



## SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

# Project Case Study: CHITIN Project - REfLECTS Stroke Trial

### THEME:

Health & Social Care

### FUNDING(ERDF+MATCH)

€10,601,181.20

### MATCH FUNDERS:

Department of Health  
Northern Ireland

Department of Health  
Ireland

### LEAD PARTNER:

Public Health Agency,  
Northern Ireland

### PROJECT PARTNERS

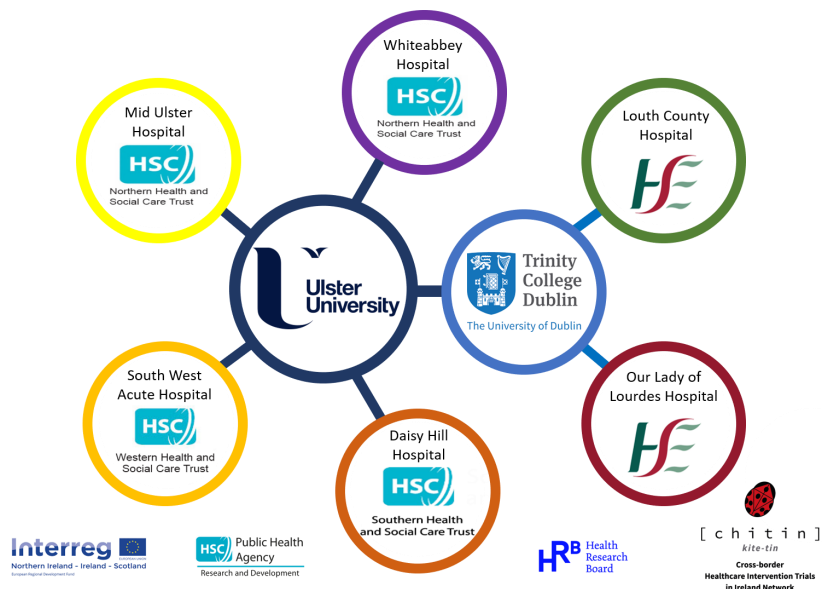
Health Research Board,  
Ireland

**Start Date:** 01/09/2016

**End Date:** 30/06/2023

The Cross-border Healthcare Intervention Trials in Ireland Network (CHITIN) is a unique partnership between the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland and the Health Research Board in Ireland, who are working together to deliver 11 Healthcare Intervention Trials (HITs). The HITs will help prevent and cure illness and promote improved health and well-being. The REfLECTS (randomised controlled trial of mirror box therapy in upper limb rehabilitation with sub-acute stroke patients) project is just one of such interventions: investigating the effectiveness of mirror box therapy in improving movement of the arm with stroke survivors within three months of stroke onset.

Stroke may affect a person's ability to move one side of their body, generally leading to paralysis of the arm. Mirror box therapy is a treatment which may improve arm function. The therapy involves the use of visual illusion to trick the brain into thinking the affected arm is moving. This is achieved by observing the movements of the non-affected arm in a mirror. It is believed mirror neurons in the brain, which are responsible for learning new skills through observation, may be responsible for the effects of mirror therapy.



[https://  
research.hscni.net/chitin](https://research.hscni.net/chitin)

[@CHITINProject](https://twitter.com/CHITINProject)

REfLECTS aims to build the evidence base for mirror therapy to improve stroke rehabilitation and is led by Dr Alison Porter-Armstrong, Ulster University, in partnership with Dr Tadhg Stapleton, Trinity College Dublin. The study has been developed and implemented by a team of cross-border occupational therapists who are highly skilled senior therapists in the field of stroke rehabilitation. The Northern, Southern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland and County Louth Health Service Executive in Ireland are involved in the project. The research team are currently recruiting across study sites, with the aim of securing 180 participants.