

# Social Work Research & Continuous Improvement

Scoping out what is happening  
across organisations

Feedback



# Background

Agreement by Implementation Board (Established June 2017) to conduct scoping exercise

To ensure we have a common purpose for future discussions on research, evidence and continuous improvement.

To inform decisions on governance and infrastructure

# Overall our intention remains to:

- Increase research capacity and usage (building skills)
- Identify and consult and agree strategic research priorities
- Support a research active culture across academic and practice settings and other sectors (collaborative approach)
- Promote and support better dissemination and utilisation of research findings
- Increase involvement of service users and carers (experienced experts)
- Better define and measure outcome focused social work provision

# Scoping exercise-position as of September 2017

## Scope of the exercise (3 areas)

- Processes developed within organisations aimed at stimulating and supporting research, evidence and continuous improvement
- Processes developed or being developed where it's possible to establish synergy
- Priority area to benefit from conduct of research or evidence review

# Responses received from:

- Health and Social Care Board
- Department of Health
- Five Health and Social Care Trusts
- Probation Board Northern Ireland
- NIGALA
- Youth Justice Agency

# Processes

(Regional Governance Assurance & Training. Learning & Workforce Development)

Nominated Lead	Training Supports	Developmental Activity
<p>All have a nominated lead with exception of Youth Justice Agency. Usually from regional governance, Assurance &amp; Training, Learning &amp; Workforce Development</p> <p>DoH-link to the Strategic Agenda Social Work and Research</p>	<p>Range of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post qualifying activity - elements of research;</li> <li>• Partnerships eg. professional teaching, adult safeguarding, supervision, child care award, approved social work.</li> </ul> <p>Specific Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REM Programme @ UU</li> <li>• Doctoral programme @ QUB</li> <li>• Masters level</li> <li>• PHD</li> <li>• YJA-none at present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team meetings</li> <li>• Publications</li> <li>• Events/conferences</li> <li>• Presentations (Research &amp; Quality Improvement)</li> <li>• Journal clubs</li> <li>• Professional forums</li> <li>• Book club</li> <li>• Research is a theme that populates Trust forums across organisations</li> <li>• Regional Annual Social Work &amp; Social Care Conference</li> <li>• Supporting processes to explore measurement of learning outcomes (development of tools)</li> <li>• Development of specific accredited courses(certIFICATE, diploma, masters level)</li> <li>• Research &amp; Evidence training for service users &amp; carers (accredited)</li> </ul>

# Processes Continued

## Networks

- Evidence informed Quality Improvement in Social Care (new group) (NHSCT)
  - Research & Development, Research & Governance Committee (Medical Director engagement across professions) SHSCT
  - Lessons Learned groups(quality)
  - Safety & Quality Experience (SQE) and Quality Improvement (QI)- Regional Initiative
- } SEHSCT

# Networks continued

- Emerging from Children's Participation Network
  - Evaluation of practice ethnic minorities
  - Care proceedings
  - Skills sharing event
  - Children's Interagency Groups (legal research best practice)
- Natural connectivity with Irish Probation Journal (PBNI). Encourage publications
- Development of a Trust group is on agenda-not implemented (BHSCT)

} NIGALA

# Other resources

- Research potential within Trust to support other staff (searching research databases) (WHSCT)
- Directors fund small presence of research (SHSCT)
- Recent launch of local research strategy (NHSCT)
- Research lead (until recently) supporting staff (SEHSCT)
- Staff members in training teams actively progressing partnerships in learning and development- increasing numbers (SEHSCT)

# Challenges

N.B Research profiled on regular basis in various social work forum meetings and learning events across adults and children's-across organisation

- Key issue is getting personnel to lead and coordinate groups (BHSCT)
- Workload and service pressures currently prevent staff conducting research (SHSCT)

# How research & evidence could be better profiled

- Use of research and evidence in practice guidelines
- Training of staff (service users)
- Quality Improvement Networks (engage with research agenda)
- Funding of posts dedicated to social work research
- Social media/digital platforms
- Executive Directors Forum
- Greater use of book club
- Greater link with Social Care Research Lead
- Connectivity to procurement and
- Organisation part of European led Research Study-member of steering group

# Synergy

- Quality Improvement (QI) Agenda
- Safety Quality and Experience (SQE)
- Outcomes Based Accountability
- Regional procurement processes-using evidence and calls for evidence
- Evidence reviews to improve commissioning and planning
- Adult safeguarding
- Journal and Practice Learning Networks
- Rewrite Practice Guidelines (up to date in relation to service users)
- Part of European Research Activity
- Engagement in other research studies
- Evaluation Framework-Improving Safeguarding Social Wellbeing

# Potential areas to benefit from research evidence reviews

Probation Board NI	Longitudinal study of long term effects of community supervision	Insight into what works for service users
NIGALA	Care order proceedings impact on the service and ability to cope with increase	Data to articulate why there had been a substantial rise in care proceedings. Advise trusts/NIGALA/DoH & court services
Youth Justice Agency	Harmful sexual behaviour area	Front line practitioners and managers in youth justice, education & social services settings have been increasingly asking for guidance on how to understand and risk assess the sexual behaviours of adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The consensus within literature is there is no comprehensive knowledge base combining both these subjects
WHST	Decision making in adult safeguarding	Under researched area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How decisions are made</li> <li>• How referrals are categorised</li> <li>• Thresholds</li> <li>• Decisions on service provision</li> </ul>
SHST	Adult Safeguarding	Outcomes of interventions for adult safeguarding
NHST	Social work meeting with frontline childcare teams and messages for workforce planning	High level of turnover within family support and intervention teams
BHST	Children's participation in Child Protection Case Conferences	How to optimise children's contribution and participation has significance for their understanding and capacity to assimilate decision –making
SEHST	Building and support staff resilience	To support staff in a more pro active evidence based way to stay healthy and manage the demands of the professional social worker
HSCB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of most effective social work interventions to keep safe from harm</li> <li>• Qualitative research relating to the Champions Model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need to support practitioners to engage in social work interventions enhancing an individuals capacity to keep themselves safe from harm through neglect, abuse or exploitation.</li> <li>• All 5 trusts have been developing this model. Regular feedback highlights benefits within adult mental health and children’s services. formal research would explore the benefits and the difference it makes to recovery when parental mental health exists in families.</li> </ul>

# Concluding Comments

- Useful exercise to conduct
- Range of activity underway
- Synergy is but need to be careful that we don't supplant research and evidence agenda with other initiatives – need to reaffirm clarity in the differences
- Potential to relook at priorities for research or evidence (adult safeguarding noted in two Trusts)