

**Post Qualifying Social Work
Research Methods Programme provided by
Ulster University and employer organisations**

**Undertaken 2025-2026 as part of the
“Evidence Informed Professional and
Organisation” Module SWK 751
and
“Using Evidence to Inform Professional and
Organisation” Module SWK 753**

**Abstracts
2026**

Preface

Social Work Research Methods Programme

The Research Methods Programme provides two postgraduates, post qualifying modules for social workers approved by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council as part of the Professional in Practice Framework:

- The Evidence–Informed Professional and Organisation (SWK 751)
- Research and Evaluation Methods in Social Work (SWK 752)

The programme provides three modules for users of social care services and their families:

- Using Evidence to Inform Professionals and Organisations (SWK 753)
- Research and Evaluation Methods to Inform Social Work (SWK 754)
- Innovation and Co-Production in Social Care Research (SWK 755)

The modules for social workers are accredited by the professional regulatory body, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, and enable candidates to gain Requirements of the Professional in Practice Framework as detailed below. They require employer support and post-qualifying practice experience for entry. They are designed particularly for Senior Practitioners, training officers and other experienced Social Workers to gain knowledge and skills in using evidence to inform their practice and service development in their organisation. These modules achieve credit towards the Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma/MSc in *Professional Development in Social Work*.

The modules for service users and carers equip them to carry out roles in developing social care research, such as membership of research committees and grant awarding panels. These modules achieve credit towards the Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma/MSc in *Development and Co-Production of Social Care Research*.

All modules are 60-credit Level 7 (postgraduate) modules and are designed to develop knowledge and skills relevant to social work research-related activity and culture in Northern Ireland in support of the *Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy 2020-2025* (Health & Social Care Board, 2021). The previous 2015- 2021 Strategy was revised in 2020. A new strategy under the leadership of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council is currently being developed.

The Evidence Informed Professional and Organisation (SWK 751)

Using Evidence to Inform Professionals and Organisations (SWK 753)

These two modules are taught in the same class together. Candidates undertake a review of empirical research on a topic agreed with employer representatives as well as their tutor. Candidates learn to use web-based sources of evidence; shape an answerable question; identify research and appraise its quality; synthesize research into clear recommendations for practice; and present this evidence to an audience of professionals and service users.

They are designed to contribute to improving our Social Work Services to individuals and families by improving knowledge and skills, service quality and the effectiveness of organisations delivering social care services. The modules run for one academic year from September to June each year.

This report provides full abstracts and contact details for those who undertook systematic narrative reviews of evidence as part of the post qualifying course between 2024-2025. To obtain copies of the full evidence review please contact the reviewer. Contact details are included on each abstract. Electronic versions of the abstracts are also available on the University website <http://www.ulster.ac.uk/dare>.

[Previous details of Abstracts from the academic year 2016 onwards are also available on at the end of this document inclusive of a list of names, titles of reviews and contact details.](#)

This report will also be placed on the Northern Ireland's Social Care Council (NISCC) website under - ***Want to get involved in research*** - [Building our research capacity - NISCC](#)

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate competence in negotiating, collaborating with a range of stakeholders and fostering reciprocal relationships in undertaking a systematic narrative review.
- Applying advanced systematic approaches to retrieving research literature from electronic academic and professional databases and web resources in relation to a social work and social care topic relevant to their role.
- Analyse and evaluate a body of research exercising judgement to determine its quality and relevance to complex practice issues.

- Create an innovative synthesis of empirical research by writing a postgraduate dissertation which makes worthwhile recommendations for service improvement in line with organisational and social work principles.
 - Influence change through delivering an oral presentation to managers, professionals and service users which critically appraises and applies knowledge from research to inform practice.
- **The Research and Evaluation Methods in Social Work module (SWK 752)**
 - **Research Evaluation Methods to Inform Social Work module (SWK 754)**

These two modules are also part of the Research Model Programme. These require the Evidence-Informed Professional and Organisation Module (or equivalent) as a pre-requisite for entry. Candidates build on the literature review undertaken during that module (or equivalent) to undertake a work-based research, service evaluation or professional audit project agreed with line management. Candidates develop knowledge and skills in designing and managing a project that will support robust, evidence-based development of professional practice and services. An additional booklet on the outcomes from these modules are produced and placed on <http://www.ulster.ac.uk/dare>.

Contents

Title	Reviewer	Organisation
What Role do Social Workers Play in the Prevention of Domestic Homicide?	William Deery	Western Health and Social Care Trust
What are the facilitators and barriers to accessing community mental health services for adults experiencing homelessness?	Ryan Murray	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
What is the role of colleague support in promoting wellbeing and retention of social workers?	Rhonda Donaldson	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Needs Led or Risk Focused? Practitioner Perspectives to Assessment in Youth Justice	Danielle Boyd	Youth Justice Agency
Understanding the Lived Experience of young onset dementia	Una Hume	Western Health and Social Care Trust
How can interagency collaboration improve the safeguarding of adults with learning disabilities?	Leon Blue	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
How effective are agency-led interventions in responding to the sexual abuse of young people in sport?	Emma Clarke	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
How do informal carers describe the impact of caring for a child with a neurodevelopmental disorder who presents with behaviours that challenge?	Patricia McGookin	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
How can professionals respond to risk-taking behaviour among individuals with learning disabilities?	Chloe Hughes	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
What are the experiences of children, parents, and social workers regarding the frequency of parent–child contact following care proceedings?	Maeve O'Connor	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Evidence Informed Practitioner and Organisation Social Work Module (SWK 751)

Title of Systematic Narrative Review

What Role do Social Workers Play in the Prevention of Domestic Homicide?

Abstract

Context

Domestic homicide represents the most lethal outcome of domestic abuse and a significant public health and safeguarding concern. Social workers occupy a pivotal role within multi-agency systems designed to protect victims and prevent escalation to fatal violence, yet the specific contribution of the social work profession to domestic homicide prevention remains underexplored within the research literature. Whilst an established evidence base exists within criminology, public health, and domestic homicide review analysis, research that directly examines the social work role including risk identification, perpetrator engagement, survivor-centred practice, and interagency collaboration is limited. This systematic narrative review aims to synthesise the available evidence to examine what role social workers play in the prevention of domestic homicide and to identify the systemic, structural, and professional factors that enable or constrain effective practice in this area.

Methods Employed in the Review

A final search of three databases was undertaken in January 2026. These included Social Services Abstract, CINAHL and Medline. Three concept groups were identified domestic abuse, homicide and social work which informed the search strategy. Using defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, eleven studies were identified as meeting the threshold for inclusion. Studies were appraised using the Quality Appraisal Tools developed by Taylor, Killick and McGlade (2015), specifically the QAT-Q for qualitative studies and the QAT-S for quantitative studies. The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) Version 2018 (Hong et al., 2018) was applied to studies employing mixed methods designs. Synthesis of the emergent themes extracted from the eleven included studies informed the findings of the review.

Findings

Five overarching themes emerged from the synthesis. Theme One, Victim Factors, addressed victim vulnerability, help-seeking behaviour, and risk escalation, with evidence demonstrating that victims were frequently in contact with services prior to their deaths yet service contact alone was insufficient to prevent fatal outcomes

(Koppa and Messing, 2021; Kafka et al., 2024). Theme Two, Perpetrator Factors, examined coercive control, criminal histories, mental health, and substance use, identifying that perpetrators were commonly known to agencies yet rarely subject to pattern-based risk assessment or meaningful accountability-focused intervention. Theme Three, Family Context, considered children and safeguarding failures, finding that child protection services were absent in the majority of domestic homicide cases involving children and that safeguarding frameworks remain poorly integrated with homicide prevention (Olszowy, Jaffe and Saxton, 2021). Theme Four, System Responses, identified pervasive risk assessment failures, limited MARAC access, and the non-binding nature of domestic homicide review recommendations as central barriers to prevention (Chantler et al., 2020; Saxton et al., 2025). Theme Five, Structural Factors, addressed gender, socioeconomic inequality, racial disparities, and cultural bias as determinants of both homicide risk and access to protection. Synthesis of the studies evidences the complexity and multidimensional nature of the challenges involved in preventing domestic homicide within professional practice.

Discussion and Relevance

The findings and evidence within this systematic narrative review suggest that there are areas in which professional practice and collaboration could be improved not just within the Social Work profession but with other key partners. A greater focus and scrutiny on perpetrators behaviours to proactively identify risk and to implement more effective safety plans is achievable. There are particular risks associated with older people and younger people that need to be considered and may require a more tailored approach to intervention strategies.

Conclusions and Suggestion for Practice

The role of social workers in domestic homicide prevention is a relatively underexplored topic within social work-specific research, and the evidence base remains limited compared to that available within criminology and public health. The findings of this systematic narrative review indicate that research addressing the review question is primarily situated within domestic homicide review analysis, fatality review data, and justice system research, with very few studies examining social work practice directly. Whilst transferable learning emerged across the international literature particularly regarding risk recognition, multi-agency coordination, and perpetrator accountability further evidence-based research focused specifically on social work practice in high-risk domestic abuse cases would make a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge and to the development of safer, more effective professional responses.

Name of Reviewer	William Deery
Organisation	Western Health and Social Care Trust
Contact email	William.deery@westerntrust.hscni.net

Title of Systematic Narrative Review	What are the facilitators and barriers to accessing community mental health services for adults experiencing homelessness?
Abstract	
Context Community mental health teams (CMHTs) are central to delivering mental health care within modern health and social care; however, increasing demand and structural pressures may limit equitable access, particularly for people experiencing homelessness (PEH). Given the high prevalence of mental illness among PEH and the evidence of unmet need, this review examines the facilitators and barriers to accessing community mental health services.	
Methods employed in the review A systematic narrative review was conducted using four databases: • PsycINFO, • MEDLINE, • Scopus and Social Science Premium Collections. Searches were undertaken using three concept groups (community mental health services, homelessness and service access). Selection criteria included peer-reviewed empirical studies, adults aged 18-65, English language and publications from 2010 onwards. The search initially identified 981 articles, with 18 studies included following screening and removal of duplicates. Additional studies were identified through citation searching (n = 4) and hand searching of key journals (n = 1). Data was extracted systematically and appraised using established tools (i.e. QAT, CASP, MMAT) then synthesised using a narrative approach informed by a systems theoretical framework.	
Findings Access to services is shaped by interacting structural, service-level, relational and individual processes. Key barriers include system capacity constraints, restrictive eligibility criteria, fragmented care, and inflexible appointment-based models. Facilitators include outreach, co-location, integrated care, housing stability and relationship-based practice. Findings highlight that access is a dynamic process rather than a single event.	

Discussion and relevance

Instead of assuming PEH are choosing not to engage, CMHTs should provide care that recognises and adapts to the lived realities of PEH. CMHTs may improve access through flexible delivery models, enhanced care coordination, outreach approaches, and strengthened relational practice, alongside the reconsideration of performance measures.

Conclusions and suggestion for practice

Improving access for PEH requires multi-level interventions addressing structural inequities, service design and relational processes to reduce exclusion and support sustained engagement.

Name of Reviewer	Ryan Murray
Organisation	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Contact email	ryan.murray@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Title of Systematic Narrative Review	What is the role of colleague support in promoting wellbeing and retention of social workers?
Abstract	
Context Social work is recognised as emotionally demanding, with high stress levels and difficulties retaining staff in key frontline roles. The purpose of this review is to explore how colleague support contributes to social workers' wellbeing and desire to stay in the Job.	
Methods employed in the review The review was undertaken using a systematic narrative approach. A search was carried out utilising three databases; • PsycInfo, • SCOPUS and • Social Sciences Premium Collection (SSPC). Four concept groups were identified social worker, colleague, wellbeing and support. Additional inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed to ensure that the studies selected fell within the remit of the question. 12 studies were identified.	
Findings The main findings of the 12 included studies suggests that colleague support plays a significant and multi-dimensional role in promoting social workers' wellbeing and retention. Across the evidence base, support from colleagues was emotional and relational, practical and learning-based, linked to team belonging and organisational commitment, and protective in the face of workload, risk and wider organisational strain. The strongest theme was team belonging, identity and organisational commitment, which appeared in 10 of the 12 studies, while emotional support, practical support and buffering strain each appeared in 6 studies, and variation by role, career stage and setting appeared in 5 studies. Although the studies differed in design, context and scale, the overall pattern was consistent in showing that stronger colleague support was associated with better wellbeing-related outcomes and stronger indications of staying in practice.	
Discussion and relevance Five key themes were yielded from the narrative synthesis: (1) emotional and relational support; (2) practical, operational and learning support; (3) team	

belonging, identity and organisational commitment; (4) colleague support as a buffer to organisational strain; and (5) variation by role, career stage and setting. Across these themes, stronger colleague and team support were consistently associated with improved wellbeing, greater job satisfaction and stronger indications of remaining in role. Team belonging and identification with colleagues emerged as particularly important in linking everyday support to organisational commitment.

These findings are highly relevant to frontline social work, where practitioners are routinely required to make complex, high-stakes decisions, often under significant time pressure and emotional strain. Frontline social workers regularly navigate ethical dilemmas, risk assessment and statutory responsibilities within contexts of high workload, limited resources and exposure to service user distress. In this environment, consistent emotional and relational support from colleagues plays a critical role in helping practitioners process difficult decisions, manage uncertainty and sustain professional judgement. Practical and learning-focused support within teams further enables workers to reflect on cases, share responsibility and maintain confidence in their practice.

The prominence of team belonging across the synthesis highlights its particular significance in frontline settings, where feelings of isolation and moral distress are well documented. Identifying with a supportive team appears to strengthen workers' capacity to cope with the demands of practice and reinforces organisational commitment, despite ongoing structural pressures. Overall, the synthesis demonstrates that colleague and team support are not peripheral but central to sustaining frontline social work practice, making these findings highly relevant to workforce wellbeing, safe decision-making and retention within statutory services.

Conclusions and suggestion for practice

The findings suggest that colleague support should be recognised as a core workforce resource rather than an informal extra. Organisations can apply these insights by creating protected opportunities for peer reflection and debriefing, strengthening induction and peer mentoring for early-career workers, and supporting supervisors' own collegial networks. At the same time, supportive teams cannot substitute for safe workloads and adequate staffing. Overall, the review concludes that promoting strong, supportive peer and team relationships is a key component of improving social workers' wellbeing and retention. colleague support is a key part of the conditions that help social workers remain well enough to stay in practice.

Name of Reviewer	Rhonda Donaldson
Organisation	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
Contact email	Rhonda.donaldson@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Title of Systematic Narrative Review	Needs Led or Risk Focused? Practitioner Perspectives to Assessment in Youth Justice
Abstract	
Context This systematic narrative review examines the evolving tension between risk focused and needs led approaches to assessment within Youth Justice practice with particular attention to practitioner perspectives and the emergence of Child First approaches. Historically, Youth Justice assessment has been dominated by actuarial and risk-based frameworks designed to predict and manage offending behaviour. However increasingly, criticism of deficit-focused models alongside the development of child-centred and rights- based practice has prompted a shift towards needs-led and strengths-based assessment approaches. Within the context of Northern Ireland's transition towards a Child First model of practice, this review explores how practitioners understand, negotiate and implement these competing paradigms in practice.	
Methods employed in the review A systematic search of the literature was conducted across three electronic databases: • Scopus, • Criminal Justice Abstracts and • PsycINFO. Additional studies were identified through citation searching and hand searching. Inclusion criteria focused on peer-reviewed English-Language empirical studies published from 2005 onwards relating to Youth Justice assessment practitioner perspectives, risk and need assessment and Child First approaches. Sixteen studies met the inclusion criteria incorporating qualitative, quantitative and mixed - methods research from the UK and USA. Studies were critically appraised using the Quality Appraisal Tool (QATs) and Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) and findings were synthesised using a narrative approach.	
Findings Four key themes emerged from the synthesis: competing paradigms between risk and needs/Child First approaches; policy and practice gaps; the central role of practitioners and evolving understandings of children risks and needs. The review found that while policy and research increasingly support needs-led strengths-based and child-centred approaches, risk focused frameworks continue to dominate Youth Justice systems structurally and culturally. Practitioners were shown to actively negotiate these tensions through discretion and relational practice, often adapting formal tools to meet the complex needs of justice involved	

youth. Relationships, communication and engagement emerged as central to effective assessment practice.

Discussion and relevance

The review highlights that Youth Justice assessment cannot be understood through a binary of risk-focused vs needs-led. Instead, assessment practice is best understood as a hybrid, dynamic and context dependent. The findings are highly relevant to contemporary Youth Justice policy and practice, particularly in N.I where implementation of Child First and needs-led assessment remains ongoing.

Conclusions and suggestion for practice

The review concludes that while significant progress has been made towards more holistic and rights-based approaches, structural risk dominance persists. Future progress requires continued organisational support, practitioner training, reflective practice development and further longitudinal and empirical research examining the implementation and outcomes of Child First needs- led assessment approaches.

Name of Reviewer	Danielle Boyd
Organisation	Youth Justice Agency
Contact email	Danielle.Boyd@justice-ni.gov.uk

Title of Systematic Narrative Review	Understanding the Lived Experience of young onset dementia
Abstract	
Context According to Dementia UK there has been a 69% increase in YOD diagnosis since 2104. Despite the increasing numbers there exists a gap in professional's understanding of the condition. This has led to delays in timely diagnosis and difficulties navigating services. Historically research into YOD has been completed with families and carers rather than the individual with the diagnosis. This Narrative Synthesis of literature will contribute to the development of a greater understanding of the lived experience of young onset dementia.	
Methods employed in the review Concept groups relating to 'dementia', 'young onset' and 'experience' used to search across the • medline, • psychinfo, and • cinhal databases. An inclusion/exclusion criterion was applied. 12 studies were selected for inclusion and appraised using the QAT-Q tool. Data extraction table used to identify themes across the studies.	
Findings Three main themes emerged from the literature: 1) The Experience and impact of diagnosis 1.1 Getting the diagnosis 1.2 Emotional Responses 1.3 Acceptance 2) Maintaining identity and staying independent: 2.1 Independence 2.2 Work 2.3 Identity 3) Staying connected: 3.1 Families 3.2 Friendships 3.3 Services	
Discussion and relevance	

The discussion explored how the identified how each of the themes could contribute to the knowledge base around young onset dementia. It explores opportunities to improve services and supports for people with a diagnosis of young onset dementia and makes suggestions for social work practitioners.

Conclusions and suggestion for practice

The review described a complex interplay of diagnostic challenges, emotional responses, identity disruption and ongoing efforts to maintain independence, connection and purpose. Across the literature, delays in diagnosis, professional disbelief and limited understanding of atypical or age incongruent symptoms shape the early experience of living with the diagnosis. It detailed the importance of engaging in activity that create meaning for people and having access to age appropriate services. Despite the challenges the literature detailed opportunities to understand and accept their diagnosis and to live well with the diagnosis.

Name of Reviewer	Una Hume
Organisation	Western Health and Social Care Trust
Contact email	Una.hume@westerntrust.hscni.net

Title of Systematic Narrative Review	How can interagency collaboration improve the safeguarding of adults with learning disabilities?
Abstract	
Context: In Northern Ireland, adults with learning disabilities face significant safeguarding risks due to a gap in power, current policies and a fragmented support system that makes it more difficult to stay safe. This systematic narrative review looks at how better collaboration between agencies can bridge existing gaps in power and service provision, focusing on the evidence base to support the upcoming Adult Protection Bill (Northern Ireland) 2025 (DoH, 2020). The research explores how interagency teams can move beyond a paternalistic approach and prioritise one that focuses on individual empowerment.	
Methods: A systematic search was performed on 09/01/26, utilising three primary databases: • Scopus, • PsycINFO, and • Social Science Premium. The search strategies were organised into three core concept groups: • “Adult Safeguarding”, • “Learning Disabilities”, and • “Interagency Collaboration.” The search included peer-reviewed, English-language journals published between 2014 and 2025. After screening 2,860 initial results and performing a two-stage review of abstracts and full texts, 9 journals met the inclusion criteria.	
Findings: The synthesis identified three main themes: (1) Structural and Systemic Frameworks; (2) Professional Barriers and Culture; and (3) Path to Empowerment. The findings suggest that while policy provides the conceptual framework for safeguarding, the safety of adults with learning disabilities depends on how well different agencies work together.	
Application to Practice: The implications for practice are clear; bridging the gap not only requires shared goals but also shared tools. Implementing standardised assessments and multi-agency training ensures that safety is defined consistently across all agencies. This approach prioritises co-produced safeguarding plans that uphold the rights and independence of adults with learning disabilities, ensuring they are active participants in their own care.	
Conclusion: Effective safeguarding is dependent on a cultural shift toward proactive interagency trust. The empirical evidence synthesised in this review highlights why passing and implementing the Adult Protection Bill must be a top priority for Northern Ireland (DoH, 2020). The findings show that working together across	

agencies is the only effective way to ensure that safeguarding leads to real empowerment for adults with learning disabilities.

Name of Reviewer	Leon Blue
Organisation	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Contact email	Leon.blue@southerntrust.hscni.net

Title of Systematic Narrative Review	How can interagency collaboration improve the safeguarding of adults with learning disabilities?
Abstract	
Context: This review examines the effectiveness of agency-led interventions in responding to the sexual abuse of young people in sport. Safeguarding within sport has developed significantly over time; however, concerns remain regarding the consistency and impact of current approaches.	
Methodology: A systematic narrative review method was used to analyse relevant literature. Searches were carried out using three academic databases (see Appendix 1), with a total of ten studies being selected after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria detailed below (3).	
Findings: The findings were synthesised into six themes: • whole-system safeguarding, • gaps between policy and practice, • organisational and cultural barriers, • reporting and disclosure, • awareness and prevention, and • lack of outcome evidence. The review found that while safeguarding policies are now widely established, their implementation is inconsistent. Barriers also exist, such as; such as poor coordination, unclear reporting systems, and disjointed organisational structures. Furthermore, across the studies there is a lack of outcome-based research which further limits the understanding of what works in practice.	
Conclusion The findings suggest that while progress has been made in safeguarding within sport, the effectiveness of agency-led interventions is limited due to gaps in implementation and evidence. Greater focus and evaluation are needed on coordinated approaches, preventative practice, to improve the safety outcomes for children and young people engaging in sport.	

Name of Reviewer	Emma Clarke
Organisation	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Contact email	Emma.clarke@southerntrust.hscni.net

Title of Systematic Narrative Review	How do informal carers describe the impact of caring for a child with a neurodevelopmental disorder who presents with behaviours that challenge?
Abstract	
Content: Informal carers supporting children with neurodevelopmental disorders who display behaviours that challenge report profound impacts. However, there is a paucity of research that centres the voices of informal carers; as such, the contextual complexity and nuanced nature of their experiences remain under-reported. This review therefore aims to synthesise existing research to represent the lived experiences of this marginalised group.	
Methodology: Twelve global qualitative studies were selected and appraised using a clearly defined search strategy. The review aimed to capture carers' lived experiences, considering how context specific differences shape the ways in which caring is experienced and described.	
Findings: This review deepens understanding of how carers describe the impact of caring for children with neurodevelopmental disorders who present with behaviours that challenge. Across the included studies, carers describe how their lives are shaped by fear, hypervigilance, stress, isolation, exhaustion, grief, and ambiguous loss, alongside love, commitment, resilience and gratitude. The findings illustrate the pervasive and cumulative nature of stress, showing how caring reshapes family dynamics, identity, and interpersonal relationships. Despite these pressures, carers also report positive dimensions of caring and demonstrate considerable strength, even while navigating systemic barriers that intensify financial strain and restrict access to specialist support. Finally, the review highlights the prevalence of anticipatory grief, with carers continually balancing the demands of daily life alongside uncertainty about their future capacity to care.	
Conclusion: Despite diverse global, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts, informal carers report strikingly similar experiences. A dominant thread across the studies is the intense psychological impact of caring for a child who presents with behaviours that challenge. However, carers also demonstrate significant resilience, creativity, and commitment, highlighting the inner turmoil experienced while sustaining their caring role.	

Name of Reviewer	Patricia McGookin
Organisation	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Contact email	Patricia.McGookin@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Title of Systematic Narrative Review	How can professionals respond to risk-taking behaviour among individuals with learning disabilities?
Abstract	
Content: Professionals have a duty of care to provide high level of quality care to service users with learning disability by enabling their independence, promoting autonomy and supporting a person-centred approach. There is evidence to suggest that service users who have and continue to display risk taking behaviours may be due to multiple failings of professionals. This systematic narrative review aims to review 10 identified studies relating to professionals working with service users with learning disability and risk-taking behaviours and identify potential outcomes and learning that can enhance future practice.	
Methodology: The reviewer used three databases in order to identify relevant research. (See appendix 1). In order to gather relevant research, the reviewer conducted an inclusion and exclusion table (1) which can be found below.	
Findings: The reviewer identified three main themes found within research; - Learning outcomes - Reasons why people take risks - Ethical dilemmas Research findings suggest that often service users will take risks due to lack of understanding of the risk due to lack of education and approach around risky behaviour, lack of adaption for assessment and intervention and influences in their life.	
Conclusion: The reviewer has reviewed 10 research studies was analysed and categorised into three merging themes. There are many key findings identified within this systematic review. Some of the key findings identified; - reason and understanding why individuals with a learning disability display risk taking behaviours. - An additional theme is the influence and contributions to an individual that may promote them to partake in risky behaviours. - Lack of adaption of risk assessments - Ethical dilemmas within practice	

These key themes all play a vital role in enhancing the knowledge of professionals and their approach to supporting an individual with learning disability who display risk taking behaviour.

Name of Reviewer	Chloe Hughes
Organisation	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Contact email	Chloe.Hughes@southerntrust.hscni.net

Title of Systematic Narrative Review	What are the experiences of children, parents, and social workers regarding the frequency of parent–child contact following care proceedings?
Abstract	
Content: Social Workers are bound by law to “promote reasonable contact” (Children (NI) Order 1995, art.53) in Northern Ireland and yet what is reasonable to the child, the parent and the practitioner can sometimes vary greatly. This is further compounded by the wider systemic issues facing children’s Social Work at present around resources and staffing. This review seeks to explore the experiences of these three key groups; children, parents and practitioners.	
Methodology: A search was conducted across 3 databases; • Social Services Abstracts, • Social Policy and Practice and • the SOC index alongside hand-searching of journals and contact with experts. Using a narrative synthesis approach, ten studies from a range of international contexts were retrieved and reviewed to identify key themes, patterns and gaps within the existing evidence base.	
Findings: 1. The majority of children want more contact with their birth parents. 2. Children need to be included in decisions about their contact with birth family. 3. Younger children and fathers need specific attention to ensure representation. 4. Parent’s need more practical supports to sustain contact arrangements. 5. Social Worker’s need to make more effort to engage parents in contact.	
Conclusion: Overall, the review highlights that contact frequency cannot be understood in isolation from broader relational and contextual factors. The findings reinforce the importance of participatory and individualised approaches to contact planning within social work practice.	

Name of Reviewer	Maeve O'Connor
Organisation	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
Contact email	Maeve.OConnor@setrust.hscni.net

Systematic Narrative Reviews 2025

Title	Reviewer	Organisation	Email address
What are the challenges to promoting person centred practice, for the social worker, in the acute hospital setting?	Victoria King	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	Victoria.King@setrust.hscni.net
What are teenager's experiences, knowledge and understanding of intimate partner abuse?	Teresa McCann	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	Teresa.Mccann@belfasttrust.hscni.net
What are the experiences of service users who engage in community services during an acute mental health crisis presentation?	Paul Devine	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	Paul.devine@setrust.hscni.net
What organisational factors influence the sustainability of Quality Improvement (QI) in Social Work and Social Care?	Niall Ferguson	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	Niall.ferguson@setrust.hscni.net
What are the experiences of parents/ carers towards the assessment and diagnosis process for children and young people that have been referred for ASD assessment?	Brendan Connolly	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	BrendanJ.Connolly@southerntrust.hscni.net
What are the factors influencing treatment readiness for adults experiencing alcohol and/or substance misuse difficulties?	Antoinette (Toni) Smyth	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Mental health/ addictions	Antoinette.smyth@belfasttrust.hscni.net
What impacts professional responses to older women experiencing domestic abuse?	Ciara Duffin	Northern Health and Social Care Trust	ciara.duffin@northerntrust.hscni.net

Systematic Narrative Reviews 2024

Title	Reviewer	Organisation	Email address
What areas do non-kinship foster parents need additional support with to foster unaccompanied asylum seeking or refugee children?	Catherine Weatherup	Foster Care Associates (FCA)	catherine.weatherup@thefca.co.uk
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	Kitty.downey@westerntrust.hscni.net
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	rachael.graham@setrust.hscni.net
What are the experiences of service users with a diagnosis of Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder within Adult Community Mental Health Services?	Steph Craig	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	Steph.craig@setrust.hscni.net
What are the roles and learning and development needs of social care workers in social work with children and families?	Susie Morrow	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	susie.morrow@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Systematic Narrative Reviews 2023

Title	Reviewer	Organisation	Email address
Eye or Spy – An exploration of the effectiveness of the use of CCTV cameras in the adult safeguarding process in care homes	Ryan Adair	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	Ryan.adair@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Mental health help-seeking intentions and barriers for university students	Drew Neill	Ulster University Student Wellbeing department	d.neill@ulster.ac.uk
Challenges to supporting people with dementia in shared decision-making	Sarah Galvani	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	Sarah.galvani@setrust.hscni.net
Family focused support for children and young people with mental health difficulties	Maria Flanagan	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	Marian.flanagan@setrust.hscni.net
The contribution of life story in social work practice with older people	Andrea Smyth	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	Andrea.smyth@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Improving adolescent mental health through adventure therapy	Rachel Duncan	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	Rachel.duncan@setrust.hscni.net
Social Workers Perceptions of Poverty and the Potential Implications for Practice	Evelyn Curran	Strategic Planning and Performance Group	Evelyn.curran@hscni.net
The impact of Menopause in the Workplace	Gemma Ward	Person with Lived Experience	gemmaward377@btinternet.com
The Well-being of Approved Mental Health Professionals	Lisa Morrison	Training and Consultancy Person with lived experience of mental health challenges	lisa@lisamorrison.co.uk

Systematic Narrative Reviews 2022

Title	Reviewer	Organisation	Email address
Alternatives to Acute Admission for Patients with a Primary Diagnosis of Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder	Carrie Cruikshank	Belfast Heath & Social Care Trust	Carrie.cruikshank@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Supporting Individuals with Dementia in Decision-Making	Holley Larmour	Belfast Heath & Social Care Trust	holley.larmour@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Carer's Assessment Processes within Adult Service: Informal Carers' Perspectives	Laura Thomson	Southern Health & Social Care Trust	Laura.Thomson@southerntrust.hscni.net
Who cares? Overcoming barriers to identification of informal carers in primary care services	Kate Havern	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	kate.havern@setrust.hscni.net
The Strengths and Limitations of Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes	Mary Ryan	Southern Health & Social Care Trust	mary.ryaniat@southerntrust.hscni.net
Burnout in Child Protection Social Work – Key considerations that may limit impact on our staff	Laura King	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	Laura.king@setrust.hscni.net
Does co-production impact upon adult co-researchers and service users' experiences who suffer from mental illness?	Katherine Greer	Service User	katherinegreer789@gmail.com
Motivations associated with Young People's use of Social Media	Noel Wilson	Service User	E28533@btinternet.com

Systematic Narrative Reviews 2021

Title	Reviewer	Organisation	Email address
<i>“Same time next week?”</i> An exploration of the relationship between probation supervision and desistance.	Peter Beck	Probation Board of Northern Ireland (PBNi)	Peter.beck@probation-ni.hscni.net
What are the barriers for Social Workers implementing trauma-informed practice with adolescents?	Lauren McBride	South Easter Health & Social Care Trust	lauren.mcbride@setrust.hscni.net
<i>‘Should I refer this to safeguarding?’</i> Recognising and Responding to Adult Safeguarding within Long Term Care Homes. Does Education and training make a difference?	Scott Fleming	Northern Health & Social Care Trust	Scott.flemming@northerntrust.hscni.net
The psychological impact of handling crisis.	Nigel Morris	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	Nigel.morris@belfasttrust.hscni.net
A narrative review of social work interventions,	Fred Davidson	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	Fred.davidson@belfasttrust.hscni.net
An exploration of the factors that contribute to social workers and other professional’s decision making in the adult safeguarding process affecting adults with disabilities.	Noeleen Higgins	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	Noeleen.higgins@belfasttrust.hscni.net
What is the Qualitative Evidence Regarding Service User Experience and Satisfaction with Hospital Social Work Interventions in Acute Care Hospital Settings?	Jake Lange	Northern Health & Social Care Trust	Jake.lange@northerntrust.hscni.net

Leadership in Child Protection Social Work	Andrea Hegarty	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	Andrea.hegarty@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Young onset Dementia and Family Support	Emily Wilson	Service User	Emilywilson1955@icloud.com
Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing of Health and Social Care Workers	Liam Bradley	Service User	Bradley989@btinternet.com
Can routine data be used to improve the quality of health and social care regulation?	James Laverty	The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority	James.laverty@rqia.org.uk

Systematic Narrative Reviews 2020

Title	Reviewer	Organisation	Email address
Trauma-informed Practice in Criminal Justice.	Annie McAnallen	Probation Board of Northern Ireland (PBNI)	annie.mcanallen@probation-ni.gov.uk
Factors associated with staff retention in child welfare.	Bronagh Hamill	Northern Health & Social Care Trust	Bronagh.hamill@notherntrst.hscni.net
Palliative Care and Advanced Care Planning among Nursing Home Residents with Dementia.	Keith Johnston	Northern Health & Social Care Trust	Keith.johnston2@notherntrst.hscni.net
Longer-term Outcomes Of Adopted Adults' Reunions with Birth Relatives.	Donna Shields	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	Donna.shields@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Collective Styles of Leadership in Continually Changing Health and Social Care Organisations.	Jillian Morris	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	Jillian.morris@setrust.hscni.net
The voiced experiences of families after children return home from care.	Martin Robinson	Western Health & Social Care Trust	Martin.robinson@westerntrst.hscni.net
The Factors Contributing to a Trauma-Informed Organisation.	Gillian McAuley	Extern	Gillian.mcaley@extern.org
Lessons that can be learnt from a systematic narrative review of modern slavery and human trafficking, which informs probation practice with offenders.	Emma Richmond	Probation Board of Northern Ireland (PBNI)	Emma.richmond@probation-ni.gov.uk

Systematic Narrative Reviews 2019

Title	Reviewer	Organisation	Email address
Vicarious Trauma: Associated impacts on practitioners working with young victims of trauma.	Bill Vail	Western Health & Social Care Trust	Bill.vail@westerntrust.hscni.net
The outcomes of older people ready to leave hospital and discharged with unresolved delirium.	Brian Crossan	Western Health & Social Care Trust	Brian.Crossan@westerntrust.hscni.net
The social work contribution to providing psychosocial palliative and end of life care in adult services.	Gillian Thomas	Western Health & Social Care Trust	Gillian.thomas@westerntrust.hscni.net
Beyond UNOCINI - The use of decision-making models in children's services intake teams.	James Draper	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	James.draper@setrust.hscni.net
Home from Home - Interventions for anxiety driven behaviours in service users with a diagnosis of dementia living in long term care.	Julie Doherty	Western Health & Social Care Trust	Julie.doherty@westerntrust.hscni.net
The impact of social factors for older people in the discharge process from hospital	Pamela Fillis	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	Pamela.fillis@setrust.hscni.net
The Apex of Involvement? Emergent themes in research into Co-production in Adult Recovery Colleges	Karen Bester	Service User	karen.l.bester@gmail.com

Systematic Narrative Reviews 2018

Title	Reviewer	Organisation	Email address
Service user involvement and co-production In social work practice development and education.	Patricia Burns	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	patriciam.burns@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Decision making influences in identifying an alternative to hospital admission in mental health assessments.	Ian Burnside	Nothern Health & Social Care Trust	ian.burnside@northerntrust.hscni.net
The influence of personal support systems on the capacity of foster carers to sustain the role long term.	Laura Butler	Nothern Health & Social Care Trust	laura.butler@northerntrust.hscni.net
What is the evidence for improved outcomes for patients who have had social work intervention in the emergency department?	Kerry Cullen	Nothern Health & Social Care Trust	kerry.cullen@northerntrust.hscni.net
Supporting families of children with a disability.	Janet Johnstone	Southern Health & Social Care Trust	janet.johnstone@southerntrust.hscni.net
Family/Carer experience of advance care planning.	Deirdre McKenna	Southern Health & Social Care Trust	deirdre.mckenna@southerntrust.hscni.net
Factors influencing the reporting of financial abuse of older people.	Eamonn Neeson	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	eamonn.neeson@setrust.hscni.net
What does the literature tell us about if and how informal networks work for young people transitioning from care.	Philip Teer	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	philip.teer@belfasttrust.hscni.net

What does the literature tell us about if and how informal networks work for young people transitioning from care.

Jillian Martin

Department of Health NI

Jillian.Martin@health-ni.gov.uk

Adoptive families experiences of disruption.

Elizabeth Lytle

Service User

elizabethlytle65@gmail.com

The experience of adopted children in school.

Fiona Templeton

Service User

fionatempleton@hotmail.com

Parental alienation in children of divorce and separation.

Mairead Steward

Service User

mairead741@btinternet.com

Systematic Narrative Reviews 2017

Title	Reviewer	Organisation	Email address
Community forensic provision for adults with a learning disability who offend	Denis Maguire	Southern HSCT	denis.maguire@southerntrust.hscni.net
Risk factors for self-harm in adolescence	Elaine Pollock	South Eastern HSCT	elaine.pollock@setrust.hscni.net
What is effective at reducing ante natal maternal stress associated with foetal developmental risk?	Jane Hindes	South Eastern HSCT	jane.hindes@setrust.hscni.net
Contribution of professional regulation on the Health and Social Care workforce	Caroline McGonigle	Northern HSCT	caroline.mcgonigle@northerntrust.hscni.net
Does a person-centred approach enhance the self-reported quality of life for people living in residential or nursing home care?	Kathryn Carmichael	Northern HSCT	kathryn.carmichael@northerntrust.hscni.net
The effectiveness of structured learning in the development of emotional intelligence in social work education	Robby Nelson	South Eastern HSCT	robby.nelson@setrust.hscni.net
Service user involvement in 'best interest' decisions during discharge from hospital	Robyn Lennox	Northern HSCT	robyn.lennox@northerntrust.hscni.net
Interventions to improve communication between children and their birth parents about the reasons they are in care	Lynda McGill	Northern HSCT	lynda.mcgill@northerntrust.hscni.net

The regulation of adult Health and Social Care establishments in the community	Suzanne Cunningham	RQIA	suzanne.cunningham@rqia.org.uk
Community based interventions with disengaged adolescents and their families	Gerard Gorman	Barnardo's	gerry.gorman@barnardos.org.uk
Delivering together - service users and social workers in partnership as co-producers in research and continuous improvement	Sonia Patton	Service User and Carer	sipatton924@gmail.com

Systematic Narrative Reviews 2016

Title	Reviewer	Organisation	Email address
-------	----------	--------------	---------------

Family preservation: What is effective in preventing older adolescents coming into state care?	Laura Doyle	Action for Children	Laura.doyle@actionforchildren.org.uk
Ageing out from Foster Care, the support and experience of young people.	Francis Kavanagh	South Eastern HSCT	francis.kavanagh@setrust.hscni.net
The Emotionally Intelligent Parent - should we consider this in our assessment process?	Ruth Kingston	Belfast HSCT	ruth.kingston@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Implementing Evidence Based Parenting Programmes. Barriers and enablers to recruitment and retention.	Martina McCooey	Southern HSCT	martina.mccooey@southerntrust.hscni.net
The impact of relationship factors between Looked After Children and Young People and the people who look after them.	Jennifer Rice	South Eastern HSCT	jennifer.rice@setrust.hscni.net
Physical activity and teenager and young adult cancer survivors.	Simon Darby	Belfast HSCT and CLIC Sergeant	simon.darby@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Can effective interaction be enhanced when working with individuals who are deaf blind?	Liz Tanner	Southern HSCT	Liz.Tanner@southerntrust.hscni.net
Working with families where older people have experienced abuse.	Carole Kirk	Northern HSCT	Carole.Kirk@northerntrust.hscni.net
Developing team resilience as a strategy to prevent burnout and compassion in a statutory residential child setting implementing therapeutic practices.	Adrian Graham	South Eastern HSCT	adrian.graham@setrust.hscni.net

Evidence Informed Professional and Organisation Social Work
Module SWK 751 and SWK 753

Contacts

Course Director	Co-Tutor
Campbell Killick Lecturer - Social Work Applied Social & Policy Sciences Ulster University	Ms Anne McGlade Lead for Social Care Research Northern Ireland Social Care Council anne.mcglade@nisc.hscni.net

c.killick@ulster.ac.uk	
Programme Support Vanessa Butler Academic Executive Executive Assistant Ulster University v.butler@ulster.ac.uk	School Office School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences Room MH208 Ulster University, Northland Road, Londonderry BT48 7JL

The course is very much about adding value and is focussed places a focus on continuous improvement demonstrating outcomes and learning from practice.

The Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy 2015-2020 revised in 2020 and reproduced as The Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy 2020-2025 places emphasis on the importance of building capacity of social workers and service users and carers

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.

The Strategy is available on NISCC's website [Social-Work-and-Social-Care-Research-Evidence-Strategy-2020-2025.pdf \(niscc.info\)](https://www.niscc.info/Social-Work-and-Social-Care-Research-Evidence-Strategy-2020-2025.pdf)