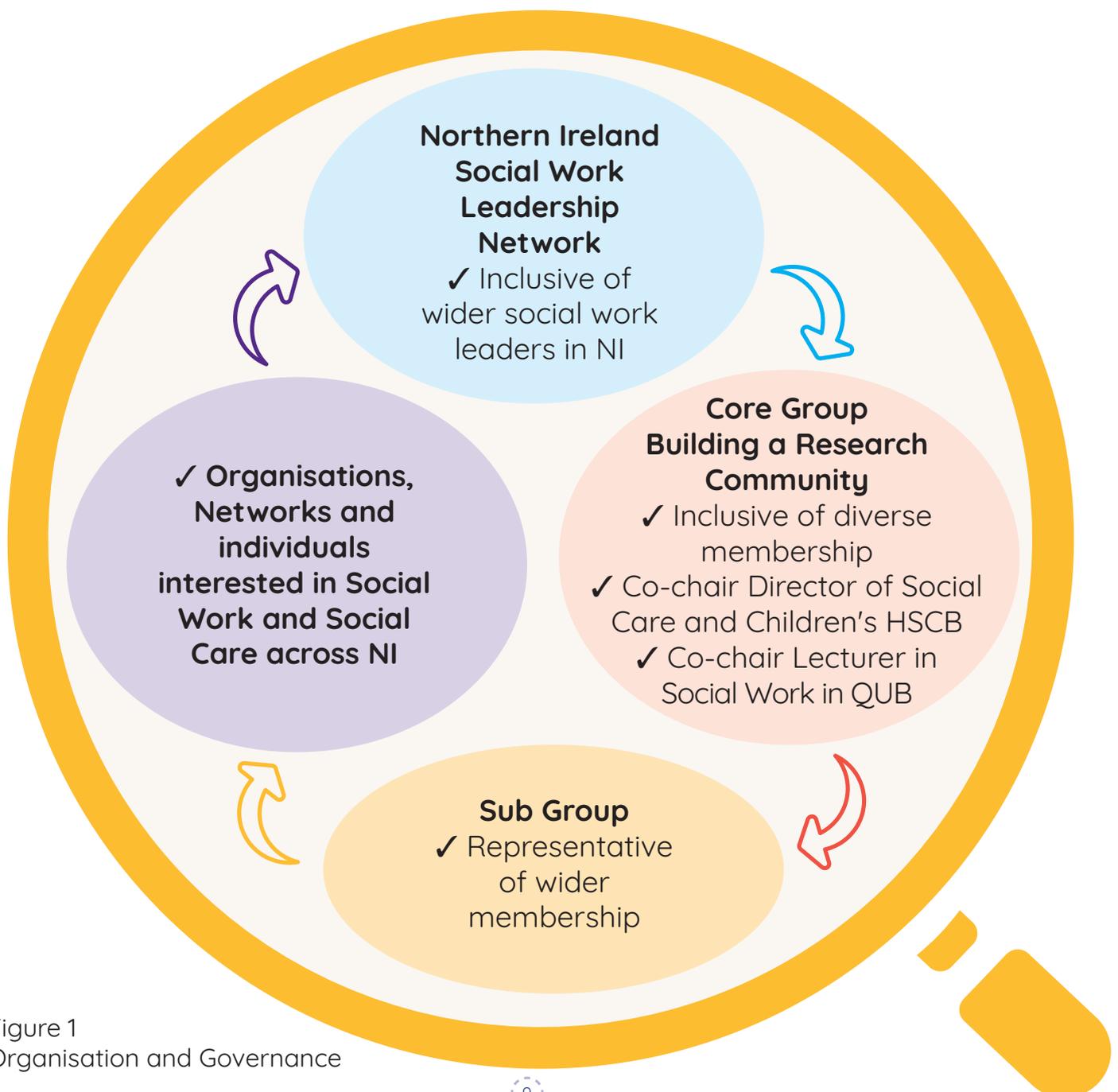


Figure 1
Organisation and Governance

In summary core group members will

Maintain a forum for engagement, collaboration, collation and exchange of ideas and good practice.

- Support accessible communications.
- Connect the regional strategic agenda and the local research agenda.
- Link with employer organisations to ensure two way flows of ideas.
- Set social work and social care research priorities.
- Work collaboratively to identify and secure funding.
- Create synergy between research and evidence and other agendas.
- Engage with other local, national and international bodies supportive of driving forward research and evidence.

Sub group members will progress actions on behalf of the core group.

A Communication Plan has been prepared to ensure effective engagement and participation throughout the stages of the development of work in relation to research. This will be inclusive of a range of media options events, and conferences; workshops; meetings and bulletins. This will be kept under review to ensure that there is visibility of the research agenda and outcomes between and within stakeholders and the wider public.



Conclusion



The Implementation Plan below reflects a framework for translating the vision that we anticipate from our work in relation to Building Research Community Social Work and in Implementing our Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy 2020-2025.



Actions that we have been progressing over the last few years with the first Strategy 2015-2020 with more recent work commenced in 2019 with Building a Research Community will help us ensure that the journey that we are embarking upon takes us closer to our longer term vision and cultural shift.



We know why we are doing this - to create the cultural shift required within our social work profession.



We know who we have to do it - for our service users and carers and for our staff.



We know the things that we need to do to - implement our plan and what outcomes we want.



We know how we will do it - through providing leadership, engaging with others using our Communication Plan.



We know when we plan to achieve this - over the next five years.



The lesson learned from the first strategy that wider ownership of the agenda remains important. People who worked with the initial stages of development will continue to do so as the work progresses. They and others will also have a part to play in its implementation if our vision is to be realised.



Our vision is that people in Northern Ireland who use our services will have confidence that social work and social care policy, practice and service outcomes are underpinned by a strong research evidence base committed to continual improvement? People will have the confidence that the social work and social care workforce will be sufficiently resourced, motivated, skilled and freed up to engage in research activity.

Our Vision



Notes to be read in conjunction with the implementation plan



Designing an implementation plan that reflects the very different roles and functions of our stakeholders brings with it a number of challenges but also a number of very positive opportunities for greater collaboration working and engagement.

Our stakeholders represent education, justice, health and social care, not-for-profit organisations and service users and carers but all with a common interest in the social work and social care. It is inevitable therefore that agreed actions that need to be progressed will sit differently depending on respective social work roles and functions. For example academic institutions charged with educating social work and social care staff; organisations with policy and strategic and commissioning functions; organisations with operational functions inclusive of learning and development and governance; those with regulation and improvement functions. All have a role in relation to outcomes for service users and carers.

This plan is focused on your organization's **research and evidence involvement or capacity**, not your organization's plans or capacity in general.

The plan is designed to reflect actions to address in the **immediate, the medium and longer term** over the life of the research community and research and continuous improvement strategy. When the strategy and the plan were devised it was during a period of the Covid 19 pandemic which inevitably impacted.

Whilst not wishing to see this as a barrier, given that research and evidence are even more crucial at times that are challenging, account never less needs to be taken of this. In particular new work pressures faced by staff and organisations as a result of the pandemic. Equally however there have been new opportunities created with more flexibility and better use of various technology and social media that support networking and engagement that need to be further capitalised.

The action plan relates to the four key aims of our research agenda: collective leadership; increasing engagement; generating knowledge for better outcomes and strengthening credibility which are also interrelated to the five individual focus areas addressed in the strategy:

- 1 Building collaborative networks through engagement and involvement;
2. Research Priorities;
3. Securing Investment;
4. Inspiring research leadership, competence and capacity amongst staff and service users and carers; and,
5. Research and evidence utilisation and knowledge transfer.



Action Plan

Building a Research Community and Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy 2020-2025

Strategic Implementation Plan - Date created : March 2021 based on Immediate (I), Medium (M) and Longer term (L) actions.

A pre-requisite to the successful progression of the actions identified in the implementation plan is the development of tailored business cases to get funding.

Aim 1	Objectives	Where are we currently	Where we want to get to
<p>To inspire and empower the development of individual and collective research leadership.</p> <p>Link also to Strategy</p> <p>Focus area 2 Research Priorities</p> <p>Focus area 3 Securing Investment</p> <p>Focus area 4 Inspiring research leadership, competence and capacity amongst staff and service users are carers.</p>	<p>Cultivate research leadership at different levels.</p> <p>Build capacity amongst research leaders and potential research leaders.</p> <p>Nurture, develop and celebrate all those engaged with research.</p>	<p>Leadership needs to be consistent across organisations.</p> <p>Debates on how people were going to implement it.</p> <p>People are signed up but for frontline staff, service deliver is the priority. This will always be a challenge.</p> <p>The Covid 19 pandemic has exacerbated this issue when safeguarding is the priority.</p> <p>Issue is not about commitment – shortfalls social worker staffing also influence this.</p>	<p>Having a champion or lead research role that will achieve cultivation of leadership across all levels and builds capacity as well as nurturing and developing engagement in research.</p> <p>Funding ring fenced for champion/lead role – accountability/outcomes built in to this role to assist people taking forward research.</p> <p>Funding to address/take account of the need for backfilling issues if staff across sectors engaged in research related activities including training.</p> <p>Important for this to be open across all sectors.</p> <p>Funding secured for IT infrastructure to support links to research.</p> <p>Funding secured from outside the parameters of social work.</p>

Aim 1	Objectives	Where are we currently	Where we want to get to
		<p>Impact of Covid 19 also impacting on research priorities but reinforced the importance of evidence.</p>	<p>Research becomes embedded within services.</p> <p>Continue to build on foundations with research methods at Ulster University course and other Post qualifying routes - from degree, through Assessed Year in Practice (AYE) and throughout social work career.</p> <p>Scope out the feasibility of developing a shared repository or similar that is adequately resourced and maintained to coordinate and harness research produced.</p> <p>Access to contemporary research undertaken is facilitated. This is kept under review.</p>

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 1</p> <p>Support the strategic implementation of building a social work research community and research strategy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting staff and service users and carers to undertake post qualifying training (i.e. Research methods). Finding ways to disseminate information within organisations. Develop ways for staff to develop research that arises from priorities in their own work. Resourcing of time for staff to undertake. 	<p>Core and sub group members.</p> <p>Wider groups and individuals as relevant.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>M</p> <p>L</p>	<p>Financial</p> <p>Human</p> <p>Political</p> <p>Access to training and knowledge to enable the research to be undertaken.</p> <p>Time resources.</p>	<p>Regular monitoring reports.</p>	<p>Funding in place that facilitates research and evidence training across sectors for practitioners and service users and carers and for staff backfilling.</p> <p>Uptake on Professional in Practice programmes/and submissions that are research related.</p> <p>Increase in research initiatives.</p> <p>Outcomes of current levels of research courses and literature reviews undertaken be harnessed and disseminated via web site repository.</p> <p>Champions adequately trained in research methods and facilitated to mentor staff and service users and carers.</p>

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 2</p> <p>Support organizational and collective research and evidence mindedness in the business of organizations.</p>	Core and sub group members and senior leaders show more strategic support and grounding to make it happen.	-	Political Financial	<p>In a number of organisations monitoring will be through the Business Plan goals and objectives basis and reviewed also by senior management.</p> <p>In academic organisations this will be reflected in educational provision within curriculum content and course design that instils research mindedness at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.</p> <p>Opportunities to engage students in peer research and co-production research activities.</p>	<p>Messages highlighting the importance and use of research and evidence readily referenced in relevant written plans, documents, notes of meetings and oral presentations.</p> <p>Number of research partnerships between organisations and academia.</p> <p>Curriculum content that reflects research and evidence.</p>

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
Step 2 continued				<p>Universities are proactive in ensuring accessible course provision is available to service users and carers, to ensure that research involves the meaningful voice of recipients of services.</p> <p>Master's and Doctoral level research opportunities open to social workers and service users, some of which are available part-time and others on a full-time basis.</p> <p>University social work departments are keen to respond, as appropriate, to requests to collaborate or to tender for funding for sector wide research and evaluation projects that are relevant to the profession.</p>	

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
Step 2 continued				<p>Funding opportunities including those outside social work may be available to social workers interested in engaging in research at this level.</p> <p>Organization and professional actively support a number of research projects in partnership with the universities.</p>	

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 3</p> <p>Develop and test a system where all stakeholders who have a role in identifying and setting research priority areas are engaged.</p>	<p>Core Group.</p> <p>Smaller sub group to be established with additional input from academics, social work practitioners and wider groups.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>Establish groups.</p>	<p>Political</p> <p>Human</p>	<p>Meetings of Core Group and reports to NI Social Work Leadership network.</p> <p>Review process.</p>	<p>System in place to capture feedback from stakeholder advising of benefits.</p> <p>Priority areas/ themes identified.</p> <p>Two way process for sharing of ideas for priorities.</p>
<p>Step 4</p> <p>Identify research priorities at a strategic level in relation to social work and social care linked to current and local issues, trends, needs, areas of learning within HSC, Justice and Education and the Social Work Professional body - BASW NI.</p>	<p>Core Group.</p> <p>Smaller sub group to be established with additional input from academics, social work practitioners and wider groups.</p>	<p>M</p> <p>L</p>	<p>Political</p> <p>Human</p>	<p>Monitoring and review of outcomes and impacts.</p> <p>Success indicators developed progress reported.</p> <p>Regular review of funding streams at local, national and international levels.</p>	<p>Evidence of the involvement in priority setting by relevant social work staff across sectors including independent research staff, service user and carers.</p> <p>Responsiveness and successes of applications to national and international funding bids.</p> <p>Taster opportunities in place for staff to get involved in small scale research activity related to priorities under a research apprenticeships type model reflected in applications.</p>

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 5</p> <p>Develop a plan for securing funding to implement the strategy over the five year period.</p>	<p>Core group and Sub group.</p> <p>Executive Directors Group.</p>	I	<p>Political</p> <p>Human</p>	Monitoring and review of Implementation plan.	A plan in place and to demonstrate how effective use of resources will be utilized based on priorities.
<p>Step 6</p> <p>Lobby the DoH and other relevant Departments for funding for the Research and Continuous improvement Strategy.</p>	<p>Core group and Sub group.</p> <p>Senior Leadership Network.</p>	I M L	Financial	Review of implementation plan and Monitoring of spend.	<p>Evidence of responses to funding applications where appropriate.</p> <p>Facilitation and resourcing of research within and across partnerships.</p>

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 7</p> <p>Secure grant funding by working closely with higher education institutes and other centres of excellence building the skill base in applying for funding.</p> <p>Some funding opportunities for consideration https://www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk/; and/or the equivalent of the currently funded NI Research Centres and/or research networks in health; https://research.hscni.net/infrastructure</p> <p>Specific funding to support social work practitioners to engage in ongoing study beyond the Masters – at the moment we have the NINE DTP Doctoral training; Home - NINE DTP</p> <p>R and D Office NI Public Health Agency - Research & Development in Northern Ireland (hscni.net)</p>	<p>Core group and Sub group.</p> <p>Additional inputs from other academics.</p> <p>PhD students.</p>	<p>M</p> <p>L</p>	<p>Political</p> <p>Human</p> <p>Financial</p>	<p>Number of successful and timely responses to funding calls from research funding bodies.</p>	<p>Increase in studies that social work in Northern Ireland are engaged that reflect strategic priorities identifies.</p>

Aim 2	Objectives	Where are we currently	Where we want to get to
<p>To increase engagement and involvement between policy - makers practitioners, researchers, academia and service users and carers increasing mutual knowledge and engagement, co-design and co-production issues.</p> <p>Link to Strategy</p> <p>Focus area 1</p> <p>Building collaborative networks through engagement and involvement.</p> 	<p>Build and support partnerships.</p> <p>Support the sharing of information, skills and opportunities in securing access to and responding to funding sources and bids.</p> <p>Encourage greater transparency to enable research activity and processes to thrive beyond traditional boundaries.</p>	<p>Good examples of collaborative partnerships across policy, practice and research, as well as different fora for services and co-production but can be ad hoc activity.</p>	<p>Building Research Community has a unique presence in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The network has a presence supported by Information Technology and is recognised as the focal point, a 'go to' place, for any discussions on collaborative practice focused research.</p>

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 1</p> <p>Utilise and develop the partnership arrangements as established by the Building a Research Community to keep research on the agenda.</p>	<p>Core group.</p> <p>In immediate timeline need to put the work of the network/ research on the agenda at key internal for an on-going activity.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>M</p> <p>L</p>	-	Regular reporting and review (short quarterly or biannual report from core group members).	Increased promotion, facilitation and resourcing of collaborative research activity including within and across partnerships.
<p>Step 2</p> <p>Build, strengthen and extend existing collaborative research community to include other networks locally, nationally and internationally.</p>	<p>Core Group.</p> <p>And sub group members plus others where necessary.</p>	<p>M</p> <p>Agree groups (including virtual) local partnerships; all Ireland implementation network and European Family Support Network, Research in Practice.</p> <p>L</p>	Human	Regular reporting and review to ensure updating networks list and mailing lists.	<p>Evidence of approaches made to wider groups networks inclusive of service users and carers and wider community.</p> <p>Network(s) of diverse partners with focused agendas in place.</p> <p>Widening of the research community.</p>

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 3</p> <p>Facilitate formal relationships /meetings with external researchers and academics to inform their research and provide context along with service users and carers experience.</p>	Core Group and Sub Group members plus wider academic staff and researchers.	<p>M –</p> <p>To include other Departmental Researchers, Centre for Effective Services and National Children’s Bureau.</p> <p>International representation.</p> <p>L</p>	-	Outcomes of Biannual meetings.	Research and evidence topics reflect practice issues identify topics relevant to practice issues.
<p>Step 4</p> <p>At Post Qualifying level Development of a research community between the two groups of masters programmes, students at QUB, UU and Open University.</p>	Core Group and Sub Group members plus wider academic staff.	<p>M</p> <p>Formal links between the 3 universities to establish practice based research student for a.</p> <p>L</p> <p>Connection to practice.</p>	Human	Regular reporting and review.	<p>Evidence of joint dissemination of research projects findings in practice.</p> <p>Greater evidence of a connection of research undertaken and practice needs.</p>

Aim 3	Objectives	Where are we currently	Where we want to get to
<p>To seek out and further develop research and evidence to generate knowledge that impacts positive change and improved social wellbeing outcomes for service users and carers and wider communities.</p> <p>Link to Strategy</p> <p>Focus area 5</p> <p>Research and evidence utilisation and knowledge transfer.</p> 	<p>Generate agreement across partners on what research impact entails.</p> <p>Collaborate for the delivery of research and evidence for policy and practice impact.</p> <p>Support collaborations locally, nationally and internationally.</p> <p>Support a culture of openness and transparency in research activity. Inclusive of research, evaluations and reviews.</p> <p>Create synergy with other approaches used to support quality and improvement.</p>	<p>Currently have Post Qualifying research master's course at Ulster University.</p> <p>Open learning course piloted in May 2020 designed as introduction to research for service users who want to get involved.</p> <p>> Can be delivered by QUB or Community and Voluntary organisations.</p> <p>Lunchtime seminars from Social Care Council (NISCC).</p> <p>Annual Social Work Research conference.</p> <p>Continuous professional learning course.</p> <p>Good culture of research mindedness.</p> <p>Need to look at where research goes once it is complete – how is it being used.</p> <p>At the beginning phases of the sharing of research learning.</p>	<p>Instill professional curiosity through corporate leadership.</p> <p>Reflect importance in time allocation of the job – cannot always drop to the bottom of the list.</p> <p>Messaging to reflect that research should be implemented in practice to improve outcomes and efficiency in work.</p> <p>Research must make positive impact to service delivery and time management of service delivery.</p> <p>Easy access to research already conducted.</p>

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 1</p> <p>Identification of an effective range of forums, hubs and networks within /between partner organisations utilising existing platforms and hubs to disseminate research.</p> <p>> Research to be standing item on Social Work supervision agenda.</p>	-	I	Administrative	Regular review as part of review of Implementation Plan.	Collective agreement effective platforms in NI to be utilised to facilitate sharing of information, which will provide the access to evidence-informed ways of working to the wider workforce.

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 2</p> <p>Identify gaps in knowledge.</p> <p>Facilitate mechanisms to bridge gaps in knowledge exchange to inform policy, commissioning, practice and service delivery. Support from academia for the dissemination of relevant research.</p> <p>Establish a link between social work forums and the research agenda.</p> <p>Research champion research app/research website.</p> <p>Social media strategy: Communicate messages through social media.</p> <p>2 minute video from perspective of social workers showing positive impacts of research.</p>	<p>Research community.</p> <p>Social work forum leaders.</p> <p>Communications team.</p>	<p>M</p> <p>L</p>	<p>Financial</p> <p>Human</p>	<p>Regular review as part of review of Implementation Plan.</p>	<p>Production by UU and QUB and Open University of regular joint accessible bulletins/e-zine on research related projects, summaries.</p> <p>Case studies; features on social work academics where they reflect on their roots in practice, how this has shaped research agendas and where social work professionals and service users and carers have informed respective research agendas.</p> <p>The growing social work evidence base is reflected for teaching, both qualifying and post-qualifying training.</p>

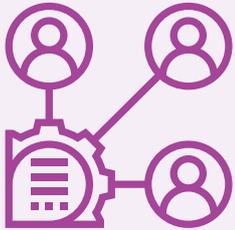
Aim 4	Objectives	Where are we currently	Where we want to get to
<p>Strengthen the credibility, professionalism and resilience of the workforce to support effective evidence - informed services for service users and carers.</p> <p>Link to Strategy</p> <p>Focus area 4</p> <p>Inspiring research leadership, competence and capacity amongst staff and service users are carers.</p> 	<p>Support and facilitate an organisational culture encouraging research mindedness.</p> <p>Encourage social work staff to engage in education and learning that supports evidence informed practice and critical appraisal.</p> <p>Support through organisational commitment and resourcing practitioner based research evidence activity, including research, evaluations and reviews, in the workplace involving service users and carers as part of a regular mainstream activity.</p>	<p>Organizational specific differences. Service delivery and service provision differs according to context and structure.</p> <p>Whether research is core business or not.</p> <p>Overlaps in research interest organizationally and is committed to research and evidence some of which is educational and Qualifying Training based, Professional in Practice (PIP) and standards of the profession promote research mindedness.</p> <p>Building a structure where there is an existing ethos that promotes and rewards employees to engage in research evidence and evaluation.</p> <p>Quality Improvement paralleling research - is this an area of overlap?</p> <p>Quality Improvement based on research evidence.</p> <p>Audit - next steps following findings.</p>	<p>To a place where research and continuous improvement is core business across all organizations and structures and that it makes a difference to practice and outcomes for service users and carers.</p> <p>To support staff to be innovative and provide individuals with resources to drive forward improvement and a culture of evidence-based practice.</p> <p>Addressing the barriers to research, evaluation and innovation that currently exist.</p> <p>The funding requirements, as noted at aim one, is secured.</p>

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 1</p> <p>Reinforce the importance of the Professional in Practice (PiP) framework which requires that research and evidence is a core element of professional and social care registration and a core element of social workers roles and responsibilities.</p>	Professional in Practice (PiP). PIP partnership and senior governance leads and the Social Care Council, universities and employers.	I M L	Human Political	Accountability and review through PiP Framework.	<p>Evidence from PiP framework and Learning and Development teams on how research is promoted and undertaken within training and learning and development opportunities.</p> <p>Outcomes of learning.</p>

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 2</p> <p>Build the capacity of staff and service users and carers for greater dissemination of research locally, nationally and internationally</p>	<p>Core Group, Sub Group and organisational training teams and regulatory body.</p> <p>Initiatives to increase accessibility to research for service users and carers.</p> <p>All funders require service users and carers' involvement from design stage onwards.</p> <p>More co-produced research for ownership to be shared.</p> <p>Building capacity to ensure people can participate meaningfully in UU Post Qualifying Research Methods Programme for social work professionals and service users and carers.</p> <p>Open Access introduction to research methods for service users and carers.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>M</p> <p>L</p>	Financial	<p>Monitoring take up of opportunities by staff and service users and carers.</p> <p>Types of projects and initiatives.</p> <p>Accreditation outcomes.</p> <p>Feedback from students.</p>	<p>Outcomes from research and evidence studies.</p> <p>Presentations at a diverse range of event.</p> <p>Publications.</p> <p>Utilization of outcomes in influencing decisions about practice and training.</p>

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 3</p> <p>Create opportunities to celebrate and communicate success and value.</p> <p>Skill base of those practitioners and service users and carers who have acquired academic credit.</p>	<p>Sub group members, other training teams and heads of Post Qualifying programmes.</p> <p>PIP awards and dissemination events for Post qualifying research methods training.</p> <p>Social Work Awards – co-production.</p> <p>Annual Social Work and Social Conference and other conferences.</p>	<p>I</p> <p>M</p> <p>L</p>	-	Organisational programmes of events.	Evidence of how these skills have been utilized in supervising others, mentoring, teaching inputs on recognized course.

Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timelines	Resources	Evaluation	Evidence
What Will Be Done?	Who will lead and /or participate	(I) (M) (L)	Financial Human Political & Other	How will we review progress?	How we will evidence outcomes
<p>Step 4</p> <p>Explore the feasibility of appointing a lead with relevant research specialism skill and knowledge research who will have a brief to contribute to both the strategic research agenda and local organizational agendas and liaise and network with relevant others.</p>	Need uniformity across Trusts or other organisations in the commitment to a research post.	I M	Human Political	Outcomes of meetings and discussions on this issue strategically and locally.	Scoping report as evidence of outcomes of negotiations.
<p>Step 5</p> <p>Dependent on outcome of step 3 disregard or progress actions –securing funding for posts, agreeing job descriptions , assessment of posts /implementation etc.</p>	<p>Only if progressed</p> <p>Consistency and uniformity of approach.</p>	L	Human Political Financial	<p>Posts designed and job descriptions validated and approved.</p> <p>Outcomes agreed.</p> <p>Accountability reports and activity.</p>	Outcomes at local level of activity against outcomes that evidences what is the difference.



Appendix 1: Stakeholders - Building a Research Community

a) Service Users and Carers

- Those who have developed research evidence competence and capability
- Other service users and carers

b) Health and Social Care

- Department of Health
- Health and Social Care Board
- Health and Social Care Trusts
- Research and Development Division – Public Health Agency
- Northern Ireland Guardian ad Litem Agency
- Social Care Council
- Regulation and Quality Improvement Agency
- Patient and Client Council

c) Academia

- Queen's University
- Ulster University
- Open University
- Education Authority

d) Justice Agencies

- Department of Justice / Northern Ireland Prison Service
- Probation Board Northern Ireland

e) Community and Voluntary Sector

- Voypic - Voice of Young People in Care
- Barnardo's NI
- Disability Research Network
- Children in Northern Ireland
- Older people representation by Presbyterian Ireland
- Children and Young People Strategic Partnership

f) Other research providers

- The membership of the research community will be kept under review as part of the implementation plan and invitations will be extended to other research providers if considered relevant.

g) Other organisations

- British Association of Social Workers NI
- The Healthcare Libraries of Northern Ireland

References

- 1 Research Community <http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/our-work/social-care-and-children/swresearch>
- 2 Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy 2020-2025 <http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/get-involved/consultations/sw-research-continuous-improvement-strategy-2020-25/>
- 3 Building a Research Community Framework Document Supporting Research Evidence in Social Work and Social Care in Northern Ireland



**FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION**

Social Care and Children's Directorate
12-22 Linenhall Street
Belfast
BT2 8BS
[www.hscboard.hscni.net/our-work/
social-care-and-children/swresearch](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/our-work/social-care-and-children/swresearch)
E: swresearchstrategy@hscni.net