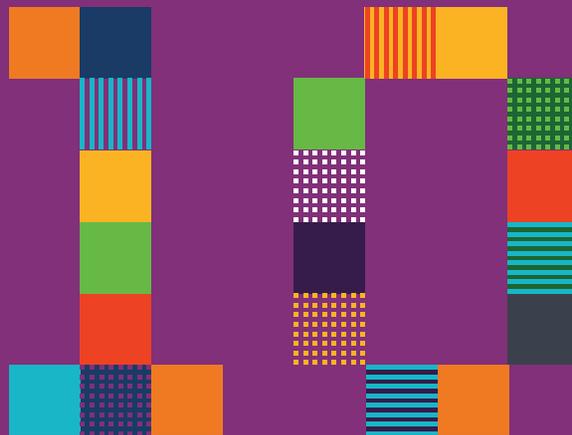




We bring new ways of thinking to complex problems,  
to help advance social change.

# CES Ten Year Review September 2018





# Review of the Work and Impact of the Centre for Effective Services

June 2018

Dr Nat O'Connor, Dr Markus Ketola, Dr Karl O'Connor

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## List of abbreviations

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ABC    | Area Based Childhood Programme                               |
| AP     | The Atlantic Philanthropies                                  |
| CDETБ  | City of Dublin Education and Training Board                  |
| CES    | Centre for Effective Services                                |
| CRN    | Children’s Research Network                                  |
| CRNINI | Children’s Research Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland |
| DCYA   | Department of Children and Youth Affairs                     |
| DCRGA  | Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs         |
| DES    | Department of Education and Skills                           |
| DPER   | Department of Public Expenditure and Reform                  |
| EITP   | Early Intervention Transformation Programme                  |
| EPIC   | Empowering People in Care                                    |
| EPPI   | Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiative             |
| ESRI   | Economic and Social Research Institute                       |
| EUR    | euro   |
| GBP    | British pounds   |
| GII    | Global Implementation Initiative                             |
| HSCT   | Health and Social Care Trust                                 |
| HSE    | Health Service Executive                                     |
| IPA    | Institute of Public Administration                           |
| IPH    | Institute for Public Health                                  |
| KHF    | Katharine Howard Foundation                                  |
| LCDP   | Local Community Development Programme                        |
| MHD    | Mental Health Division                                       |
| NGO    | non-governmental organisation                                |
| NI     | Northern Ireland   |

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| NICCY  | Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People |
| NICS   | Northern Ireland Civil Service                              |
| NIRN   | National Implementation Research Network, USA               |
| NQSF   | National Quality Standards Framework                        |
| OBA    | outcomes-based accountability                               |
| PEII   | Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative                |
| REF    | Research Excellence Framework                               |
| ROSF   | Reaching Out, Supporting Families                           |
| SPPMO  | Strategic Portfolio and Programme Management Office         |
| SUSI   | Student Universal Support Ireland                           |
| Tusla  | Tusla, the Child and Family Agency                          |
| UU     | Ulster University   |
| USD    | US dollars  |
| WHSCCT | Western health and Social Care Trust                        |
| YEI    | Youth Employment Initiative                                 |

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Foreword

In 2017, in the lead up to marking ten years of CES, we initiated two important tasks. The first was to commission a review of our work to tell the story of CES and to capture some of what we have learned along the way. The second was the development of a new organisational strategy, which builds on that learning and sets out our direction of travel over the next three years.

The review brings together our work history, feedback from partners and senior leaders in services, analysis and case studies of our project work, and examines them through a lens of public value. CES is a not for profit, independent organisation which shares many values with public services, and occupies a unique role in the policy and practice landscape.

Our new strategy which accompanies the review reaffirms our commitment to supporting the work of government departments, agencies and organisations to improve outcomes for people in health, mental health and education.

The concept of public value, which moves beyond measuring economic benefits to consider quality and outcomes for people offered fresh perspectives on how CES adds value to human and social services. The public value framework used by the research team identifies four different pillars in public value, one of which is focused on system capacity.

The world has changed significantly since CES first opened its doors in 2008. CES was set up as an intermediary organisation to create an appetite for good quality research evidence amongst policy makers and practitioners, and to help them generate that evidence. Since that time, governments around the world have initiated a range of reform initiatives. The complexity of social problems such as poverty, homelessness and youth mental health requires new approaches, better use of data and learning from other jurisdictions. The skills and capacity needed to interpret, analyse and apply forms of evidence such as data, research and feedback from citizens have become more sophisticated. Ten years on the review shows that while we have stayed true to our original mission, the work has grown in scale and complexity, reaching into

new sectors and engaging with a broader range of departments, agencies and organisations. The complexity of social problems. The review identifies both the use of evidence and building capacity as areas where CES has and will continue to add value.

The role of CES as a 'bridging mechanism', or 'broker' is a strong theme in this review. Supporting government departments, agencies and people within the system to make connections is an important aspect of CES's work. Cross government and whole of government work is essential to achieve better results for citizens. CES has reviewed the evidence and produced resources to support this way of working. We are now working with government departments across Ireland to test some of these skills and approaches in the real world in a programme focused on systemic change.

CES's learning on effective implementation is recognised within the review as a valuable resource for agencies, government departments and other organisations involved in policy and practice. We now know more about the stages of implementation, the people, skills and organisational infrastructure that need to be in place when introducing, scaling and sustaining change. Frameworks, tools and approaches can support practical application and contribute to a growing field of knowledge to support organisational change, better use of evidence, service improvement and public value.

Through our work with government departments, agencies and frontline practitioners, we have learned that evidence is only one of several factors which influences systemic change. Relationships, trust, competency and a commitment to working with others over time is also important. We look forward to building our partnerships over the coming years. As an all-island organisation, we are committed to strengthening the connections across both jurisdictions. We know that the similarities and differences between both jurisdictions offer a wealth and experience of learning that is valued by policy makers and practitioners. CES will continue to facilitate these important connections even in the most uncertain of times.

We are grateful to our funders for their strategic investment during our first ten years, which has enabled our work to be responsive to needs within the system as they emerge. I would like to thank the research team for their work on the Review, and to all of those who took the time to contribute their reflections and feedback. This summary

offers a brief insight into the findings, and the longer report is also available on our website. The report provides us with a significant repository of rich learning, ideas and possibilities as we move forward into our second decade.

Nuala Doherty

Director, CES

# 1. Introduction

## *The review*

In 2017, a team from Ulster University's School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences was commissioned to conduct a review of the work of the Centre for Effective Services (CES). The researchers were asked by CES to undertake a bespoke review, with a focus on identifying the different strands of CES's work over the 10 years of its existence, in order to provide a holistic picture of the impact and public value of the organisation's work. The review proposed by the University of Ulster (UU) was designed to break new ground in terms of methods and approach, as opposed to delivering a routine evaluation of the organisation.

Four main methods/sources were used to gather evidence about CES:

Source 1. Analysis of documents and other texts

Source 2. Interviews

Source 3. Online survey

Source 4. Impact case studies

Firstly, a large volume of documents was analysed, alongside text from other sources, such as the [effectiveservices.org](http://effectiveservices.org) website. Secondly, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 20 people, mostly from Ireland and Northern Ireland, including members of the CES senior management team, CES board members, and a range of external stakeholders. The external interviewees included senior civil and public servants, CEOs of community or voluntary organisations, and frontline practitioners involved in service delivery. Thirdly, an online survey was conducted, with invitations to participate sent out via CES's email lists and social media channels. A total of 144 valid responses was received; these provided qualitative data through text boxes alongside multiple-choice responses. Fourthly, a guided exercise was conducted, involving the writing up of eight impact case studies covering a range of CES projects in both Ireland and Northern Ireland. The impact case study format was modelled on the same process used as part of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) for UK universities to showcase their own impact as part of periodic evaluation of their work.

Drawing on these sources – and frequently combining them – the main body of the review is structured around the work of CES. Five sections follow the types of work carried out by CES, and a sixth section provides an overall synthesis of the work of CES under thematic headings, representing ways that CES has had impact and added value over its lifetime. The overall aim of the review was to examine the holistic value and impact of CES’s work over the 10 years of the organisation’s existence.

As a caveat, it is important to note what the review did not attempt to do. For example, it did not consider finances in any great detail; nor did it look at CES’s internal or external communications, human resource management or work management systems. Its focus was on the work carried out by CES.

### *Structure of this report*

This section provides a brief description of the CES and a synopsis of the review process.

In Section 2, the concept of a public value approach is outlined as the way in which the review seeks to present the holistic value of CES's work and the contribution it makes to the work of other organisations formulating policy and delivering public services.

Section 3 provides a brief overview of some key concepts and theories that are helpful in synthesising the CES's approach to achieving its mission and goals, which can sometimes be quite specialised.

Sections 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 all describe different sets of projects that CES has worked on – some of which are still ongoing – in the areas of practice, networks, policy, service design and systemic change. In each case, CES's work in this area is described and an analysis of that work is given. The conclusion of each of these five sections summarises the contribution of CES's work in terms of creating public value.

Section 9 provides an overall synthesis of CES's work using a thematic framework drawn from reviewing this work.

### *Origins of the CES*

The CES is a not-for-profit organisation that provides a range of services and supports to government departments, public agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in the delivery of public services.

According to the CES website:

"The Centre for Effective Services (CES) is a not for profit, intermediary organisation with offices in Dublin and Belfast. We connect policy, practice and research, helping to ensure the implementation of effective services, to improve the lives of people living across the island of Ireland."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://effectiveservices.org/about>

CES was established in 2008 as a joint initiative of The Atlantic Philanthropies and the Office of the Minister for Children, which was housed at the Department of Health in Ireland; co-funding was also provided by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

The aim of CES was to address the lack of data and science in Irish policy-making and to create an “infrastructure of evidence and research”. CES’s twin goals were to create an appetite for good quality evidence among policy-makers and practitioners, while also working to provide that evidence (Proscio, 2011).

According to interviewees, senior civil servants who were involved in these initial conversations saw the creation of an independent entity as a strategic opportunity to drive improvements in public service delivery more quickly and effectively, and in a sustained way over a period of time. It was decided to make a longer-term investment in order to seize this opportunity. One interviewee felt that at the time there was a need for evidence-based cross-over between policy and delivery in the children and families space. Another interviewee described the thinking as “quite bold and quite innovative”, with the goal of “creating space for things that aren’t the here-and-now”. The 2007 ‘blueprint’ for CES argued that the organisation would “fill an internationally recognised gap, that is, the need to increase the success of services in improving the lives of children by connecting the design and implementation of children’s services with scientific and technical knowledge of what works” and, at the time, the blueprint argued that CES would be “the first organisation of its kind anywhere” (Prospectus, 2007).

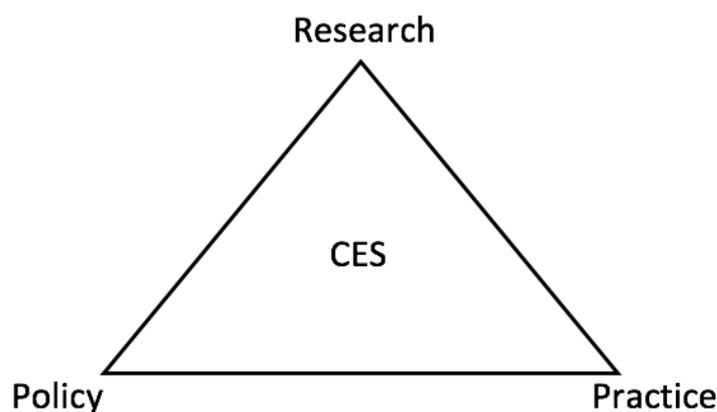
Another understanding of CES’s origins, which is compatible with the above account but from a different perspective, is that it made sense for The Atlantic Philanthropies to invest in evidence-based practice in order to embed its philanthropic investments in services for children and young people and ensure the sustainability of those investments. The Atlantic Philanthropies was active in both Ireland and Northern Ireland, and its philanthropic investments totalled USD 1.3 billion in Ireland (1987–2015) and USD 570 million in Northern Ireland (1991–2014). Among these, for example, its Children and Youth investments totalled USD 26.8 million in Northern Ireland (2007–2012) and USD 164 million in Ireland (2004–2014).

Several interviewees confirmed that CES's first task was to establish its credibility, show the robustness of its approach and build relationships to create trust and confidence. Some of these interviewees also remarked on the challenge at the time of creating space for the new organisation and the innovation that it sought to promote.

With offices in Dublin and Belfast, CES operates on an all-island basis, with most of its staff based in Dublin. Personnel include a senior management team, project specialists, staff of the Children's Research Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland, corporate services and project support staff, and graduate interns. CES is governed by a seven-person board, whose members sit in a voluntary capacity.

### *The work of CES*

A large number of interviewees described CES's work as occurring at the interface of policy and practice, informed by evidence and international research. Interviewees described CES as having a "brokering role", as "translating research", as a source of "technical support", or "a bridging mechanism", or as "connecting researchers, policymakers and practitioners". One interviewee visualised CES's work as occurring in



*Figure 1. CES work linking policy, practice and evidence*

the middle of a triangle, between government, academics and service delivery

According to this view, this represents CES's unique selling point.

A similar view of CES was that it represents "a repository of knowledge, in relation to policy formation and development" that looks at the international picture and elicits learning. As one interviewee put it, "they are really, really good at translating top-quality

research into formats that others can access and engage with". A CES interviewee noted that the "very big spread" from policy through to practice is "part of the uniqueness of CES" but also "a very large ask" because of the diversity of skills required within the organisation to cover this spread.

However, the generic picture of linking research, policy and practice needs to be understood as applying to specific domains. The CES was clearly identified by interviewees and survey respondents as working in relation to children, young people and families, as well as in relation to public services reform, community development and allied fields, such as social work, education and mental health. It was also clear from both the review of its projects and interviews that CES has broadened out the domains in which it works over the 10 years since it was established.

## 2. Measuring the public value of CES

### *Public value*

There has been an international trend towards more sophisticated measurement of the socioeconomic outcomes achieved by public policy and services and their value to the public (O'Flynn, 2007). The current trend in public management is to maintain organisational capacity, but to shift from a narrow focus on costs and outputs towards improving the *quality* of services provided for citizens and businesses (OECD, 2010) and to better measure *outcomes* rather than outputs (Barber, 2017). One way to summarise this trend is to consider value-for-money reviews. It has been easier to measure the money dimension than to measure the value, but it is precisely the latter that is now in greater focus. This implies that more sophisticated social scientific approaches are routinely required in public administration, so that the full economic, social and environmental value of public expenditure can be calculated. The total value or benefit can be called the 'public value' of an organisation or its activities (Moore, 1995).

At its core, public value is anything that the public values (Talbot, 2006). What the public values can often be measured in some way, albeit not always in money terms (Meynhardt, 2009). The public value school of thought is one example of the trend towards moving away from the narrow economic focus of new public management towards a more holistic conception of public services that are more responsive to citizens while also rooted in traditional public service ethics (Talbot, 2006).

An agreed system of public value accounting is still in development (Moore, 2014). However, organisations can improve the likelihood that they will achieve more and better outcomes if they are organised in a way that maximises efficiency and effectiveness, maximises engagement with stakeholders, and promotes the skills and knowledge they need in their teams in order to deliver the greatest possible return to the public on the investment of public funds (Barber, 2017). The four 'pillars' of Barber's public value framework are: pursuing goals; managing inputs; engaging users and citizens; and developing system capacity (Barber, 2017: 6-7). CES's work is most closely linked with building system capacity (see Annex for more detail).

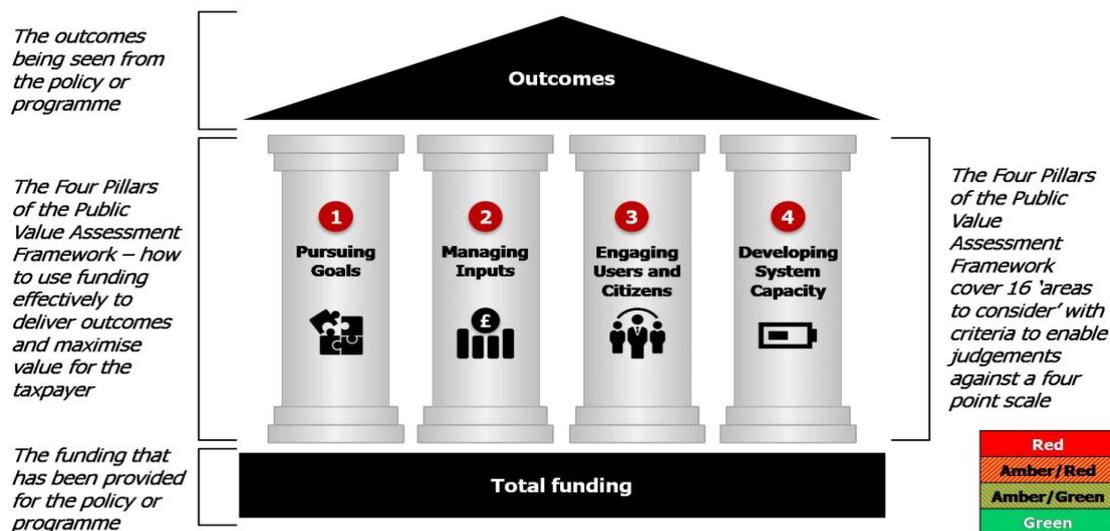


Figure 2: Barber (2017)

### *Measuring outcomes and impact*

One way to understand the mission of CES is to see it as helping public agencies and voluntary organisations achieve beneficial outcomes in people’s lives. Strategic objectives set at policy level are increasingly focused on the achievement of socioeconomic outcomes – such as the outcomes specified in the Northern Ireland Draft Programme for Government. One of the contemporary challenges for public administration, and for voluntary organisations working in the delivery of public services, is how best to achieve such outcomes.

Short-term outcomes are specific changes in people’s lives, (e.g. behaviour, knowledge, skills, status and level of functioning). Long-term outcomes or ‘impact’ refer to fundamental change occurring in organisations, communities or systems as a result of a service’s activities (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2006). For example, many aspects of population health, such as people’s behaviour in terms of diet and exercise, and the results of this in terms of physical and mental health, are outside the control of public health agencies. In order for public agencies to better influence outcomes in society, they need to be designed and structured differently as organisations – with different skill sets and competences within their workforces, and sometimes very changed

processes and practices – so that they can work successfully alongside a range of other organisations to deliver the desired outcomes.

### *Capturing the public value of the work of CES*

The review identified the following ways to explain how CES adds value through its work:

- Public value as an overarching logic to CES’s work: The review explored the concept of public value as a way of understanding and reflecting on the work of CES.
- A set of **themes** was identified that emerged from the review and that describe ways in which CES adds value to projects and organisations with which it works.

These themes were as follows:

- The application of social science to policy formulation and service delivery
- Agility and flexibility
- CES’s human capital
- The all-island dimension
- International links
- Relationship building
- Public service ethos
- The CES as an independent, critical friend
- A learning organisation.

### 3. Concepts that explain CES's work

Six concepts and theories, drawn in part from academic studies of public administration and civil society organisations, help to clarify the nature and value of CES's work.

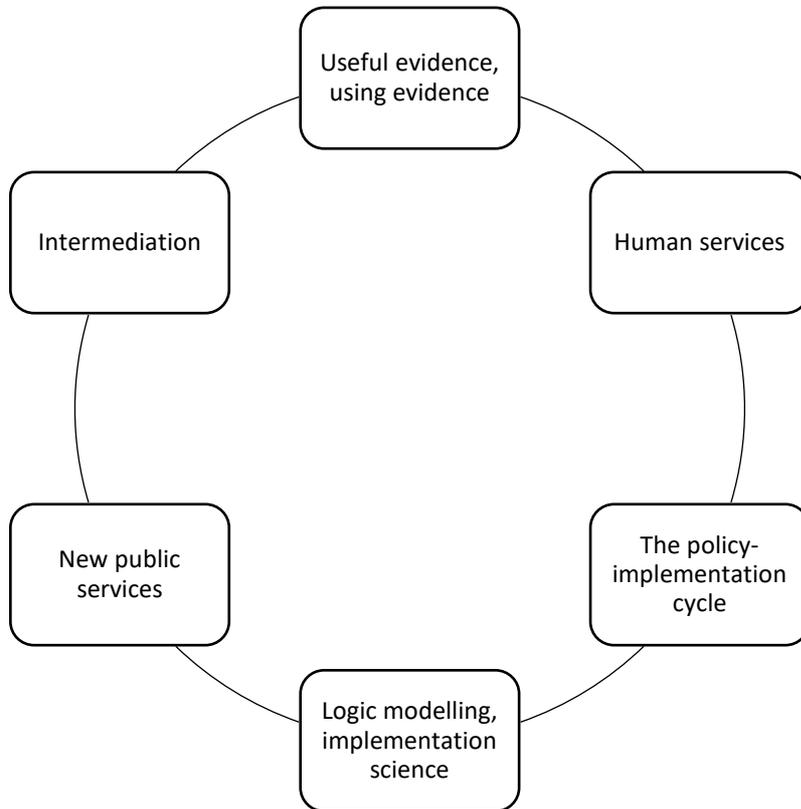


Figure 3: Concepts that explain CES's work

**Useful evidence, using evidence:** In nearly half (46%) of its projects, CES has provided support around 'use of evidence'. Another common form of support has been 'knowledge translation' in around a fifth (19%) of its projects. Clearly defining 'evidence' helps to clarify CES's work in promoting evidence-based and evidence-informed policy-making and practice.

Evidence and evidence-informed practice is not just about formal qualifications or individuals receiving information; it is about the role of knowledge in organisations as something that raises the capacity and effectiveness of the organisation – and the individuals working within it – and as something to be applied in practice. A useful

typology of knowledge policy-making suggests that some knowledge is written down and codified ('inscribed'), but knowledge is also present ('embodied') in the experience and acquired expertise of individuals. Knowledge is likewise present ('enacted') in how organisations function (Freeman and Sturdy, 2015). Recognition that knowledge can be present in an organisation in embodied and enacted forms is important, as formal reviews tend to privilege the written word, such as guidelines, manuals and so on. CES's work to assist in the actual implementation of clinical guidelines, rather than just their production, is one example of focusing on ensuring that evidence moves from being inscribed to actually being embodied and enacted. Another example is that the knowledge held by service users and their families is only recently being systematically included through engagement processes. Some CES reports reflect this broader understanding of knowledge by using the term 'practice wisdom' to acknowledge the experience and practical knowledge of those working on the frontline in the delivery of services.

In brief, CES's work involves taking account of a wide range of evidence – including 'evidence' from service users and their families and from those delivering services, as well as from research studies, in order to deeply understand the delivery of a service in a particular context. This evidence is then brought to bear in the design of a service and how it operates, with a view to improving its ability to achieve sought-after outcomes, such as improvements in the lives of children and families.

**Human services:** The concept of human services is a useful way to understand the communities of practitioners and policy specialists with whom CES seeks to connect and form networks. According to the National Economic and Social Council (NESC), "Human services are services that are publicly provided, funded or regulated with the purpose of promoting the well-being of citizens," (NESC, 2011). A more expansive definition from a US organisation focuses on the interdisciplinary and problem-solving nature of human services:

"The field of Human Services is broadly defined, uniquely approaching the objective of meeting human needs through an interdisciplinary knowledge base, focusing on prevention as well as remediation of problems, and maintaining a

commitment to improving the overall quality of life of service populations. The Human Services profession is one which promotes improved service delivery systems by addressing not only the quality of direct services, but also by seeking to improve accessibility, accountability, and coordination among professionals and agencies in service delivery.”<sup>2</sup>

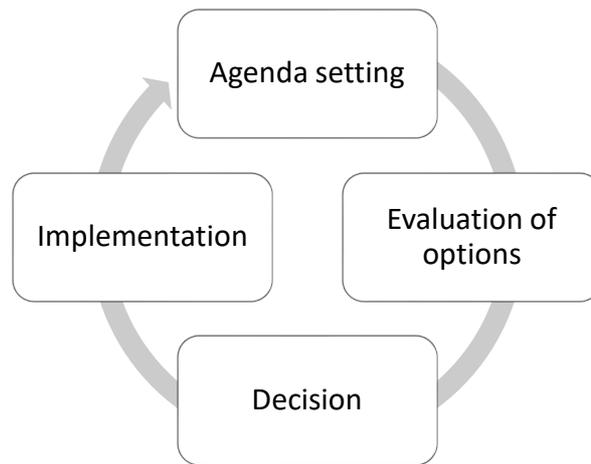
In Ireland and Northern Ireland, human services professions include people working in areas as diverse as addiction, children and young people, community development, disability, education, eldercare, families, healthcare, homelessness, and policing. While there is perhaps not yet a common sense of there being a singular human services profession in Ireland or Northern Ireland, what unites people working in these areas is their use of social scientific approaches to gather evidence and understand the causes and potential solutions for their target populations.

CES is largely focused on ways of working that unite different social service and social care professionals, such as translating evidence into practice, and designing services to ensure that policies can be implemented and sustained. Human services are a better way to understand CES’s work than the broader term ‘social policy’. Rather than some of the traditional pillars of social policy, such as housing or social welfare payments, CES is typically concerned with services that work directly with people to meet their personal needs.

**The policy implementation cycle:** The policy implementation process is an endless cycle of decision-making. When the cycle is broken down into logically separate moments of decision-making, there are just four distinct categories of ‘moment’: Setting the agenda; Evaluation of options; Decision; and Implementation (Hyland, 1995). CES is quite distinct from most other community and voluntary sector organisations in that it does not have a public profile based on raising issues or concerns through lobbying or media appearances in the hope of eliciting a response from policy-makers, i.e. agenda setting.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nationalhumanservices.org/what-is-human-services>



**Figure 4: The four moments of decision-making in public policy**

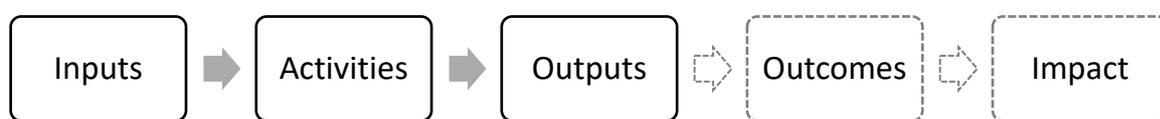
In contrast, CES’s position was described as one of “insider-outsider” by some interviewees. CES has been involved in part of the evaluation of options, from the perspective of technical expertise and specialist knowledge as opposed to advocacy for any particular approach. Likewise, CES has been involved in aspects of implementation – from supporting policy-makers to build in implementation from the outset of policy formulation, to working on the detail of how a given policy or service can best be implemented based on international evidence of best practice, and on what works. However, CES has had very little interaction with elected decision-makers or politicians more generally. It is different from many community and voluntary organisations in that it does not deliver services directly. Rather, CES’s focus is on technical support to public and voluntary organisations to assist the implementation of policy and best practice.

**Implementation:** As a separate but complementary strand to its work on evidence-informed policy and practice, CES is an advocate for ‘implementation science’. At its simplest, this is the study of implementation. Many depictions of implementation science discuss four or more distinct stages – exploration, installation, initial implementation, and full implementation – as well as periodic reviews to ensure sustainability and improvement over time. A more specific definition proposes that:

“implementation science is the study of the process of implementing programmes and practices that have some evidence from the research field to suggest they are worth replicating. It is the study of how a practice that is

evidence based or evidence informed gets translated to different, more diverse contexts in the real world.” (Metz et al, 2015).

For those working within CES, implementation is shorthand for a number of discrete activities. For example, one interviewee described it as “supporting people to implement. There is a capacity building element in that: an understanding of best practice, change methodology, behavioural change, leadership and all that goes around implementation and change and improvement.” One tool often used in CES’s work in implementation is the Logic Model. This has five basic elements, as shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 5: The basic elements of a Logic Model (W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2006)**

When CES works with organisations to improve their services, a simple way to describe this is that changes are made to inputs and activities in order to improve outputs by whatever quantitative or qualitative criteria have been established to judge that organisation. A second key concept illustrated in Figure 5 above is that there is a world of difference between outputs and outcomes. In contrast to activities and outputs, which are simply what an organisation does and which are broadly under the control of its management and staff, outcomes and impact are understood to be changes made in the world. Radically different skills, competences and service design may be needed if an organisation is to be as successful in achieving outcomes as it has been in achieving outputs.

There can be any number of additional influences in the same social or economic environment that affect the socioeconomic outcome and impact that a given organisation is working to achieve. When CES is working with an organisation or a service, the work is based on understanding and analysis of what other organisations influence the sought-after outcome, and how best to ensure that the organisation it is working with builds relationships in this wider milieu, if it is to be successful in implementing its particular goals and achieving specific outcomes.

**New public services:** One way to understand CES's work – and to an extent the purpose of CES as an organisation – is that CES seeks to change the way in which policy-makers and public services operate. Systemic change should be understood as fundamental change occurring in organisations, communities or systems. Public sector reform or system change is not done for its own sake but assumes that improvements can be achieved in the lives of people affected by public policy or using publicly funded services.

CES's specific contribution to this is obviously to inculcate the better and more frequent use of evidence alongside techniques to focus attention on implementation. As one interviewee put it, "getting that behaviour deeply embedded in large organisations is a mammoth task. And CES is kind of a minnow in that context." Yet, there is evidence of changes occurring in public administration in Ireland and Northern Ireland. One question for this review was to try and identify whether CES was perceived to be contributing to these developments or whether it was perceived to be the product of these trends.

A well-regarded study, illustrated in Table 1, suggests that there are three distinct archetypes of public administration, ranging from **traditional public administration** through **new public management** to the concept of **new public service** (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000, Table 1).

In terms relevant to this review, the first archetype (i.e. traditional public administration) represents a hierarchical world driven largely by politics rather than evidence. The third archetype (new public service) represents work in progress, in terms of an enlightened vision of public services engaging in dialogue with citizens and in which evidence is likely to have greater salience. In between the two, much of public administration in the UK since the 1980s – and in Ireland somewhat later – is seen to be influenced by the political ideology of that period, with an emphasis on limiting the role of the State, dismissing the idea of a public service ethos, importing practices wholesale from the private sector into public service provision, such as assuming rational economic behaviour and encouraging competition among public service providers. This so-called

new public management movement has been the subject of a broad criticism (OECD, 2010; Robinson 2015).

Using these three archetypes of public administration as a lens is a useful way to analyse the work of CES. It makes the nebulous idea of ‘public sector reform’ much more concrete, which helps to clarify the working environment in which CES is operating. Given that trends in public administration move slowly and unevenly, it is reasonable to suggest that some parts of the system remain traditional, whereas others resemble the archetype of new public management and still others seem to be aiming towards new public service. Some of the critiques of CES suggest that it is allied to, or reinforces elements associated with, new public management. However, the evidence found in this review points to a much more nuanced picture.

**Table 1. Comparing perspectives: Traditional public administration, new public management, and the new public service (modified from Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000)**

| <b>Traditional public administration</b>   | <b>New public management</b>   | <b>New public service</b>   |
|--|--|---|
| Public interest defined politically and expressed in law                                   | Public interest understood as the aggregation of individual interests                          | Public interest resulting from a dialogue about shared values   |
| Public servants responsive to clients and constituents                                     | Public servants responsive to customers  | Public servants responsive to citizens  |
| Role of government to ‘row’ (design and implement policies focusing on a single objective) | Role of government to ‘steer’ (acting as a catalyst to unleash market forces)                  | Role of government to ‘serve’ (negotiating and brokering interests among citizens and community groups, creating shared values) |
| Policies implemented through existing government agencies                                  | Mechanisms and incentives to achieve policy objectives through private and non-profit agencies | Building coalitions of public, non-profit and private agencies to meet mutually agreed upon needs                               |

| Traditional public administration  | New public management   | New public service  |
|--|---|---|
| Hierarchical accountability of administrators to elected political leaders | Market-driven accountability: the accumulation of self-interests will result in outcomes desired by broad groups of citizens (or consumers) | Multifaceted accountability: public servants must attend to law, community values, political norms, professional standards, and citizen interests |
| Top-down authority within bureaucratic organisations                       | Decentralised public organisations with primary control remaining within the agency   | Collaborative structures with leadership shared internally and externally   |

The public value school of thought is one example of how the new public service idea is conceptualised. Public value “looks backward not only to the managerialism, efficiency and performance of NPM [New Public Management] but also to some aspects of more traditional public administration, seeing legitimacy and trust as important issues which are in part engendered by due process and equity. But it also seems to look forward to new forms of governance, networks of policy and implementation and more ‘agile’ public services,” (Talbot, 2009).

There is evidence of change occurring in public administration in Ireland and Northern Ireland, not least the sustained focus on outcomes rather than outputs, and greater involvement of citizens and service users. CES’s specific contribution to public sector reform is obviously to inculcate the better and more frequent use of evidence alongside techniques to focus attention on implementation, all of which is geared towards achieving better outcomes. As one interviewee put it, “getting that behaviour deeply embedded in large organisations is a mammoth task”. Additionally, several projects and interviews also pointed to CES, including the voices of service users, practitioners and other stakeholders. All of this is consistent with a move towards a new public service approach that is more responsive to citizens and that aims to maximise the creation of public value.

**Intermediation:** CES has used the term ‘intermediary organisation’ to describe itself, and a number of staff interviewees made reference to the term, although one

interviewee described it as “a term that’s helpful to me, although I’m not sure it’s helpful to everybody [because] I don’t think everybody knows what you mean”. The term is much more commonly used in the USA than in Ireland and Northern Ireland. One definition is that:

“Intermediaries are organizations that occupy the space *in between* at least two other parties. Intermediary organizations primarily function *to mediate* or to manage change in both those parties. Intermediary organizations operate independently of these two parties and provide distinct value beyond what the parties alone would be able to develop or to amass by themselves. At the same time, intermediary organizations depend on those parties to perform their essential functions.” (Honig, 2004, emphasis in the original).

The role of an intermediary is therefore different from technical assistance or consultancy, which simply assists an organisation in some aspect of its work. A true intermediary organisation assists two or more other parties to work together in new and more effective ways. One internal CES interviewee explained how the organisation liked to work through a process of “co-design” and “partnership” with organisations that are seeking support. While initial engagement by CES might be simply responding to a tender, CES will then seek to work with the commissioner on the design of what exactly they need and how best to meet that need, which might be quite different from what was tendered for initially. Simply writing down what a client thinks they want done is the wrong approach. Engagement with CES about what outcomes they are trying to achieve “should be a developmental conversation for them”, which ideally should add value beyond what they initially anticipated.

## **4. Practice**

### *CES's work on practice*

CES's work on **practice** has been primarily focused on helping practitioners to use research and evidence to implement better services. The work has involved supporting the use of evidence and evaluation, help with capacity building and professional development, and help with implementation strategies, in order to enhance and improve some aspect of the service practice.

### **The focus of the work**

From the start, the CES developed expertise in the domain of children, young people and families, with a particular focus on prevention and early intervention where a lot of international evidence exists to describe good practice in service delivery. This key emphasis is reflected in the extensive body of materials on the CES website that address aspects of prevention and early intervention.

CES's work in direct support of evidence-informed practice and implementation has been a much stronger feature of the later phase of development. Of the 20 projects carried out and ongoing with this practice focus, virtually all have been undertaken since 2013.

Over the 10 years since it was established, CES has evolved to address evidence-informed practice development in early years services, youth work, child and family services, in health and education, mental health and social care.

### **The commissioners**

The commissioners of work have broadened over the 10-year period to include a range of government departments (e.g. Department of Health, and Department of Education and Skills in Ireland; Department of Education in Northern Ireland), State agencies such as the Teaching Council, HSE, Oberstown Children Detention Campus, community and voluntary sector organisations, and philanthropic organisations (e.g. Big Lottery, Community Foundation).

## Making an independent contribution

A key feature of CES's work in the practice domain, as in other domains, has been the investment by the CES of its own resources in developmental projects capable of contributing to field building; this investment draws on learning and experience of evidence-based implementation of effective practice across multiple sectors.

An example of CES's earliest self-financed work on evidence-based practice was What Works, a process carried out with organisations – using a bespoke tool – to help them reflect on how evidence informed their work was in relation to current research and thinking on what is effective. This was well received as a method of working with organisations to look at relevant evidence and to bring them through an intensive process of reflecting on how that might inform practice. However, CES found that it could not scale it up, as “it was too labour intensive and too long, and would have been too costly”.

## The scale of the work

While some projects have been of short duration (under a year), many projects, especially since 2013, have involved work over a period of years, thus enabling CES to build relationships with commissioners and practitioners around key aspects of evidence-informed service delivery.

### *Examples of CES's work to strengthen practice in human services*

The following sample of practice-focused projects gives an indication of CES's work in the sphere of strengthening practice in human services over the past 10 years. More detailed insights are provided on key projects in the form of case studies:

1. In 2014, the **Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiative (EPPI)** was developed in a partnership between CES and Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, to strengthen the use of evidence by social workers in their work with children and families (see Box 1).
2. The **Access Evidence Project** was initiated by CES in 2015 and is ongoing. Its aim is to provide front-line practitioners with reliable and strong evidence in

support of their work with children, families and young people. Resources have been produced in partnership with youth workers, teachers, GPs, social workers, and psychologists, and have been disseminated widely.

3. In 2015, Big Lottery Fund commissioned the **Reaching Out, Supporting Families (ROSF)** project in Northern Ireland, a seven-year programme of learning and networking with the community and voluntary sector as well as with Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts (see Box 2).
4. In 2017, CES was commissioned by the Department of Health, Ireland to support the **implementation of national clinical guidelines**. CES provided capacity building, implementation training and implementation supports for staff in both the Department of Health, Ireland and the HSE.
5. Since 2016, CES has been working with the **Teaching Council (Ireland)** to bring evidence-based ways of working to teachers and into educational settings.
6. Other practice development projects include:
  - Evaluation training for staff in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and Tusla (2014)
  - Co-design of an implementation guide for the Triple P Parenting Programme (Midlands Area Parenting Partnership, 2013)
  - Connecting Evidence to Outcomes: Practitioner Development Programme, for social workers in Northern Ireland to enhance their use of evidence, leading to better outcomes (Western Health and Social Care Trust, 2014).

### **Box 1. Empowering practitioners and practice initiative (EPPI)**

In 2014, EPPI was developed through a collaboration between CES and Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, in order to enhance practitioners' capacity and confidence in using evidence to deliver consistent and high-quality outcomes for children and families in Ireland. The development of the project was informed by a survey and needs assessment in which over 450 social workers participated; it included 141 participants in 8 regional discussion groups. This highlighted important information, such as topics most relevant for social work, where social workers sourced and used evidence, and the fact that 12 different assessment frameworks were in use across the country. The project consisted of three main strands: a professional

development plan for social workers; an evidence-informed toolkit covering nine key topic areas; and the Evidence-Informed Practitioner (EIP) Programme, which builds social workers' capacities in sourcing and using evidence. The project continues to deliver EIP in partnership with Tusla's Workforce Learning and Development team. While implementation of the project is ongoing, and its impact has not yet been formally evaluated, early signs are positive. Judges in the Irish courts have expressed satisfaction to Tusla on the improved quality of evidence and of court reports presented by some social workers who have participated in the EPPI. Individual feedback from social workers and from Tusla senior management is also positive and the EPPI Toolkit has been integrated into training for the new national approach to social work practice in Ireland entitled Signs of Safety.

### **Box 2. Reaching Out, Supporting Families (ROSF)**

In 2015, Big Lottery commissioned CES to support its grant recipients under the GBP 25 million Reaching Out, Supporting Families (ROSF) project in Northern Ireland. This ongoing seven-year programme of learning and networking involves CES working with 36 grant holders from the community and voluntary sector, as well as statutory bodies such as the HSC Trusts. CES has delivered shared learning events, masterclasses, workshops, handbooks, Logic Models and one-to-one interventions with grant holders. Topics included 'what works in parenting, supporting parents with a learning disability', 'engaging and supporting vulnerable families', data collection, reviewing indicators, and service design. Extensive post-training questionnaire data and qualitative feedback from participants indicated a high level of satisfaction with the events and provided evidence that participants intend to make real changes to their practice. Big Lottery Fund's annual reports have commented favourably on the work.

#### *Impact and public value: CES and practice*

CES's work in the practice domain aligns strongly with its mission to make research evidence useful and accessible to those who make policy, design services, or deliver those services – and the need to strengthen the interconnections among these core dimensions of service provision. Projects involving access to useful evidence for front-line practitioners, knowledge management and dissemination among professionals, and a focus on capacity building for effective implementation, account for a substantial and growing part of the work of CES, in particular since 2013.

## **The focus on effective practice**

Most interviewees were clear that CES's major focus was on improving practice. There was a widely shared view among interviewees that CES's work was robust, of good quality and "an easier way to get at information". A number of interviewees remarked on how CES was very systematic in its work: "they make the links from research to policy to practice quite clear in what it is they do. Practitioners can find it hard to draw from their work to inform policymakers".

In terms of children's services, one external interviewee noted "there was a definite need to take that sort of scientific, peer-reviewed journal quality data and to refine it into useable policy briefs that would be true to the research but that would also be savvy about living in the real world, and I think the work that CES did was very important there."

## **Supportive ways of working; building internal capacity**

Several interviewees discussed the kinds of interactive processes they were involved in with CES which strengthen internal capacity and investment in sustainable development. Interviewees felt that CES was helping community and voluntary organisations to achieve goals initiated by themselves "to see better impact, more effectiveness, better use of resources". Other interviewees made similar remarks about CES helping organisations to discover and learn, and drawing out the knowledge held by practitioners in a way that would be useful and sustainable for themselves.

At the same time, there was evidence from the interviews that some projects did not work out as anticipated, and CES has had to modify the approach it adopted in its early years in order to arrive at the engagement model and way of working with other organisations described above. There was evidence that CES has shifted its approach, having been perhaps too academic and failing to engage with practitioners initially, to now being better at communicating what it does and being seen as an enabler. A public sector interviewee appreciated the way that CES "bring practitioners in", because of the lack of opportunities for practitioners to engage with evidence and research findings.

Also, in relation to working with CES, other interviewees observed, “they brought a drive for evidence. They brought challenge, encouraging us to not just accept”; “it made me challenge myself about how effective [our] practice is”; and “they brought clarity to what it was we were doing [...] The process they took us through helped give it a cohesion.”

“... my staff, for example, who’ve worked very closely with CES on the development of those strategies, I think they probably now have developed skills that they otherwise may not have had. I think CES has been instrumental in the development of those skills for my staff, and obviously those will have a long-lasting effect”. (Public official)

### *Impact and public value for practice: an overview*

The focus on supporting effective practice through evidence, strong implementation and knowledge dissemination has become a core feature of the work of CES in recent years, with the range of areas and commissioners broadening across sectors and public service areas.

The impact and public value of the work of CES over the past 10 years has, according to interviewees and survey respondents, been characterised by some key features of both the content of the work and the approach to working with organisations:

- A clear focus on improving practice
- Robust, quality work
- Making systematic links between research, policy and practice
- Translating quality data into useable policy briefs
- Marrying academic and practitioner perspectives
- Equipping organisations and individuals with key skills for self-managing their own effectiveness
- Collaborative working and building sustainable practice.

In terms of the conceptual lens introduced earlier – about inscribed, embodied and enacted knowledge CES has developed a capacity to deliver on all three fronts:

- Draw from academic writings
- Translate those findings into formats that people can assimilate into their thinking and their individual practice

- Conduct processes with organisations that were learning experiences, which helped bring about a change of organisational procedures and possibly changes to organisational culture.

## **5. Connections, networks, partnerships**

### *CES's work on connections, networks, partnerships*

From an early stage in its development, CES was involved in establishing or supporting networks that bring together communities of professionals with shared interests in aspects of human services. Some of the resulting networks remain in existence and provide ongoing opportunities for networking and learning.

### **The strategic value of networks**

The investment in supporting or building networks represents a CES belief in the importance of enabling communities of practitioners, policy-makers and service providers to engage together in sharing their learning and practice wisdom. The networks are a key mechanism for disseminating research and evidence to support practice, policy development and service design. The networks also provide practical opportunities for these learning communities to explore and construct the linkages across policy development, service design and practice.

### **The focus and scope of CES involvement in networks**

Over its 10 years of work to date, CES has both supported and initiated networks and partnerships in a range of domains. Some networks represent a focus on services for particular groups (e.g. children, young people, parents) whereas others look to strengthen the approaches to policy and service provision across service domains (e.g. implementation, use of evidence and research). A key feature of the work of CES in this space has been the all-island reach of some networks.

### **Knowledge management and communications: the development and dissemination of resources**

An additional form of CES's investment in connections, networks and partnerships around evidence-informed work is the development and dissemination of resources to support evidence-informed policy development, service design and practice across all the themes and areas where CES undertakes work.

CES's resources are a key strategic tool of the work of the organisation. They are the means through which the key learning, as well as messages from research and evidence, are distilled from each project or across several projects. These are disseminated to a wide community of practitioners and policy-makers through various mechanisms and in a range of formats, including research summaries and syntheses, published tools and templates. The dissemination of this body of knowledge has evolved in recent times from primarily written reports to the use of digital media, including blogs, podcasts, and animations. The growing work in the design and development of resources represents a strategic move by the CES towards an approach that strengthens the use of evidence, thus building capacity and supporting implementation across the fields of human services where it is focused.

### *Examples of CES's work: connections, networks and partnerships*

The following examples highlight CES's involvement in networks and partnerships across a range of domains over a period of 10 years since the organisation was established in 2008.

1. **The Global Implementation Initiative (GII)** CES is a founder member of the Global Implementation Initiative (GII), which promotes implementation science internationally and shares learning between different jurisdictions. In related work, CES co-founded the European Implementation Collaborative (EIC) – [www.implementation.eu](http://www.implementation.eu) – which comprises practitioners, policy-makers and researchers throughout Europe and provides an infrastructure for cross-European exchange of practice and research on implementation.
2. In 2010, CES initiated and was instrumental in establishing the **all-island Children's Research Network Ireland and Northern Ireland (CRNINI)**, which aims to build long-term relationships across research, practice and policy so as to promote better understanding of the lives of children and young people.
3. Another all-island network initiated by CES in 2010 is **The Parenting Network**, developed to create a unique space for developing thinking around issues relevant to parents in their parenting role and to children's and young people's well-being; and to emerge with a strategy that would ensure Ireland is a place where parenting

is highly valued and supported. Membership of The Parenting Network Steering Group currently includes agency directors or CEOs, funders and public officials, professional bodies and practitioners engaged in direct work with parents, as well as academics and professional researchers with an interest in parenting; the Parenting Network Steering Group is now hosted by the Katherine Howard Foundation.

4. In 2011, CES established the **Implementation Network of Ireland and Northern Ireland**, which it has maintained and developed since then. The Network brings together senior policy-makers, service providers, managers, practitioners and researchers from all over the island of Ireland to promote learning about implementation, locally and internationally. The Network meets twice a year, and in between these meetings knowledge is shared in several other ways, including within learning communities and in newsletters. This Network is part of CES's wider work on implementation (see Box 3).
5. The **CES Leaders Digest** is an example of recent CES knowledge dissemination resources that combine and make available the work of CES and the experience of practice leaders in several fields. The Leaders Digest is a blog series that draws from research and CES's work in health, education and with children and families. In each of these areas, leaders are invited to share their experience on the following themes:
  - Why focus on leadership?
  - Complexity in public services – roadblock or hidden opportunity?
  - Six ingredients for collaborative, compassionate, inclusive leadership in public services.
6. The *Ten years of learning* report synthesised many studies and covered a broad range of evidence in relation to prevention and early intervention (see Box 4).

### **Box 3. CES's Implementation Initiative**

Implementation science is a significant part of both CES's day-to-day work and long-term strategic planning. CES's work in implementation science has taken multiple forms, based around awareness raising and building capacity and skills. As part of this body of work, CES established the Implementation Network of Ireland and Northern Ireland (discussed above) and

its two learning communities. CES has also made implementation resources available via its website and has collaborated with international organisations. Since 2014, CES has collaborated with Trinity College Dublin to design and deliver a Postgraduate Certificate in Implementation Science. Several of CES's projects have had a strong focus on implementation science, including work on national clinical guidelines, an implementation case study of SUSI, ROSF, the ABC Programme, and the Nurture Programme: Infant Health and Well-being.

#### **Box 4: Example of CES evidence - children and young people's services**

As a detailed example of the kind of useful evidence produced by CES, the organisation published *Ten years of learning: prevention and early intervention in children and young people's services*.<sup>3</sup> The report synthesises many studies and examines an extensive range of evidence. The reference list includes 40 titles, a number of which are in turn reviews of a wider research literature. This documentation of academic and professional knowledge is the foundation for readers to have confidence in the robustness and reliability of CES's conclusions. Additionally, CES also managed to distil the key learning from this research into eight pithy and easily understood messages:

1. Supporting parents pays real dividends in terms of better outcomes for children.
2. Because of the importance of early brain development, a strong focus should be placed on supporting children's development from birth to three years.
3. Initiatives to support children's learning must promote a love of learning and be clear how the initiatives will integrate into the school setting.
4. Supporting key transitions – such as moving from an early years service to primary school – can make a significant difference to a child's life outcomes.
5. Programmes that support social and emotional learning and promote inclusion should be supported by wider school structures and policies.
6. The development of personal skills and aptitudes should be a part of formal and ongoing training for all professionals working with children.
7. Consulting with local communities helps to ensure that prevention and early intervention services and programmes fit with the needs of children, young people and their families.
8. Effective interagency structures are vital to ensuring better services for children, young people and families.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.effectiveservices.org/downloads/PEII\\_10\\_Years\\_of\\_Learning\\_Report.pdf](http://www.effectiveservices.org/downloads/PEII_10_Years_of_Learning_Report.pdf)

### *Impact and public value: CES and networks*

CES's work in building and supporting networks, partnerships and connections represents a systematic approach to embedding evidence and implementation thinking in the service provision. This has been a strong focus of the work of CES since its establishment and has developed and expanded over the organisation's 10-year existence. In more recent years, the implementation networks represent a new and significant development in the CES offering.

A significant aspect of CES's work is that all of the networks it has established continue to be active. The network members constitute a highly specialised community of practitioners and researchers, many of whom play an essential part in delivering human services in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, especially but not exclusively those services directed towards children, young people and families.

### **Working effectively to connect agencies and build collaboration**

One interviewee remarked of CES that "the social network side of the work they do is very effective". It is "like a web, connecting other agencies working in these sectors".

A senior public sector official noted that Ireland has "a very decentralised public sector" despite being centralised as a State. This decentralisation means "it's very hard for new insights and new practices to percolate in a systemic way [...] We sorely lack, in the public sector, a real sense of consistent joined-up thinking and collaborative action", particularly on complex systemic problems. CES was seen as very useful in addressing this lack of collaboration.

One interviewee noted that CES provides methods for cross-agency or departmental cooperation that were particularly helpful when trying to 'join the dots' and implement public policy. Several interviewees also noted the cross-fertilisation benefit they receive from CES linking them to individuals or organisations that can help them in their work.

### **Creating common ground and building cohesion**

An interviewee noted that the communities involved in delivering human services can be very disparate, and they operate from different sets of assumptions and different

frames of reference. In this context CES offers the potential to link up and bridge these communities, not only through its report summaries but also through its face-to-face work.

One external interviewee had a similar view: “if you were to look at the number of government agencies they touch, in some way, there’s a lot. If you look at the non-profit sector that they are working with and communities, their reach is pretty extensive.”

### **Investing in and highlighting the value of networking**

An external interviewee familiar with the work of intermediary organisations in other jurisdictions noted that the work of “creating teams, bringing people together” is often undervalued and underfunded. There can be a focus by funders on “the deliverables” in terms of data and reports, whereas the sustainability of organisational change and the implementation of policy is often achieved at the level of people. “This is so complex, this translational work, and it’s so relationship-based” [...] “it’s hard to find people that can facilitate a meeting and are also really good at data use. And CES has managed to find some”.

### **Reaching highly skilled professionals**

Based on the survey respondents – as well as an analysis of the organisations with which CES has done project work – many of the users of CES’s resources and many of the people who CES interacts with in projects are likely to be experienced professionals, with a range of skills and qualifications in human services. This may be seen as a niche professional audience, but in fact tens of thousands of people are employed in human services across the island of Ireland.

### **Providing high-quality accessible resources**

*“It is probably most around having a trusted source to access resources and knowledge on good practice and evidence”.*

All survey respondents used one or more CES resources, and a majority used the CES ezine, its weekly Knowledge Exchange, and its publications as well as toolkits. Survey respondents valued the quality, practical focus and clear style of CES resources and

publications. While some would have preferred a less academic writing style and shorter material, others noted the value of having the research syntheses made available to them. CES's weekly Knowledge Exchange was singled out as a particularly helpful service that highlights key developments, documents or statements that warrant attention.

Survey respondents and interviewees indicated that CES is quite a unique organisation and probably the only major source of implementation science tools and supports on the island of Ireland.

### *Impact and public value: an overview*

Building networks, partnerships and connections represents a key strategic tool in the CES approach to achieving its goals and objectives. The impact and public value of the work of CES in these areas draws from:

- The high quality of the work and trusted resources
- The capacity to work effectively to connect agencies and build collaboration
- Supporting public agencies and other organisations to create common ground and build cohesion, thus enabling joined-up approaches to implementation
- Reaching experienced and highly skilled professionals.

It seems reasonable to conclude that one benefit of CES's work is the strengthening of networks of practitioners and specialists across human services, including academics and policy-makers, providing them with opportunities for professional development and creating links between people and organisations to the benefit of their practice.

Moreover, it is likely that CES is having some influence on this audience in terms of advancing evidence-based practice and implementation science.

## **6. Policy**

### *CES's Work on Policy*

The goal of CES is to connect policy, practice and research, helping to ensure the implementation of effective services to improve the lives of people across the island of Ireland. So, while **policy** projects involving CES are aimed at informing the shape of policy, much of CES's work on policy has tended to be about ensuring that successful implementation is a core emphasis from the outset.

### **The focus of CES's work since 2008**

As has been the case with its work in the areas of practice, service design, and network building, from its inception CES has had a strong focus on policies relevant to children, youth and family services. Policy work relating to these groups has been diverse, particularly in recent years. The work has encompassed early years strategy, a broader children's strategy, youth policy and youth homelessness, and policies that address disadvantage, childcare, child protection, child sexual exploitation, young carers, children's participation, and fathers' roles in children's lives.

In terms of themes and approaches to policy work in these sectors, prevention and early intervention have been an integrating focus over the life of the organisation, as has the use of evidence to inform policy development. Support for implementation and knowledge management, for accessing data and data analysis, and for capacity building and evaluation, also characterise the work. Several projects have drawn on CES skills in gathering and translating evidence of international good practice to support policy review or new policy and strategic thinking.

While there have been several short projects on policy themes, many projects have been developed over time in partnership with the funder and commissioner.

### **The commissioners**

DCYA has been a key funder and commissioner of CES work in about half of CES's work in the policy space since 2011, as part of a joint funding programme with Atlantic Philanthropies. This funding model, which was in place until 2017, meant that projects

were commissioned on an ongoing basis as part of an annual work programme undertaken for DCYA across various areas of DCYA's remit.

Commissioners also range across several government departments and public service bodies in Ireland (e.g. Department of Education and Skills (DES); Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER); Wexford County Council) and in Northern Ireland (Department for the Economy; Department of Education; Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY); Public Health Agency (PHA)).

### *Examples of CES work: policy development*

The following small sample of policy-focused projects gives a flavour of the range and breadth of CES work in the sphere of policy development over the past 10 years. More detailed insights are provided on key projects in the form of case studies:

1. **Implementation support for Children and Young People's Services Committees (2009–2017).** In 2009, CES was commissioned by DCYA to support the nation-wide implementation of county-level Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs). CES offered operational and strategic support at national and local level for CYPSCs, which are a key DCYA-led mechanism for achieving the outcomes for children and young people identified in the national children's strategy *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. Support took the form of practical outputs, toolkits and templates; in addition, from 2013, CES hosted the national coordinator role for the CPSCYs. That role was integrated into the work of Tusla in 2017.
2. The **Capturing the Learning** project was one of CES's first major projects, and continues to this day on an all-island basis, focused on distilling and disseminating evidence, and learning about prevention and early intervention strategies (see Box 5).
3. From 2011, CES was commissioned by DCYA to review the **implementation of the Youth Homelessness Strategy** and the report entitled *Every Child a Home: a Review of the Implementation of the Youth Homeless Strategy* was published in July 2013. Also in 2012, the CES was commissioned by DCYA's Youth Affairs Unit to bring an evidence focus to development of the **National Quality Standards Framework (NQSf)** as part of youth policy (see Box 6).
4. Supported by funding from the PHA, CES worked with a range of partners to undertake the Northern Ireland **Child Sexual Exploitation Knowledge Transfer Partnership**. CES's contribution included drawing on research to accurately define child sexual exploitation and to develop new professional guidelines.
5. In 2014, CES carried out an implementation review of the **Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI)** service (see Box 7).

6. Other policy development projects included:

- A comprehensive review of childcare legislation in six jurisdictions (DCYA, 2015)
- A review of the international evidence on commissioning human, social and community services (DPER, 2015)
- Exploratory study on children’s budgeting (NICCY, 2014)
- Evaluation of a pilot programme of youth service provision in Northern Ireland (Department for the Economy, 2016).

**Box 5. Capturing the Learning/On the Right Track**

CES’s *Capturing the Learning/On the Right Track* reports represent 10 years of distilling, summarising and synthesising the findings of research to provide a strong evidence base to inform early intervention and prevention policy and practice for children, families and young people. These reports have informed the national policy framework for children and young people in Ireland, i.e. the 2014–2020 whole-of-government policy Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, and the Early Intervention Transformation Programme in Northern Ireland, among other programmes. CES has synthesised the learning from evaluations as well as the collective learning from The Atlantic Philanthropies’ (AP’s) EUR 127 million Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative (PEII). CES reports and briefing papers in relation to this project analysed what worked in terms of promoting positive change across parenting, children’s learning, improving child behaviour, and fostering inclusion, child health and development, organisational learning, leadership, and volunteering. The reports from this project are widely cited by academics and professionals. This work has also informed subsequent philanthropic investments in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

**Box 6. Supporting youth policy**

Over a period of seven years, CES was centrally involved in the significant progress made in many areas of youth policy. In 2010, CES was engaged to support the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (which became the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in 2011) in developing a youth policy framework that would identify core policy objectives and outcomes, and establish the best ways to oversee, support, monitor, evaluate and

deliver services. CES promoted evidence-informed approaches to youth services; this included organising a roadshow, charting youth work research, and organising a major symposium and a roundtable event. CES subsequently supported the Irish Presidency of the EU Council of Youth Ministers. CES also assisted DCYA with designing the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). CES was a member of the project team (2014–2015) that produced the first ever Irish National Youth Strategy 2015–2020; CES review of evidence informed the development of the strategy. CES supported the cross-sectoral task group overseeing the strategy drafting process and also supported an extensive process of consultation with young people and other stakeholders. In addition, CES has worked on youth justice and has supported DCYA with policy implementation. A major achievement was having the first ever National Youth Strategy underpinned by CES activity in terms of research and report writing.

### **Box 7. Implementation review of SUSI**

The CES report documenting the learning from the implementation of Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) made a significant contribution to the running of the student grants service; in addition, learning from the report was shared and applied more widely across the Civil Service by the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and by the Reform and Delivery Office in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER). The report supported the work of partners including DES, the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb) and SUSI itself, and was republished as a learning tool by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as part of its Observatory on Public Sector Innovation website,<sup>4</sup> which indicates the quality of the report and gives recognition to the need to focus on – and learn from – significant examples of public service innovation and reform. A wide range of anecdotal evidence – including from interviews for this review – confirm that CES’s report on SUSI was well received and was seen as making a useful contribution to the more general issue of how public bodies should learn from challenging implementation experiences.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/governance/observatory-public-sector-innovation/innovations/page/susistudentuniversalsupportireland.htm#tab\\_results](https://www.oecd.org/governance/observatory-public-sector-innovation/innovations/page/susistudentuniversalsupportireland.htm#tab_results)

### *Impact and public value: CES and policy*

As noted earlier, the goal of CES is to connect policy, practice and research, helping to ensure the implementation of effective services to improve the lives of people across the island of Ireland. Work in the policy space since 2008, and more particularly since 2011/2012, has been strongly focused on the core forms of support that characterise the CES offering towards strengthening the effectiveness of human services in general, and public services in particular. These encompass support for accessing useful evidence to underpin policy development, implementing policy and for capacity building and knowledge management/knowledge transfer. Feedback from interviewees and those surveyed highlight the aspects of the work that have represented value and have delivered impact to those who use the services of CES.

### **Joining policy and practice – a focus on implementation**

CES's work on policy is seen as affecting both ends of the continuum, from policy through to implementation. A number of interviewees – including senior civil servants and former public officials – commented on the gap that exists between policy and practice. According to one interviewee, "There can be a very unusual divide in the public sector, where policy formulation and implementation are two separate conversations. Which is what you don't find in the private sector". However, this gap between evidence, implementation and policy was thought to have narrowed more recently.

In terms of the CES contribution, one external interviewee observed of CES that "what they are navigating is turning policy into practice. In that role, they are working with policy-makers, to maybe be able to try and influence sensible policy, meaningful or implementable policy. And then they're working with implementers, at the operational end, to better implement policy. And so they're able to influence on both ends, and participate on both ends."

A senior public official viewed CES as prompting and promoting a certain way of working. An external interviewee described the ideal process as not just working to

support policy-makers, but a “journey that we try to take people on”. Rather than “polishing up a particular policy document [...] it’s about helping policy-makers to think through the challenges and opportunities of implementation as well”. A number of interviewees agreed with the sentiment that “you need to think about implementation from the very beginning or from a very early stage anyway”.

One interviewee remarked on the risks associated with CES’s focus on implementation rather than on seeking to influence the policy itself, other than from the point of view of giving it a greater focus on implementation: “if you’re a skills-based implementation organisation ... and that’s primarily what you sell. [...] You’re then slightly at the mercy of what policies are developed. [...] you might find yourself being asked to deliver something that you philosophically weren’t in agreement with, and all the kind of compromises that come with that. And I think that’s a very typical problem that NGOs face”.

### **Providing trustworthy, objective analysis and an evidence base**

The need for the kind of objective evidence provided by CES was valued by interviewees as meeting a key need in policy development. A public official argued that “public servants are always looking for high-quality, objective work. Most public servants try to base their decisions on evidence”. However, good sources of objective analysis are relatively rare because everyone “has an agenda”. CES’s work has been useful in meeting the need for objective analysis.

One senior official spoke of how CES’s work “anchored our policy development process in a good methodology and at least an interest in the evidence. Even if the evidence was still only emerging, still we were bringing it to bear on the next stage of policy development”. The benefit of CES’s work was in “it’s being attuned to making research policy-relevant and talking in a language that the policy world can accommodate. Some really good academics can do that but [...] having someone whose job that is can be very useful. [...] if you’re an academic you’ll tend to be an advocate for your own research,

which CES can synthesise. And actually, a lot of the benefit is in the synthesis that they bring to it.”

### **Enabling practice to shape policy**

The policy-research-practice relationship is iterative, rather than linear or one-directional. The interviewees touched on a number of examples of CES’s impact in making the link from practice back to policy. For example, while some public servants may draft a policy and consult on it, CES’s ‘15 days’ Toolkit – a resource developed within the GOAL Programme to support practitioners in collaborative problem-solving in public services – “emphasises getting out to the frontline as part of your fifteen days. And listen to frontline practitioners and take that back. It’s an extremely intensive process.” This process helps strengthen the connection between policy formulation and implementing things in practice.

### **A strategic focus on reflection and learning**

Embedding learning and reflection as an integral part of support for the policy implementation process is a core value in the work of CES. CES’s report on the learning from the introduction of SUSI was seen as “modelling a process [of how] all agencies, all government departments should review their policy”. It was seen by this external interviewee as demonstrating “true self-evaluation and critical external evaluation”.

### **Supporting whole-of-government approaches**

In Northern Ireland, one external interviewee spoke about the benefit of CES in connecting different government departments and making them aware of links between policies that might be developing in parallel. The Goal Programme for Public Service Reform was also praised by a number of external interviewees.

Another benefit of CES’s work was that “if I use CES within the Department here, they have an understanding of how government works. They may even have an understanding of how this department works. They can come in and they can do it in a more culturally-attuned kind of way. [...] CES has an interest in this department doing

well because they've worked with us and will hope to work with us in future. It's a much more medium- to long-term type of relationship rather than a transactional one."

### *CES impact and public value: an overview*

The rich discussion that was prompted by questions of CES's influence on policy, combined with the numerous specific examples, provide grounds for believing that CES has contributed to the advancement of evidence-informed policy and practice, and that in particular it has helped to bring a sharper focus to implementation at all stages of the policy implementation cycle, not least in the early stages of policy implementation.

## **7. Service design**

### *CES's work on service design*

**Support for the design** or redesign of services has been a central strand of CES work, particularly since 2012, with about 20 large and smaller projects undertaken in Ireland and Northern Ireland to date. In and of its nature, this work is particularly suited to using evidence to guide decisions about the shape of new or reoriented services, drawing on implementation expertise, and building implementation strategies around agreed outcomes, captured in systematic logic modelling.

### **The focus of the work since 2008**

Work with organisations and agencies on service design became a key part of CES's work from 2012 onwards. Unlike work in the policy space, or in the area of network building, a significant amount of service redesign work has taken place with community and voluntary organisations at local and national level, as well as local service provision by State agencies and support for the design of national programmes.

The focus of the work has been wide and diverse, involving work with services for population groups (e.g. children, parents, older people, members of the Traveller community), national programmes for infant health and well-being, impact of alcohol, and programmes with a particular focus including prevention and early intervention, learning disability, disadvantage, dementia.

### **Themes and approaches**

The themes and approaches that characterise CES work in the service design space mirror the organisation's mission and goals. The work draws on making evidence accessible to guide service design, building organisational capacity in order to identify desired outcomes, and supporting implementation and evaluation. Offering tools and resources such as logic modelling has been a central feature of service redesign work.

### **The commissioners**

Service design work has been provided for a wide range of Community and Voluntary Sector organisations in Ireland and Northern Ireland, including the Katherine Howard

Foundation, Barnardos, St. John of God Services, Daughters of Charity, Dóchas Family Centre, Parents Plus, and Mencap. In Ireland, government departments and agencies that have commissioned work from CES include DCYA, the former Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, and the HSE; in Northern Ireland, they include the Department of Health, the Health and Social Care Board, and the Big Lottery Fund.

### *Examples of CES work: service design*

The following examples of service design projects give an indication of CES's work in this area, mainly since 2012. More detailed insights are provided on key projects in the form of case studies:

1. In 2009, CES was commissioned by the DCRGA to conduct an international literature review and Logic Model in support of a newly designed Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP). In 2012, CES was commissioned by the reconfigured Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to conduct a **mid-term review of the LCDP** against the Programme's outcomes framework.
2. **The Early Intervention Transformation Programme (Northern Ireland)** was a cross-government project which ran from 2014 to 2017, supporting the design and implementation of services for children and families across Northern Ireland (see Box 8).
3. In 2013, CES was commissioned by the **Big Lottery Fund in Northern Ireland** to engage in a five-year programme of technical and learning support, through data analysis and workshops for 31 Big Lottery grant holders that address alcohol misuse or addiction.
4. In 2015, **The Katharine Howard Foundation (KHF)** commissioned CES to provide technical assistance to both the foundation and the HSE with the implementation of the HSE Nurture Programme, which supports the strategic reform of universal health and well-being services for infants and their families.
5. Other service design projects include:
  - Support for building an early intervention community to improve outcomes for children (Colin Neighbourhood Partnership (Northern Ireland) 2011)
  - Programme management and implementation support for the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme, for children and families in 13 disadvantaged areas (DCYA, 2013)

- Comprehensive tools and implementation planning support for delivery of the Dementia Learning and Development Framework (Public Health Agency Northern Ireland, 2014)
- Review of NI Parenting Programmes (Health and Social Care Board, Public Health Agency Northern Ireland, 2014)

### **Box 8. Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP)**

CES influenced the design and implementation of services for children and families across Northern Ireland, building these services' capacity to develop a prevention and early intervention approach within mainstream services. CES's role included consultations with midwives, health visitors and preschool providers to understand the needs of families and children, supporting the development of the *Operational Guidance* manual, informing services of evidence of what works to improve outcomes, and exploring evidence-based parenting programmes. This project resulted in a stronger focus on outcomes and a greater incidence of collaboration and learning, with hundreds of attendees at CES learning events in the period 2014–2017. Evidence suggests that CES's work influenced the design and delivery of services.

## *Impact and public value: CES and service design*

Work with organisations on designing evidence-informed services that achieve sustainable outcomes for citizens is central to the mission of CES and draws on its core capacities in terms of use of evidence, a service design and outcomes focus, and effective implementation. The feedback from interviewees and survey participants highlighted the specific ways in which the work of CES has impact and value in this domain, and some of the challenges that have been met.

### **Embedding implementation thinking in service design**

A recurring theme in interviews was CES's drive to use evidence and implementation techniques to improve the quality of public services in order to achieve better outcomes for people in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Survey respondents also strongly associated CES with work on implementation of policy (43%), programmes/service design (53%), and implementation of change (40%), and cited implementation work and the Implementation Network as having had a particularly beneficial impact.

An external interviewee, recalling the establishment of CES, mentioned "what we all called at the time the implementation deficit. I don't know if we really understood what it meant, but we were definitely calling it that." There was a perception "that unless we had an agency to help with implementation, the statutory services would never really be able to change what they were doing. There'd never be real change unless there was a focus on implementation, because it was the implementation that was letting us down all the time. [...] we had so many policies. So many plans. And we had very little clarity around what was needed to implement them."

### **Helping to change the language and discourse**

An external interviewee noted hostility at the outset when these ideas were introduced into the voluntary sector, despite many years spent talking about impact. Then language around outcomes and evidence became the focus, and "we're all at that now. And that's not fazing anybody now." CES is perceived to have fitted into and contributed to these developments.

## **Recognition for complexity, the investment that effective implementation needs**

A number of interviewees specified ways in which they felt CES had made a contribution to service design around implementation and planning to achieve outcomes. An external observer felt that they had gained “traction” in getting people “to understand that implementation takes time”. This has led to more implementation plans that allow for policies to be well operationalised, and to be sustainable. “Those are things that take two to four years and, you know, policymakers and funders like those things to take more like twelve to eighteen months”.

## **Offering useful context-relevant tools, techniques and skills**

Equipping staff to use implementation tools such as logic modelling has been a hallmark of the CES offering from the early years of its work. An observer believed “some of their offering is pretty universally lauded as helpful. Where they help organisations to get onto a single page logic model of what it is they are about. That is generally regarded by the organisations that I know of as really helpful, in terms of just clarity of direction”.

Another aspect of CES’s work, according to an insider, was that there is now a greater understanding that the kind of work it engages in involves complexity. In this context, there is more widespread recognition of the requirement for people to have skills and to enable people to use those skills.

Another interviewee felt CES “have a role around how to make evidence-based practice work in a very specific context”. This work involves moving from broad, sought-after outcomes to “an actual programme of work that will deliver on those outcomes”.

## **The value and challenges of the intermediary role in implementation**

A senior public official expressed the view that, in Ireland, central government was good at developing policy and legal frameworks, and working the political system, but it was not so effective at implementation. By contrast, local government was, they said, strong on implementation and had a core competence in doing, but it was less effective at

policy evaluation. The ideal is to have the “best of both worlds”, and “CES have a great chance to be the glue in the middle.”

Again, the theme of CES as a linking organisation was identified. On the one hand, CES could speak to government partners in their language of outcomes. But it also kept a “connection with some of the range of both voluntary and community organisations but also statutory services delivering on the ground”. By doing both, CES understood more of the nuances. CES was praised by one senior official for not giving in to repeated demands for over-simplified analysis, but instead sticking to its more nuanced understanding that proposals needed to be tailored to specific communities. One public official felt that collaboration with CES “has allowed us to do things we couldn’t have done ourselves because they don’t have the same boundaries.”

Among the downsides of CES’s way of working on service design and implementation were that this kind of work often goes unnoticed and does not give the organisation any kudos. Interviewees also suggested that CES had learned some lessons on how best to work with other organisations. Moreover, this positioning of CES “left a lot of other people off the hook”, as CES could be blamed if a project did not advance.

According to interviewees, some projects may have been soured by a perception that CES staff presented themselves as experts and did not acknowledge other forms of knowledge. However, interviewees provided many other examples of projects where CES worked closely with practitioners and brought their “practice wisdom” to the forefront. Some were aware of negative experiences where CES staff presented themselves as “implementation science experts” and were accused of arrogance.

### *CES impact and value: An overview*

The impact and public value of the work of CES over the past 10 years in the service design domain has, according to interviewees and survey respondents, resided in the added value that CES has brought by:

- Helping to embed a focus on effective implementation
- Building acceptance of systematic implementation in the change discourse

- Tailoring implementation to the context of the work and the needs of communities
- Offering a detached, independent intermediary role.

There is ample evidence that CES has built up expertise on logic modelling and has developed tools and techniques that enable it to work with organisations to improve their focus on achieving outcomes. Interviewees gave detailed examples of where CES had delivered tangible added value in areas as diverse as bringing organisations through co-design and planning processes, so that they really understand what they were trying to do; increased their awareness of how long implementation takes; and raised their awareness of how local context affects implementation. It shifted focus/gave greater focus to the skills people need in order to implement policies, and to transcend the boundaries that might have constrained what an organisation could do or would have envisaged doing if left to its own devices.

There may be communication barriers to CES's work in advancing the concept of implementation science, which is not a widely used term. However, the evidence would suggest that CES has had significant influence in advancing the use of specific techniques, such as logic modelling, as well as the broader implementation agenda.

## **8. Systemic change**

### *CES's work on systemic change*

**Systemic change** projects focus on the broad theme of public service reform and the kinds of skills and competences needed in order to successfully modernise and continually improve the delivery of public services. Working on projects related to systemic change emerged in the second half of CES's 10-year existence, particularly from 2015 onwards. To an extent, this is only a matter of scale, as many of CES's other projects, such as on policy or service design, are equally oriented towards achieving change in how policy-makers and service providers work. However, the more recent projects are more self-consciously oriented towards the challenges of achieving systemic change and public sector reform.

In order to deepen its understanding of the nature of systemic change, and, in particular, the concept of whole-of-government working, in 2014 CES undertook a review of international models of whole-of-government working, with a particular focus on policy-making on an all-government basis and the potential of implementation science to strengthen the development of policy that needs to be developed on a whole-of-government basis. In addition to a written report, this work led to a roundtable event for senior public servants in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

### *Examples of CES work on systemic change*

Two large-scale multi-annual projects represent CES's main involvement in systemic change work.

#### **1. Setting up the Strategic Portfolio and Programme Management Office (SPPMO)**

In 2015, CES began work with the HSE Mental Health Division (MHD); this involved co-establishing a Strategic Portfolio and Programme Management Office (SPPMO) as a framework and structure to support implementation of the 2006 national mental health strategy, A Vision for Change. Two other projects were linked to this: co-establishment

of a Service Improvement Lead Group with the MHD, and drafting a report on the MHD's 'journey' from reform and policy to design and implementation, thus providing the MHD with the rationale for the development of the service improvement programme and how that led to the establishment of the formal service improvement function (see Box 9).

### **Box 9. Establishing a Mental Health Programme Office**

The Strategic Portfolio Programme Management Office (SPPMO) was established in 2015 as a collaborative initiative of CES and HSE Mental Health Division (HSE-MHD). The SPPMO provided a structured, sustainable framework to support transformative organisational change in the MHD and mental health services. The nature of the changes achieved included attitudinal shifts and resultant changes in practice, which should ultimately benefit service users, their families and the staff who work on developing and delivering services. To date, seven projects have been successfully completed and the remainder are in various stages of/are at various stages in the project management cycle. CES has supported the establishment of service improvement projects in all 29 current projects in the HSE-MHD's portfolio. As part of the collaborative project, CES has developed, designed and customised structures and methods for use in mental health services, including project tools and resource templates. The new SPPMO led out on both the development and the design of the necessary structures and processes to support a broad suite of service improvement projects. This governance approach developed by the SPPMO has been endorsed by the national MHD management team as the preferred way of working to drive a system-wide programme of change. Evidence of impact includes the adoption and mainstreaming of programme/project management methods, as well as other systematic approaches to organising and prioritising work that have been adopted.

## **2. The Goal Programme for Public Service Reform<sup>5</sup>**

Since 2015, CES has been engaged in the large, multifaceted Goal Programme for Public Service Reform, funded by a legacy grant from Atlantic Philanthropies (AP). The overall architecture of the programme was an AP/CES initiative, informed by

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<sup>5</sup> The Goal Programme was subject to a separate review by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA), running concurrently with this review. As a result, it was not a major focus of this review, despite accounting for a significant proportion of CES's current work.

discussions with senior civil servants in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Goal Programme supports systemic change in public services, in order to improve outcomes for people using public services. Seven government departments from Ireland and Northern Ireland are participating, and CES has been engaged in nine distinct projects. Each project is separate, but there is cumulative benefit from shared learning between departments in both jurisdictions as a result of participating in the overall programme (see Box 10).

The expected **short-term** outcomes include new ways of working in public services and the Civil Service. These include joined-up policy and models of service; strengthened capacities for public servants in using evidence and effective implementation of policies; and better use of data and evaluation across the system.

In the **longer term**, the programme aims to achieve improved outcomes for people using services, better use of evidence in policy and joined-up service delivery. Its ambition is that Ireland and Northern Ireland will be recognised as leaders in implementing effective, evidence informed, outcomes-focused policies and services.

### **What is involved?**

Government departments and CES selected nine large-scale sectoral reform projects in Ireland and Northern Ireland in areas such as leadership development, using data, and youth mental health. The **nine exemplar projects** are testing new ways of working in the public service and the Civil Service. CES will help government departments to:

- **Connect** policy domains – promoting **collaboration** across sectors and disciplines
- Support **leadership development**
- **Build skills** and capacities
- Intervene at **'whole' system** level – both vertical and horizontal
- Model and **trial new ways of working**
- Capture and **disseminate the learning** from the exemplar projects to support systemic change.

## What is CES's role?

- Advice and support for **outcomes-focused**, evidence-informed policy/programme design
- Support with **using evidence** in policy development and implementation
- Building skills and capacities in **implementation, evaluation and innovation**
- Building **leadership skills** for systemic and sustainable change in public services
- Designing and supporting **stakeholder connections and collaborations**
- Facilitating the **sharing of learning** from Goal Programme projects across government departments.

### *Goal Programme exemplar projects*

| Department   | Project name   |
|--|--|
| Department of Health (Ireland)                     | 1. Developing <b>evidence and knowledge management</b> , as part of the Department of Health's change programme, entitled Working Better Together                                |
| Department of Health (Ireland)                     | 2. <b>Youth mental health</b> and well-being <b>pathfinder project</b> – working differently across government to enhance mental health and well-being supports for young people |
| Department of Education and Skills (Ireland)       | 3. Building <b>collaborative working</b> practices in the Department of Education and Skills   |
| Department of Education and Skills (Ireland)       | 4. Enhancing the <b>effective use of data</b> to inform policy development and implementation  |
| Department of Children and Youth Affairs (Ireland) | 5. Technical and capacity building support on the <b>reform</b> programme for <b>Youth Funding programmes</b>  |
| Department of Children and Youth Affairs (Ireland) | 6. <b>Professional development programme</b> for Civil Service staff in <b>understanding evaluation</b>  |
| Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)              | 7. <b>Strategic advice</b> on the outcomes-focused Programme for Government and the <b>NICS Grade 3 Leadership Programme</b>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Department of Education (Northern Ireland) | 8. Promoting a collaborative approach to the development and implementation of the <b>Children and Young People Strategies</b> |
| Department of Finance (Northern Ireland)   | 9. Supporting the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the NICS with mechanisms to <b>embed innovation and reform</b> |

### *Impact and public value: CES and systemic change*

Although work on public services reform, with its systemic change orientation, is a relatively new focus for CES, it draws in a coherent way on all the CES work of earlier years in the domains of evidence-informed policy, service design and practice, whole-of-government and interagency working, networking and partnerships, outcomes-focused strategic planning and, in particular, implementation. Systemic change work aims to bring these together in the form of integrated support for public services reform.

### **A modernising agency with an independent focus**

One external interviewee noted that more traditional public organisations were a challenge, but also an opportunity, for CES. There is “a problem with some of the bigger, monolithic public services. It’s not too hard to think where we want to be, but how we get there from here is a very big problem” because of their “old-fashioned, hierarchical, bureaucratic structures”. CES was frequently seen by interviewees as a modernising agent within public administration. One public official saw CES’s unique selling point as that “It kind of sits above service delivery organisations. [...] it has sort of a vantage point where it can look objectively at the entire system of how things are performing”.

### **Supporting cultural change**

The theme of working out how to change long-standing work practices and cultures came up repeatedly in the interviews. For one external interviewee, “I spend most of my time working in incredibly taxed, compliance-driven public systems that have to make consequential decisions on a regular basis for children and families and, probably, aren’t necessarily going to jump at the chance to start, to maybe up take research evidence in

the form that it's often shared with them". In this context, "is it about resistance or is it really about readiness? And whose job is it to create readiness, and to create capacity? [...] I think we do lack sustainability of a lot of things, you try and push into systems, and it's because you're layering this on top of incredibly, you know, complicated systems that are very compliance-driven and regulated".

One interviewee saw the cultural change in public services in favour of evidence as "really aided by CES in the Irish context". One public official, speaking about current changes to public services in Ireland, stated: "I think we're on the cusp of something big here. In terms of that particular model, ways of working, the mindset of the public sector, as it would have been since the foundation of the State, is definitely shifting. [...] we are definitely challenging worldviews".

### **Building systemic cross-agency approaches**

Another public official spoke about CES's contribution to their service improvement: "one of the things the project has promoted is investment in the discovery phase of the improvement – where you're actually saying, are we clear what the problem is? Are we clear what the endgame would look like? And can it be done? And how can it be done?" As a result, "we have a whole methodological approach now to improvement. We have a service improvement function, completely working to a standardised method, which is research based or evidence based."

### **Working in partnership: co-design and co-production as a CES value**

A barrier to systemic change, identified by one interviewee, was that "there's still resistance to specialists". Another external interviewee concurred that there is "resistance" in public bodies "to be shown or taught how to do anything. Or to change", not least in a context where there has already been a lot of change. Addressing this resistance was seen as part of the challenge and complexity of bringing about systemic change.

Part of the solution, according to one interviewee, is working out just what the services need. The most effective strategies in "supporting the use of evidence in both policy and practice settings" are those that have moved away from a "push model, trying to push

out evidence” through dissemination of findings and have used “more of an exchange model” [...] “I think now, we have a greater emphasis on relevance and on relationships and capacity. And those are incredibly different things to focus on. So I think we’re all still figuring out how to do this well. And I think we’re all still trying to figure out what is evidence to different parties involved in this work.” CES “has done a nice job in embracing [...] co-design and co-production work, really authentic stakeholder engagement processes”.

Based on the interviews, as well as on the observation that much of CES’s work is focused on outcomes, not merely counting outputs or other short-term indicators, seeing CES as part of ‘new public management’ or as an agent of State ‘austerity’, are unsupported characterisations. An important difference is the way that CES seeks to work with people and organisations so that they define the outcomes they are seeking and devise appropriate ways to measure progress towards those outcomes. While this did not always occur in all of CES’s projects, especially in some early work, this enabling practice is central to how CES contributes to a more participatory form of public services.

### **Adopting flexible ways of supporting organisational and system change**

One external interviewee commented favourably on the mechanisms that CES uses to engage other organisations as “very precise”. CES’s Strategic Plan 2018–2021 describes them as embedding, hosting, consultancy, consortium and secondment, and they represent a spectrum of options, from fairly conventional external consultancy or advice through to CES staff essentially joining an organisation for a period of time to oversee the implementation of a project. Another external interviewee commented that “the idea of seconding people across, in and out of the system. I think that’s a very valuable way of communicating what it is you bring to the table. [...] It’s one of the most powerful ways of just creating a bit of a footprint and a bit of traction with the system”.

As an example of this, several CES interviewees pointed to the example of the work CES has done with the HSE Mental Health Division. One interviewee felt that the project has been “fundamentally changing” how the Division works together “as a

collaborative group and to focus on delivering improvements". Moreover, "their understanding of the difference between business as usual and strategic change has been evidenced. [...] their governance structures have changed. The way they speak changes. Their delivery rates have improved, and so their performance as a change group has improved." Creating sustainable change within organisations "is really an important motivator for us".

### **System change as incremental change**

In relation to the big picture of systemic change, a CES interviewee noted that "the business of sustainable change is a life's work. [...] you set a big strategic direction and you move towards it in small steps." This sense of how to incrementally achieve real and sustainable change was seen as "one of the things that differentiates us from more of the kind of traditional consultancy firms". CES "might be in an organisation's life for three years, five years. And we'll make some achievements [...] but in the scale of the lifetime of that organisation it's a small time."

### *CES impact and public value: an overview*

CES is unambiguously part of a modernising wave and little or nothing that CES has done has reinforced the traditional hierarchical and political forms of public administration. Some of what CES does – such as quantifying and measuring what service providers do – can be associated with the new public management trend. However, this is largely superficial, because CES is not associated with the marketisation of services, as much of its work is in the area of improving State-run and/or publicly funded services rather than creating market mechanisms, such as competition among providers. It is significant that CES works at the level of the individual service and gets involved in the nuts and bolts of how that service contributes to outcomes for the people using the service. Most of the evidence points towards CES as a champion for what is termed 'new public service'. CES's more recent work on stakeholder engagement and ensuring that the voice of service beneficiaries is heard is in line with the ideal of collaborative processes and dialogue about what outcomes are

being sought. CES's work is also more clearly responsive to people's needs and is based on coalition building among stakeholders and distributed forms of leadership.

## 9. How CES adds value

### *Public value as an integrating logic for the work of CES*

CES can be clearly identified with the push towards more efficient and effective public services, so that they deliver a greater return to the public in terms of genuinely improved services with better outcomes for people using them, not just value for money. Secondly, CES aims to achieve both immediate and long-term outcomes, in terms of changes to individuals and changes to organisations or systems, such as groups of agencies involved in delivering certain public services (including services for children and young people). This is particularly the case in Northern Ireland, where government has shifted towards outcomes-based accountability rather than the traditional emphasis on money spent, or the number of times service users accessed a service. Thirdly, much of the value of CES's work consists of building system capacity: strengthening the ways that organisations and professionals go about their work, based on international evidence of what works, in order to improve the overall functioning and effectiveness of public service delivery. As such, in order to describe the value and impact of CES's work, much of this review's analysis is based on understanding where and when CES has been involved in trying to improve the capacity of public services delivery organisations, rather than directly working with those organisations' end users (the public). This poses a challenge in terms of estimating the monetary value of CES's work. But as the analysis shows, it is possible to demonstrate the value of CES's work in terms of how it is likely to lead to lasting improvements in the delivery of public services.

On the whole, interviewees gave positive examples of CES's monetary or financial value, as well as its delivery of value for money; in addition, they gave many examples of non-monetary or societal added value that CES provides. Some specific examples of CES's unique selling points were its ethos and values, the long-term relationships it builds with organisations, its flexibility and responsiveness to organisations' needs, the resilience provided by its philanthropic core support, its international links, the North-South dimension of its work, the quality of its leadership, staff and recruitment processes. Part of CES's uniqueness was perceived to be the fact that it draws its

funding from different sources; and part of its uniqueness related to the organisation's mission around continuously supporting the improvement of public services to better serve citizens. At the same time, there was realism among internal and external interviewees that the work of CES could, of course, be replaced by one or more organisations, but at this point in time it was the only not-for-profit organisation doing the kind of work that it does. As such, CES "has been an important flagship", in both jurisdictions, "around effectiveness, being evidence informed, more effective implementation, prevention and early intervention".

### *Thematic approaches to CES's value and impact*

In the course of the review, evidence was found to support the view that CES's work fits in well with the Barber review's public value framework, especially its fourth pillar around developing system capacity, which Barber identifies as the least developed among public services generally. CES can be seen as contributing to all six elements under this pillar: Capacity to innovate and learn from innovation; Capacity to plan and deliver; Capacity to engage with the delivery chain; Capacity to work across organisational boundaries; Capacity of the workforce, and Capacity to review performance data and evaluate impact.

The many projects CES has been involved in have provided examples of key thematic ways in which it adds value, and the interviewees and surveys corroborated these points. These can be summarised as follows:

- The application of social science to policy formulation and service delivery
- Agility and flexibility
- CES's human capital
- The all-island dimension
- International links
- Relationship building
- Public service ethos
- The CES as an independent, critical friend
- A learning organisation.

## **The application of social science to policy formulation and service**

**delivery:** This represents CES's unique selling point and part of the motivation for its creation as an organisation. CES seeks out evidence about what works in certain areas of public services, drawing on academic research and international best practice. It also seeks out evidence about what is the best approach to implementing what works in the specific contexts in which services have to be delivered in Ireland and Northern Ireland. While the application of social science to public services can sometimes be straightforward and similar to the work done by some civil servants, public agencies or voluntary organisations, at other times the specialist nature of CES's work can create barriers to understanding. For this reason, six key concepts are described in the next subsection, which the reviewers found helpful in explaining CES's work more precisely and illustrating its value.

**Agility and flexibility:** Various interviewees expressed the view that CES offered flexibility and responsiveness to the organisations it worked with. CES's long-term relationship and engagement with organisations was felt to better equip CES staff to uncover and respond to that organisation's needs, by comparison with more conventional consultancy or technical support. An example of flexibility included the fact that CES was much more open to changing what was negotiated upfront as the nature of the work evolved. In terms of agility, this was understood by one CES interviewee as the ability to "fail quick and then start again. Learn by it". Examples were given of projects that had restarted a number of times, as CES was working out how to achieve a given objective. This persistence was also seen as a virtue, given that there can be a lack of good examples of successful change initiatives and an underestimation of how difficult it can be to achieve change. Another example was the view that CES could "rapidly mobilise an assessment" of a potential project and quickly work out "how our skills might be shaped to contribute to it".

**CES's human capital:** CES has a wide range of internal diversity in its staff complement, in terms of having people who are stronger on policy and others who are stronger on practice, which allows them to mirror discussions in the wider world about how to marry the two in terms of implementing policy in practice. A number of external

interviewees remarked favourably on the skill sets, qualifications and professionalism of the people CES has recruited, as well as their commitment to service provision. The profile of staff is different from that of general consultants, as many of them “are people who are specialists, with knowledge in their field.” Several interviewees commented on CES’s ability to recruit and retain its complement of highly qualified and motivated staff. Several interviewees found that CES staff worked well with the teams in their own organisations and built up “very good bottom-up knowledge, as opposed to just top-down or desk work”. This gave them more credibility with these teams than other consultants would have had. Interviewees appreciated the combination of their own employees’ skills and knowledge with the different skills and perspectives that CES staff brought to a piece of work. One public official felt that this kind of combination “gave us a unique way of bringing in improved implementation”.

**The all-island dimension:** CES has always operated in both Ireland and Northern Ireland, which was a requirement of The Atlantic Philanthropies. The social policy and human services contexts can be different in the two jurisdictions. Ireland and Northern Ireland face some similar social policy problems, such as the growing demand for services from an ageing population, as well as relatively high levels of child poverty. Operating in both jurisdictions is a distinctive feature of CES, which has brought challenges as well as added value to the organisation’s work. According to the Central Statistics Office, the combined population of the island of Ireland is 6.6 million people, of whom 4.76 million live in Ireland; according to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 1.86 million people live in Northern Ireland. CES recognised that there were economies of scale and that the whole island was still quite a small market for the kind of services CES provides. This sense of scale extended to the risk of insularity among policy-makers and service providers in either jurisdiction. Several senior public officials from both jurisdictions who were interviewed commented on the useful lessons to be learned from North-South comparison and an injection of external thinking about what is possible in a similar context, with similar constraints. Interviewees felt that it gave CES credibility among officials in both jurisdictions to have the ability and track record of working across two jurisdictions. Some felt that this

credibility would be further enhanced if CES worked in other parts of the UK or mainland Europe.

**International links:** While CES's focus on evidence means that it is obviously drawing on international academic and professional research into policy and practice, the CES interviewees also perceived a benefit in seeing CES "as part of a coalition of broadly similar-minded organisations on a global basis". An external interviewee noted CES's influence in bringing the Global Implementation Conference to Dublin in 2015, the first time it was held in Europe. That also brought together a lot of international experts in this field. The interviewee also confirmed CES's "critical" role in helping to establish the European Implementation Collaborative. One view, from someone external to CES who was familiar with the global scene, was that "there are not more than eight to ten intermediaries that fit this bill, of being able to do the range of work that CES does". Various internal interviews confirmed that CES had links with a number of these organisations and had exchanged learning and ideas with them.

**Relationship building:** Many interviewees distinguished CES from typical consultancy firms by reference to the longer time frame during which CES would engage with their organisations, and the qualitatively different relationships that would develop; for example, "I'd see them very much as partners, even though it's a contract on foot of a tender". A key feature of this was CES's desire to engage in collaboration towards achieving a joint output and maintaining an ongoing working relationship rather than simply delivering a written report or some other one-off piece of work. A CES interviewee talked of leaving behind "assets", , to strengthen the organisation they were working with. One public official felt that, for CES, "the relationships are not exclusively or primarily transactional. But really good consulting firms try to build relationships where they're not purely transactional either." CES was perceived as being willing to invest as much time as it took to achieve an outcome with partners, rather than sticking to the contractual limits of a given project.

**Public service ethos:** A key message that came from interviewing CES interviewees was their really strong commitment to publicly funded services. CES interviewees

expressed the importance of working to improve services, and by extension to improve the lives of those using public services. A number of interviewees talked about this from the point of view of what motivates CES staff, and several felt it was extremely important to them personally that their work made a difference. External interviewees also confirmed this view of CES's staff; for example, "at a personal and individual level, their passion and their energy for their work. Their ethical commitment to it is palpable. [...] Their mission is real, and their commitment to the mission is real". Another felt that "the professionals who are there are not doing it for commercial reasons. It is what it is. And the commitment is there".

**CES as an independent, critical friend:** Several interviewees used the terms "critical friend" or "honest broker" to explain their view of CES. The central idea is that CES can and does challenge the organisations it works with – including ministerial departments that it may have a funding relationship with. However, the nature of the challenge tends to be behind closed doors rather than carried through the mass media, as would be the case for many voluntary organisations with an advocacy role. Many interviewees felt that the CES added value in this way, although it was perceived as a "balancing act". CES was perceived externally as "both inside and outside the system", with a number of interviewees seeing it as quite different from community and voluntary organisations and NGOs, despite the CES's not-for-profit status. It was perceived, both internally and externally, as essential that CES had established trust with organisations before it influenced them through evidence or critical analysis. Various external interviewees felt that "CES can challenge and make observations and recommendations that a lot of people in departments and government departments would not necessarily want them to make". For some officials, "they would challenge us. Even in terms of where our thinking is going. And they're not afraid to do that". In the context of the economic and fiscal crisis which began in 2008, one official felt that senior leadership in the public sector "are sufficiently wiser after the crash to realise we need honest feedback". A number of external interviewees talked about trusting the information and evidence presented to them by CES: "I would rely on the information

they provided me with and I would expect them to be honest in their exchanges with me. That's certainly been the experience to date."

**A learning organisation:** Evidence from the interviews would suggest strongly that CES learns from projects that – for different reasons – did not work out as planned: "the other thing that keeps us sharp is we have become much better at attending to learning as an organisation, so reflecting on pieces of work that we've undertaken or what has been learned or not learned from that piece of work". CES has "definitely had difficult experiences that we've learnt from", for example, lessons learned from individual projects in CES's earlier years when the organisation may have been missing certain skills and experiences that would have helped to deliver projects. Nonetheless, "learning is one of the outcomes that we want in CES". Several interviewees commented on the accumulation of knowledge and experience in CES, which over time would give them added capacity to comment on patterns, trends and risks emerging in the areas where they are active.

### *The evolution of CES*

At 10 years of age, CES is a relatively young organisation. Despite this, it has gone through some significant changes and has demonstrated agility in responding to different circumstances and demands placed on the organisation. Throughout this time, CES has also refined its internal understanding of what is the most valuable contribution it can make to organisations with which it works.

From the outset, CES was intended as a strategic investment that would deliver a return over a multi-annual time frame, in terms of supporting evidence-informed policy development and an outcomes-focused approach in policy, service design and practice. Despite inauspiciously beginning its work at a time when the Irish economy had collapsed and the Exchequer's capacity to invest was greatly constrained, CES managed to retain a focus on this longer-term, strategic objective.

The recession and subsequent crisis in public finances post-2008 did have an impact on part of CES's work, especially in its early years. One of its funders, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DCRGA), "had some immediate needs that

were more community based”, which drew some of CES’s activity away from families and children for a period of time, although this remained its primary focus.

CES retained and built on its primary focus of children, families and young people, with a close working relationship with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (Ireland) for several years at a time when crucial work was being undertaken. CES’s longer-term work helped to embed a prevention and early intervention focus in policy and practice in relation to children, families and young people. CES’s contribution can also be seen in various youth strategies and in the establishment of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency.

In CES’s early work for the DCRGA, it was perceived that this funder was under pressure to show outputs for the resource commitment to CES during the height of the economic collapse. Positively, CES was able to respond to the needs of the DCRGA, and it successfully completed a number of projects, which established a capacity within the organisation to expand its reach into services beyond the domain of children and families. A second consequential result was where CES’s relationships with community and voluntary organisations were initially tense – particularly in the domain of community development, where the DCRGA required CES to conduct short-term reviews rather than being involved in longer-term engagement. This was a learning experience for CES, and the organisation subsequently modified its approach to community and voluntary organisations and moved towards more of a partnership and capacity building approach.

CES also expanded its reach into older people’s services, alcohol prevention, mental health services and other areas, and developed relationships across the public sector and with community and voluntary organisations in Ireland.

While initially CES had stronger relationships in Ireland, it has worked in Northern Ireland from an early stage and is more firmly established today in its engagement with Northern Irish government departments, agencies and NGOs.

In common with other voluntary organisations, CES has to adapt to what opportunities exist for funded work. At the same time, several public agencies have returned to CES

with new projects on the basis of their satisfaction with earlier work, which in turn has allowed CES to deepen its specialist work, not least in the area of implementation and whole-of-government working.

Despite a focus on the work of CES, and asking interviewees to describe specific projects and examples, the conversation often returned to the question of what kind of an organisation CES is, and what exactly it does.

The easiest way to explain CES is to highlight the fact that make reference to the fact that many commonly understood professional roles did not really exist 10 years ago. Such roles include app developers (the iPhone was launched in 2007), social media managers, cloud computing specialists, big data analysts, and sustainability managers.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, CES's work reflects the complexity and pace of change in public services delivery, and is likely to reflect roles that will be more common in future, such as research and evidence 'translators', co-design and co-production specialists, and implementation specialists.

At the time of this review, CES is planning to expand its work on co-design and co-production, as part of enhancing its ability to support citizen engagement in public services delivery.

### *Reflections and recommendations*

A commonly expressed view within CES is that the organisation is involved in "contribution" rather than "attribution". In other words, CES helps organisations to achieve their aims and to fulfil their missions, which they would have wished to do anyway. The end result stems from the efforts and expertise of the people in these organisations, combined with the contribution of CES's staff and processes. It is therefore difficult to attribute end results, particularly outcomes for people using public services, to work that CES might have carried out several years previously in the design or improvement of a service.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/06/10-jobs-that-didn-t-exist-10-years-ago/>

Nonetheless, organisations would not undertake evaluations, service redesign, process improvement and other forms of organisational change if their management teams and boards were not convinced that such exercises have the potential to deliver meaningful and significant benefits for people using their services. As shown in the many examples given in the previous sections, the work of CES made an important contribution to the public service value chain in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The ultimate value created goes beyond monetary value and includes a range of societal benefits, with the whole summarised within the concept of creating public value. Most of the CES's work adds value to the underserved area of 'developing system capacity', the fourth pillar of the Barber review's framework for the creation of public value.

### **The following recommendations emerged from the findings of the review:**

- Although CES has previously taken steps to clarify how its work is understood by stakeholders, more is needed, and it is hoped that the substantive content of this review provides suggestions about how that might be done.
- Accounting for the creation of public value by public services delivery organisations and allied support organisations is a nascent area. Nonetheless, the framework was useful for this review, in order to examine the holistic value of CES's work. CES should give consideration to continuing to use a public value framework to articulate and measure the full value of its work. CES is also well placed to contribute to the development of approaches to measuring public value in Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- Measuring the outcomes and longer-term impact stemming from CES's work requires the development of CES's in-house processes and may also require follow-up surveys and interviews to document the outcomes of CES's work after a project has been completed. The process of writing up impact case studies, used as part of this review, provided useful information about the value of the organisation's work, and should be adopted in some form by CES for future use.
- CES should consider having frank discussions with key stakeholders in government departments that fund CES's work or engage in partnership with the organisation about how best to manage public acknowledgement of CES's

contribution. This is a sensitive area, as CES needs to strike a balance between being recognised for the value of its contribution and not over-claiming its influence. Nonetheless, the review showed that key stakeholders were aware of CES's need, as an NGO, to be able to showcase its work, and it seems likely that a process where public agencies sign off on agreed statements outlining CES's contribution to projects could be established.

- CES's work on maintaining networks, sometimes with no specific funding to do so, was identified as an important part of the organisation's work and an important contribution to the ongoing development of a community of human services professionals in Ireland and Northern Ireland. To further the objectives of these networks and to mitigate against any sense of exclusion, particularly from people working in smaller community and voluntary organisations, CES should consider expanding the opportunity of membership of these networks, not least to ensure that the many smaller community and voluntary organisations involved in the delivery of public services have an opportunity to avail of the exchange of knowledge and best practice.
- CES's ability to draw on international best practice and the actual experience of working in two different jurisdictions was widely seen as an important strength. A number of external interviewees felt that CES could benefit from operating across more jurisdictions, and CES should consider being active in other jurisdictions.

## Annex: The public value framework

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Pillar 1:<br/>Pursuing goals</b></p>              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding goals and indicators<br/><i>understanding goals, key performance indicators</i></li> <li>2. Degree of ambition<br/><i>ambition, organisational change, interdependencies and constraints</i></li> <li>3. Progress towards indicators and goals<br/><i>historic performance, measures/indicators, trajectories</i></li> </ol>  |
| <p><b>Pillar 2:<br/>Managing inputs</b></p>             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Processes to manage resources<br/><i>understanding of total resources, financial planning, financial processes, management information</i></li> <li>2. Quality of data and forecasts<br/><i>spending breakdown, tracking spending, forecast accuracy, evidence of inputs linked to outputs</i></li> <li>3. Benchmarking and cost control<br/><i>front line and back office, unit costs, domestic and international comparison, cost control</i></li> <li>4. Cost shifting<br/><i>source of funding, reliance on others, cost shifting on others, temporal cost shifting</i></li> </ol>  |
| <p><b>Pillar 3:<br/>Engaging users and citizens</b></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public and taxpayer legitimacy<br/><i>understanding public/taxpayer perceptions, responding to public/taxpayer perceptions</i></li> <li>2. User and client experience and participation<br/><i>understanding experience, improving experience, participation in policy action</i></li> <li>3. Key stakeholder engagement<br/><i>key stakeholder groups</i></li> </ol>   |
| <p><b>Pillar 4:<br/>Developing system capacity</b></p>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Capacity to innovate and learn from innovation<br/><i>innovation environment, use of technology, changes in behaviours, system learning and what works</i></li> <li>2. Capacity to plan and deliver<br/><i>business strategy, implementation planning/milestones, accountability</i></li> <li>3. Capacity to engage with the delivery chain<br/><i>understanding the delivery chain, influencing the delivery chain, communication and engagement, service commission and intervention</i></li> <li>4. Capacity to work across organisational boundaries<br/><i>relationships, principles and incentives</i></li> <li>5. Capacity of the workforce<br/><i>workforce strategy, leadership, skills and capacity, system capacity development</i></li> </ol> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | 6. Capacity to review performance data and evaluate impact<br><i>performance data use, feedback speed, evaluating actions</i> |
|--|---|

(based on Barber 2017: 53-59)

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