

Northern Ireland Social Care Council, HSC R&D Division and Partner Organisations

12th Annual Social Work and Social Care Research Conference

Theme

Making Connections in Research and Evidence, Collective leadership, Workforce,
Planning Change and Service User Involvement.

Connecting policy; practice, academia, learning and development;
and service users and carers.



5 March, 2025

8:30am - 17:00pm

Riddel Hall, 185 Stranmillis Road,
Belfast BT9 5EE

#SWSCResearch2025

Keynote Speakers

Examining the moral and fiscal costs of social worker turnover in Northern Ireland: Taking a service user perspective and economic lens to a complex problem

Professor Paula McFadden and Gillian Martin (Ulster University)

This presentation addresses the moral and fiscal costs of social worker turnover in social work. There are two parts to the presentation as noted below.

It shifts from an examination of social worker workforce issues, which are well known, and takes the lens to the lived experience of service recipients. Whilst wellbeing and retention is a critical matter for social workers health and wellbeing, critical concern must be for those whose safety and protection is dependent on reliable, safe and consistent social work services from a stable workforce. Further aspects relating to the need to stabilise the workforce is also important for confidence in the profession and organizational efficiency. On this basis, the need for an economic and moral analysis relating to social worker turnover, is now urgent.

The analysis includes data exploration to understand, and highlight, the differences between datasets in the number of social workers recorded in Northern Ireland. It will explore the costs of training, recruitment and loss of productivity within the health sector to provide an estimate of the costs of social worker turnover, aiming to inform employers and commissioners, about the economic benefits of retention policies for a sustained and stable social work workforce for the benefit of both service users and the workforce.

Co-Production in Health and Care Research: Turning Aspiration into Reality.

Professor Robin Miller (University of Birmingham) and Stacey Grealis (Patient partner with the Centre for Arthritis Research in UCD)

People who access care should be at the heart of decisions about their own support as well as being central to design and delivery of health and care services. This ensures that support focuses on what is important to them and effectively uses the resources available. Currently though, there are limited examples of such co-production happening in practice, including within primary research and the embedding of evidence. In this presentation, Robin Miller from the University of Birmingham and Stacey Grealis from University College Dublin will share insights from their experience within the field of integrated health and social care both in relation to the challenges and how these can be overcome.

Navigating multiple challenges in a complex environment: key practice messages from research with unaccompanied refugee children and young people.

Dr Muireann Ní Raghallaigh, Associate Professor (University College Dublin)

Drawing on the presenter's own research and on other national and international studies, this presentation will explore the multiple challenges faced by children of refugee background who are separated from their parents or customary caregivers. The presentation will explore how experiences pre and post migration interact with one another to shape the resettlement process in jurisdictions such as Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. With attention to the current context, where anti-refugee sentiment has risen and where options for care provision are often in short supply, the presentation will examine the important role that social workers and social care workers can play in mitigating the stressors and in building the resilience of unaccompanied children and young people. With a focus on qualitative studies, the presentation will privilege the voices of children and young people themselves, using data from interviews and focus groups.

Meet our Keynote Speakers



Professor Robin Miller

Prior to taking up post at the University, Robin was a frontline social work practitioner in disability and mental health services before moving into operational management of integrated health and social care teams. He worked as a Commissioning Manager for Vulnerable Adults & People with a Learning Disability before taking on the leadership of an Integrated Service for children and adults with a disability. His final operational post was Deputy Director of Community Services within a Care Trust with a lead for Children's health services and adult disability and mental health.

Through his evaluation work he has maintained a direct link with the realities of health and social practice and seeks to support practitioners and managers to use research and theory to improve experience and outcomes of people and communities. Robin's PhD explored the realities of change management within health and care through researching change in different contexts and levels of the system. He regularly speaks at home and international conferences on improving collaboration between professionals, organisations, and sectors.

Robin has considerable experience of leadership roles at the University of Birmingham, including Director of Global Engagement for the College of Social Science, Head of Department of Social Work & Social Care, and Co-director of the Centre of Health & Social Care Leadership. He has undertaken key external roles includes chairing an advisory group of the national adult social care taskforce for COVID 19 and representing the university sector on the Birmingham Health & Wellbeing Board.

Other external responsibilities have included chair of trustees at a large care and support charity, a non-executive director of a housing association, and the chair of the Kent Research Partnership for Adult Social Care.



Stacey Grealis

Stacey Grealis is a health consumer living with a number of chronic health conditions and a leader in citizens science. She is an IPPOSI patient education program graduate and member of the European Patient Academy (EUPATI).

She holds a certificate in Integrated Care from the Integrated Care Academy. And has just been appointed to The Editorial Board for the International Journal of Integrated Care (IJIC). She also supports the International Integrated Care Academy in communicating the patient centric care principles at number of different Universities. Stacey has undertaken and went on to train and facilitated the Stanford Model of Chronic Disease Self-Management programme.

Stacey is a co applicant on the Clinical guideline support and Evidence Reviews (CICER), a partnership comprising HIQA, Trinity College Dublin (TCD). She also a co applicant on two genetic studies into Rheumatoid Arthritis. Additionally, she supports as a number of research projects in physical activity and life style interventions. She is on the Steering Management committee in University of Limerick for GLAD Ireland an exercise and education programme for people with Osteoarthritis to help people to manage their condition. She is an Embedded researcher on maintain physical activity in people with long term health conditions in RCSI. Additionally, she is a Co Applicant on the SleepFit Trial out of University of Sydney a Comparative effectiveness of lifestyle interventions (Physical Activity, Sleep and CBTI) for people with chronic musculoskeletal pain and poor sleep. Stacey advocates that all patients and public voices should be at the heart of all healthcare, policy and research.



Professor Paula McFadden

Professor Paula McFadden is a researcher and educator in Social Work at Ulster University, with research interests on workforce wellbeing, resilience, and burnout. Professor McFadden currently is working with the Department of Health Northern Ireland on the Safe Staffing in Social Work research study which will inform policy and legislative development of Safe Staffing law soon to emerge in Northern Ireland. Professor McFadden conducted a series of award winning UK wide research studies, examining burnout, workforce ageing in social work, and wellbeing. In June 2020, McFadden was awarded funding by the Health and Social Care Board, Public Health Agency, Northern Ireland to study 'COVID-19: UK Health and Social Care Workforce Wellbeing and Coping' over a 3 year period. This research informs employers, regulators, professional bodies, and service commissioners, about the key issues for workers and provides strategic guidance on what is needed to address workforce concerns relating to staff absence, turnover and retention. In addition to workforce research, McFadden is also interested in social work education and graduate preparation for social work practice. Professor McFadden has collaborated with authors from international countries on social work regulatory comparisons including curriculum and practicum. During the onset of COVID-19, McFadden also collaborated with international social work educational providers, on rapid changes to admissions and education due to social distancing and lock down restrictions. Paula is also the founder and co-convenor of the Workforce Research Special Interest Group with ESWRA.

Professor McFadden is collaborating with the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) and Bath Spa University on a global study of social work working conditions across international countries. This repeat time series survey is the first study to examine working conditions and wellbeing of social workers across the globe, enabling country specific information to inform governments, Non Government Organizations and service commissioners and regulators to take an informed approach to workforce and service planning.



Gillian Martin

Gillian joined the Economic Policy Centre in 2019 and carries out a range of economic and policy research predominantly within the firm-level strand of research. Gillian also works on UUEPC's Northern Ireland and Local Economic Models to support economic forecasting. Gillian also supports the delivery of teaching modules within the Ulster University Business School.

Gillian has completed the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice and is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Prior to joining the Economic Policy Centre, Gillian completed a MA in Global Security and Borders and BA Politics, Philosophy and Economics, both from Queen's University Belfast.



Dr. Muireann Ní Raghallaigh

Dr. Muireann Ní Raghallaigh is an Associate Professor of Social Work at University College Dublin, where she primarily teaches on the Professional Masters in Social Work. Muireann previously worked as a social worker with unaccompanied refugee children. Her research is mainly focused on the lived experiences of refugees and international protection applicants, looking at topics such as foster care experiences of unaccompanied refugee children; refugee family reunification; transition from the direct provision system; and the needs of refugee children.

She is currently working on two research projects, one focusing on the care experiences of unaccompanied refugee children in Ireland and the other focused on inequality in housing among refugees and international protection applicants across Europe.



Dr. Janet Diffin

Dr Janet Diffin is a Senior Programme Manager within the Health and Social Care Research and Development Division, Public Health Agency (HSC R&D Division). She brings to my current role over 14 years' experience in managing and delivering research & evaluation projects within the academic, public sector and charity and voluntary organisations, along with skills in policy analysis and consultations.

Her portfolio includes a range of areas to include support for cancer research, social care research, mental health research, and personal and public involvement.

A few small notes:

Please note that photos will be taken throughout the day and pictures may be used for Northern Ireland Social Care Council publicity such as social media and website pages. If you do not wish your photo taken just let the photographer know.

Important Upcoming Dates:

8th March is the International Women's Day - Let's Accelerate Action

18th March 2025 is the World Social Work Day -
"Strengthening Intergenerational Solidarity for Enduring Wellbeing".

Programme

- 8:30am **Registration and Poster Viewing - Tea and coffee**
- 9.15am **Introduction**
Anne McGlade, Northern Ireland Social Care Council
- 9.25am **Welcome and Opening remarks**
Declan McAllister, Interim Chief Executive of Northern Ireland Social Care Council
and Professor Davy Hayes, Chair of the Research and Evidence Partnership
- 9.35am **Keynote Presentation**
Chair: Professor Mary McColgan, Professor Emeritus Ulster University
- Keynote Speakers**
Professor Paula McFadden and Gillian Martin, Ulster University
- 10.05am **Parallel Oral Presentations - Breakout sessions**
- 11.05am **Tea and Coffee - Networking opportunity, stands and poster viewing**
- 11.30am **Musical Interlude - Edelle McMahon Singing for the Brain**
- 11.50am **Keynote Presentation**
Chair: Helen McVicker, Northern Ireland Social Care Council
- Keynote Speakers**
Professor Robin Miller, University of Birmingham and Stacey Grealis
Patient partner with the Centre for Arthritis Research in UCD in Citizen Science
- 12.20pm **Lightning Presentations**
Chair: Professor Davy Hayes, Queen's University Belfast
- 12.50pm **Lunch and Networking - Poster viewing and voting**
- 13.40pm **Interlude**
Nandi Jola
Broken Down - Ten Minute Monologue
ArtsEkta
- 14.00pm **Parallel Oral Presentations - Breakout sessions**
- 15.00pm **Tea and coffee - Virtual Online Voting for Poster**

Programme

15.25pm

Keynote Presentation

Chair: Professor Jonathan Jackson Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Keynote Speakers

Associate Professor Muireann Ní Raghallaigh,
University College Dublin

15.55pm

Research and Development Division

Opportunities for social care and social work research in Northern Ireland.
Dr Janet Diffin, Research and Development, Public Health Agency

16.10pm

Research Methods Programme Ulster University Award Ceremony

Awards presented by Aine Morrison, Chief Social Work Officer,
Department of Health

Chairs: Dr Campbell Killick and Professor Paula McFadden, Ulster University

Awardees

1st Year

Kitty Downey
Rachael Graham
Catherine Weatherup
Susie Morrow
Steph Craig
Ryan McNeill
Bronagh McKernan

2nd Year

Sonya McCabe
Rachel Duncan
Andrea Hegarty
Katherine Greer
Lisa Morrison
Maria Flanagan
Diane McGarvey

3rd Year

Noel Wilson
Emily Wilson

16.35pm

Poster Winners

Presented by Roslyn Dougherty Board member of the Social Care Council

16.45pm

Close and Evaluation

Anne McGlade, Northern Ireland Social Care Council

**Chair Professor Davy Hayes
Queen's University Belfast and Chair of the
Research and Evidence Partnership**

Five minute lightning presentations

TITLE	PRESENTER
Social care workers in social work with children and families: what do we know about their role and their learning and development needs?	Susie Morrow Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Residential Staff's Perspective on the Model of Attachment Practice	Dr Tom Cassidy Western Health and Social Care Trust
Improving meaningful engagement in long-term care settings	Rosemary Bradley Ulster University
Young Onset Dementia and Family Support	Emily Wilson Person with lived experience and carer

Posters

NO	TITLE	PRESENTER
1	Feelings of Failure: What are the experiences of practice teachers and social work students involved in failing or struggling practice placements?	Rachael Graham South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
2	What are the challenges experienced by social work/health/care workers when navigating difficult conversations in the workplace?	Kitty Downey Western Health and Social Care Trust
3	Exploring the experiences of Looked after Children and Young People within Child Welfare Services with advocate support.	James Lunn Queen's University Belfast
4	What are the challenges, barriers, and enablers for educational success for children in residential care in Northern Ireland?	Caoimhe McCormick Queen's University Belfast
5	A rapid review of the international evidence on the most effective approaches to staff recruitment, development and retention in social care	Anne Johnston Praxis Care
6	Adult Safeguarding referral app and monthly activity reporting for Belfast Health and Social Care Trust hospitals	Rhoda McBride and Joel McFetridge Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
7	Highlighting the impact compatibility on the quality of care in a residential service for adults with complex needs and how this can greatly impact the person or people we are supporting	Sinead Gilsean Praxis Care
8	Supporting the Welfare Needs of Ambulance Service Patients: A Collaborative Approach to Prehospital Safeguarding and Social Prescribing in Belfast	Ciara McClement, Des Flannagan, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
9	What is the lived experience of unmarried mothers whose children have been adopted under closed adoption?	Donna Shields University of Edinburgh
10	Trauma Informed Practice - Connecting People Purpose and Practice	Dawn Richardson Salvation Army
11	The Psychosocial Team, addressing the Psychological needs of Cancer Patients in Northern through Social Work and Lived Experience	Dr Brian Crossan and Linda Warwick Macmillan and Mindwise
12	Excellence in Communication and Engagement	Rhoda McBride Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Display Stands

1. **Advancing Social Care Practice: Digital learning on key challenges in care (Queen's University Belfast)**
2. **NI Social Care Council**
3. **NI Public Health Network**
4. **Centre of Effective Services**
5. **British Association of Social Work NI**
6. **Child Care in Practice**
7. **Healthcare Library of Northern Ireland**
8. **Centre for Child, Youth and Family Welfare (Queen's University Belfast)**
9. **Alzheimer's Society**
10. **Deirdre McKenna - When there are few words**
11. **Dementia NI**
12. **IMPACT NI**
13. **Praxis Care**

Room names for the Oral sessions

Morning Sessions

Room 1: Lecture room 1

Room 2: Syndicate Room 2

Room 3: Lecture room 3

Room 4: Syndicate room 3

Room 5: Lecture room 4 (*First floor*)

Afternoon Sessions

Room 1: Lecture room 1

Room 2: Lecture room 3

Room 3: Syndicate room 3

Room 4: Lecture room 4 (*First floor*)

*Note that keynote presentations and lightning presentations will take place in the Isdell Courtyard and coffee/tea breaks and lunch, display stands and interludes will take place in the conference rooms 1 and 2.

Morning Oral Presentations

Chairs

Room 1: Robby Nelson, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Room 2: Anita Mallon, Queen's University Belfast/Member of the Research Community Group

Room 3: Marita Magennis, Southern Health and Social Care Trust/Member of Research and Evidence Partnership

Room 4: Emma Richmond, Probation Board Northern Ireland

Room 5: Bronagh Hamill, Northern Health and Social Care Trust/Member of research Community Group

NO	TITLE	PRESENTER
1	Migrant families of children with disabilities in Northern Ireland: The state of research on social support	Noah Agbo Queen's University Belfast
1	Adult protection interviews - Getting back to the core of social work	Sonya McCabe Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
1	Hear Our Voice - A co-produced documentary made by people living with Dementia in partnership with Southern Health and Social Care Trust and South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	Mairead McHagan, Peter Alexander Southern Health and Social Care Trust and person with lived experience
2	The views and experiences of primary school teachers regarding personal education plans (PEPs) for children in care in Northern Ireland	Patricia Nicholl Queen's University Belfast
2	The Social Work role with Adult Vulnerable Witnesses in Northern Ireland	Dr James Todd Southern Health and Social Care Trust
2	Hearing the voices of Approved Social Workers: Factors that impact emotional health and well-being!	Lisa Morrison Independent training and consultancy
3	Research Dissemination: Supporting Service User's to Engage - Meaningful Involvement Through Training	Noel Wilson Person with lived experience
3	Trauma and Social Support Experiences of Imprisoned Men in Northern Ireland	Dr Daniel McFadden Maynooth University
3	What are professionals perspectives on the benefits of adventure therapy for adolescents who engaged in the adventure therapy programmes	Rachel Duncan South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Morning Oral Presentations

NO	TITLE	PRESENTER
4	How are social work students managing the cost of living and cost of learning on the social work degree?	Patricia Burns and Andy McClenaghan Ulster University and British Association of Social Work Northern Ireland
4	What are the GP Multidisciplinary Team's Senior Social Work Practitioners and Senior Mental Health Practitioners perspectives on mental health services for children and young people and their families in primary care?	Maria Flanagan South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
4	Review of Northern Ireland Degree in Social Work Partnership's Regional Protocol for Factors Impacting Progression on practice learning opportunity	Professor Mary McColgan and Joanne Lyttle Ulster University and Northern Ireland Degree in Social Work Partnership
5	Opportunities to strengthen community development teaching in undergraduate social work programmes: an international curriculum comparative case study analysis	Fergal O'Brien and Dr Katheryn Margaret Pascoe Queen's University Belfast
5	Our Social and Therapeutic Horticulture Service	Anita O'Brien Praxis Care
5	Growing solutions from the ground up: Reimagining Self directed Support as a mechanism to cultivate human-rights based micro-organisations and address the provider crisis in Northern Ireland	Dr Susan Hughes and Dr Jonathan McCrea Brain Injury Matters Northern Ireland

Afternoon Oral Presentations

Chairs

Room 1: Carole Kirk, Northern Health and Social Care Trust/ Member of the Research Community Group

Room 2: Jonathan Ming, Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland

Room 3: Amanda Shields, Open University/ Member of Research and Evidence Partnership

Room 4: Grace Reihill, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

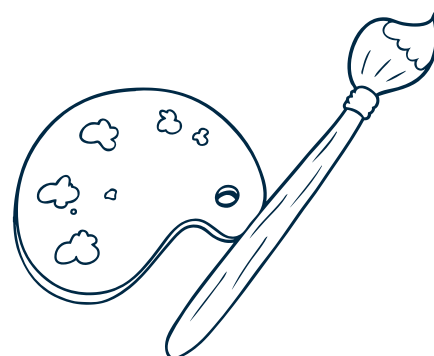
NO	TITLE	PRESENTER
1	The Joys and Challenges of Family and Child Care Social Work in the Context of Organizational Change	Professor Davy Hayes and Jason Caldwell Queen's University Belfast and South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
1	The Social Work Leadership Framework... The Story so far...	Eileen McKay and Brenda Horgan Belfast and Northern Health and Social Care Trusts, Centre of Effective Services
1	What are the facilitating and restraining factors that influence practitioners' decision making on whether to engage with post qualifying assessed programmes?	Diane McGarvey Northern Health and Social Care Trust
2	What are the barriers to, and enablers of, co-production for staff working in social care?	Katherine Greer and Paul Webb Praxis Care
2	Implementing Evidence and Improvement in Adult Social Care in Northern Ireland	Barbara Campbell and Amanda Barr IMPACT UK
2	Punching above our weight-a case study of a boxing intervention in a day care setting	Dr Eunan McCrudden and Susan McCutchen Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
3	Welfare inequalities and institutional abuse of older people in Northern Ireland. An exploratory study	Lorna Montgomery and Professor Lisa Bunting Queen's University Belfast
3	Social Care Workforce Reform-The Care in Practice Framework	Mervyn Bothwell and Sharon Foster Northern Ireland Social Care Council
3	Parents Perspectives on the Impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis upon the Rights of Families with Children with Complex Needs in Northern Ireland	Celia Lynn Hawkins Legal Services (DLS) Directorate of Operations, Business Services Organisation

Afternoon Oral Presentations

NO	TITLE	PRESENTER
4	"Through their eyes"- Service User Feedback of their experience being assessed under the MHO (1986) and the Role of the ASW	Mary Mullan and Deirdre Kerrin Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
4	OT4ME (Occupational Therapy for me) - The Transition Mission	Sophie Riddel and Cat McClelland South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
4	The Perception of First Line Managers' Leadership in Child Welfare Teams	Andrea Hegarty Belfast Health and Social Care Trust



Illustrating our day by Molly McFadden
Scan the QR Code below to see Molly's work
and contact information



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To find out more about our Research and Data,
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