Strengthening practice through research and information mentoring

TUSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

The Development of a Research and Information Mentor Strategy

Research Strategy 2015-2017

- Underpinned by the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013 Part 2 Section 8 (1) (f) : *"Undertake or commission research related to its functions".*
- *The aim of the strategy is to set out a plan... for the development of a research function and the promotion of a research culture across the organisation.*
- *Two objectives of the strategy include: To use research to develop the capacity of Tusla as a learning organisation and to use research information to support improved service delivery through evidence informed practice.*
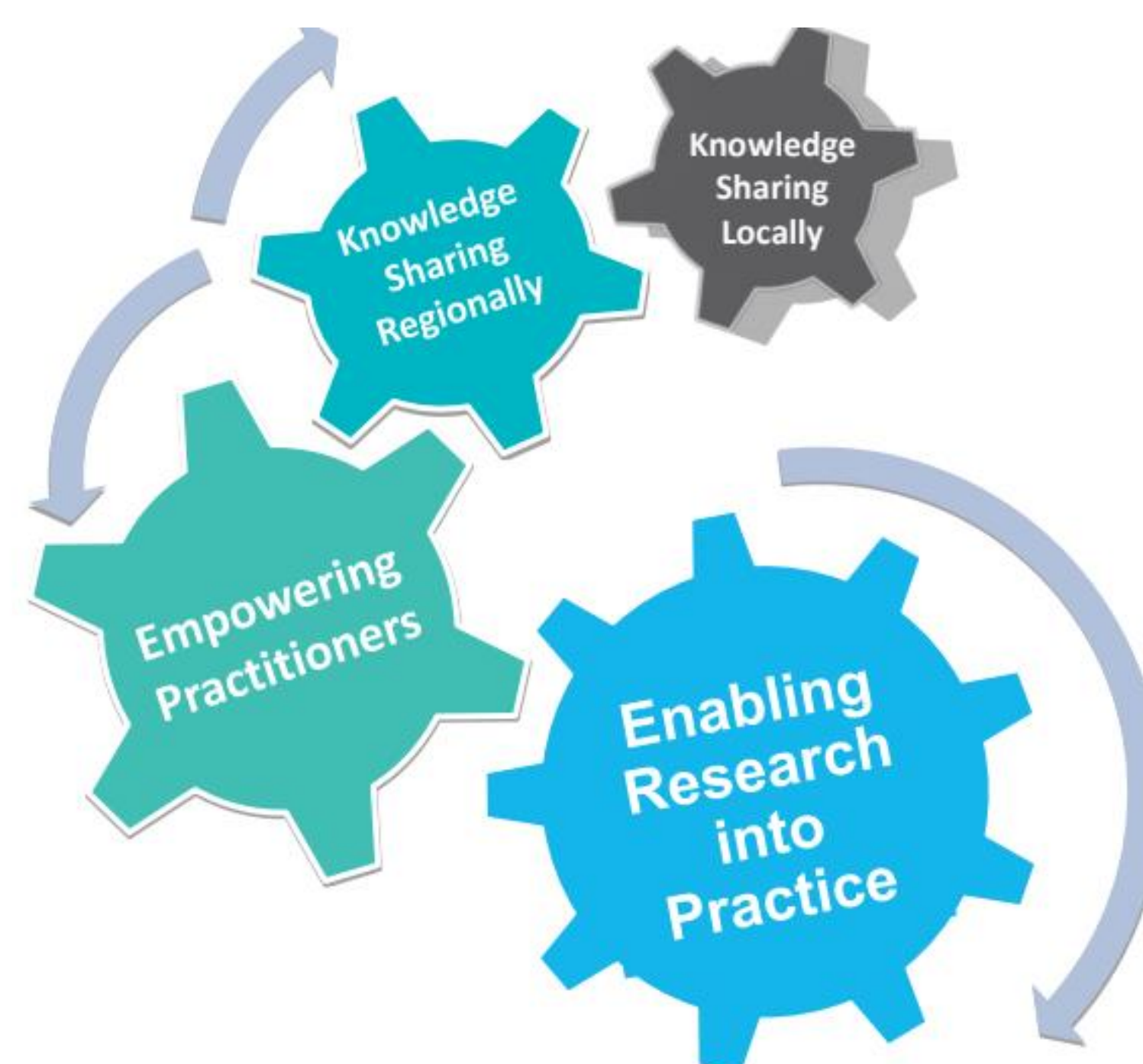
Research and Information Mentor (R&I) Strategy 2017

A whole agency approach to developing research and information skills and capacity.

An interdisciplinary initiative to improve inter professional communication and coordination.

A contribution to a learning organisation through the development of a research culture and research mindedness.

Valuing an Interdisciplinary Learning Community
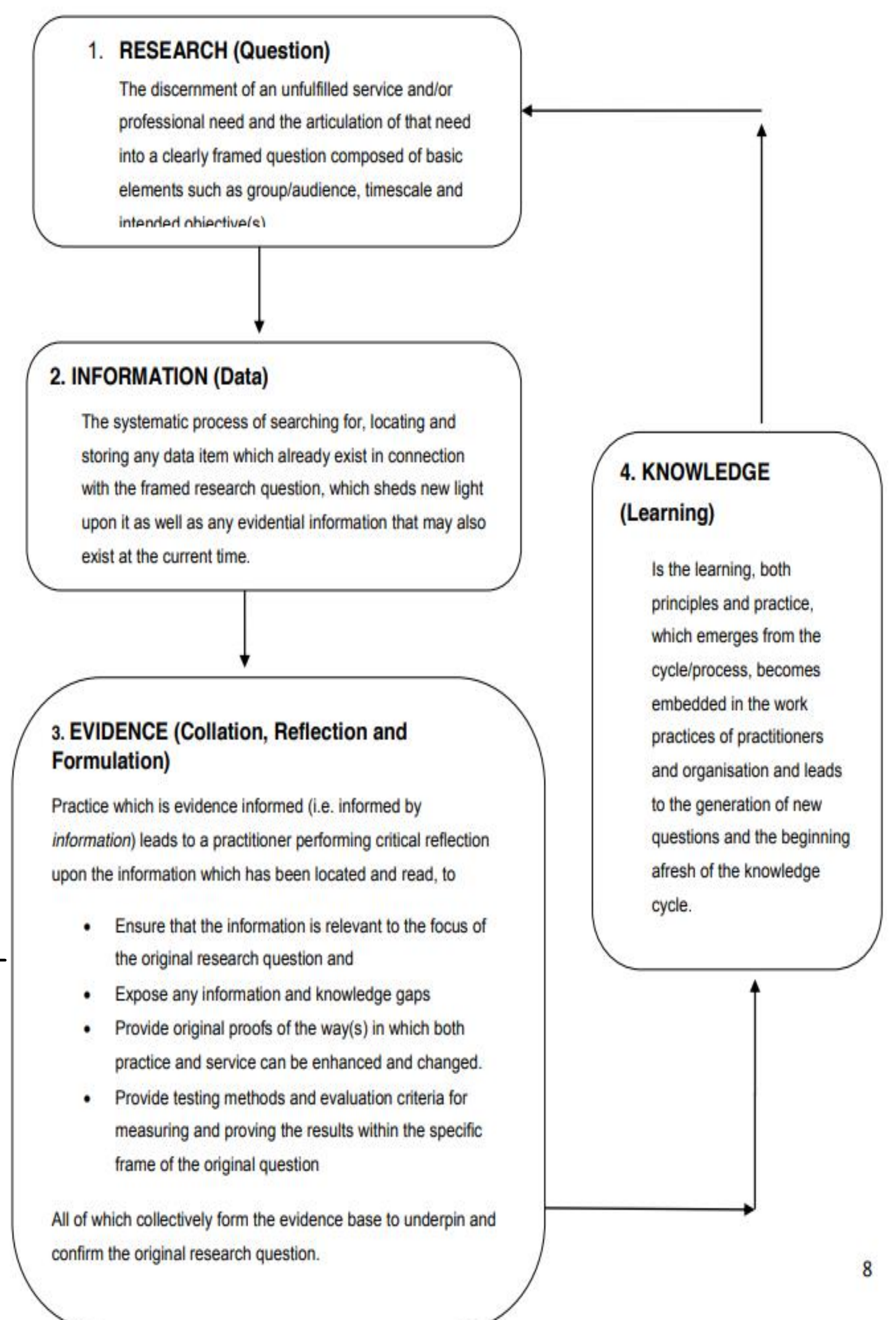

Implementation Timeline

January 2017— R&I strategy approved

Feb–June 2017— Preparation & communications

July 2017—Nominations and recruitment

October 2017—Twenty six R&I Mentors confirmed

January 2018—Induction and skills development training delivered to first group of 13 R&I Mentors

February 2018— The role begins with dedicated support from the National Research Office.

April 2018– Regional networking event— Dublin

May 2018—Regional networking event—Kilkenny

July 2018—Induction and skills development training delivered to 13 R&I Mentors

September 2018— Database search skills training—Athlone

October 2018—Research and Information Mentors National Network day—Dublin

Knowledge Sharing Locally

Knowledge Sharing Regionally

Empowering Practitioners

Enabling Research into Practice

Research Empowerment

The personal and collective capability and responsibility of all Tusla staff to ask basic research questions as an established component of their professional practice. All Tusla staff working within and contributing to such a culture see research as an activity which empowers themselves, empowers their colleagues and empowers all those they practice with leading to a cycle of reflection and knowledge creation.

The Knowledge Cycle

1. RESEARCH (Question)
The discernment of an unfulfilled service and/or professional need and the articulation of that need into a clearly framed question composed of basic elements such as group/audience, timescale and intended objective(s).

2. INFORMATION (Data)
The systematic process of searching for, locating and storing any data item which already exist in connection with the framed research question, which sheds new light upon it as well as any evidential information that may also exist at the current time.

3. EVIDENCE (Collation, Reflection and Formulation)
Practice which is evidence informed (i.e. informed by *information*) leads to a practitioner performing critical reflection upon the information which has been located and read, to

- Ensure that the information is relevant to the focus of the original research question and
- Expose any information and knowledge gaps
- Provide original proofs of the way(s) in which both practice and service can be enhanced and changed.
- Provide testing methods and evaluation criteria for measuring and proving the results within the specific frame of the original question

All of which collectively form the evidence base to underpin and confirm the original research question.

4. KNOWLEDGE (Learning)
Is the learning, both principles and practice, which emerges from the cycle/process, becomes embedded in the work practices of practitioners and organisation and leads to the generation of new questions and the beginning afresh of the knowledge cycle.

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Research and Information Mentor Activity

Working with the National Research Office

Research Office team member assigned to each R&I mentor

Advice and guidance on role development.

One to one meetings, regular phone calls and emails.

Regional and national training and network events.

Evidencing the work through monthly activity records.

R&I Mentors communicate the work of the Research Office.

Working with Each Other

Networking and sharing information through YAMMER.

Peer support groups have formed regionally.

R&I Mentor partnerships have developed.

Co-facilitation of presentations promoting the role.

Recognising the value of interdisciplinary collaboration.

Local and regional coordination of roles.

Working with Colleagues

R&I Mentors are visible and accessible via online profiles.

Engaging with multiple disciplines across all Tusla services.

Development of research questions and queries.

Database search skills mentoring.

Working with practitioner researchers locally and regionally

Advice and guidance on Research Ethics requirements.

The Learning so far

- R&I Mentors bring their skills, knowledge, experience, enthusiasm and creativity.
- Communication of the strategy and role is key to implementation across all services & staff groups.
- R&I Mentors skills development is on-going.
- The importance of establishing role identity.
- Allocating time to the role can be a challenge.

Find these documents and all R&I Mentor Profiles at **www.tusla.ie/research**

- **Tusla Child and Family Agency Research Strategy 2015-2017**
- **Research and Information Mentor Strategy 2017**
- **National Research Office Reference Paper on the Development of a Research Skills Programme located within Research Minded Culture and Utilisation Structures 2016**

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Next Steps

- Development of a work plan to embed R&I Mentoring and increase the research and information capacity of all staff.
- Strategically strengthen the R&I Mentors with the Tusla/Barnardos library partnership.

Are you interested in developing a Research and Information Mentoring approach in your organization?