

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: Queens University Belfast
Unit of Assessment: 3b
<p>a. Context: The School of Nursing and Midwifery's research cluster, Supporting Vulnerable Groups, is focussed on two key health care areas that are embedded in wider University collaborative research initiatives: Maternal and Child Health, and Cancer Nursing, Supportive and Palliative Care. These research groups provide a focus for interdisciplinary, internationally excellent research and research training in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at a regional, national and international level.</p> <p>The main demonstrable research impact is reflected in the health and well-being of women, their partners and children, and patients who require cancer nursing, supportive and palliative care; with benefits for the health service user, their families and carers, policy makers and health professionals. Impact in society is also evidenced in School research, for example, the introduction of an educational resource into the national curricula of post-primary schools in Northern Ireland and Ireland (Lohan and O'Halloran).</p> <p>Our key partners in planning and delivering impact include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Makers (e.g. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSPSS) and Public Health Agency fund our work and have sought our participation in policy and user engagement strategies) • Health service providers (e.g. we work across the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland (NI) and have been invited to advise and participate in the new NI Neonatal Network) • Practitioners (e.g. we work closely with a range of practitioners in all HSC Trusts in NI, throughout the UK, Ireland and internationally; drawing on their expertise to explore how to best implement findings into practice) • Voluntary sector organisations (e.g. engagement with Tiny Life, Marie Curie and the Northern Ireland Hospice) • Service users and their families (e.g. we involve service users at project level and through more formal structures such as the James Lind Alliance).
<p>b. Approach to impact:</p> <p>Staff and postgraduate researchers are supported in the development of research impact plans for every project. Significance and reach are considered at each stage from grant application, to project delivery and dissemination strategies. The University provides training, workshops, advice and media support to facilitate impact. The School research groups and across university research networks (e.g. Improving Children's Lives initiative (www.improvingchildrenslives.org/) and the Queens into Policy initiative) provide excellent opportunities for School staff to enhance impact through sharing good practice and exploring innovative approaches to engage users. Staff host conferences and seminars within the School and we encourage wider participation through public lectures and our Research in Practice series that takes research presentations out to the HSC Trusts to inform, consult and reflect on changes to policy and implications for practice. We have three primary approaches to impact:</p> <p>1) Partnership working and involvement of stakeholders: The School currently funds a joint appointment Nurse Consultant in Haematology/Cancer in collaboration with the Belfast HSC Trust and Marie Curie, a Nurse Consultant in Mental Health in the Older Adult, a Nurse Consultant in Sexual Health with the South and Eastern HSC Trust, and a Consultant Midwife with the Northern HSC Trust. Key components of these joint appointments are promoting research in practice, strengthening of NHS collaborative working and enhancing user involvement. We also have strong effective relationships with a range of charities including Tiny Life, Cedar Foundation, Child Brain Injury Trust, Marie Curie, Diabetes UK, and Northern Ireland Patient and Client Council. Our policy is to include users from an early stage in project development; service users and health professionals are included in the development of study design and as members of study advisory groups. This is demonstrated through the 'Music in Mind' study (Porter, Holmes and Lynn) which is an RCT designed to find out if music therapy can help children and young people with mental health problems. This study was developed in partnership with the NI Music Therapy Trust and was awarded a Research Programme Grant by the Big Lottery Fund. In addition to Belfast HSC</p>

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Trust and third sector engagement, two parents of former recipients of music therapy sit on the trial steering committee. An example of the success of our engagement with key stakeholders is demonstrated in studies such as that of **Reid** and **Porter** who conducted an evaluation of a chemotherapy telephone helpline located in the Regional Cancer Centre in Northern Ireland. The study provided a robust demonstration of its effectiveness, leading to the commissioning of two staff nurse posts to ensure the long-term operation of the service.

2) Public engagement: We support a wide range of clinical and user engagement workshops, conferences and public lectures. At project level we work with users, policy makers and clinicians to implement research in practice through development of guidelines and audits, clinical roadshows, workshops and user conferences. For example, the first paediatric acquired brain injury conference in NI, organised and hosted by **Linden**, brought together parents, young people and healthcare professionals from the UK and Ireland. In addition to publishing our research in high impact research journals, we are committed to publishing the findings in professional journals and consumer magazines, seminar series, the School website, the media and through social media <http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofNursingandMidwifery/Research/>.

We have also sought to increase user access to research through involvement in larger research impact initiatives. For example, **Alderdice** was an honorary Cochrane fellow at the UK Cochrane Centre (2002-2012) in acknowledgement of her involvement in establishing the current all-Ireland Cochrane initiative. This initiative led the way, worldwide, in providing open access to the Cochrane Library which provides high quality evidence for health professionals, policy makers and health care consumers via internet connection anywhere in Ireland. **Lohan** is on the Steering committee of the **Queens into Policy (QPol)** initiative which facilitates knowledge exchange between the university and policy community; as well she authored a Policy Briefing paper on 'Fatherhood in the 21st Century: A Policy Briefing Paper for NI' which was disseminated to all parliamentarians, statutory and voluntary sector by the Workers Education Association NI.

3) Development of easily accessible resources for education and practice: The interventions we develop build on research that has given careful consideration to how to best communicate evidence to patients, practitioners and policy makers, giving due attention to the context of patient vulnerability and to identifying patient needs. Resources include a DVD for women with diabetes who are considering getting pregnant (**Holmes** and **Alderdice**), web based education for midwives on the experiences of pregnancy for women with HIV (**Alderdice** and **Lohan**) and a DVD of psycho-educational resources for parents of children with Congenital Heart Disease (**McCusker**).

c. Strategy and plans: 'Connecting the University with research users' (University Research Strategy p14) is key to the University strategy and we will strive to enhance research impact through ongoing University initiatives and support mechanisms, for example, Impact Away Days, Impact Awards and media strategies. At the School level we will continue to build on our current good practice identified in section b, develop mechanisms to monitor our success and explore new approaches to enhancing impact. Specifically we aim to:

(i) **Have consumers at the core of our research programme** by building on broader consumer and professional networks. For example, **McNeill** and **Alderdice** are on the working group of the James Lind Alliance premature infant strategy and **Alderdice** is Chair of the working group on user engagement for the new Northern Ireland Neonatal Network and provides a user perspective on the MRC Stem Cell Bank Steering Committee. Similarly, **Porter** and colleagues are involved with the All Ireland Hospice and Palliative Care network that was developed on an interagency basis with consumers at its core. Also a strategic approach to partnership working at School level will be maintained through the School Users group. This group aims to identify strategies for effective and consistent involvement of health users in School research and teaching.

(ii) **Sustain the development of key relationships with health providers** at practice and policy levels, and consultation and engagement with regional professional bodies (e.g. RCN and RCM). We also aim to communicate our research using an interagency approach e.g. the Northern Ireland Cerebral Palsy Register informs and consults with health service users through parent websites and charities (e.g. the Cedar Foundation and the Public Health Agency). Strategically, we will continue to work closely with NHS Trusts, government, clinical networks and charities to establish a research plan that has a shared focus to meet local, national and international clinical needs.

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- iii) **Continue to develop impact plans for each project.** We will formalise mechanisms to establish the success of project impact plans through appraisal and audit.
- (iv) **Maximise knowledge translation.** Our strategy is to include strands to our research that will facilitate user engagement and approaches to knowledge translation. For example, the School is currently leading a project in collaboration with Toby Lasserson at the Cochrane Editorial Unit, London and Prof Mike Clarke Director of the MRC All Ireland Methodological Hub looking at how we summarize evidence and how we might improve this to maximise the impact of research findings through plain language summaries and abstracts. A pilot study has been conducted in the School using a cross-sectional factorial design to examine the information midwifery students derive from Cochrane abstracts and plain language summaries to inform their study and practice. The study has now been rolled out to eight other centres in the UK and Ireland (the BRIEF Trial).
- (v) **Develop innovative and effective ways of evaluating impact.** We are currently developing approaches to evaluating the impact of research through a HSC PHA R&D fellowship in collaboration with the Belfast Trust (**Porter** and **O'Halloran**). We aim to continue to develop these to ensure the rigorous evaluation of the impact of our research.

d. Relationship to case studies: The three case studies highlight our current approach to impact outlined in section b.

Lohan and **O'Halloran's** case study 'Changed attitudes towards unintended pregnancy: young men and the Relationship and Sexuality Education curriculum' is based on an interactive educational programme for young men on unintended pregnancy (**b3**). The resource was developed in partnership with government departments to deliver a research informed resource within the state-supported Relationship and Sexuality curricula of NI and Ireland (IRL) which also supports parent-child communication (**b1**). In addition to having an impact on education curricula at second level schools, for the first time the Department of Education in Ireland and the Council for the Curriculum Education and Assessment (CCEA) NI are working together as part of the research project leading to shared learning between specialists and supporting the implementation of the Belfast Agreement. The resource was developed through focus group discussion and product development involving young men and women (**b1**). Public engagement was enhanced by **Lohan** and **O'Halloran** delivering a seminar on the study as part of a knowledge exchange seminar series of QPol and producing a policy briefing paper for a Stormont parliament event (**b2**).

The case study 'Improving pregnancy outcomes for women with diabetes' (**Holmes**) demonstrates significant health impact applicable in hospital and community settings. The study design built on user and multi-professional advisory groups to produce a pioneering and highly acceptable preconception counselling resource for women with diabetes (**b1 and 3**). In keeping with our strategic research approach to enhance impact, we explored awareness among women with diabetes regarding the importance of pre-pregnancy counselling and conducted focus groups with women prior to the design of a resource to enhance their knowledge and needs with regard to reproductive health and finally evaluated the resources with women (**b1**). This led to the launch in 2010 of an easily accessible, user driven, preconception counselling resource which is the UK's first widely distributed multi-media preconception counselling resource to be made available to women with diabetes and their healthcare teams. The reach and significance of the resource is reflected in the team winning an award for 'Best improvement programme for pregnancy and maternity' in the UK Quality in Care Diabetes Award 2013. Further professional and public engagement has also been facilitated by the award of a HSC R&D division Knowledge Transfer grant (£100K) in 2013 to promote its broader reach to women and health professionals who have regular contact with women in the preconception period (**b1 and 2**).

In addition to conducting intervention studies, the School has a substantial expertise in systematic reviewing, currently supporting 12 Cochrane reviews, one of which is the case study by **Alderdice** 'A systematic review of low cost interventions to improve health outcomes and survival of high risk babies'. Engagement of users and key stakeholders has primarily been through the international Cochrane network which has strong clinical and consumer engagement and input at each stage of the review process (**b1 and 2**). Engagement has also been enhanced through the School's role in the Neonatal Intensive Care Outcomes Research and Evaluation (NICORE) group (supported by the Public Health Agency, NI). NICORE is maintained in close partnership with practitioners and policy makers locally, nationally and internationally (**b 1 and 2**).