

<b>Programme's name:</b> <i>Original title:</i>	Development of a Guardian ad Litem Case Information System
<u>Organisation / Country:</u>	Northern Ireland Social Care Council, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom
<u>Website:</u>	<a href="https://niscc.info/">https://niscc.info/</a>
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<u>Summary:</u>	The management of children cases in court by the Northern Ireland Guardian ad Litem Agency was largely paper based within no digital interface with the local social work authority. Because of the increased number of care applications, a delay of court decisions for children and young people in family proceedings courts followed. Therefore, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council developed a Guardian ad Litem Case Information System to deliver an electronic case management system. This allowed Guardian ad Litem (specialised social workers) to follow the Court cases and decrease delays in decisions for children and young people in court.
<u>Resources:</u>	The Northern Ireland's Department of Health jointly invested a total capital fund of £250K for this project. Two whole time equivalent staff members worked on the delivery in line with the supplier for 6 months and in the engagement with social workers, legal professionals and officials from the Department of Health. The project board met twice per month for a total of 8 months.
<u>Objectives:</u>	The objective of the project was to deliver an electronic case management system to lead to reductions in delays of final decisions for children and young people in court.
<u>Issues encountered:</u>	At the beginning of the project, social workers were sceptical and reluctant to use the digital case management system, as they had the feeling they were losing the human connection to their work.
<u>Outcomes:</u>	Outcomes related to the project relate to an increase in the efficiency of the workforce and therefore cost saving. Furthermore, and most importantly, there was a significant reduction of waiting time for court decision for children and young people.

<p><u>Evaluation of practice:</u></p>	<p>A post project evaluation was carried out by an independent adjudicator in line with the Departments Post Project Evaluation Template. All case related data about children and their parents/guardians is collected and tracking of the journey and outcomes through court. This information assists local Health and Social Care Trusts with their workforce planning and child protection intelligence. The system supports digital recording and delivery for Guardians ad Litem at the point of care through the use of integrated case record technology such as Digital pens and digital dictation. The system also supports workload management through its inbuilt case load weighting system and ensure information is shared digitally and securely with all parties in a children's family law case in Northern Ireland.</p>
<p><u>Sources of further information:</u></p>	