



Centre for Effective Services

Annual Review 2016

Connecting policy, practice and research, helping to ensure the implementation of effective services to improve outcomes for communities, children and young people across the island of Ireland.

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About CES

The Centre for Effective Services connects policy, research and practice to improve lives of people across the island of Ireland. We work to influence policy and systems change; champion innovative service design and implementation; and build knowledge, skills and capacity for government departments, organisations, researchers and practitioners.

CES is a not for profit intermediary organisation with offices in Dublin and Belfast.



Welcome from the Chair

2016 will be remembered for some significant endings, but also promising new beginnings at CES.

Like many organisations and agencies working with children and young people, we paid tribute to a significant investment by The Atlantic Philanthropies in services in Ireland and Northern Ireland which came to a close in 2016. Atlantic's investment in services for



Dan Flinter, CES Chair

children and young people was instrumental in testing innovative prevention and early intervention approaches in Ireland and Northern Ireland, and in generating high quality reliable data through the implementation and evaluation of evidence informed programmes.

One of CES's first tasks when it was originally established was to summarise and synthesise learning from the Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative. It was fitting that the end of last year, we published final reports based on the initiative. The reports capture key learning from the Initiative that are transferrable to wider services, and communicate them in a way that is accessible and engaging. While the initiative may be complete, it leaves a valuable legacy and we will continue to share the learning with service commissioners and policy makers.

2016 was a year of many firsts for CES – the first in a new series of accessible, evidence informed resources for frontline practitioners, and the first four modules of a practical, evidence informed toolkit for social workers. Our Programme Management Office, established together with the HSE Mental Health Division, was launched in July, to support mental health services in Ireland to deliver on a highly ambitious reform agenda which will place people, their wellbeing and recovery at the heart of services.

Over the past ten years, this organisation has expanded and grown, reached into new sectors and made connections across jurisdictions, departments, disciplines and agencies. Our work has evolved from collecting and summarising evidence, to translating it for use in some of the most complex social challenges faced by government and society, including supporting the reform of

mental health services, facilitating systemic change in universal child health services, supporting the development of evidence informed policy for children and young people, and strengthening evidence informed decision making in social work.

We have striven to gain trust with our partners and collaborators, working side by side with government departments, large statutory providers and vital community and voluntary services. We never do, or could do anything at CES on our own. Our partners know that we are there for ‘the long haul’, that we recognise the value of practitioner wisdom, and the experiences of people using public services as much as the rigour of good research.

The development of our work in Northern Ireland, our belief in the value of an all island approach, inspired by the vision of The Atlantic Philanthropies and the commitment to share learning in both jurisdictions is even more important as we face the challenges of Brexit and wider political uncertainty. A new phase of our work supporting public service reform agendas in Ireland and Northern Ireland will provide us with a unique opportunity to support decision makers across the island to learn from each other as they test and implement new approaches in education, health and services for children. We will also work alongside them to build their capacity as leaders and innovators in services.

As my term as Chairperson and a member of the Board of CES comes to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my current and former colleagues for their support and wisdom over the past ten years, our Director Nuala Doherty for her leadership and vision for the organisation and all of the staff for their commitment, enthusiasm and energy for the mission of CES. I wish the organisation, under the leadership of our new Chairperson, Dr Jack Golden, well in advance of the launch of a new strategy later this year, and courage, confidence and resilience in facing the future.

Dan Flinter

Chairperson, CES

May 2017

2016 – A summary of our work

This review describes our work in 2016. The first section of the report outlines **our work with government departments** in Ireland and Northern Ireland. In 2016 we began a new phase of our work in public service reform which involves seven government departments across the island. We also continued to provide implementation support to government initiatives such as the Area Based Childhood Programme in Ireland, and the Early Intervention Transformation Programme in Northern Ireland.

The second section of this report deals with **our work with statutory service providers** in both Ireland and Northern Ireland, including the Health Service Executive (HSE), the HSE Mental Health Division, and Tusla the Child and Family Agency. In 2016 the focus of our work with service providers involved supporting service design and implementation, and building capacity by creating tools and resources, providing training and developing networks. We held two meetings of the Implementation Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The final section of the report outlines **our communications activity** in 2016. We continued to develop relationships both nationally and internationally, and were invited to speak at a number of significant external events. We produced sixteen different publications during the year, along with online resources including videos. Publications we produced and shared last year included the first **Access Evidence** resource for frontline practitioners working with children and young people, and a series of summaries called **'On the right track'** based on learning from the Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative.

Section One: Our Work with Government Departments



'Serving the public well, what can we learn?' January 2016

In January 2016, we launched a new programme of work – the *Goal Programme for Public Service Reform* in Ireland and Northern Ireland. This all island programme of work was funded during the final phase of investment by The Atlantic Philanthropies in Ireland, and will build on the strategic investment to date by Atlantic in state funded services. The aim of the

programme is to support systemic change in public services in areas such as education, health, mental health and children's services, to improve outcomes for people living in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Supporting Public Service Reform Agendas in Ireland and Northern Ireland

In beginning this work, we reviewed the literature on implementing public service reform in countries around the world. While learning is still emerging from the literature, the review identified some of the factors that lead to successful implementation of reform initiatives.

In January, we presented the findings of our review to an audience of officials from a range of government departments in Ireland at a seminar called '*Serving the Public Well, What can we learn?*' Senior officials from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs spoke at the event. A panel discussion brought together experienced policy makers together with leading researchers in the field of public service reform, to discuss the findings from the review in an Irish context. The review was disseminated widely throughout the public service in both Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Partnership is a critical aspect of this programme and in 2016 we engaged with seven government departments across the island to secure their commitment. In Northern Ireland, participating departments include the **Executive Office**, the **Department of Education** and the

Department of Finance. In Ireland, the **Department of Education and Skills**, the **Department of Health**, the **Department of Children and Youth Affairs** and the **Department of Public Expenditure and Reform** will take part. Departments selected nine exemplar projects for the programme. These projects will address themes such as youth mental health, leadership development and using data. We will provide technical assistance to the project teams.

In September, Memoranda of Understanding between government departments, The Atlantic Philanthropies and CES were signed, to reflect this commitment.

An Advisory Group was established to guide the programme as it develops. The group brings together Permanent Secretaries, Secretaries General and other senior officials from participating departments. The first meeting of the Advisory Group took place in October 2016 at our office in Harcourt Street. During this meeting, the group agreed terms of reference. Sir Peter Housden, former Head of the Scottish Government was appointed chair.

Working with Government Departments in Ireland

In 2016 we continued to work closely with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to support implementation of the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme, and to conduct a national evaluation of the programme. CES jointly manages the ABC Programme together with Pobal, and during the year we provided implementation support at national level and to each of the individual areas. We carried out individual site visits to each area, developed tools and resources, and hosted a Learning Community event on the theme of *'Early Years, Driving Quality and Challenging Poverty'*.

The ABC evaluation team in CES worked with all of the ABC areas, to evaluate three strands of the programme: outcomes, implementation and cost analysis.



ABC Learning Community Meeting, February 2016

Section One: Our Work with Government Departments



CYPSC Coordinators Network Meeting, March 2016

We continued to provide strategic and operational support to the Children and Young Peoples Services Committees. The committees have been identified by government as the structure to plan and co-ordinate services for children and young people in every county in Ireland. We hosted the National Co-ordinator, and new County Co-ordinators were appointed by Tusla throughout the year. The appointment of these additional personnel

means that the initiative can now be rolled out across all counties in Ireland.

Our work in the youth justice sector involved both the National Children Detention Campus at Oberstown and the Irish Youth Justice Service. We completed a review of international literature about how relationships between staff and young people in detention settings can improve their outcomes. In June 2016, the National Children Detention Campus launched *Lessons from the Literature: Building relationships with young people to improve pro social outcomes*.

Other work we completed with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs included a Child Protection and Welfare Reports Database, *A Review of Childcare Policy and Law in other Jurisdictions*, and a review of CSO data on Children as Carers. We provided ongoing support to the Department to develop a set of national indicators which will help government to track progress on the five national outcomes for children and young people.

In December, CES facilitated an Open Policy Debate hosted by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to inform the Early Years Strategy. This is Ireland's first ever National Early Years Strategy for children up to the age of six, and the strategy emphasises a joined up, whole of government approach. An Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Katherine Zappone both spoke at the event. Together with the Department, we designed and facilitated a series of round table discussions with key stakeholders across the sector, and produced a report based on the discussions.

Working with Government in Northern Ireland

The Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP) is a cross government initiative which aims to transform mainstream services in Northern Ireland through a prevention and early intervention approach. The programme involves five government departments and is delivered through the *'Delivering Social Change'* Framework. In 2016 we provided technical support to three different workstreams on the programme. This involves service design, using evidence and supporting implementation. We spoke to early years staff about the evidence base for the programme, and presented the findings of an audit on evidence based parenting programmes to Health Trusts and Commissioners. Our work informed the development of a fourth workstream that was added to the Programme, which aims to embed prevention and early intervention approaches across relevant professionals in Northern Ireland.

In April 2016, we were commissioned by the former Department of Employment and Learning to evaluate the pilot phase of the United Youth Programme, which was run across Northern Ireland until March 2016. The programme worked with young people between the ages of 16 to 24 to build their confidence, promote citizenship, good relations and to prepare them for work. In the evaluation, we looked at how effective providers were in responding to the needs of young people, what were the outcomes for young people taking part, and how cost effective the pilot was. The Department for the Economy shared the findings of the evaluation widely during a series of information seminars. The report was also used to inform the design of a new programme funded under the European Union's Peace IV Programme.

Section Two: Our Work with Services

In 2016 we worked closely with large scale statutory service providers, including Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, the HSE and the HSE Mental Health Division. In Northern Ireland we worked closely with community and voluntary providers delivering services under the Big Lottery Fund *Reaching Out, Supporting Families Programme*. Our work with the Public Health Agency and the Health and Social Care Board focused on the implementation and evaluation of the Dementia Together Programme.

Building Evidence Informed Practice in Social Work in Ireland

We are working with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency to support social workers to use evidence in their work with children and families, so that they make confident, well informed decisions in their practice. The Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiative brings together professional development, and an evidence informed toolkit to meet the needs of social workers and the Agency.

In 2016, 71 social workers from across four regions took part in the Evidence Informed Practitioner Programme, a learning and development initiative which combines research, practice and real life case studies. In May 2016, social workers who took part in the programme spoke about their experience of the



CES and Tusla Staff at the EPPI Conference, September 2016

Programme and how they were using it in their work at a conference in Dublin Castle. The conference also featured contributions from Fred McBride, CEO of the Agency, and Justice Rosemary Horgan, President of the District Court.

The Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiative also involves the development of a toolkit for social workers. In October, we published the first four modules of the toolkit, focusing on the subject areas of **Attachment, Engaging Children and Families, Parenting Capacity** and **Critical Thinking**. Each module includes key messages from research literature, practice points and

evidence informed tools and resources which social workers can apply to their practice. Content for the toolkit is closely aligned to the strategy, guidelines and policy used by the Agency.

Modules were made available internally in Tusla to over 50 social workers who took part in a pilot project and applied the toolkit to their own caseloads. A report was compiled based on their feedback to inform the final four modules of the toolkit.

Working with the HSE Mental Health Division to Reform Mental Health Services

We continued to support the HSE Mental Health Division to implement an ambitious programme of change in mental health services in Ireland. Together we established a Strategic Programme and Portfolio Management Office, which was launched in July.

The PMO includes a small team which provides expertise and specialist skills to the Mental Health Division in order to develop new structures, process and approaches. The PMO also provides practical support to projects at local level. In 2016 the PMO developed a project management methodology to meet the needs of services and to support them with different aspects of their projects,



CES PMO Team, July 2016

from governance through to organisational roles, objectives and timelines. The team provided training for project managers in the services, and developed additional tools and resources to meet their needs in managing and completing projects.

Work with Services for Infants and Their Families

In May 2016 the HSE Nurture Programme was officially launched. The programme aims to give infants born in Ireland the best start in life, by changing how universal services are delivered. Nurture focuses on services during pregnancy and the first three years of a child's life. While the programme aims to make a difference for infants and their families, it will also build the capacity of staff in universal child health services.

The Atlantic Philanthropies provided funding for the programme, and The Katharine Howard Foundation is the managing agent for the grant. The HSE is delivering the programme. Our role involves providing implementation support to the programme. Together with the HSE and the KHF we developed an implementation plan and established six implementation teams to make the plan a reality. Teams began their work in areas such as knowledge and communications, antenatal to postnatal services, health and wellbeing promotion, infant mental health and supporting parents, and training and resources.

In 2016 two new staff members joined CES to support this work, with expertise in implementation and data and information.

Supporting services for vulnerable families in Northern Ireland

In 2016 we engaged with thirty-six grant holders in Northern Ireland funded under the Big Lottery Fund *Reaching Out, Supporting Families Programme*. Projects are addressing the needs of vulnerable families in Northern Ireland, for example those dealing with challenges such as intellectual disability, isolation, exclusion and poverty. Projects are based on partnerships in the community and voluntary sector, with a range of learning



Reaching Out Supporting Families Social Media Training, July 2016

needs. Our work with grantholders involved planning and delivering an extensive learning and development programme, coordinating networking activities and events, and supporting grant holders to implement and evaluate their projects. Groups involved are encouraged to shape the programme activities through consultation, needs analysis and a project steering committee.

Section Two: Our Work with Services



Warren Cann, PRC Masterclass, April 2017

The Parenting Research Centre (PRC) in Melbourne is our partner on this project, and in April we welcomed Warren Cann, CEO of the PRC to Northern Ireland to host a masterclass with grant holders about supporting parents. In August, we developed and delivered a session on using social media. In September, we invited Dr Glenda Walsh from Stranmillis University

College to give a Masterclass to grant holders on involving children in evaluation approaches.

We also produced two Knowledge Exchanges for grant holders, which signpost useful tools, resources and research for their projects. We set up a Facebook group for grant holders, to help them keep in touch with each other about their projects.

Dementia Together

We continued to work with the Public Health Agency and the Health and Social Care Board to support the implementation and performance management of the Dementia Together Programme. Our role involves providing technical expertise for the development of Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) scorecards and report cards, accessing and using evidence, service design and implementation.

Sharing Knowledge About Implementation

We coordinate the Implementation Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland to bring together policy makers, practitioners, service providers and researchers to promote and share learning about implementation. In 2016 we held two meetings of the network. Presentations at the meeting in April included one on implementing the Healthy Ireland Framework.



Implementation Network Meeting, November 2016

Following the recommendations of a review in 2015, we introduced some new approaches to network meetings.

Section Two: Our Work with Services

In November, the network met for the first time in Belfast. Fifty members attended the meeting in Belfast, which featured a presentation on the application of implementation theory to practice by Dr Tom Jefford of Cambridgeshire County Council. A panel discussion with representatives from government agencies in Ireland and Northern Ireland considered the challenge of building an infrastructure for implementation. Membership and interest in the network continued to grow.

Section Three: Our Communications

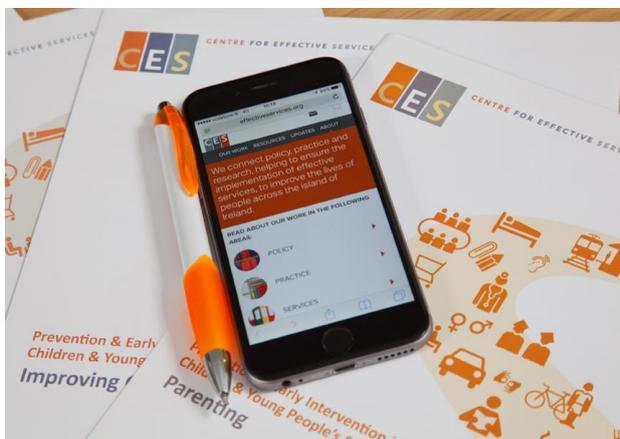
During 2016, we published 16 different publications, including reports and summaries. We also produced a series of videos based on two Masterclasses in Northern Ireland.

Our website, quarterly ezine and social media channels were the main communications platforms we used to reach our audiences. In 2016, almost 21,500 people visited our website. The number of downloads of



On the Right Track Publications

resources and publications on our website increased significantly in 2016. 4,614 resources were downloaded from our website, an increase of almost 70% on the previous year.



In September, we conducted a short survey with people subscribed to our mailing list. 77% of those who responded to the survey indicated that they found our website easy to navigate and use. Research summaries, and tools and resources for policy makers and practitioners were identified as the most useful content on our website.

The number of people signing up to our database increased by 15%, while our following on Twitter increased by 33% during the year. Our Ezine Open Rate remained at 31%, consistent with the previous year and well above industry averages.

Top Ten Resources Downloaded from the CES Website in 2016:
1. Childhood Adversity – An Access Evidence Summary
2. Improving Health and Wellbeing – Research and Practice
3. Prevention and Early Intervention in Children and Young Peoples Services – Ten Years Learning
4. An Introductory Guide to Implementation
5. National Quality Standards Framework Route Map for Youth Work
6. Ideas in Action in Youth Work – Practice
7. Commissioning in Human, Social and Community Services – A Rapid Evidence Review
8. Childhood Adversity – Outcomes, Risk, Resilience – An Access Evidence Review of the Literature
9. Implementing Public Service Reform – Messages from the Literature
10. On the Right Track – Children’s Learning



Access Evidence Publications

CES produced the following publications in 2016:
Implementing Public Service Reform – Lessons from the Literature Report and Summary, March 2016
Improving Health and Wellbeing in the Early Years – Research and Practice Produced with the Institute of Public Health, June 2016
Building Relationships with Detained Young People to Improve Pro Social Outcomes Published by Oberstown Children Detention Campus, <i>Report and Summary</i> , June 2016
Access Evidence – Childhood Adversity Full literature and summary, including key messages from research and guidance for practitioners. September 2016.
On the Right Track Outcomes reports on child behaviour, parenting, children’s learning, volunteering, leadership. Summaries on child behaviour, parenting, child health and children’s learning. December 2016.

Relationships and external engagements

We contributed to, supported and participated in networking activities in Ireland and internationally, to promote and share knowledge about implementation, and to strengthen connections between policy, practice and research.

The Childrens Research Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland

We continued to support the Childrens Research Network, following their integration into CES in 2015. During 2016 the Network began work on the Prevention and Early Intervention Research Initiative, a data archiving project funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies. In 2016, the Network hosted eight different events in Ireland and Northern Ireland, including specialised training and networking events for researchers. In December the Network hosted its annual conference on the theme of *Building resilience, enhancing social support: What research tells us*. Two significant joint events also took place, a PhD Symposium co-hosted with Maynooth University and an event on *'Improving research through practice'* which was co-hosted with the ISPCC.

What Works Research was the theme of a conference held at Queen's University Belfast, co-hosted by the Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation (CESI), CES, Playboard NI and CRNINI. The Network also produced a number of publications and resources for members.



Members of CES, CRNINI, CESI and Playboard NI at the *What Works Research* conference in Queen's University Belfast, November 2016

As a result of this activity and an increased focus on practice, the Network was successful in raising its profile and attracting new members.

National and International Events

In 2016, we contributed at Board level to both the European Implementation Collaborative and the Global Implementation Initiative. Our partnership with Trinity College Dublin continued, as the third year of a Postgraduate Certificate in Implementation Science began in September.



Tusla Conference, Dublin Castle Conference Centre, September 2016

We were invited to participate in a number of conferences and events, both nationally and internationally. In Ireland, these events included the national Criminal Justice Agencies Conference, the European Early Childhood Research Conference and the Age Friendly Ireland Conference. We were also invited to contribute at international events such as the 'What Works Global Summit' and the Global Challenges for Education International Conference in Vilnius.

Our Board of Directors

The Board of Directors at CES played a strategic leadership role enabling the organisation to deliver on its approach to sustainability.

Our Staff and Graduate Interns

Our staff team grew in 2016 in line with the expansion of our work. In September, we began the sixth year of our Graduate Intern Programme. We would like to thank our staff and graduate interns for their contribution and commitment to the organisation, and acknowledge the departure of those who left in 2016.

Our Funding and Financial Statements

We acknowledge and thank our funders for supporting our work in 2016. Financial Statements for the year ending December 31st 2016 are available on the CES website www.effectiveservices.org.

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