

**Confirmed minutes of Research and Evidence Partnership workshop**  
**26th September 2024, 10am – 1pm**  
**James House - 1.6-1.7 (1st Floor)**

**Attendees**

Prof. David Hayes	NI Social Care Council Board - Chair (DH)
Dr Aideen Maguire	Administrative Data Research Centre UK (AM)
Kerry Cuskelly	All Ireland Social Work Research Consortium (KC)
Eileen McKay (EMcK)	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Rep Tracy Reid
Noeleen Higgins (NH)	British Association of Social Work NI, Rep Carolyn Ewart
Elaine Armstrong	Cedar Foundation (EA)
Dr Alison Montgomery (AM)	Centre of Effective Services, Rep Majella McCloskey
Susan Ritchie	Department of Health (SR)
Prof. Louise McCabe	IMPACT (LMcC)
Prof. Mike Clarke	NI Clinical Trials Unit & NI Methodology Hub (MC)
Prof. Lisa Bunting	NI Social Work & Social Care Research Community (LB)
Claire Taylor	Probation Board NI (CT)
Dr Janice Bailie (JB)	Public Health Agency, Research & Development Division
Prof. Brian Taylor	Research Advocate (BT)
Prof. Paula McFadden (PMcF)	Research Methods Programme – Ulster University
Marita Magennis	Southern Health and Social Care Trust (MM)
Catherine Cassidy	Strategic Planning and Performance Group (CC)
Louise Dunlop	UK Committee on Research Integrity (LD)
Prof. Ann-Marie Gray	Ulster University (AMG)
Kelvin Doherty	Youth Justice Agency (KD)
Danielle Boyd	Youth Justice Agency (DB)
Patricia Higgins	NI Social Care Council (PH)
Marian O'Rourke	NI Social Care Council (MOR)
Anne McGlade	NI Social Care Council (AMcG)
Helen McVicker	NI Social Care Council (HMcV)
Catherine Maguire	NI Social Care Council (CM)
Andriana Alkiviadou	Secretariat – NI Social Care Council (AA)
Rebecca Smyth	Secretariat – NI Social Care Council (RS)

## Apologies


Tracy Reid	Association of Executive Directors of Social Work (TR)
Dr Tom Cassidy	Association of Executive Directors of Social Work (TC)
Carolyn Ewart	British Association of Social Work NI (CE)
Majella McCloskey	Centre of Effective Services (MMcC)
Pauline Shepherd	Independent Health and Care Providers (PS)
Frances Lyons	National Children's Bureau (FL)
Prof. Jonathan Jackson	NI Clinical Research Network (JJ)
Prof. Mark Tully	NI Public Health Research Network (MT)
Dr Amanda Shields	Open University (AS)
Joanne Sansome	Person with lived experience (JS)
Sonia Patton	Person with lived experience (SP)
Paul Webb	Praxis Care (PW)
Prof. Karen Winter	Queens University (KW)
Dr Jennifer Hamilton	Ulster University (JH)
Prof. Bernie Kelly	Queen's University (BK)

Item	Note	Action by
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome - Prof. David Hayes (Chair)</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	<p>The Chair, DH, welcomed members to the first meeting of the Research and Evidence Partnership, and noted apologies as above.</p> <p>DH outlined the background to the establishment of the partnership and</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Welcome to the Social Care Council - Patricia Higgins</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<p>The Chief Executive, PH, welcomed members on behalf of the Social Care Council and outlined the importance of the Social Work and Social Care Research and Evidence Strategy 2020-2025 and the establishment of the Research and Evidence Partnership at a strategic level to ensure that the research and evidence agenda will be supported moving forward.</p> <p>She acknowledged the dedication of Anne McGlade, Social Work and Social Care Research Lead over a number of years in progressing the research agenda and raising its profile, and referenced the more recent work of Marian O'Rourke, Director of Regulation and Standards and AMcG in engaging directly with members leading to the establishment of this strategic partnership.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Group agreement - Anne McGlade</b>	
	AMcG introduced proposed underpinning principles for discussion and group agreement, acknowledging both the opportunity and challenge of working in collaboration and partnership. It was agreed principles will inform the Terms of Reference.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Let's meet - Group Exercise</b>	

	<p>A small group exercise was used to facilitate members getting to know each other and learn about the experience and expertise of others. A number of key themes emerged, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the value of strategic engagement which includes focus on service users and families</li> <li>• opportunity for building regional, national and cross border connections at policy, system and infrastructure, governance, and practice levels that support better evidence and research activity and outcomes</li> <li>• potential for academic and sector collaboration alongside Research and Development Division guidance and support on funding opportunities</li> </ul> <p>importance of improving data and access to data for social workers and social care workers and ensuring research opportunities are accessible and manageable.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Making Connections Exercise</b>	
5.1	<p><u>Motivation to get involved</u> The Chair explained to the members that the invitation was sent to them as per their role and involvement in research and evidence agenda and not necessarily as per organisation representation.</p>	
5.2	<p><u>Ensuring the right people</u> He encouraged members to review the membership list and identify potential gaps and opportunities. The importance of including service user and carer representation was highlighted, as was research academics and practitioners. AMcG confirmed services users with a research interest are included in the membership and were apologies for this meeting. Consideration will be sought of similar partnerships that include practitioner, academics and HSC professionals.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Aims and aspirations</b>	
6.1	<p>The Chair led discussion on core aims of the Partnership. Members agreed the need to establish research priorities that would have strategic or policy impact. Members also agreed a focus on access to funding opportunities and cross sectoral collaboration.</p> <p>Areas of potential interest were noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and evidence that helps to support transformation and generate change, addressing evidence gaps with clarity on what type of research we need to generate.</li> <li>• Research and evidence that supports the building of connections and collaboration across the system, set timelines, and ensures provision of effective services.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A perceived gap in collection and analysis of data on which sector has the highest number of leavers in social work and social care and understanding of the reasons.</li> <li>• Research and evidence to support creation of new models of service delivery that meets need and demand.</li> <li>• Improve capability and capacity of social workers and social care practitioners to access and participate in research.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>6.2</b></p>	<p><u>What would success look like?</u> Member discussion on successful outcomes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Partnership to be established, known and recognised as the key body, for strategic oversight of and direction for social work and social care research in NI.</li> <li>• Integrity of purpose is clearly visible and robust, ensuring social work and social care are visible across the health and social care, education, justice and community and voluntary systems.</li> <li>• Development and implementation of ten-year strategy based on agreed strategic priorities, aligned with Government policy and intent that supports research informed practice and better outcomes for service users and carers.</li> <li>• Streamlined business model with minimal bureaucracy.</li> <li>• Data collection and sharing across practitioner experience and organisations is embedded, using Encompass project as an example</li> <li>• Improved understanding of workforce and their needs in each area of service delivery and across all sectors.</li> <li>• Democratisation of learning, making research accessible and ensuring evidence is available, accessible and timely.</li> <li>• Shared opportunities for collaboration across institutions and bodies supporting social work and social care services both in NI and in a national and international context.</li> <li>• An accessible knowledge hub for social work and social care research and evidence.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Membership</b></p>	
	<p>This item was part of discussion at 5.2 and the Chair confirmed further consideration would be given to membership to ensure comprehensive and effective representation with robust links to the Social Care Council's partnerships, including the Professional in Practice partnership, Leaders in Social Care partnership and the Participation partnership.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Values and Principles</b></p>	

	<p>Members agreed that values and principles should be included in Term of Reference.</p> <p>Values and principles highlighted for consideration included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curiosity that would drive on how to make connections with each other.</li> <li>• Commitment to partnership, collectiveness and shared sense of aims and goals.</li> <li>• Simplify methodology and be clear for everyone in this group.</li> <li>• Equal value to discussion and debate, a better understanding of individual roles and what they offer to this partnership.</li> <li>• Owning the actions and be goal oriented.</li> <li>• Connect with the voices who are not heard in terms of modelling and identify underpin principles.</li> <li>• Connecting with other partnerships.</li> <li>• Integrity, openness, honesty and transparency.</li> <li>• Acknowledge practicalities in supporting service users and their contribution to this partnership.</li> <li>• Relationship based partnership. Consistency of building connections and value the opportunity to build trust and integrity.</li> </ul>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Review Draft Terms of Reference</b>	
	<p>The Chair advised a draft Terms of Reference has been circulated for consideration and comment in light of the discussions held today. Responses are to be forward to AA. The final version of the Terms of Reference will be approved at the next meeting of the Partnership.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Plans for next meetings</b>	
	<p>Members agreed to have 4 meetings per year, preferably in person as it is important to network and build connection at this early stage of establishing a new body. Timing of meetings will be aligned with the Social Care Council Board meetings to enable the partnership to report to the Board.</p>	
<b>11.</b>	<b>How well did we do?</b>	
	<p>MO'R led a discussion on reflecting on the experience of this meeting as a means of learning and informing the establishment of the Partnership and planning future meetings.</p> <p>Members shared that the experience had been positive and inclusive with a sense of safety for open discussion. Members also noted and welcomed the opportunity to meet new people and begin to build helpful connections, it was suggested that more time be given at the next meeting to getting to know and understand the experience and expertise that members are bringing to the partnership table.</p>	

12.	<b>Close</b>	
	The Chair brought the meeting to a close with no further business noted.	
	<b>Signed</b>	
		

Item	Action	Owner	Due Date	Status	Comments
<b>MEETING HELD ON 26 SEPT 2024 – NEW ACTIONS</b>					
7	Membership to be reviewed	DH, AMCG, MOR		Open	
8.	Values and principles to be included in Terms of Reference	PH, AMCG		Closed	
9.	Draft ToR to be reviewed and returned to Andriana with comments	All Members		Open	Draft ToR circulated for responses
10.	Dates of meetings to be circulated and included on the Social Care Council website.	AA		Closed	