

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

**Systematic Narrative Reviews  
Undertaken 2017-2018 as part of the  
“Evidence Informed Practitioner and  
Organisation” SWK 751 Module**

**&**

**“Using Evidence to Inform Professionals  
And Organisations” SWK 753 Module**

**Abstracts  
2018**



## Preface

### Social Work Research Methods Programme

The Research Methods Programme provides two postgraduate, 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 (SWK755)

**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 2015-2020* (Health & Social Care Board, 2015).

## **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; synthesise 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 2017/2018. 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>.

[Abstracts from the academic year 2016 onwards are also available on this website. See page 28-29 of this document for a list of names, titles of reviews and contact details.](#)

This report will also be placed on the Northern Ireland SCIE page under Evidence, innovation and Quality Improvement.

### **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	Page
<b>Evidence Informed Practitioner &amp; Organisation Social Work Module (SWK 751)</b>			
Service user involvement and co-production In social work practice development and education	Patricia Burns	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	5-7
Decision making influences in identifying an alternative to hospital admission in mental health assessments	Ian Burnside	Nothern Health & Social Care Trust	8-9
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	10-11
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	12-13
Supporting families of children with a disability	Janet Johnstone	Southern Health & Social Care Trust	14-15
Family/Carer experience of advance care planning	Deirdre McKenna	Southern Health & Social Care Trust	16-18
Factors influencing the reporting of financial abuse of older people	Eamonn Neeson	South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	19-20
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	21-22
A systematic narrative review of professional misconduct in adult health and social care services.	Jillian Martin	Department of Health NI	23-25
<b>Using Evidence to Inform Professionals &amp; Organisations Social Work Module (SWK 753)</b>			
Adoptive families experiences of disruption	Elizabeth Lyttle	Service User	26-27
The experience of adopted children in school	Fiona Templeton	Service User	28-29
Parental alienation in children of divorce and separation	Mairead Steward	Service User	30-31

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

**Title of Systematic Narrative Review**

**Service user involvement and co-production in social work practice development and education**

### **Abstract**

#### **Context**

There has been a commitment to involving service users and carers in social work education and practice development for many years. The approach is well integrated within social work education settings and there are numerous innovative and creative examples that have paved the way for further progress in this way of working. Progress at local policy level has led to the re-emergence of 'co-production' as a preferred approach and a renewed emphasis on the importance of meaningful collaboration between service users and service providers. Although there is no single definition of 'co-production' it is regarded as an approach that aspires to the more meaningful involvement of service users and carers in the planning, design and delivery of services. Advocates for the approach believe that it not only has the potential to improve the quality of life for people and communities, but that it can also enhance the role and job satisfaction for social workers. This review considers the themes that have emerged from the findings of eleven research studies. All included studies had some level of service user involvement or had taken a co-productive approach in social work practice development and education.

#### **Methods employed in the review**

In January 2018 three electronic databases were searched for peer reviewed research articles. These included:

- PsycINFO
- Social Care On-Line
- Social Services Abstracts

A search strategy was developed from the review title and the following concept groups and terms were identified:

Service user\* **OR** client **OR** "expert by experience" **OR** carer\* **OR** caregiver\*  
**AND**

Social Work\* **OR** Social casework **OR** Social Work Education

**AND**

Involv\* **OR** Participation **OR** co-production **OR** coprodu\* **OR** “patient public involvement” **OR** “patient and public involvement” **OR** “patient public involvement” **NOT** “patient\*”

Each record was screened initially by title and abstract to determine if it related to the involvement or participation of service users in any area of social work practice. The full text of some studies was examined more closely to determine the relevance of each study against exclusion and inclusion criteria. Thematic analysis was used and general themes were identified in the literature.

## **Findings**

The main findings indicate that service user involvement is widely considered as valuable to social work education and practice development. The studies reflect a common thread in terms of general positivity about how all those involved including service users, carers, social work students and practitioners experience service user involvement.

There is some evidence beginning to emerge that focuses less on ‘how’ service users and carers are involved and more on what is achieved through this involvement, considering if it is ‘meaningful’ for the service users and carers and if it is ‘effective’ in what it has set out to do.

Over the past decade there has been growing evidence that the approach is well integrated and has become mainstream in social work educational settings. There is less evidence to support the approach being adopted outside of educational settings in the wider arena of social work practice. Examples of good practice were however presented in some of the studies that could be used as a framework to build the approach in other areas of social work practice outside of educational settings.

## **Conclusions**

The review indicates that service users and carers are involved in a variety of ways across social work educational settings. Research around co-production as an approach is limited among the included studies. The term ‘co-production’ is only used in relation to co-producing the research study itself, when service users or carers were involved as co-researchers. Although studies engaged extensively with service users and carers to report their views and experiences there is a need within higher education

settings to consider service user and carer perspectives to a greater extent and to introduce more service user and carer led research. Overall, the experience of service users, carers and social work students and practitioners are largely positive and there is some consideration given to challenges and barriers to implementing the approach, both inside and outside of educational settings.

Considering challenges and barriers is vital to our understanding of what is not working and crucially can help us to consider more innovative and creative ways to overcome them. More of this evidence is needed so that others can take the learning from the implementation studies and good practice can be shared across a range of social work settings. It is crucial that future policy or practice guidance take on board the views of service users and carers, particularly around the challenges and barriers to becoming and indeed maintaining their involvement. Clarity is also required about how those in social work settings should support the meaningful involvement of service users in all aspects of practice.

The focus on student learning outcomes is a recurrent theme throughout the literature, with less on how this learning is translated to subsequent social work practice, only a small number of studies took the further step of considering outcomes in students' subsequent practice. More research is necessary to provide robust evidence as to whether the involvement of services users and carers brings about transformative changes or positive outcomes in social work practice.

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<b>Title of Systematic Narrative Review</b>	<b>Decision making influences in identifying an alternative to hospital admission in mental health assessments</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>The Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 provides the legal authority, in specific circumstances, to remove an individual from their community to a hospital for assessment, and possible treatment, against their will. The Human Rights Act (1998) commits services to provide intervention in the least restrictive, appropriate manner possible. This places a responsibility on professionals involved to develop their ability to work in partnership with service users, families and other service providers creatively to identify risk management plans to promote service user autonomy. Alternative to admission services such as Home Treatment Teams (HTT) or Crisis Accommodation are available throughout the UK and can be an effective resource in preventing hospital admission.</p>	
<p><b>Methods employed in the review</b></p> <p>Two key concepts ‘alternatives to admission’  <b>AND</b>  ‘decision making’ were used on the following three databases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medline,</li> <li>• PsycINFO</li> <li>• Social Care On-Line</li> </ul> <p>Twenty unique studies were located. A systematic narrative analysis pooled the individual findings which can support professionals to develop a framework to assist in their decision making when involved in mental health assessments. While the majority of articles identified were based within the UK studies from America, Australia and the Netherlands provide some information on the international perspective.</p>	
<p><b>Findings</b></p> <p>Findings from the service user perspective include that alternative to admission services tend to have more female service users, are more likely to work with individuals with depression and anxiety rather than psychosis and were more likely to be a risk to self than to others. Social support was also a key element in suitability for alternative to admission services.</p>	

Service factors identified in the narrative include admission pathways, time of referral and identity of referrer. A less developed body of research identified individual staff factors such as personal risk thresholds and the conceptual model of illness used were also influential in the decision making process.

## **Conclusions**

The review concludes that while many factors have been identified the weighting or effect size of the variables has not been satisfactorily explored nor the influence they have on the outcome for individual service users.

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<b>Title of Systematic Narrative Review</b>	<b>The influence of personal support systems on the capacity of foster carers to sustain the role long term.</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>Foster and kinship carers undertake a vital role in caring for children who cannot live with birth family. The rate of children entering care is rising whilst fostering agencies face challenges recruiting and retaining foster carers. Challenges within the role, particularly stress from caring for emotionally distressed children create a need for support. This review sought to establish whether the family and friends of foster carers and kinship carers can provide support which has an influence on their capacity to sustain fostering.</p> <p><b>Methods employed in the review</b></p> <p>A search strategy was formulated as follows:  Foster care <b>OR</b> foster parents <b>OR</b> caregivers <b>OR</b> caregiver burden <b>OR</b> foster children <b>OR</b> family members <b>OR</b> foster care  <b>AND</b>  Social supports  <b>AND</b>  Resilience <b>OR</b> psychological endurance <b>OR</b> SATISFACTION <b>OR</b> RETENTION.</p> <p>Three Databases were selected to obtain relevant research as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PsycINFO,</li> <li>• Social Services Abstracts</li> <li>• Social Care Online</li> </ul> <p>Peer reviewed journals between 2000 and 2018 were located, and inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied, alongside data extraction to select articles according to relevance. Citation searching as well as contact with key authors was employed to ensure additional rigour within the process of locating the most relevant and robust, peer-reviewed, research articles. Two articles were thoroughly quality appraised for rigour, using the relevant quality appraisal tool, devised by Taylor et al., (2015). These tools were also utilised to appraise the other articles. Seventeen studies were identified; 9 quantitative, 4 mixed-methods, 3 qualitative, 1 quasi-experimental.</p>	

## Findings

Whilst some studies contradicted others, the research mainly identified that foster carers develop resilience to sustain their role and that social support is crucial to this process. Findings indicate that unique challenges exist within the fostering role which can create isolation and limit access to support and its influence. Social support can impact negatively as well as positively. In the main evidence of an influence on motivation and sustainability was found.

## Conclusions

Further research is recommended into foster carers' and kinship carers' experience of stress and isolation, their perception of support systems, and potential for developing resilience within the Northern Ireland context, as literature indicated these factors may be culturally influenced. Recommendations from research include; the assessment of support systems during initial fostering screening and recruitment, Family Group Conferencing (for kinship carers), and family support meetings for (foster carers), to identify and promote personal support systems to facilitate the development of foster carer resilience.

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Title of Systematic Narrative Review	What is the evidence for improved outcomes for patients who have had social work intervention in the emergency department?
<b>Abstract</b>	
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>Well established internationally, social work based in hospital emergency departments (EDs) in Northern Ireland is a relatively new concept, adopted at a time when health and social care in Northern Ireland is undergoing reform. Current policy drivers such as <i>Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together</i> focuses on enhancing the quality of care for patients, leading to better health and well-being in ill health. The research looks to see if social workers contribute to the health and wellbeing of patients in the ED.</p>	
<p><b>Methods employed in the review</b></p> <p>Two concept terms “Social Worker” <b>OR</b> “Social Work” <b>AND</b> “Emergency Department” were used to conduct a rigorous search across three databases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medline</li> <li>• SCIE</li> <li>• Social Services Abstracts</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Findings</b></p> <p>The review shows a small amount of literature has been published concerning the provision of social work services in the ED. Social workers provide a variety of services that promote positive outcomes for patients in the ED. Domiciliary and residential care provision, counselling, advice and education, signposting and intermediate care programs are provided. These interventions can reduce need for non-medical admission and the frequency with which patients with high psychosocial needs attend the ED, particularly with older people. Positive outcomes have also been noted where patients have received counselling and helped to access community resources and support. Patients report satisfaction with social work input in the ED, particularly where anti oppressive practice is noted. Not all patients in the UK have access to this service.</p>	

## Conclusions

The key messages from this review indicates that social workers have a role to play in improving outcomes for patients in the emergency department and promoting health and wellbeing in ill health. There remains a gap in the evidence in measuring the effectiveness of their contribution and evidence is indicative rather than conclusive. Research is sparse and results are too general to be useful in shaping future policy direction currently. Development of a systematic and robust evidence base is required to understand further how social work intervention can lead to improved outcomes for patients in the emergency department (ED).

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<b>Name of Systematic Narrative Review</b>	<b>Supporting families of children with a disability</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	
<b>Context</b>	
<p>The Health and Social Care Board (2017) commissioned an evidence review examining the effectiveness of short breaks in families where there are children with disabilities. This review recommended further review of interventions to reduce parenting stress of in families of children with disabilities.</p>	
<b>Methods employed in the review</b>	
<p>Robust searching was completed on three databases which included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PsycINFO</li> <li>• Medline</li> <li>• Social Care Online</li> </ul> <p>The search was limited by year 2010 – 2018, English language and limited to peer reviewed journals. Detailed search concepts were used for each of the databases.</p> <p>Using the concepts of child <b>AND</b> disability <b>AND</b> family <b>AND</b> intervention. An exploration of each of the databases preferred terminology was undertaken. A systematic narrative review of relevant literature was conducted on studies identified.</p>	
<b>Findings</b>	
<p>Twelve national and international studies were included in this review. The contemporary nature of the work is reflected in the fact that the majority of the studies were conducted in the last five years. Four studies were conducted as randomised control studies. Studies were grouped by three intervention types, Mindfulness, Music therapy and Parenting Programmes. Due to the experimental nature of the majority of studies a number of measurement tools were used which enabled a thematic analysis to be completed resulting in four themes within the interventions of effect. Those included stress, wellbeing, support and parent-child relationships: Findings of studies were grouped within these themes.</p>	
<b>Conclusions</b>	
<p>Studies of the interventions found useful components and small effect in factors that support parents of a child with disabilities. Additional research</p>	

is required to determine the views parents of children with a disability in relation to their support needs.

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Name of Systematic Narrative Review	Family/Carer experience of advance care planning
<b>Abstract</b>	
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>Advance care planning (ACP) is a process which involves discussion over a period of time with a competent person who has a palliative diagnosis. It includes those people important to the person, usually family members or carers, as well as their health and social care professionals. The discussion focuses on the person’s wishes and preferences for their care as they approach the end of their life. ACP includes legal, personal and clinical issues and aims to help identify what is important to the person regarding their future end of life care. Advance care planning is one of the four priorities identified by the Regional Palliative Care Programme Board in Northern Ireland. There is a dearth of research into family or carers experience of ACP internationally so this review will contribute to a wider evidence base.</p> <p>The aim of this review therefore was to review current research on family or caregivers experience of advance care planning (ACP).</p>	
<p><b>Methods employed in the review</b></p> <p>This is a systematic narrative review of the empirical research which has been carried out on the topic “family/carer experience of advance care planning”.</p> <p>Four databases were explored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Care Online,</li> <li>• PsychINFO</li> <li>• Medline</li> <li>• Cinahl</li> </ul> <p>A systematic search strategy was developed using the following key concepts, words and phrases, of which MeSH terms were applied. The terms were searched using “<b>OR</b>” for the key concepts, which were then combined using “<b>AND</b>”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carer\$ <b>OR</b> care giver <b>OR</b> relative or Relative <b>OR</b> Family <b>OR</b> Families [#1]</li> <li>• Advance Care Plan\$ <b>OR</b> Advanced Decision Making <b>OR</b> Advanced Directive, [#2]</li> </ul>	

- Experience\$ **OR** impression\$ **OR** perspective **OR** view\$ **OR** personal satisfaction **OR** satisfaction **OR** attitude [#3]
- #1 **AND** #2 **AND** #3

Inclusion criteria required that only primary, peer - reviewed research studies, written in English, which focused on adults, was included. A time limit of studies conducted between 2010 and 2018 was added. A hand search provided additional articles.

Twelve relevant national and international studies examining family or carer experience of ACP were extracted quality appraised and synthesised.

### **Findings**

Five themes were identified which related directly to participants experience of ACP: peace of mind or preparedness to die; the impact of health care professionals (HCPs) awareness or knowledge of ACP; the potential ACP has for affirming participant's autonomy and choice in decision making; it's perceived benefits in improving quality of life; the complexity of timing in introducing and conducting ACP discussions.

It is evident from this review that a well conducted ACP by a competent person benefits people's experience of quality of life and end of life care.

### **Conclusions**

There is some discussion on the usefulness of the findings for current practice in Northern Ireland as well as some of the limitations and gaps in evidence. The findings identify areas for future research in order that practitioners and researchers gain a better understanding of this important area and in so doing inform policy and practice.

Additional research is needed into the social work role in the ACP process. Consideration needs to be given to the training offered in this area. Public health approaches to ACP need be explored further given the issues identified regarding timing.

Commissioners and policy makers within Northern Ireland can use these findings to build on the credible evidence base which underpins palliative care and develop the scope for competent ACP social work facilitators to build strengths based, co-produced practice.

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Title of Systematic Narrative Review	Factors influencing the reporting of financial abuse of older people
<b>Abstract</b>	
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>This review sought to understand the factors influencing the reporting of financial abuse of older people. There is a dearth of research into this form of abuse, but of what there is, statistics would indicate that it is a highly prevalent global problem, yet under-reported.</p>	
<p><b>Methods employed in the review</b></p> <p>A rigorous search utilising the following three search bases was conducted. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medline</li> <li>• PsycINFO and</li> <li>• Social Care On-Line</li> </ul> <p>A combination of index and text terms utilizing Boolean algebra were used on both Medline and PsycINFO and where appropriate “exploded” to get the most comprehensive search possible. The ‘adj’ tool was used to obtain hits where the keywords may have been in a phrase. Brackets were used to combine key phrases and inverted commas where exact phrases were sought.</p> <p>The concept terms used for both PsycInfo and Medline were: (aged <b>OR</b> “older people” <b>OR</b> elder* <b>OR</b> pensioner* <b>OR</b> “senior citizen”) <b>AND</b> (factor* <b>OR</b> thing* <b>OR</b> characteristic* <b>OR</b> behaviour* <b>OR</b> belief* <b>OR</b> elements) <b>AND</b> aged <b>OR</b> “aged, 80 and over” <b>OR</b> frail elderly <b>AND</b> Elder abuse <b>AND</b> (theft <b>OR</b> pilfer* <b>OR</b> misappropriate* <b>OR</b> embezzle* <b>OR</b> steal* <b>OR</b> fraud* <b>OR</b> scam* <b>OR</b> defraud) <b>AND</b> (fianc\$ <b>OR</b> bank* <b>OR</b> monetary <b>OR</b> money) adj5 (abuse <b>OR</b> mistreat\$ <b>OR</b> exploit\$) <b>AND</b> (report* <b>OR</b> record* <b>OR</b> refer* <b>OR</b> inform* <b>OR</b> disclos*) <b>AND</b> Theft <b>AND</b> Exp Fraud <b>AND</b> Disclosure</p> <p>Concept terms (“financial abuse” <b>OR</b> “financial exploitation” <b>AND</b> “reporting” <b>AND</b> “understanding” or “factors influencing” <b>AND</b> “older people” were used on Social Care On Line.</p> <p>Exclusion criteria were used to identify relevant articles. Only peer-reviewed articles reporting on empirical research were used. 11 articles were included in the synthesis.</p>	

## Findings

The evidence shows that perceptions vary dependent upon the various themes assessed, (personal, cultural, power, and professional) and points to an evolutionary definition of financial abuse dependent upon the assessed theme. The review highlighted the complexities and tensions involved in the decision-making process to determine if financial abuse has occurred and the factors, influences, and motivators that are considered when deciding whether to report the abuse. An undercurrent concept of “personhood abuse” also emerged from the synthesis.

## Conclusions

The concept of financial abuse is not a simple one. Professional intervention should follow a holistic assessment of the victim’s situation and be respectful of the older person’s sense of citizenship. Further research is required to determine the value older people place upon professional intervention and the influence of gender upon the decision-making process in relation to the reporting of financial abuse.

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Title of Systematic Narrative Review	What does the literature tell us about if and how informal networks work for young people transitioning from care?
<b>Abstract</b>	
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>Young people leaving the care system face significant challenges when making the transition to adulthood, with limited support from other agencies. The outcomes are poor in comparison to their non-care peers.</p> <p>This systematic narrative review asks, “What does the literature tell us about if, and how, informal networks work for young people transitioning from care?” It aimed to systematically review and synthesize recent research on informal network support for care leavers when making the transition to adulthood.</p>	
<p><b>Methods employed in the review</b></p> <p>A systematic and iterative search was undertaken using three bibliographic databases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PsycINFO (Ovid platform),</li> <li>• Social Care On-Line and</li> <li>• Social Services Abstracts.</li> </ul> <p>Systematic searching identified three concepts: “children in care” <b>AND</b> “social networks” <b>AND</b> “transition”. These concepts were further developed with additional text terms to develop a generic search formula.</p>	
<p><b>Findings</b></p> <p>The searches retrieved 10 articles for inclusion. The articles relate to care leavers experiences of networks during and after care, with a focus on transition from a care placement to adulthood. The systematic narrative review highlights how early negative experiences and placement disruption create challenges for care leavers and impact adversely on their ability to develop supportive relationships and networks in adulthood. Furthermore, the review identifies the important role of informal networks in promoting wellbeing and better outcomes in adulthood. The review highlights a growing recognition of the importance of an educative approach. This is required both to strengthen young people’s internal resources and their ability to develop relationships. It is also required to provide others with an understanding of the</p>	

difficulties care leavers have in developing relationships due to trauma.

## **Conclusions**

The systematic review highlighted recent research emerging on the importance of interdependent living programmes to complement traditional independent living programmes. Moreover, the research identified by the review highlights the important role relationships have for wellbeing and health and improving life outcomes for care leavers. The review identifies further opportunities for research aimed at exploring the development of interdependent approaches before the transition from care to adulthood.

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<b>Title of Systematic Narrative Review</b>	<b>A systematic narrative review of professional misconduct in adult health and social care services.</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>Northern Ireland is the first country in the UK to introduce compulsory registration and regulation to the social care workforce, part of a government policy to improve the standards of social care and increase the protection and safety of people using social care services.</p> <p>The review has synthesised relevant evidence in relation to mapping the occurrence of professional misconduct in adult health and social care services and contributes learning relevant to the development of Northern Ireland adult social care workforce.</p>	
<p><b>Methods employed in the review</b></p> <p>The review synthesised relevant knowledge and evidence in relation to mapping professional misconduct within and/or across adult health and social care.</p> <p>Three key concepts underpinned the search strategy:</p> <p>Adult health and social care services  <b>AND</b>  Professional Misconduct or Malpractice or Professional Impairment  <b>AND</b>  Aged</p> <p>Systematic database searches were conducted on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medline,</li> <li>• Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), and,</li> <li>• Social Care On-Line.</li> </ul> <p>Data was extracted from the articles retrieved in the search, and appraised regarding its inclusion in the review. A narrative synthesis approach was employed to combine both quantitative and qualitative data.</p>	
<p><b>Findings</b></p> <p>The findings of the study determined that;</p>	

- Evidence informed quality improvement approaches can be effectively developed through the study of misconduct issues, and that further development of this methodology in social work and social care is warranted.
- The occurrence of professional misconduct in adult health and social care services is associated with a range of complex risk factors including; professional exposure to work based aggression; substance misuse; patient and service user profile; ineffective organisation of care; deficits in training.
- Involving frontline professionals and service users in examining misconduct issues can support the development of effective and restorative strategies to prevent the reoccurrence of misconduct.

A dilemma was identified regarding aspects of professional integrity, identity and ethical conduct that emerged in the research. Professional credibility and public trust of professionals was found to be affected by both individual professional behaviours and also by external factors. Fear of negative professional consequences as well as conflict with their professional identify were identified as barriers to professionals seeking help despite impairments of their practice. Fear of negative professional consequences was also found to be a barrier in professional willingness to extend their scope of practice. Further research was recommended to understand and explore the perspectives of the social work and adult social care workforces regarding addressing or improving impaired performance.

## **Conclusions**

The studies included in this review provide an overview of the evidence regarding professional misconduct in adult health and social services. The conclusions have been developed with particular consideration as to their relevance to social care practice in Northern Ireland, and are in line with government and professional policy regarding a continuously improving social care workforce. Delivering Together (DOH, 2016-2026), The Social Work Strategy for Northern Ireland (DOH, 2012-2022), The Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy (HSCB 2015 -2020), Power To People (DOH 2017).

The findings of the review offer an evidence base about misconduct which may be used to inform the wider evaluation of the impact of the Northern

Ireland government's policy to introduce mandatory workforce registration and standards of conduct to the social care workforce.

Further local and national research was found to be warranted regarding the occurrence of misconduct in adult social care settings, and in particular in relation to contributing to the protection and safety of people using social care services, and also in improving understanding about professional impairment.

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## Using Evidence to Inform Professionals & Organisations Social Work Module 753

**Title of Systematic narrative Review**

**Adoptive families experiences of disruption**

**Abstract**

### **Context**

In adoption there are high numbers of families that run into severe difficulties and some that ultimately break down. This review aimed to examine the lived experience of adoptive families that are at risk of disrupting or have disrupted; to understand why the disruption happened from both the children's and parents' perspective; to discover the role that adoption services played in these families' lives and how this was perceived by the families.

### **Methods employed in the review**

Using the databases

- PsycINFO
- Social Care Online
- Social Services Abstracts

Two concept groups were searched for and combined:

*Adoptive families* (key terms: adoption, adoptive parents, adopted children)

**AND**

*Disruption* (key terms: disruption, breakdown, termination, displacement, dissolution, post-placement discontinuity).

A careful hand search was carried out for articles that offered the self-reported experiences of adoptive families. Overall this produced ten studies that used interview and observation methods.

### **Findings**

The findings from the studies made difficult reading. The families were characterised by relationships that lacked trust, warmth and closeness and child behaviours that created fear and dread. Both adults and children experienced profound loss of past lives, of expectations, of well-being. While unmet expectations and unresolved losses provided a common backdrop for

disruption, it was unsafe behaviours that were usually the trigger for the child to leave home. Disappointment in the services turned to for help was common.

## **Conclusions**

The review raises questions about current adoption policy and practice. For example there are some children for whom adoption is not the best option? Should there not be a statutory duty and adequate resources to support adoptive families raise some of the most traumatised children in our society? There are implications for practice issues in assessing, matching and preparing adopters; in providing timely and appropriate support and effective crisis intervention; in working collaboratively with adopters when their children can no longer live at home.

Local research is needed to discover the extent of adoption disruption in Northern Ireland and to hear local voices from disrupting families.

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Title of Systematic Narrative Review	The experience of adopted children in school
<b>Abstract</b>	
<b>Context</b>	
<p>This Systematic Narrative Review was conducted in order to gain greater insight into the experience of adopted children in school. A recent UK wide survey conducted by Adoption UK (2017) found that adopted children were excluded from school at a rate of 20 times that of the general school population and were five times more likely to have a fixed term exclusion. It is increasingly recognised that early childhood trauma can have a major impact on a child’s ability to access all that school life can offer. The aim of this review was to highlight common challenges that adopted children can face and identify interventions which are seen to be effective.</p>	
<b>Methods employed in the review</b>	
<p>In order to elicit contemporary, empirical research relevant to the review focus a rigorous search strategy was developed. This search strategy, which included the key concepts of adopted children <b>OR</b> adoption <b>AND</b> school <b>OR</b> education was systematically applied to four databases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PsycINFO</li> <li>• MEDLINE</li> <li>• Social Care Online and</li> <li>• British Education Index.</li> </ul> <p>Further hand and citation searching resulted in a systematic and robust search strategy which returned seven studies to be included in the review.</p>	
<b>Findings</b>	
<p>Adopted children can face major challenges in negotiating the school environment. The impact of traumatic early life experiences is not simply eradicated when a child is adopted. The ability to love and trust does not always come naturally to these children and issues belonging were highlighted as becoming particularly important during adolescence. Providing the opportunity to develop positive relationships with one or two ‘key adults’ in school can be beneficial to these children and young people. Teachers require multi-agency support in order to more adequately support the children and young people. This support from other professionals was often</p>	

found to be to be sporadic and not all professionals engaged in the work had a good understanding of the ongoing issues adopted children can face.

## **Conclusions**

The challenges that adopted children can face in school are considerable. It is important that the voice and experiences of adopted children and young people are captured. Ongoing research into the effectiveness of interventions and approaches is required as is further development of effective multi-agency support for teachers to enable them to offer a therapeutic approach to the children in their classrooms. Specialised training of all adults working with adopted children in an educational setting is required if the school environment is to be a place where adopted children can flourish and reach their full potential.

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Title of Systematic Narrative Review	Parental Alienation in Children of Divorce and Separation
<b>Abstract</b>	
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>Parental alienation disrupts the secure attachment of a child to a primary caregiver and is harmful to the well-being and development of the child. The aim of the review was to raise awareness of parental alienation as a health and social care issue in Northern Ireland. Parental alienation is becoming increasingly common and recognised here in the context of child custody proceedings. This was highlighted at a recent parental alienation awareness conference in Belfast.</p>	
<p><b>Methods employed in the review</b></p> <p>Three concept terms were chosen from the title: parental alienation, children <b>AND</b> divorce <b>AND</b> separation. The databases searched were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PsycINFO</li> <li>• Social Services Abstracts</li> <li>• Social Care Online</li> </ul> <p>Parental alienation is a relatively new construct. To widen the search to find articles for the review, both words were searched separately and combined. The truncation and the adjacency tools were also used to retrieve relevant articles. The terms were combined and journal articles were examined for relevance to this review. Two leading authors were contacted and citation searching retrieved further articles. The review critically analysed 14 peer reviewed journal articles and systematically synthesised the findings using a narrative synthesis approach. The articles included qualitative and quantitative research. Information was collected using a data extraction table. The findings in this review were categorised in four themes: Alienated Children, Psychological Impact, Long-Term Effects and Parent-Child Relations.</p>	
<p><b>Findings</b></p> <p>The main findings that emerged from the review are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental alienation was associated with psychological abuse. Once a parent engaged in alienating behaviours they were likely to continue and increase as the child matures.</li> <li>• Parental alienation negatively impacted the well-being and</li> </ul>	

development of the alienated child across the life span. The effects included low self-esteem, poor mental health, compromised self-agency and psychosocial problems.

- The acrimonious relationship between their parents and the coercive control of one parent contributed to the child's psychological stress in childhood and to parental alienation.
- Parental alienation adversely affected the quality of the relationship with their parents and relationships in their adult lives.

### **Conclusions**

The findings highlight that parental alienation should be examined as a child protection issue. Parental alienation requires socio-legal and therapeutic intervention. Understanding the counterintuitive nature of parental alienation, the family dynamics and use of attachment-based diagnostic tools will assist professionals in effective intervention. Specialised training and a co-ordinated approach from professionals at policy and practice levels would be important to address parental alienation and protect the well-being and development of the children in Northern Ireland.

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## Systematic Narrative Reviews 2016

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

## Systematic Narrative Reviews 2017

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Community forensic provision for adults with a learning disability who offend	Denis Maguire	Southern HSCT	<a href="mailto:denis.maguire@southerntrust.hscni.net">denis.maguire@southerntrust.hscni.net</a>
Risk factors for self-harm in adolescence	Elaine Pollock	South Eastern HSCT	<a href="mailto:elaine.pollock@setrust.hscni.net">elaine.pollock@setrust.hscni.net</a>
What is effective at reducing ante natal maternal stress associated with foetal developmental risk?	Jane Hinds	South Eastern HSCT	<a href="mailto:jane.hinds@setrust.hscni.net">jane.hinds@setrust.hscni.net</a>
Contribution of professional regulation on the Health and Social Care workforce	Caroline McGonigle	Northern HSCT	<a href="mailto:caroline.mcgonigle@northerntrust.hscni.net">caroline.mcgonigle@northerntrust.hscni.net</a>
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	<a href="mailto:kathryn.carmichael@northerntrust.hscni.net">kathryn.carmichael@northerntrust.hscni.net</a>
The effectiveness of structured learning in the development of emotional intelligence in social work education	Robby Nelson	South Eastern HSCT	<a href="mailto:robby.nelson@setrust.hscni.net">robby.nelson@setrust.hscni.net</a>
Service user involvement in 'best interest' decisions during discharge from hospital	Robyn Lennox	Northern HSCT	<a href="mailto:robyn.lennox@northerntrust.hscni.net">robyn.lennox@northerntrust.hscni.net</a>
Interventions to improve communication between children and their birth parents about the reasons they are in care	Lynda McGill	Northern HSCT	<a href="mailto:lynda.mcgill@northerntrust.hscni.net">lynda.mcgill@northerntrust.hscni.net</a>
The regulation of adult Health and Social Care establishments in the community	Suzanne Cunningham	RQIA	<a href="mailto:suzanne.cunningham@rqia.org.uk">suzanne.cunningham@rqia.org.uk</a>
Community based interventions with disengaged adolescents and their families	Gerard Gorman	Barnardo's	<a href="mailto:gerry.gorman@barnardos.org.uk">gerry.gorman@barnardos.org.uk</a>
Delivering together - service users and social workers in partnership as co-producers in research and continuous improvement	Sonia Patton	Service User and Carer	<a href="mailto:sjpatton924@gmail.com">sjpatton924@gmail.com</a>

## Evidence Informed Professional and Organisation Social Work

### Module 751 & Using Evidence to Inform Professionals and Organisations Social Work Module 753

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Improving and Safeguarding Social Wellbeing : A Strategy for Social Work 2012-2022 **Strategic Priority 3** adding value, delivering outcomes places a focus on continuous improvement and a focus on demonstrating outcomes and learning from practice.

### **The Social Work Research and Continuous Improvement Strategy 2015-2020**

**Priority 4** placed importance on recognising, valuing and maintaining the skill base of those social work practitioners who have already acquired academic credit for research.

**Priority 6** is to ensure the experience and knowledge of social workers, service users and carers are used in research evaluation and audit.

**Strategic Priority 7** is to ensure that research related activity promotes the principles and practice of personal and public involvement, equality and human rights. The Research Methods Programme utilises these skills through the provision of mentoring, supervision and the provision of teaching inputs on recognised courses for the benefit of other practitioners, service users and carers wishing to engage in research activity.

The Strategy is available at <http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/swresearch/>

The module supports the vision of the: Improving and Safeguarding Social Wellbeing: A Strategy for Social Work in NI 2010 - 2022) available at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/improving-and-safeguarding-social-wellbeing-strategy-social-work-northern-ireland>

*Notes:*