



Report to
Centre for Effective Services



Process Evaluation of the Empowering
Practitioners and Practice Initiative

September 2019

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1 Foreword

“Knowledge is having the right answer. Intelligence is having the right question”

From the outset, the Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiative (EPPI) has always been about Tusla asking itself the right questions so that we never tire in the continuous journey of finding better answers.

As an organisation we recognise the importance of the decisions we make in the everyday lives of the children, families and communities we serve. We also recognise the obligation we have to make good decisions and to ensure that these are based on what we know works and in the collective wisdom of the children, families and professionals who assist us. EPPI was our commitment to enhance our learning about what would support our decision making and this evaluation is about asking the right questions about whether the collaborative approach we took with CES was successful in achieving these aims.

It is hugely reassuring to read this independent evaluation report and to recognise the success of the approach both in developing and implementing this change programme but more importantly the impact it has had for practitioners in assist them in the challenging decision they make in their everyday practice.

A key strength was undoubtedly the collaboration of expertise with in CES with the knowledge and wisdom of frontline managers and practitioners that saw a co-produced body of work that will have a lasting presence in Tusla. In particular, this collaboration was best represented in the co-development of an accessible and comprehensive evidence informed toolkit that directly supports all practitioners in applying expert knowledge to professional judgement and joint decision making with our stakeholders and families.

Under our Child Protection and Welfare Strategy Tusla has already begun implementation of the key learning identified in this report and this will ensure the sustainability of progress and continuous learning for our staff and our Agency. My thanks to CES, all our staff and the work of Crowe in their evaluation and report.

Cormac Quinlan
Director of Transformation and Policy, Tusla.

EPPI, a three year partnership between Tusla and CES, aimed at building capacity in staff by making up to date evidence available to social workers to use in their work with children and families. The initiative also focused on supporting the Agency’s aim of a consistent approach to social work practice across the country. The initiative had two main elements, the production of an online toolkit to bring evidence to social workers on significant areas of their work, and a development programme to increase their skills accessing evidence and applying it in their case work.

It has been an exciting collaborative initiative with social workers demonstrating real commitment to their work, sharing learning from experience and raising their practice bar, in a very busy environment. Both CES and Tusla shared an interest in mining experience of the initiative by commissioning this independent examination of the whole process of EPPI. The report provides us with an analysis of key learning which is helpful to organisations introducing large scale change.

The findings highlight the importance of consultation and collaboration in the work so that it meets the real need of the Tusla practitioners, and also supports the ambitions of the Agency. This attention to both practitioner and organisational need was a significant ingredient in the success of the initiative. It gives a valuable pointer to approaching other big initiatives in Tusla.

The report highlights the importance of a structured governance approach to the work so that the practitioners had confidence in the work and that it would be carried through by the organisation.

If a project has relevance to front line work, if it addresses the priorities of the organisation and there is effective project management of the work, there is increased likelihood of successful implementation of the initiative.

It was a real privilege to co-produce this work with Tusla and we look forward to continuing to support its embedding and evaluation.

Nuala Doherty,
Director, CES

2 Executive Summary

2.1 Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide a process evaluation of the Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiative which has two core strands of work:

1. Development of a therapeutic intervention Toolkit for Tusla practice staff and managers
2. Implementation of the Evidence-Informed Practitioner Programme (EIPP) for Tusla social workers

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the **process** of the **development of the online Toolkit** and the **delivery of the EIPP**.

2.2 Methodology

The review of EPPI consisted of desk research based on internal and external documentation related to the initiative, stakeholder consultation and a demonstration of the online Toolkit. The consultation process was carried out through individual interviews (face-to-face and phone calls) and focus groups.

The themes of the responses from the consultation phase are grouped under the questions set out in the RFT in relation to the Toolkit and the EIPP.

2.3 Consultation Findings

An outline of the themes which emerged from the consultation process is listed below.

What has worked well in relation to the Toolkit?

- “Clear, structured and business-like” approach to:
 - Project management
 - Team structures and representation
- CES’ ongoing communication
- Resource allocation including:
 - CES “embedded” resource within Tusla
 - Tusla IT resource
- Design process
 - Consultation and involvement with social work practitioners
 - Integrating feedback into design and content

Challenges that were observed in terms of the development of the Toolkit have been categorised under common themes and outlined in greater detail below:

- IT infrastructure
- Toolkit reviewer time constraints

What has worked well in relation to the implementation of the EIPP?

- Programme structure
- Active learning/ live case studies
- Communication between
 - Project lead and programme participants
 - Project lead and mentor
- Engagement between
 - Mentor and mentee
 - Mentee engagement
- Supportive environment
 - Provision of supporting documents / guidelines
 - Hospitality at programme events
 - Support available from mentoring
 - HSE library services / research materials.

Challenges outlined in relation to the implementation of the EIPP are categorised under common themes and outlined in greater detail below.

- Recruitment of programme participants
- Recruitment and retention of mentors
- Clarity regarding the commitment required
- Mentor/mentee interaction
- Availability of research
- Presentation preparation.

2.4 Key Findings of the Analysis

The key findings are outlined below and discussed in further detail throughout the report.

- EPPI was an **ambitious project delivered in challenging times** but despite this **successfully demonstrated strategy in action** for both CES and Tusla.
- A vision, culture and environment were created with **specific collaborative ways of working** which was key to the overall EPPI success. This highlights a strong process and an ability for the project partners to pull together towards a meaningful goal.
- A **robust project management methodology** was key to the creation of a shared understanding of the tasks at hand, the intended end results and the inputs required at the various phases of the work plan.
- A **user-centric approach** was a key success factor through all stages of the process.
- The themes of the Toolkit and the use of live cases on the programme meant that EPPI was **grounded in the current experience of practitioners** and as such contributed to solving actual issues and challenges being faced in contemporary practice.
- **Legacy IT infrastructure posed the most significant challenge** to delivery of the Toolkit. However, the knowledge and adaptability of the IT resources were critical in overcoming challenges.
- **Requirement to have an enabled PC or laptop in order to remotely access the Tusla intranet restricted** deeper penetration and reach during the toolkit's development.

- The **programme delivery was deemed successful** in relation to the more critical, core and technical elements of the programme itself, such as **modules, content and the conducive learning environment created.**

2.5 Learning

Learning is presented in relation to:

- Strategy in Action
- Collaborative Working Learning
- Project Management Learning
- User-centre Learning
- Contemporary Practice Learning
- IT Infrastructure Learning
- IT Limitations Learning
- Programme Delivery Learning

1.5.1 Summary Learning Table

The table below summarises the Key Learning in terms of issues that we believe should be continued by CES in future projects of this nature and also areas that should be considered in future. Similarly, for Tusla, the table summarises lessons learned for the future development and implementation of EPPI and the core strands.

CES	Tusla
Continue: Overall EPPI	Continue: Overall EPPI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aligning projects with CES strategy ■ Emphasis on policy to practice ■ Designing content and programme materials that improve practice / service provision ■ Creating a shared vision at the start of the project ■ Agree clear project objectives in partnership ■ Creating collaborative partner and project structures from the outset ■ Build trust through collaboration and genuine consultation which integrates feedback ■ Initiating and maintaining a project management culture ■ Communicating project progress to key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aligning projects with Tusla strategy ■ Aligning projects with policy ■ Continue with project specific groups ■ Cross-directorate working ■ Applying project management techniques applied to EPPI ■ Recognise the return on investment of meaningful consultation and build in consultation processes ■ Integration of feedback into phases, iteration of the projects

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise the return on investment of meaningful consultation and build in consultation processes Integration of feedback into phases, iteration of the projects 	
Continue: Toolkit	Continue: Toolkit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User-centred design Defining the problem to be solved from the users perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign defined resources to the future development of the Toolkit Define the problem to be solved for future iterations of the Toolkit in terms of themes and content Integrating Toolkit with EPPI Aligning content with
Continue: EIPP	Continue: EIPP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed learning methods Active learning approach Provision of support materials and support via mentors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosting programme modules in the regions Reviewing level of study leave to ensure that sufficient levels are provided Identifying external partners who can to provide access to additional resources (as was the case with HSE Library and Barnardos Library and Information Service) Assign defined resources to the future development of the Toolkit Integrating EPPI with Toolkit Integrating programme outputs with contemporary practice priorities

CES	Tusla
Consider: Overall EPPI	Consider: Overall EPPI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrying out an organisational readiness assessment in advance of project commencement For large scale, complex projects, continue to develop a risk assessment and risk management plan as part of the project initiation plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to risk assess future project timelines and targets Increased involvement of the regions and local areas in the promotion of EPPI and its strands
Consider: Toolkit	Consider: Toolkit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrying out an IT infrastructure assessment in advance of project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrying out an IT infrastructure assessment in the context of further development of the Toolkit

commencement in the case of online resource creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve qualitative and quantitative data gathering ■ Increased emphasis to be placed on developing awareness of the Toolkit and of its content (and that of the hub in general)
Consider: EIPP	Consider: EIPP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For programmes with national participants, investigate webinars, streaming etc. to minimise travel time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consult with past and potential future participants to review programme structure and define possible flexibility that might make the time commitment more manageable ■ Analyse qualitative and quantitative data gathered each time the programme is delivered in a timely manner ■ Increased sessions where all participants and all mentors meet jointly ■ Review the mentor panel to ensure there is a sufficient number of active mentors and that the active mentors are not overburdened ■ Increased involvement of the regions and local areas in facilitating shared learning e.g. inclusion of research findings on local agendas

2.6 Conclusion

What this process evaluation has shown is that CES applied an effective and successful project management approach to developing EPPI and the initiative is held in high regard by both the project teams, the Toolkit users and the EIPP participants.

The evaluation depicts an approach which combines the application of robust project management techniques complimented by collaborative structures to ensure project progress. An ethos of consultation and review, within the collaborative culture that was created, characterises the work.

As well as documenting the processes at the development and delivery phases of the Toolkit and EIPP, the purpose of the evaluation is to uncover the learnings to date from this project. For CES the opportunity is to apply the learnings in similar projects in the future, and, for Tusla, the learnings can be applied as the agency takes over responsibility for the implementation and delivery of the Toolkit and the EIPP.

3 Introduction

3.1 Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide a process evaluation of the Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiative (hereinafter referred to as EPPI) for the Centre for Effective Studies (hereinafter referred to as CES) which Crowe was commissioned to carry out following a tender process.

EPPI was, in its first phase, a 3-year project between 2015 and 2017, commissioned by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, with support from CES. It stems from Tusla’s commitment to deliver an evidence-informed and outcomes-focused service for children and families.

EPPI has two core strands of work:

1. Development of a therapeutic intervention Toolkit for Tusla practice staff and managers.
2. Implementation of the Evidence-Informed Practitioner Programme (EIPP) for Tusla social workers.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the **process** of the **development of the online Toolkit** and the **delivery of the EIPP**. As per the tender document, the following broad questions will be addressed:

Questions to be answered	
1.	How has the Toolkit been developed to date; what has worked well; what has been challenging and how have those involved in the Toolkit project experienced the process of development and implementation?
2.	How has the EIPP been implemented; what has worked well; what has been challenging and how have those involved in the programme experienced the process of implementation?
3.	What is the learning for Tusla and CES regarding the development and implementation of the overall EPPI programme?

3.2 EPPI

In 2014, Tusla commissioned CES to provide support in developing a programme of work, EPPI. EPPI was established, in its first phase, as a 3-year project **“to support social workers in Tusla to deal with the challenges they come across in their practice”**. The **central aim was to apply evidence to decision making in case work and to support the use of evidence in practice**, through **“increasing the knowledge levels and confidence of social workers and improving the consistency and quality of practice across the Agency”**. This was in line with the central objectives of Tusla’s Corporate Plan (2015-2017), which was **“to develop a workforce that was valued and supported within a learning organisation”**.

As outlined by CES, the overall aims of EPPI are to:

- **Improve outcomes** for children and families using an outcomes-focused approach.
- Increase the use of **evidenced-informed decision-making** in day-to-day social work practice.
- **Improve decision-making** in relation to children entering and leaving the care system.
- **Reduce reliance on expert witnesses in court proceedings** and reduce costs as social workers’ capacity increases.

- **Improve the confidence of social workers.**
- **Strengthen the capacity** of the workforce.
- **Strengthen partnership, collaboration and inter-agency working.**

EPPI was established to support social workers as they face challenges in their work, which would also improve the outcomes for children and families. In order to achieve this, two core strands of the work were developed, the Toolkit and the EIPP. A brief description and the objectives of the Toolkit and the EIPP are outlined below.

2.2.1 *The Toolkit*

The online Toolkit is an evidence-informed, outcomes-focused resource for Tusla social workers to deliver evidence-informed interventions in their day to day practice. Specifically, the outcomes to be achieved from implementation and use of the Toolkit are:

- **Improve outcomes for children and families** through the adoption of an outcomes focused approach.
- Increase the use of **evidenced-based decision** making in social work.
- Promote the capacity of social workers to **intervene therapeutically** with children and families.
- **Improve decision-making** in relation to children entering and leaving the care system.
- **Improve care planning** for children in care, and their experience while in care.
- **Improve the understanding** of child development, attachment/parent child relationships, and the impact of mental illness, substance abuse and domestic violence on parenting capacity and family functioning.
- Increase the use of **evidenced-based interventions** to address the issues above, and the capacity of staff to implement them.

The Toolkit was developed between 2015-2017 and went 'live' on the Tusla hub in July 2018, with nine modules available to staff agency-wide. Currently Tusla are responsible for any further updating of current content and the development of new content.

2.2.2 *The EIPP*

The purpose of the EIPP is to develop social worker's confidence and expertise in order to enable them to apply evidence and knowledge to their day to day practice that will ultimately lead to better outcomes for children and their families. Specifically, its objectives are to:

- **Develop skills** in sourcing, critically appraising and applying evidence to practice and service improvement.
- Integrate evidence into **reports and decision-making.**
- Integrate evidence into **supervision and practice/service development.**
- Facilitate **knowledge translation and transfer** between practitioners.
- Build a **learning and improvement culture.**

The EIPP uses an active learning approach which encourages practitioners to apply evidence and learning to their own work. The programme consists of 4 modules delivered over four months, with approximately 20-25 participants. Currently the programme has been delivered to more than 170 social workers and team leaders in Tusla, across the four Tusla regions: Dublin Mid-Leinster, Dublin North East, West and the South.

4 Methodology

4.1 Overview

The review of EPPI consisted of desk research based on internal and external documentation related to the initiative, stakeholder consultation and a demonstration of the online Toolkit. The consultation process was carried out through individual interviews (face-to-face and phone calls) and focus groups. Documents received and reviewed are listed below in addition to the stakeholders consulted during the evaluation process.

4.2 Research Ethics Application

Once the project was awarded, CES and Crowe were made aware that it was a requirement to submit a research ethics application to Tusla Research Ethics Committee prior to project commencement. A joint application was created by CES and Crowe detailing the project descriptors, project participants, the research process, data protection, access to services/role of gatekeeper, dissemination of results, indemnity and insurance, cost and resource implications including funding and payments. The joint application was submitted for approval at the June 2018 meeting of the Tusla Research Ethics Committee.

Following clarifications, the application was approved by the Tusla Research Ethics Committee on 5th September 2018, after which the project could begin.

4.3 Documentation reviewed

- CES Strategy 2012-2014
- CES Annual Review 2016
- CES Director's Report and Financial Statements 2017
- CES Strategy 2019-2021
- CES 10 Year Review Summary September 2018
- CES Digital Brochure
- Tusla Business Plan 2015
- Tusla Corporate Plan 2015 – 2017
- Tusla Corporate Plan 2018 – 2020
- Tusla Child Protection and Welfare Strategy
- Government of Western Australia, Department for Child Protection, Signs of Safety Framework
- EPPI documentation (which are listed in the Section 10 Appendix)
- Toolkit specific documentation (which are listed in the Section 10 Appendix)
- EIPP specific documentation (which are listed in the Section 10 Appendix)

4.4 Stakeholder consultation

Consultation with key stakeholders took place via individual interviews and focus groups. Those individually consulted included:

- CES project sponsor for EPPI
- Tusla project sponsor for EPPI
- Toolkit project team members
- Workforce Learning and Development representative, Tusla
- Tulsa project lead for EPPI (former CES project lead)
- Manager for Web Development & New Media, Tusla
- Toolkit testers

Focus groups were scheduled to take place with the following groups:

- Tusla mentors
- EIPP participants from Dublin region
- EIPP participants from Western region

The participants for the focus group were selected by Crowe from anonymised lists provided by Tusla which contained the following details:

- Job Title
- Team
- Region
- Year of Participation in EPPI

A sample of participants were chosen which represented a mix in regards to Job Title, Team, Region and Year of Participation in EPPI. Details of those to be invited to participate in the consultation processes were submitted to Tusla who made contact with each participant to obtain their consent to be directly contacted by Crowe.

4.5 Process evaluation methodology

In order to evaluate the process of the development of the Toolkit and implementation of the EIPP, a framework to measure the **REAL IMPACT** of the processes used by CES was created. This framework was referred to when developing the stakeholder consultation questions to inform the analysis and subsequent learnings.



- **Relevance** – were the objectives of the Toolkit and EIPP relevant to the audience?
- **Efficiency** – did the processes employed use resources effectively e.g. staff, time etc.
- **Adaptable** – were the processes adaptable?
- **Lessons** – what lessons can be learned regarding how processes operated?

- **Implementation** – were the processes and activities actioned as originally planned?
- **Measurement** – was process integrity monitored throughout?
- **Participation** – were the processes in place for participant engagement and feedback sufficient?
- **Attribution** – can the successes and failures be shown to be related to the processes used, as opposed to influencing factors?
- **Collaboration** – did the process of communication and collaboration between the project partners (i.e. CES and Tusla) work?
- **Time** – were the core strands delivered in a timely manner?

5 Key Consultation Findings

Responses from the consultation phase have been grouped under the questions set out in the RFT in relation to the Toolkit and the EIPP.

5.1 Toolkit

4.1.1 *What has worked well in relation to the Toolkit?*

Common themes observed as having worked well in the development of the Toolkit are listed below and outlined in greater detail subsequently:

- “Clear, structured and business-like” approach to:
 - Project management
 - Team structures and representation
- CES’ ongoing communication
- Resource allocation including:
 - Tusla IT resource
 - CES “embedded” resource within Tusla
- Design process
 - Consultation and involvement with social work practitioners
 - Integrating feedback into design and content

“Clear, structured and business-like approach”

Project management

The approach taken by CES was described as “clear, structured and business-like”, which was attributed to the application of project management techniques by CES that ensured the Toolkit development process was well-planned and well-managed. This was backed up by various comments including:

- CES set clear milestones and monitoring via detailed work plans, which were described as being effective for the following reasons:

“CES put a timeframe around the Toolkit development and then stuck to it”

- The work plan outlined tasks that were assigned to individuals, project teams, reviewers etc.
- Responsibility for various tasks contributed to “developing ownership within Tusla”.
- The work plans included processes for reviewing the Toolkit and the provision of feedback.
- Development deadlines were met.

Project team structure / representation

The general consensus was that the Toolkit project team’s structure was successful. The “good team work” was attributed to:

- “CES made sure there was a cross-directorate on the work groups, i.e. representation from policy, operations, learning and development, research etc.”.
- The team had “good representation” of staff from across the agency, representing different roles and geographies.
- There was a combination of skills and expertise.

“It was good to have a mix of roles on the project team”

CES' ongoing communication

During the consultation process CES' "dedication" to regular communication with all relevant project partners was also highlighted. It was noted that:

- CES and the Toolkit project team would meet regularly to discuss the "aims and vision of the Toolkit" which enabled both groups to "discuss, negotiate and agree" how to progress and ensure the development remained in line with the timelines outlined in the work plans.
- CES held general meetings and briefings with Tusla staff leading to a sense of being informed, updated and involved.
- The Project Board was updated quarterly on the progress of the work.
- CES remained in contact with the Toolkit Project team at each stage of its development and updated the team on the Toolkit's progress regularly.

Resource allocation

Tusla IT resource

Access to Tusla's internal IT resource was described as being "critical to the Toolkit's development" as the development issues within the available infrastructure were understood, including:

- Remote access restrictions
- Content
- Functionality
- Design
- The Tusla intranet and HSE server restrictions

CES "embedded" resource within Tusla (post 2017)

Albeit a development post-2017, which is not within the timeframe being evaluated, it is important to note that it was repeatedly acknowledged during the consultation process that having access to CES' "embedded" support positively impacted the Toolkit's development. It was commented upon that:

- CES staff being seconded into Tusla enabled the Toolkit to be "embedded into the agency at a deeper level".
- "Visually being able to see CES in the building was very important".
- The fact the work was happening within the social work department "made it feel very real".

Consultation processes

It was observed that there was a high level of consultation via a number of mechanisms:

- The baseline scoping survey.
- Regional group discussions / focus groups.
- Piloting and user testing content and online functionality of the Toolkit.



"It was all about hearing more voices to provide feedback"

It was observed that CES "identified the need for input from front line staff and management" and due to the rigorous consultation, the Toolkit "contains what staff wanted and what they said they wanted".

The consultation process was positively described in a number of different ways:

- Tusla staff felt they could be honest and open with CES on how the Toolkit was being developed.
- CES were described as having “respected and trusted” the Toolkit project team’s feedback.
- There was great “two-way communication” and “open lines of communication” between the Toolkit project team and wider Tusla staff.
- The involvement of social workers in the Toolkit’s development created a “co-production” environment which facilitated a “sense of ownership” for Tusla, while CES facilitated the process.

Integration of feedback

The general consensus from the consultation indicated that the content developed for the Toolkit is “meaningful, relevant and useful” for social workers. It was acknowledged that:

- The Toolkit’s content was “teased out” and following the baseline scoping survey and open group discussions on the survey findings, “priorities were agreed upon” with the Toolkit’s project team.
- Feedback was “incorporated into the next iterations of the Toolkit” during the development process.
- Staff felt that their feedback was valued and influenced the development process.

4.1.2 *What has been challenging in relation to the Toolkit?*

Challenges that were observed in terms of the development of the Toolkit have been categorised under common themes and outlined in greater detail below:

- IT infrastructure
- Toolkit reviewer time constraints.

Although the scope of the tender is to assess the development of the Toolkit, a number of challenges regarding the Toolkit’s implementation were cited during the consultation process and are included on that basis. These are outlined below and in further detail:

- Monitoring restrictions
- Continued use of Toolkit
- Remote access restrictions.

IT infrastructure

A number of IT infrastructure challenges were highlighted in relation to the development of the Toolkit, including:

- It was identified that the reliance on the HSE server caused limitations and restrictions in terms of independent control, autonomy, speed, accessibility and other related issues.
- The Tusla intranet presented limitations in that it is built on an old content management system which was observed as not “working well” and created barriers in terms of how to display content in a visually appealing way, ease of navigation and formatting text.
- As the look and feel of the Toolkit was a challenge due to the old content management system, a decision was made to use interactive PDFs with external hyperlinks for the specific content pertaining to each section.

Toolkit reviewer time constraints

Time available to review the Toolkit and attend meetings was sometimes cited as a challenge.

“Social workers are constantly under time pressure”

Implementation barriers

Monitoring restrictions

As previously mentioned, the Toolkit is sitting on the Tusla intranet and the HSE server and this continues to create restrictions in terms of monitoring the Toolkit’s usage, data gathering, analytics and profiling. It is not currently possible to measure how many people are accessing the Toolkit, time of access, the frequency of visits and the impact of any initiatives or new thematics, etc.

Remote access restrictions

The Toolkit has to be accessed via the Tusla intranet which requires an enabled PC or laptop. Due to this, practitioners were limited in remotely accessing the Toolkit and therefore mentioned having to print out material where they needed to access it and could not do so remotely.

Continued use of Toolkit

“We need to make sure people are actually using the Toolkit”

It is evident that continued use of the Toolkit is more likely if users have a reason for repeat visits. This means the Toolkit’s maintenance and development is “an ongoing process and always needs to be improved”. It was observed that “a decision needs to be made” in terms of how the Toolkit will be updated moving forward and staff feedback needs to be regularly gathered regarding their needs, use and engagement.

Awareness

Awareness building for the Toolkit was also expressed as a challenge. Reasons cited for this include:

- The Toolkit requires continued communication to ensure using it “becomes habit” for social workers.
- It was often suggested that “the Toolkit needs to be kept on the agenda at team meetings regularly” to increase and reinforce awareness.

“It’s important to bring the Toolkit to social worker’s attention on a regular basis”

4.1.3 *How have those involved in the Toolkit project experienced the process of development?*

Overall, there was positive feedback from those involved in the Toolkit project regarding the process of development. The following insights were provided

- The Toolkit was described as a hugely positive tool that still impresses staff and is one of “the best things to come out of the agency”.
- Consultation between CES and Tusla during the Toolkit’s development was commended for being consistent.
- It was felt CES created a culture that supported openness and honesty for all those involved in the development of the Toolkit.
- CES outlined timelines within the work plan (including revised work plans) which considered the time constraints of those involved in the process.
- CES held productive meetings where valuable and relevant information was presented.

5.2 EIPP

4.2.1 *What has worked well in relation to the implementation of the EIPP?*

- Programme structure
- Active learning/ live case studies
- Communication:
 - Project lead and programme participants
 - Project lead and mentor
 - Mentor and mentee
 - Peer engagement
- Supportive environment
 - Provision of supporting documents / guidelines
 - Hospitality at programme events
 - Support available from mentoring
 - HSE library services / research materials

Programme structure

During the consultation process the programme's modular structure was commended for a number of reasons:

- The programme's modules flowed logically from one to the next and helped participants to map out their chosen case study. This design allowed the programme to "build incrementally from one module to the next".
- Participants were asked to complete a 'Pre-Programme Questionnaire' and 'Before Measures' questionnaire (with their line manager) which was believed to have prepared participants well for the upcoming programme.

"The four modules were mapped out, there was a clear structure for us"

Active learning / live case studies

"The EIPP action learning was a bridge from academia to real life and a bridge back to learning"

The active learning approach was highlighted by those consulted. It was highlighted that this aspect of the programme's implementation makes it feel "worthwhile and real" and provides a direct connection to day-to-day practice.

It was felt that using a current case as the basis for applying EIPP learning affords social workers greater insights and understandings of the subject matter, develops evidence-based decision-making and provides for better case outcomes.

Communication

The following communication processes were emphasised:

- **Project lead and programme participants:** It was observed that the communication process worked well between the project lead and the participants. The project lead was described as "supportive and committed" in providing regular updates and scheduling meetings.

- **Project lead and mentor:** from the mentor’s perspective, there was regular communication about the programme’s progression and mentors were included on communication to programme participants. This worked well for mentors in providing prompts for getting in touch. Meetings were also highlighted as a positive, noting that mentors were “guided” at meetings and were “given direction again”.
- **Mentor and mentee:** Overall, it was felt engagement between mentor and mentee was based on “the individual level of support needed”.
- **Peer engagement:** The peer learning and knowledge sharing aspect of the programme was regularly commended. It was observed that the “the networking aspect was great” and “there was a lot of camaraderie” amongst participants. Hosting national events with participants travelling from different areas to meet each other provided an opportunity to meet peers outside of normal circles and share knowledge.

Supportive environment

A supportive environment and learning culture were described as including a number of elements:

- **Provision of supporting documents / guidelines:** guidelines and templates were provided for participants which were easy to follow and supported them in working on their literature review.
- **Hospitality at programme events:** the “warmth and hospitality” at EIPP events was often commented on as creating welcoming and conducive learning environments.
- **Support available from mentors** between learning events provided interim supports.
- **HSE library services / research materials:** participants received training in the use of the HSE library and how to access journals and articles.

“CES looked after us very well and it made a difference”

4.2.2 *What has been challenging in relation to the implementation of the EIPP?*

Challenges outlined in relation to the implementation of the EIPP are categorised under common themes and outlined in greater detail below.

- Recruitment of programme participants
- Recruitment and retention of mentors
- Clarity regarding the commitment required
- Mentor/mentee interaction
- Availability of research
- Presentation preparation

Recruitment of programme participants

To overcome the challenge of participant recruitment, it was suggested that further promotion of the programme by area managers and via the regions to encourage team members to participate would be beneficial.

“More needs to happen in the regions departments to recruit participants”

It was also proposed that previous participants should act as advocates for the programme once they have completed it.

Recruitment and retention of mentors

Recruitment and retention of mentors was cited as a challenge in terms of:

- Identifying the right people who would suit the mentor role for the programme with the requisite skills, capacity and experience to make a valuable contribution to the programme from Principal Social Workers (PSWs), Area Managers and other senior staff in Tusla.
- Retention of mentors was highlighted as a struggle in that “mentors don’t always come back the following year”. It was noted that the current list of mentors totals 70 but only 12 are active.
- Some views were expressed that more could be done to provide mentors with “role clarity”, including being very clear on the boundaries of the role.

Clarity regarding the commitment required

The programme requires a significant investment of time. It was recognised that participants found it difficult to find time to dedicate to completing the programme given their workloads. It was stated that:

“The programme is a big commitment”

- The level of commitment required from participants was “a lot more than what they expected”.
- Participants are “spending time outside working hours to meet the programme’s timelines”.
- Participants often underestimate the level of work required for the programme and related time constraints/workload.
- It was noted that in the first iteration of the programme, two half study days were allocated. This was viewed as insufficient and an amount of personal time was required to complete the programme. The increase to three days since then was acknowledged.

Mentor/mentee interaction

It was noted that some mentor/mentees relationships were more active than others and some participants preferred more support than others. A number of different scenarios were described which included:

- Divergent experiences were presented where some mentors felt they were “chasing mentees” and others felt they “could be giving more time”.
- From a mentor’s perspective, it was a sometimes a challenge to maintain contact with all mentees for the duration of the programme. This was a result of the individual participants’ time constraints due to their caseloads.
- Due to the different locations of mentors and mentees face-to-face contact was often challenging and in order “to make best use of people’s time” communication between participants and mentors was often via phone calls.
- The optimum number of mentees to a mentor, “to give them equal attention”, was proposed to be 3:1.

Availability of research

Finding appropriate research for literature reviews caused concern as available research was described as limited, with the majority coming from England, Australia, New Zealand and the US.

“A challenge was finding the right literature”

Presentation preparation

It was felt a tutorial for delivering presentations in advance would have been of value as some participants were unused to creating and delivering presentations.

4.2.3 *How have those involved in the EIPP experienced the process of implementation?*

Overall, there is very positive feedback from participants. EIPP is seen as a valuable programme which is informing their practice. From the consultation process it appears that:

- Participants really enjoyed the programme and saw it as innovative in that “there has never been anything like it before”.
- Participants valued the peer learning aspect of the programme, which created a collaborative and supportive environment and enabled participants to “discuss their work and practice” with one another.
- Learning via case studies “make it more tangible”.
- Many of those consulted noted a new way of approaching and thinking about their case work, which encourages participants to continue to take time to reflect and introduce greater research into their work.
- The programme provided participants with an opportunity to build their self-confidence in terms of practice, learning and presentations.

“The programme was terrific”

“It is very powerful for social workers to feel they are reclaiming social work”

- The programme has facilitated the creation of a portfolio of learning and the opportunity for participants to embed what they learned into their day-to-day practice.
- It was regularly acknowledged that due to the high level of workload and conflicting priorities “staff need to have a manager that supports them doing EIPP”.

6 Analysis

6.1 Overview

This section of the report analyses the desk research and consultation process (focus groups and individual interviews) to assess the process of developing the Toolkit and the process of delivery of the EIPP. Key issues arising are analysed to outline enablers and barriers for both strands of the initiative, in addition to findings under the REAL IMPACT framework. The analysis then leads in to Key Learnings in Chapter 7.

The key insights below are elaborated in subsequent sections of this chapter and preceded by a brief commentary on the conditions under which EPPI was developed and delivered and the contextual factors that influenced the experience of key stakeholders. While the tender document specifies that these points be covered for EIPP, we believe a brief overview of the overall conditions and context is beneficial in setting the scene for the initiative overall.

6.2 Key Findings

The key findings outlined below will be discussed in detail throughout the section.

- EPPI was an **ambitious project delivered in challenging times** but despite this **successfully demonstrated strategy in action** for both CES and Tusla.
- A vision, culture and environment were created with **specific collaborative ways of working** which was key to the overall EPPI success. This highlights a strong process and an ability for the project partners to pull together towards a meaningful goal.
- A **robust project management methodology** was key to the creation of a shared understanding of the tasks at hand, the intended end results and the inputs required at the various phases of the work plan.
- A **user-centric approach** was a key success factor through all stages of the process.
- The themes of the Toolkit and the use of live cases on the programme meant that EPPI was **grounded in the current experience of practitioners** and as such contributed to solving actual issues and challenges being faced in contemporary practice.
- **Legacy IT infrastructure posed the most significant challenge** to delivery of the Toolkit. However, the knowledge and adaptability of the IT resources were critical in overcoming challenges.
- **Requirement to have an enabled PC or laptop in order to remotely access the Tusla intranet restricted** deeper penetration and reach during the Toolkit's development.
- The EIPP **delivery was deemed successful** in relation to the more critical, core and technical elements of the programme itself, such as **modules, content and the conducive learning environment created**.

6.3 Overall EPPI conditions and context

- EPPI provided both project partner organisations an opportunity to demonstrate strategy in action as the initiative aligned with their strategies of the time (2015/2017):
 - CES' mission and approach are aligned with EPPI by "using (and supporting others to use) the best available evidence for the benefit of children, young people, families and communities", which complements the aims of EPPI including "improving outcomes for children and families using an outcomes-focused approach" and "increasing the use of evidenced-informed decision-making in day-to-day social work practice".

- The strategic objectives of Tusla’s first corporate plan (2015-2017) aligns with the aims of EPPI, especially objectives five and seven which focus on “a learning organisation”, “building on our research strategy” and “evidence- based decision-making” all of which align with the vision and objectives of EPPI.
- EPPI provided an opportunity to allow practitioners to translate policy to practice. The overarching national policy and legislative context included Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures 2014–2020, Child Care Act 1991 and the Children First Act 2015, Department of Children and Youth Affairs Strategy and policy and legislative requirements in the areas of Children First, adoption, aftercare, homelessness, early years’ service regulation, the School Attendance Strategy, disability, and separated children.
- Tusla’s Child Protection and Welfare Strategy (CPWS) outlines the focus on a “positive learning environment” and “empowering” staff, both of which EPPI seeks to address in its implementation, as well as a “national approach to practice”.
- EIPP is also a mechanism through which Tusla can implement Signs of Safety given “increasing emphasis being placed on the importance of evidence-based practice in the helping professions and child protection” cited in the Signs of Safety Agreement.
- Tusla was set up in January 2014 and as such was a newly constituted organisation with over 4,000 staff, which was taking on an ambitious project at a time of flux and transformation and change, where any number of projects demanded attention. The CES project team was described as being mindful of the dynamic and changing environment in terms of delivering a project within another agency and ensuring that the changes taking place within the agency were taken into consideration as necessary.
- Social workers were working in a context where their role was more complex than ever, having heavier caseloads and there were issues in relation to recruitment and retention of social workers.
- EPPI needs to be understood as a culture change programme given its outcome involving a change in practice and in leading new and innovative ways of working.

6.4 Resources required

The human and IT resources required for the initiative are outlined below, including a quantum where that information was available.

5.4.1 *Human resources:*

The table below shows the number of people involved in the various groups and teams and the frequency at which they met.

Team / Support	Persons	Frequency of meetings
Project Board	5 Tusla and 2 CES	Quarterly
Quality Advisory Group	2 CES, a representative from Tusla, a Government Department, a state body and 2 academic institutions representatives	Biannually
Tusla and CES communications	2	Monthly
Toolkit specific resource		
Toolkit Project Team	12 Tusla members 2 CES members with another 3 staff members regularly attending	Monthly / bi-monthly
Toolkit testers	25 surveys, pilot 1 47 in the consultation sessions, pilot 2	
Toolkit developer	1	Ad hoc and scheduled regularly
EIPP specific resource		
EIPP Participants	170	4 modules
Mentors	70 (during 2015 and 2016)	5 scheduled meetings (4x modules and 1x prep meeting)
CES EPPI team	Over the three years, the CES team included 7 representatives, including a project support and two CES Associates	

6.5 How was the Toolkit developed?

1. Toolkit Project Team

- A Toolkit project team was established which consisted of staff from across the agency, representative of roles and geography within the agency. In addition, a social worker was seconded from Tusla for one day a week from the end of 2016 to mid-2017.

2. Online Baseline Scoping Survey

- An online baseline scoping survey was issued to Tusla staff between February and March 2015. 463 social workers took part in the survey representing a robust response rate of 37%. The survey was conducted to establish:
 - How practitioners use knowledge
 - Relevant areas of social work knowledge and expertise
 - Social work theories and techniques used most frequently

3. Key Theories / Techniques

- Respondents to the survey identified the core theories and techniques that they use in their work with children and families. The data from the survey was analysed and a report was produced. This report was presented back to the Toolkit project team, project sponsors, project board, service directors and area managers.
- Regional group discussions were held with a total of 141 Tusla social work practitioners participated, with eight sessions taking place in the four regions. Tusla staff across the range of roles and teams attended to provide feedback.

4. Thematics

- International scoping of therapeutic interventions was conducted.
- The Toolkit was developed in two stages. Stage One was the development of a 'pilot' Toolkit for the following four areas:
 1. Attachment
 2. Parenting capacity/capability
 3. Critical thinking/analysis
 4. Engaging with children and families
- Stage Two included the following areas:
 5. Child Development
 6. Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV)
 7. Direct work with children and families
 8. Separation & Loss

5. Reviewing and Piloting

- A group of toolkit reviewers were identified via members of the Toolkit Project Team and asked to test/review the first four modules. This group comprised of individual staff with a mix of experience, locations and teams. The group was asked to test the online Toolkit and complete an online survey with their feedback. The feedback was used to inform the second iteration of the first four modules. This method of reviewing had limitations insofar as fewer staff took part in the piloting than anticipated and the online method limited the potential for more expansive and nuanced feedback. This consultation occurred during November and December 2016.
- Working with the Toolkit Project team, teams were identified from around the country with different roles (e.g. fostering, CP, Duty/intake, etc.) and asked to test the second four modules. For this testing phase, the Project Lead and different members of the CES team travelled around the country and met with the teams who tested the materials. Team discussions were held, informed by an interview guide, to gather information on what worked best, limitations/challenges, what should be changed, anything missing, etc. Subsequently the second four modules were developed on the basis of this feedback. This consultation took place in May and June 2017.

6. Development

- As the content was developed and agreed, the CES project team worked with an in-house Tulsa IT resource to develop the Toolkit.

7. Finalising the Toolkit

- The Toolkit was finalised and launched on the Tusla hub in July 2018.

6.6 Enablers for the development of the Toolkit

Analysis of the consultation findings and research identified the following enablers for the development of the Toolkit:

- Application of user-led design

A user-centric approach was evident from the idea generation through to the design and testing phases of the Toolkit. As such, user need was considered from the very beginning (baseline survey) and through the development process (focus group, testers) of the Toolkit. Therefore, the end result was based on the themes and content that users deemed to be of most use to them in their daily practice. This cemented the value of the Toolkit in terms of relevance, applicability and currency.

- Iterative design

Allied with the point in relation to user-led design is the fact that the development of the Toolkit took place in phases and each phase integrated user feedback and testing of the prior phase. The iterative design process also enabled a more meaningful end result that dealt with design and content issues prior to launch. This made for a more positive user experience when the Toolkit went live.

- Structured project management

The Toolkit was well-planned from the outset. The overall approach to project management was outlined in the work plan, which included details regarding meetings, documentation, the Scoping Survey, consultations and the development and testing of the Toolkit. Responsibilities were assigned, assumptions recorded, and timelines included. The level of detail and the awareness of roles and responsibilities ensured there was no ambiguity in terms of the development of the Toolkit.

- Access to Tusla IT resource

The involvement of an on-site IT person from Tusla benefited the development of the Toolkit due to familiarity with the Tusla intranet, its restrictions and the ability to provide solutions outlined below. This enabled a flexible and responsive approach during the development of the Toolkit and contributed significantly to the end result.

6.7 Barriers for the development of the Toolkit

Analysis of the consultation findings and research reveals the following barriers to the development of the Toolkit:

- IT hardware

The main barrier in relation to the development of the Toolkit that was mentioned was IT infrastructure in that the use of the external server (HSE) limited functionality and design. While the use of interactive PDFs provided a solution, it was suggested that the content would be better presented and accessed as individual web pages (albeit that this would involve upgrading the current Content Management System).

Access to the Toolkit was also mentioned as an issue in that the Tusla intranet can only be accessed via enabled PCs or laptops. This was an issue for development in that the Toolkit Project Team who met in CES could only view the Toolkit via the PDFs.

It should, however, also be pointed out that several users described the Toolkit as well designed and user-friendly, indicating that the work-arounds worked for users.

■ Implementation barriers

Other barriers identified during the research and consultation phase relate to implementation rather than development but are included here as considerations for future Toolkit implementation planning.

- Levels of Toolkit awareness were described as low and it was suggested that this is an area that needed work both with social workers and other disciplines if the reach is to be expanded beyond social work.
- The IT infrastructure was noted as an area to be addressed with a sense that Tusla needs to have its own server to improve functionality, design etc. in future.
- The inability to monitor usage was also cited as an issue related to the use for an external server.
- The IT capacity of those accessing the Toolkit was noted as an area for future focus and improvement.
- A sustainability plan was noted as a requirement to ensure that the Toolkit is reviewed and updated with new themes and new content to remain in line with user need and areas of interest at any point in time.

6.8 How was the EIPP implemented?

1. Team Briefings

- Briefings between CES and Tusla project team were conducted.
- Identification of Tusla project team members to co-deliver the programme.
- CES engaged with the HSE library services.

2. Programme Preparation / Promotion

- In the early stages of the programme's implementation information flyers were developed.
- Collection of pre-programme data from participants and their line managers.

3. Programme Preparation

- EIPP manual was designed and written.
- Venues were sourced for the delivery of the four modules.

4. Recruitment

- CES identified and liaised with the Workforce Learning and Development team, service directors and area managers to recruit participants and mentors via expressions of interest.
- Following this, participants were assigned to their appropriate mentors.

5. Programme Delivery

- The programme has four modules that are delivered over four months, with approximately 20-25 participants taking part:
 - Module 1: Orientation
 - Module 2: Sourcing, appraising and apply evidence
 - Module 3: Evidence informed Intervention
 - Module 4: Application and outcomes / presentations to Panel.

6. Mentoring

- Each participant had mentoring support available to them between programmemodules.

6. Post Programme Delivery

Following the programme delivery, the following actions were implemented: post-measures administered, collation of EIPP literature reviews and EIPP conference.

6.9 2015 and 2016 attendance and attrition rates

The 2015 and 2016 programmes' attendance and attrition rates are outlined below, by region.

EIPP Participants 2015					
	DML	DNE	South	West	Total
Total	21	24	28	31	104
Completed	13	14	22	18	67
Failed to Complete	4	5	2	4	15
Never Attended	4	5	4	9	22

As outlined in the EIPP Evaluation Report 2015, "For DML and DNE the target was to have approximately 20 participants and 10 mentors go through the programme in each region". However, due to attrition, this target was not achieved. Subsequently, this was raised to 25 participants when the programme was run for the South and West regions, in order to allow for some level of attrition and get closer to the originally targeted level of completion.

Of the 104 participants nominated, a total of 67 participants successfully completed the programme. This represented an overall completion rate of 64%. These completion rates varied slightly by region, as DML had a completion rate of 62%, DNE had 58%, the South had 79% and the West had 58%.

Twenty-two (22) of the originally nominated 104 participants never attended any of the EIPP 2015 modules. This represented an overall rate of 21%. Again, this varied slightly by region as DML had 19%, DNE had 20.8%, the South had 14%, and the West had 19%. The evaluation report cites the reasons for this attrition as follows:

- "Of the 15 participants who started the module but failed to finish, nearly half (seven) dropped out due to their high workload interfering with their participation in EIPP.
- The other eight participants who failed to complete were evenly split (two each) between 'Illness', 'Unforeseen Circumstances', 'Failure to Submit Coursework and Attend Module 4', and 'Not Stated'."

EIPP Participants 2016					
	DML	DNE	South	West	Total
Total	29	27	30	28	114
Completed	16	13	22	20	71
Failed to Complete	4	7	4	2	17
Never Attended	9	7	4	6	26

Of the 114 participants nominated in 2016, a total of 71 participants successfully completed the programme. This represented an overall completion rate of 62%. These completion rates varied slightly by region, as DML had a completion rate of 55%, DNE had 48%, the South had 73% and the West had 71%.

Twenty-six (26) of the originally nominated 114 participants never attended any of the EIPP 2016 modules. This represented an overall rate of 23%. Again, this varied slightly by region as DML had 31%, DNE had 26%, the South had 13%, and the West had 21%.

The above tallies with findings through the consultation process for this evaluation which found that the main reason for attrition was lack of available time due to workload and/or lack of understanding of the time commitment required.

6.10 Enablers for the delivery of the EIPP

Analysis of the consultation findings and research identified the following enablers for the delivery of the EIPP:

■ Integration with current caseload

A key enabler of EIPP was the integration of the programme into case work, supervision and development work, as the programme was based on live case work. This enabled both the progression of a current case and also the development of evidence-informed practice which is topical and current. As summarised by one contributor "It's an opportunity to look at evidence and apply to practice and make practice more robust and make staff more confident talking about it".

■ Co-facilitation

The delivery of the programme was co-facilitated by CES and Tusla which ensured that there was input and involvement from Tusla staff throughout the delivery process. It was seen as the tangible connection between the two project partners.

■ Support of senior managers

Support of senior management for their team members who were taking part in EIPP was mentioned as a positive contributor to participant experience of the programme. The support took the form of moral support, understanding of the time requirements and endorsement of the programme and its intended outcomes.

■ Modular programme

The modular nature of the programme enabled the learning and learning outcomes to build incrementally from one module to the next. The creation of a logical programme framework facilitated a structured approach for participants.

■ Mixed learning methods

While the programme overall is principally an active learning programme, the mixed learning methods used created a conducive learning environment for those with a variety of learning styles, e.g. supported learning via mentors, peer learning via learning events, shared learning via the hub. This mix of learning methods worked well.

■ External relationships

Access to additional resources was facilitated through the involvement of HSE Library and access to research banks.

6.11 Barriers for the delivery of the EIPP

Analysis of the consultation findings and research identified the following barriers to the delivery of the EIPP:

- Ability to “protect” time

As outlined in other evaluation reports, the most frequently mentioned factor as a barrier to participation and or completion of the programme was the availability of time and the ability to “protect” time in the context of a busy work environment, increased caseloads, and the context of a high level of change and other project demands.

- Competing priorities

Linked to the issue of time being a scarce resource, is the additional, and related issue of competing priorities. The choice to participate in EIPP needs to be understood in the context of the choice to use time in any number of different ways that in reality are likely to be in addition to the demands of the day-to-day.

- Programme structured around full days

The fact that the programme is structured around full days, that often involve travel, was sometimes described as a challenge for programme participants.

- Support of senior managers

The support of senior manager was depicted as both an enabler where support was provided and as a barrier when endorsement and support was less forthcoming.

- IT capacity of participants

There was some mention of the need to present research on PowerPoint being a barrier for many who were not familiar with the package and had to learn how to use it (at a time when they were under pressure to complete EIPP).

- Lack of available research

The dearth of research, particularly Irish research, created a barrier for participants in terms of accessing culturally appropriate research material for their literature review.

6.12 Overall enablers

The analysis of the consultation findings and research has also identified some enablers and barriers that can be attributed to both strands of the initiative. Some findings also related to EPPI in terms of how it was managed overall and the overall culture that was created that emanated from EPPI activities.

The following enablers apply to EPPI and both strands:

- Shared project vision

The intent for EPPI and its envisaged outcomes in terms of benefit for practitioners was clearly articulated, communicated and understood. This ensured that all stakeholders were working towards a common end goal and that practitioners understood the intended benefit for their practice and their interaction with children and families.

- Leadership and continuity

Consistency in and leadership from the Tusla and CES project sponsors, and also continuity and overlap of many CES and Tusla staff on the Project Board and Toolkit Project Team, contributed to the efficiency of project leadership and the efficiency and productivity of project groups.

- Endorsement of the initiative

Throughout the development and implementation of EPPI, CES understood the necessity to find individuals who would endorse the initiative from within the agency. The initiative required support, which was secured from national and local management. The identification of

advocates from the Chief Social Worker to local managers was crucial to ensuring “support and endorsement” of the initiative and the strands. The involvement and promotion across various functions, disciplines and areas created a strong foundation to influence participation and engagement.

■ Integration of feedback

The fact that CES sought and listened to feedback, and, most importantly, responded to and integrated feedback, resulted in an environment where Tusla staff contributed views that they trusted would be considered and integrated where possible.

■ Collaboration

EPPI was described as being “co-produced” and “built into the ethos of the work and practice on the ground”. This cross-agency involvement created commitment amongst staff as they were “working together towards the same direction”. The commitment to engage and involve Tusla staff at each stage of the development and implementation created “tangible connections with the people in the agency and gave them a sense of ownership”. As well as creating positive working relationships, in allowing staff to take ownership of the initiative a solid foundation was created for participation and future ownership of EPPI.

■ Cross-directorate working

Cross-directorate representation on working groups facilitated the inclusion of various perspectives and steered the outcome in a way that was appropriate for policy, operations, learning and development, research, etc. Similarly, the Quality Advisory Group applied rigour from the quality and improvement perspective.

■ Project management culture

The rigorous approach to project management created a project culture that was “collaborative, clear, structured and business like”. An overall project plan was created for EPPI, as well as detailed individual project plans for the Toolkit and for EIPP. These plans were reviewed and updated regularly at project teams and Project Board meetings and updated and adjusted accordingly. A number of benefits resulted:

- Productive use of time
- Embedded collaborative structures
- Cross-directorate working across key functions including, Workforce Learning and Development, Policy, Operations, Quality Assurance.

■ Clear roles and responsibilities

Clearly defined roles of all parties were set out and communicated to all parties from the outset. This was a key feature in ensuring accountability and responsibility of all involved. The project management infrastructure that was put in place for the development of EPPI in terms of roles and responsibilities, is outlined below:

Project Management
Project Sponsor - Commissioning of the project - Overall accountability for the project
Project Board - Accountable for outcomes - Co-ordination with other corporate initiatives - Identifying and removing obstacles - Communicating and informing other stakeholders regarding the project and securing buy-in and support for the project
Project Manager - Deliver terms of reference - Report on progress and proposals to the Project Board - Develop and direct the project teams to deliver the projects
Project Teams - Assist in planning the project methodology - Carry out project tasks - Provide progress updated and feedback to the Project Manager
Quality Assurance Team - Act as an advisory, consultative and communication group to review project aspects, outputs and deliverables

■ **Momentum**

Given the project management ethos applied, timeframes were monitored on an ongoing basis and feedback indicated that timelines were met for EPPI plan and the phases of the individual strands. The involvement of so many key stakeholders meant that this momentum was directly experienced by many, and many more stakeholders were exposed to project progress reports via inclusion on area team meeting agendas, communiques issued etc.

The management and communication of project progress made project momentum tangible at regular intervals. It is likely that this contributed to ongoing momentum that would not have been the case had timelines slipped or had stakeholders not been involved or informed. The importance of generating and communicating momentum cannot be understated, particularly in the context of competing and diverting priorities, as has been noted a number of times.

■ **Communication**

The importance of regular communication with key stakeholders on a project of this scale and duration of EPPI is best encapsulated by the quote “There was a full portfolio of work purely around communications”. The level and quality of communication and engagement was characterised as a success factor in terms of:

- The ability to influence the outputs through the various consultation processes
- Maintaining information flow
- Ensuring that communication methods reflected the range of ways in which stakeholders wish to engage.

■ **Cohesion between Toolkit and EIPP**

The process utilised by CES for the development of the Toolkit and implementation of EIPP enabled each strand to influence and inform the other. As both strands developed, shared learnings were provided, and potential adjustments could be considered. The initiative needed to consider marrying both strands in order to create a broader strategic approach and therefore CES looked at “how each strands of work were similar and how they could complement each other”.

■ Continuity

Despite some personnel changes, there was a high level of continuity of key project stakeholders across the initiative and strands. Project sponsors and individuals on project teams generally remained in place for the duration. Related benefits of this, cited in the consultation, included:

- A demonstration of commitment to the project
- The creation of a respectful and trusting work relationship
- Rooted/embedded knowledge
- Experience of the project at its various stages of development

The secondment of two members of the project team, in late 2017, into Tusla, which included the CES project lead involved from the origin of the project, was regularly cited as a key success factor in terms of smoother transition, ongoing momentum and knowledge transfer.

6.13 Overall barriers

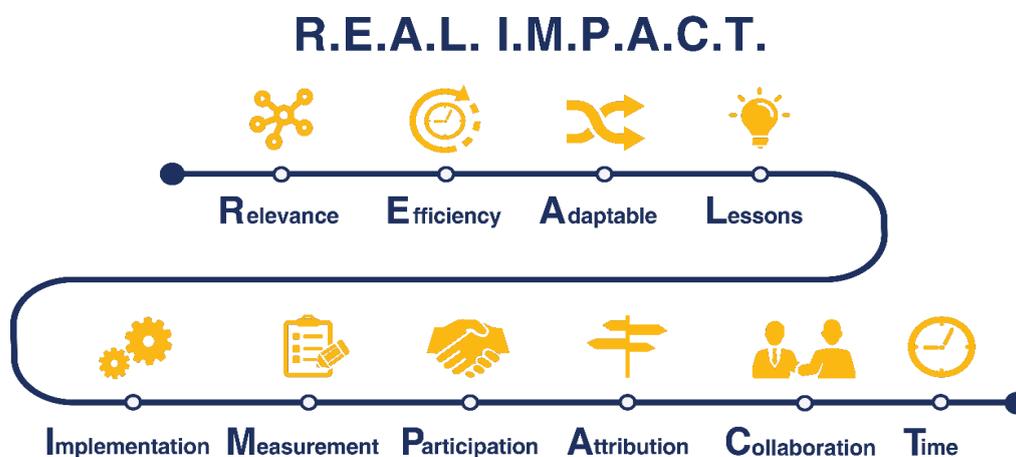
The following barrier applies to EPPI and both strands:

■ Staff capacity

As has been identified, the key resource requirement for EPPI, has been and will continue to be time-poor practitioners whose involvement will be required in future iterations of the Toolkit, as programme participants on EIPP and in the overall project management structures that will need to continue (albeit the time requirement may be less intensive than previously required). It is likely that time constraints will remain an issue for the foreseeable future.

6.14 REAL IMPACT

The **REAL IMPACT** framework below summarises the findings under each of the heading for the project partners, the Toolkit and the EIPP.



RELEVANCE	
WERE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE TOOLKIT AND EIPP RELEVANT TO THE AUDIENCE?	
Project partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrated alignment between EPPI aims and CES' and Tusla's corporate/strategic plans and related objectives i.e. building capacity, evidence-informed practice, connecting policy and practice, creating a positive learning environment, empowering people, innovative, etc.
Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Toolkit content is described as “meaningful”, “relevant” and “useful” demonstrating that it has been designed with the audience in mind and to suit their needs.
EIPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EIPP participants researching a live case as part of the programme makes the programme relevant to its audience at a practical level and is a demonstration of real time active learning.

EFFICIENCY	
DID THE PROCESSES EMPLOYED USE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY E.G. STAFF, TIME ETC.	
EIPP and Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consistency in and leadership from the Tusla and CES sponsors, and also continuity and overlap of many CES and Tusla staff on the Project Board and Toolkit Project Team, contributed to the efficiency of project leadership and project groups.
Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is likely that the processes required to work around the IT systems limitations when developing the Toolkit were not as time efficient or productive a use of time as may have been the case with better system capacity.
EIPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The provision of resource supports to programme participants, e.g. guidelines, HSE research library training etc. made the participants learning experience more time-efficient.

ADAPTABLE	
WERE THE PROCESSES ADAPTABLE?	
Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The application of iterative and user-focused/inclusive processes shows a commitment to adapting the product to best fit user needs. ■ The ability of the designer of the Toolkit to adapt to the constraints of the operating environment and modify the Toolkit in order to fit within the internal CMS, whilst maximising functionality and visual appeal, demonstrates the adaptability of the development.
EIPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The delivery process of EIPP has demonstrated adaptability in adjusting participant's study time and moving events to the regions based on participant feedback. This also indicates that there were adequate processes in place for participant engagement and feedback. ■ The variety of learning methods, e.g. active learning, supported learning, peer learning, shared knowledge was a key element of participant's positive experience. This links to creating a culture of and commitment to a positive learning environment and embedding the practice in the organisation.

LESSONS	
WHAT LESSONS CAN BE LEARNED REGARDING HOW PROCESSES OPERATED?	
Toolkit and EIPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For both strands, the project management approach allowed for the implementation of effective processes within structured and planned phases of work. The processes were managed under an overall project management umbrella that enabled efficiencies and effectiveness.

IMPLEMENTATION	
WERE THE PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES ACTIONED AS ORIGINALLY PLANNED?	
Project partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The project management and project oversight processes and structures were clearly outlined and reviews during the project phases allowed for appropriate revisions to be made if a deviation from the original plan was required.
Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The process of building awareness of the Toolkit was highlighted as an area that has possibly been underestimated in terms of time required and time committed to ensure awareness is continuously built and reinforced. ■ As outlined, the creation of an online Toolkit resource was one that required adjustment to work around system limitations. ■ Updating content of the Toolkit on a regular basis to ensure ongoing relevance is essential to continued use of the system – this is particularly the case in a dynamic environment where

	policy and practice priorities can change, and relevance can be reduced or eliminated as a result.
EIPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The programme structure was delivered as originally intended and adapted as previously outlined in terms of study days and location.

MEASUREMENT WAS PROCESS INTEGRITY MONITORED THROUGHOUT?	
Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At all stages of the development process, information was produced and analysed that resulted in more informed decisions being made as to the appropriateness of the processes being used, the product being produced and the move to the next phase of the development. ■ There was less evidence of implementation measures for the Toolkit, for example, awareness and usage of the Toolkit.
EIPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participants in all four regions were issued a Pre-assessment Questionnaire and Before Measures Questionnaire prior to taking part in the programme. The purpose of Before Measures survey was to establish a baseline from which to measure participants' progress following participation in the programme. The purpose of the Pre-assessment Questionnaire was to help participants explain areas of potential development and how they could attempt to achieve this development. ■ The same two questionnaires were issued six months after completion of the programme to assess whether the learning had been maintained and applied to practice.

PARTICIPATION WERE THE PROCESSES IN PLACE FOR USER ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK SUFFICIENT?	
Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Practitioners engagement was facilitated in a number of ways, via surveys, evaluation processes, piloting/user testing (Toolkit) and in the delivery phases via EIPP participation and via use of the Toolkit.
Mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The initial mentor meeting provided an opportunity for engagement and feedback by mentors. Ongoing opportunities for mentors to meet each other, between the initial meeting and the final presentations were limited.

ATTRIBUTION CAN SUCCESSES AND FAILURES BE SHOWN TO BE RELATED TO THE PROCESSES USED, AS OPPOSED TO INFLUENCING FACTORS?	
Toolkit and EIPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The processes used in terms of collaboration, communication, project management, user involvement contributed significantly to the success of the initiative and to mitigating potential risks. However, influencing factors related to capacity (staff time and IT capacity) impacted success.

COLLABORATION DID THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PROJECT PARTNERS WORK?	
Project partners	<p>A number of project-related collaborative structures were set up and have worked well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collaborative work structures were set up from the outset that via inclusion of project partners on the Steering Group, the EIPP Group and the Toolkit Team. ■ EIPP was jointly delivered by CES and Tusla staff. ■ Communications staff in both organisations worked together on project communications. ■ Knowledge sharing structures within the EIPP and via the Toolkit allowed peers to share learning. ■ Ultimately the secondment of CES staff to Tusla exemplified the level of collaboration and integration.

TIME WERE THE CORE STRANDS DELIVERED IN A TIMELY MANNER?	
Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adherence to the agreed time and commitment of all involved (and additional time invested) resulted in adherence to deadlines.
EIPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EIPP was delivered and completed within the timeframes originally envisaged.

6.15 Sustainability

While the brief is clear on evaluating the development of the Toolkit and the delivery of the EIPP from 2015-2017, some issues that arose related to sustainability are summarised below as pointers that, we believe, should be included for consideration by the implementation team. It is not suggested that the list below presents an exhaustive list of sustainability considerations but rather represent those that came up most frequently in the research and analysis.

■ EPPI awareness

Toolkit awareness has already been included in relation to levels of awareness from 2015-2017. The point was repeatedly made that ensuring that awareness of the two strands of EPPI is continually built and/or refreshed is an ongoing task, particularly taking account of likely personnel changes over time and to include new disciplines over time.

■ Ongoing need to integrate Toolkit themes and content with organisational priorities
There is a need to ensure that the Toolkit themes and content are continuously integrated with the priorities of Tusla as an organisation, in terms of strategy, policy and practice challenges. This will mitigate against any dilution of relevance.

■ Reliance on individual resources

It should be noted that some critical posts were reliant on a single or possibly two members of staff which emphasises the need for contingency planning to allow for situations that may arise where these staff would not be available on a short- or long-term basis. This could be covered via the planned programme manual and train-the-trainer programme.

■ IT infrastructure

Consideration is required in relation to the potential improvements to the IT infrastructure to support envisaged future developments, build in additional capacity, eliminate the need for “work-arounds”, increase access and future-proof the system in the context of, what it is assumed will be, an increased programme of activities around the initiative.

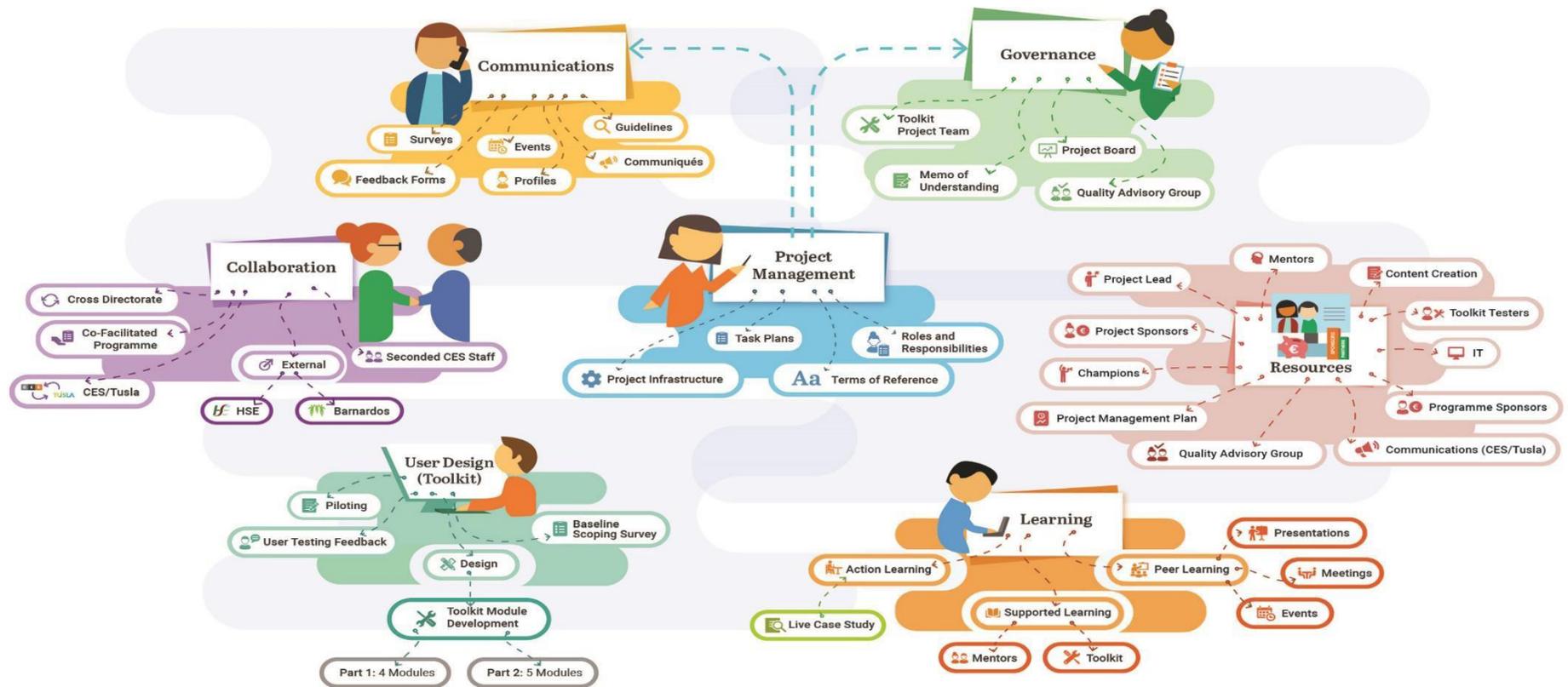
7 Process Map

The process map below visually depicts the various processes and sub-process that were involved in the initiative. It should be noted that the process map covers all elements of, and contributions to, the initiative up to 2017, whereas the evaluation covers the period from 2015 to 2016.

Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiative



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8 Key Learnings

8.1 Overview

The Key Findings sections outlined the insights gained in the research and consultation phase of the process. The Key Learnings flow on from the findings and consider what should be done in any future assignments of similar scale and complexity that would take account of lessons learned. It is always important in evaluations to consider what should continue or be replicated in future, as well as what should be changed or improved. For this reason, the learnings are framed around some of the contributing factors that enabled the successful aspects of the initiative as well as some of the hurdles encountered and the resultant learning.

8.2 Lessons Learned

The Key Learnings provide insights for future initiatives for CES and also for the Toolkit's ongoing development and EIPP delivery for Tusla. This chapter sets out to answer three questions included in the brief:

1. What is the learning for Tusla and CES regarding the implementation of the overall EPPI programme?
2. With reference to the Toolkit:
 - a. To identify the learning for CES in how best to support similar initiatives
 - b. To identify the learning for Tusla to inform future maintenance and ongoing development of the Toolkit.
3. Extrapolate the learning for both CES and Tusla from the implementation of the EIPP.

The learnings are presented under the Key Findings so that the basis of the learning is set in context.

EPPI was an ambitious project delivered in challenging times, but despite this, it successfully demonstrated strategy in action for both CES and Tusla.

7.2.1 *Strategy in Action Learning*

- Programme relevance at CES and Tusla organisational level was contingent on alignment to the CES' remit and to Tusla's strategy and corporate plans.
- The leadership demonstrated by both the CES and the Tusla project sponsors and their continued involvement for the duration of the project was a key enabler in activating the organisations' strategic plans through EPPI.
- Programme relevance for practitioners was contingent on alignment with their daily practice and the influencing internal and national policies.
- The ability to envisage how the programme will activate and demonstrate progress towards achieving strategic or practice objectives had a strong influence on the commitment to the initiative.

A vision, culture and environment were created with specific collaborative ways of working which was key to the overall EPPI success. This highlights a strong process and an ability for the organisations to pull together towards a meaningful goal.

7.2.2 *Collaborative Working Learning*

- A shared vision is critical when different stakeholders are involved with diverse areas of expertise / interest. Setting out objectives for EPPI and for the individual strands was critical to ensuring that all stakeholders understood the end gain and worked in a cohesive direction.

- Decisions were made and effort invested from the outset to create collaborative structures via the Project Board and the Toolkit and EIPP groups. It was important that this collaboration characterised the working relationship from the start, so that Tulsa staff saw it as their initiative being supported by CES, rather than as an external initiative that would develop at a distance from the organisation.
- The extent and continuity of collaborative structures facilitated a culture of inclusion, communication, consultation and joint working within which the processes were more likely to, and did, succeed.
- The ongoing and unfaltering commitment to working in collaboration from both CES and Tulsa, created a trusting and open working relationship.
- The inclusion and involvement of staff from across directorates was remarked on as an innovative approach for Tulsa and one that benefitted the initiative, the organisation and the individual. A cross-directorate approach should benefit other projects and work programmes in the future.
- For Tulsa, it will be important that collaborative working endures as an organisational benefit. For CES, it is important that this approach is understood as a defining feature of how CES work with clients.
- It will also be important to define the “soft” aspects, e.g. shared vision, bond, trust, etc. that generated the successful collaborative culture, as well as the “hard” aspects, e.g. setting up the governance and project groups, so that the scenario can be replicated in the future.
- Collaboration with external organisations can provide an opportunity to increase projects resources, as was the case with HSE Library and subsequently Barnardos Library and Information.

A robust project management methodology was key to the creation of a shared understanding of the tasks at hand, the intended end results and the inputs required at the various phases of the work plan.

7.2.3 *Project Management Learning*

- A project management approach needs to be embedded into all organisations involved in a project of this scale and complexity.
- The structured approach to project management from the outset and the regular communication, review and adaptation of the work streams over the course of the project contributed significantly to the successful completion of the programme within the targeted timeframe.
- A “readiness” assessment could be introduced before the project commences to identify enablers and blockages to effective programme management.
- Due to the complexity of the project and dynamic nature of the social care environment, a risk assessment for the entire project and the progression between each phase could be undertaken to ensure a risk management and risk mitigation plan and contingency plan is in place.
- The various task plans and their revisions at various times throughout the project contributed to a project culture of reviewing implementation on a regular basis.
- For Tulsa, a project management plan is required for further programmes and for the roll-out of the Toolkit and EIPP, with clearly assigned roles, responsibilities and governance structures.

A user-centric approach was a key success factor through all stages of the process.

7.2.4 *User-Centric Learning*

- The starting point for both the EIPP and Toolkit was a definition of the problem to be solved as defined by practitioners themselves. This facilitated the development of a solution that was co-designed.
- While the various consultation processes that were required were time consuming and required a significant amount of staff from both CES and Tusla, the return on investment was end products aligned directly with practitioner needs.
- The Toolkit design and development process was based on iterations and adaptations which increased the level of user accessibility, credibility and value.

Alignment of the themes of the Toolkit and the use of live cases on the EIP programme meant that EPPI was grounded in the current experience of practitioners and as such contributed to solving actual issues and challenges being faced in contemporary practice.

7.2.5 *Contemporary Practice Learning*

- The active learning approach worked well, in that it created a relevance to practice, to current caseload and to evidence-informed decision making. The benefits to practitioners of this approach was evident to those who took part in the programme and increased their sense of the value of the programme.
- Integration of the EIPP and Toolkit with the priorities of the day is essential and is an area that will need ongoing resources from Tusla.

Legacy IT infrastructure posed the most significant challenge to delivery. However, the knowledge and adaptability of the IT resources were critical in overcoming challenges.

7.2.6 *IT Infrastructure Learning*

- An “IT readiness” assessment could be introduced where online resources or platforms are a key element of a project’s outputs.
- Questions need to be explored as to whether the most efficient solution in relation to the IT infrastructure was the work-around required to overcome the limitations of the existing systems or whether an update to the central management system would have been more time-efficient.
- Outcomes data should be built into the system (and evaluation forms), as well as quantitative data.

Requirement to have an enabled PC or laptop in order to remotely access the Tusla intranet restricted deeper penetration and reach during the toolkit’s development.

7.2.7 *IT Limitations Learning*

- It would be beneficial to monitor awareness, access, use and updating of the Toolkit so that baseline data can be gathered and subsequently that targets can be set and monitored in relation to key indicators.

The programme delivery was deemed successful in relation to the more critical, core and technical elements of the EIPP itself, such as modules, content and the conducive learning environment created.

7.2.8 Programme Delivery Learning

- Mixed learning methods had the benefit of facilitating different learning styles and also of accommodating an easier return to education for those for whom it had been some time since they had last participated in an education programme.
- Elements of the programme were beneficially adapted following feedback from participants on the first iteration of the programme.
- While acknowledging that the high level of involvement of personnel is a resource requirement for the implementation of the four modules of EIPP, the end result was capacity building in strategically important areas to Tusla, i.e. evidence-informed decisions and better outcomes and interventions.
- Staff and area managers need to have a realistic expectation of time required so they can plan accordingly. A review of the time involved in the programme, based on past participants' experience, would provide information that could be presented to potential future participants.
- Some mentors mentioned including EIPP on the agenda at local meetings and having those involved present to local teams. This enabled shared learning, as well as increasing levels of exposure and awareness of colleagues to EIPP. This could be formalised to increase overall exposure.
- More involvement of the regions and of local areas was cited as having the potential to increase level of participation in the programme (and use of the Toolkit).
- The joint sessions for mentors and for programme participants were valued and as such consideration should be given to increasing collaborative structures for mentors and participants and to some alumni collaboration.
- Ensuring an adequate number of experienced mentors are recruited for the programme and that both the mentors and participants are clear on the boundaries of the relationship is key to the success of the mentoring support provided.

8.3 Summary Learning Table

The table below summarises the Key Learning in terms of issues that we believe should be continued by CES in future projects of this nature and also areas that should be considered in future. Similarly, for Tusla, the table summarises lessons learned for the future development and implementation of EPPI and the core strands.

CES	Tusla
Continue: Overall EPPI	Continue: Overall EPPI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aligning projects with CES strategy ■ Emphasis on policy to practice ■ Designing content and programme materials that improve practice / service provision ■ Creating a shared vision at the start of the project ■ Agree clear project objectives in partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aligning projects with Tusla strategy ■ Aligning projects with policy ■ Continue with project specific groups ■ Cross-directorate working ■ Applying project management techniques applied to EPPI

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Creating collaborative partner and project structures from the outset ■ Build trust through collaboration and genuine consultation which integrates feedback ■ Initiating and maintaining a project management culture ■ Communicating project progress to key stakeholders ■ Recognise the return on investment of meaningful consultation and build in consultation processes ■ Integration of feedback into phases, iteration of the projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recognise the return on investment of meaningful consultation and build in consultation processes ■ Integration of feedback into phases, iteration of the projects
Continue: Toolkit	Continue: Toolkit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ User-centred design ■ Defining the problem to be solved from the users' perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assign defined resources to the future development of the Toolkit ■ Define the problem to be solved for future iterations of the Toolkit in terms of themes and content ■ Integrating Toolkit with EPPI ■ Aligning content with
Continue: EIPP	Continue: EIPP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mixed learning methods ■ Active learning approach ■ Provision of support materials and support via mentors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hosting programme modules in the regions ■ Reviewing level of study leave to ensure that sufficient levels are provided ■ Identifying external partners who can to provide access to additional resources (as was the case with HSE Library and Barnardos Library and Information Service) ■ Assign defined resources to the future development of the Toolkit ■ Integrating EPPI with Toolkit ■ Integrating programme outputs with contemporary practice priorities

CES	Tusla
Consider: Overall EPPI	Consider: Overall EPPI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Carrying out an organisational readiness assessment in advance of project commencement ■ For large scale, complex projects, continue to develop a risk assessment and risk management plan as part of the project initiation plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue to risk assess future project timelines and targets ■ Increased involvement of the regions and local areas in the promotion of EPPI and its strands
Consider: Toolkit	Consider: Toolkit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Carrying out an IT infrastructure assessment in advance of project commencement in the case of online resource creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Carrying out an IT infrastructure assessment in the context of further development of the Toolkit ■ Improve qualitative and quantitative data gathering ■ Increased emphasis to be placed on developing awareness of the Toolkit and of its content (and that of the hub in general)
Consider: EIPP	Consider: EIPP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For programmes with national participants, investigate webinars, streaming etc. to minimise travel time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consult with past and potential future participants to review programme structure and define possible flexibility that might make the time commitment more manageable ■ Analyse qualitative and quantitative data gathered each time the programme is delivered in a timely manner ■ Increased sessions where all participants and all mentors meet jointly ■ Review the mentor panel to ensure there is a sufficient number of active mentors and that the active mentors are not overburdened ■ Increased involvement of the regions and local areas in facilitating shared learning e.g. inclusion of research findings on local agendas

9 Conclusion

This report seeks to present and evaluate the process of developing the Therapeutic Toolkit and the Evidence-Informed Practitioner Programme which are the two core strands of the Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiative.

What this process evaluation has shown is that CES applied an effective and successful project management approach to developing EPPI and the initiative is held in high regard by both the project teams and the Toolkit users and the EIPP participants. There is a perception of positive impact on social workers, in that social workers feel better equipped to make evidence-informed decisions and provide positive outcomes for children and families.

The evaluation depicts an approach which combines the application of robust project management techniques complemented by collaborative structures to ensure project progress. Within the collaborative culture that was created, an ethos of consultation, review, and integration of feedback, characterises the work.

As well as documenting the processes at the development and delivery phases of the Toolkit and EIPP, the purpose of the evaluation is to uncover the learnings to date from this project. For CES the opportunity is to apply the learnings in similar projects in the future, and, for Tusla, the learnings can be applied as the agency takes over responsibility for the implementation and delivery of the Toolkit and the EIPP.

Many of the learnings presented are based on continuing what worked well in the project up to now, which is a reflection of the success of the project. Clearly, there are also learnings on areas for improvement and areas that need ongoing momentum to perpetuate initial successes.

10 Appendix

10.1 Review of project management documents

The body of documentation provided by CES pertaining to the project planning of EPPI, and reviewed for process learning insights, can be categorised as follows:

- EPPI documentation
- Toolkit specific documentation
- EIPP specific documentation

10.2 EPPI documentation

EPPI documents shared by CES and reviewed for the purpose of the process review are outlined below, in date order:

1. **Proposal from CES to Tulsa** to support the development and implementation of the EIPP and Toolkit (as discussed in Section 4.2.1) (August 2014)
2. **Project management infrastructure (December 2014)**
 - a. Set responsibilities for the roles of the Sponsor, Project Board, Project Manager, Project Team and Project Quality Assurance Team and who these roles are assigned to

3. Project Task Plan 1 (August 2014)

The Project Tasks with set responsibilities and the individual assigned to the task, timing and assumptions regarding resourcing requirements from 2014 to 2017, are divided into:

- Set Up
- Professional Development Plan
- Senior Manager Sponsor Meetings
- Therapeutic Intervention Toolkit
- Evidenced Informed Practitioner Programme
- Implementation

4. Project Task Plan v11 (Task Plan end of 2014)

Revision of the original task plan,

- Set Up
- Reporting
- Professional Development Plan
- Senior Manager Sponsor Meetings
- Therapeutic Intervention Toolkit
- Evidence Informed Practitioner Programme
- Implementation

5. Draft Terms of Reference for the Project Board (October 2015)

- a. Functions of the Board, Possible Nominees and Meetings

6. Project Task Plan v11 (Revised early 2016)

Updated project tasks, with greater detail regarding specific actions, including new sections:

- Project Management: Proposal, Project Board, Quality Advisory Board, Communications, Project Team

- Professional Development Plan including development and implementation actions
- Therapeutic Toolkit Development
- Evidence Informed Practitioner Programme

7. Project Task Plan c16 (Revised mid 2016)

Further updates to project tasks, with sections highlighted as being complete, including:

- Set-up
- Reporting
- Professional Development Plan
- Therapeutic Toolkit Development
- Evidence Informed Practitioner Programme

For example, the only item left to be action in the Set Up tab is 'discuss and agree ongoing communications arrangements'

8. EPPI communiqué (September 2016)

This communication describes the programmes aims, details regarding both project teams, why the initiative is needed and the timeframe for implementation. This document also provides contact details for further information.

9. EPPI Focus Group Flyers for June – July 2015

Seven different focus groups located around the country for open discussion groups

10.3 EIPP documentation

- Tusla EIPP Checklist
 - Checklist of tasks for EIPP separated into Pre-Programme and Modules 1-4
- Tusla National Strategy for Continuing Professional Development 2015
 - Presentation on EPPI as CPD through Tusla
- Memo of Understanding
 - Between CES and the Regional Workforce Development team for the delivery of the EIPP, outlining what the EIPP is, and what is expected of CES and the host organisations
- EIPP; Briefing Area Managers – January 2015
 - Memo sent out to Area Managers regarding EPPI starting; explaining what will be happening and what it is
- EIPP; Briefing for Area Managers – January 2016
 - Memo sent out to Area Managers regarding EPPI starting; explaining what will be happening and what has happened so far since previous memo
- Before Measures Survey
 - Survey for Line Managers to complete with participants before completing the programme, as a baselines to evaluate progress after
- Pre –Assessment Survey
 - Survey for participants to do alone before completing the EIPP to determine goals for themselves for the programme
- Programme Roles and Responsibilities
 - Expectations for CES and host organisation

- EIPP Tutor Profiles x 2
- Documentation regarding Mentors:
 - Mentor guidelines: includes suggestions, what is expected, and why the mentor is involved and mentor competences (Chartered Management Institute)
 - Mentor profiles: blank template
- EIPP Agenda & Presentations for Modules 1-4
- Presentation Feedback Forms
- Guidelines for writing a Literature Review
- Case Study Template
 - Blank form for EIPP participants for their case study
- Panel Presentation Template
 - Blank presentation with slides for participants' presentation on their case study
- Evaluation Feedback forms for Module 1 and 2
- Certificate of Attendance
- Review of the Programme 2015

10.4 Toolkit documentation

- Terms of Reference: Working Group – Developing a Therapeutic Intervention Toolkit (November 2014)
 - This outlines formalities such as purpose, objectives, membership, conduct of business and accountability etc.
- Toolkit Work Plan August to October 2016
 - Includes lists of tasks to complete in the development and responsibilities / timelines
- Toolkit Work Plan October 2016 to June 2017
 - Includes lists of tasks to complete in the development and responsibilities / timelines
- CES Meeting Notes with Tusla IT: EPPI Toolkit Development (July 2016)
 - Clarification meeting regarding what can and can't be done in terms of the Toolkits development, including areas that require further attention and examples of tools / resources and content
- Request for Tender: Literature, Research and Resources Review & Synthesis to Support the Development of a Therapeutic Intervention Toolkit for Social Workers
- Terms of Reference for Scoping Exercise to Inform the Development of the Therapeutic Intervention Toolkit
- Baseline Scoping Report for the Development of a Therapeutic Intervention Toolkit v18
 - Report format of the findings from the baseline survey and open group discussions
- Baseline Scoping Report for the Development of a Therapeutic Intervention Toolkit
 - Presentation format of the findings from the baseline survey and open group discussions

-
- Open Discussion Groups Schedule / Timetable
 - Results from the Knowledge and Practice Development Survey – Open Discussions Group
 - Presentation on the initial findings from the baseline survey and questions at the end of the presentation
 - Information about Participating in the Piloting of an Online Toolkit
 - Memo regarding the piloting of the Toolkit which was sent to those already chosen to pilot it; and the document outlines how to access survey on the Toolkit which was emailed when sent
 - Toolkit User Pilot Survey 2016
 - Feedback on the Online Toolkit: Pilot User Survey
 - Presentation on the survey of those piloting the Toolkit
 - Toolkit Design Feedback
 - Toolkit design feedback from Limerick, Cork and Sligo (bullet points) and West South feedback
 - Toolkit Design Summary
 - Summary of the feedback from the discussion groups
 - Toolkit Template
 - Template for Toolkit for general content and design and more specifically for Parenting Capacity / Attachment
 - Documents for Toolkit re: Attachment i.e. previous research and reading list etc.
 - Documents for Toolkit re: Parenting Capacity i.e. previous research, reference list etc.