



CES taking stock and looking forward

Welcome to the Winter edition of the newsletter of the Centre for Effective Services, *CES Today*. The end of the year is the natural time for organisations to take stock, look back over the past year, and plan for the year ahead. At CES we have now engaged in a mid-term review of the work of the Centre. It is timely as we are half way through our initial funding cycle and CES wishes to know what impact it has had to date. The review will inform the development of a strategic plan which will set the direction of the Centre for the next three years (2012-2014). This process is rooted in changed external circumstances, and is paying attention to the strategic relevance and unique added value that CES can bring to this new environment.

We received a strong response from a wide consultation process, using both an online questionnaire and face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders. Findings produced rich data that will assist us to chart our strategic direction, and identify strategies which will contribute to the Centre becoming sustainable beyond 2013. The strategic planning process will be complete by the end of February, when some core strategic decisions will be taken regarding future priorities, the unique added value of CES, and the focus on work that will bring the best return for investment.

In the meantime, the day-to-day work at the Centre continues apace. In November the Belfast team marked one year in operation and the anniversary is highlighted with a reflection in this issue on the main work engagements in Northern Ireland.

Learning and capacity building are strong themes in this edition of *CES Today*. The team at CES have been joined by three graduate interns, Amy Power, Aisling Sheehan and Leona Mc Garrigle. This is one way that CES can contribute to the development of a new generation of evidence-informed professionals.

Considerable work has also been done to bring the CES Professional Development and Training Resource to final production. This educational resource in the field of prevention and implementation science in child, family and community services consists of eight learning modules and includes video seminars, PowerPoint presentations, and reading materials. An article on page 2 describes the content and focus of the Resource. It will be launched in early 2012.

This edition of *CES Today* covers latest news on the



Global Implementation Initiative, which aims to promote the rapid development of the practice and the science of implementation. The article (page 2) describes recent developments towards building a network, internationally and in the Republic and Northern Ireland, to share information about effective implementation.

This edition also includes an interview with Marj Stewart who is involved in the implementation of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), Scotland's national practice and policy approach to interagency work and meeting children's needs. Marj addressed the conference 'Interagency Working in Action' held by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in Croke Park in September, 2011.

We also review research on a conceptual framework for

involving families in family support services. It is Irish research carried out by Dr Stella Owens with the Daughters of Charity Child and Family Services as part of her PhD thesis. The study explored families' experience of attending the family centres and the factors that impacted on their involvement with services.

CES welcomes feedback on these developments in the newsletter and any suggestions about areas or aspects of work in this field that you would like to hear more about.

• *CEO Nuala Doherty (second left) introduces graduate interns (l. to r.) Amy Power, Leona Mc Garrigle and Aisling Sheehan to CES's Dublin offices in Harcourt Street. More about their interests and aspirations on page 3.*

CES New Training Resource

One of the core aims of CES is to build capacity among professionals working in child, family and community services. After a period of planning and development we will launch our Professional Development and Training Resource in 2012. This module-based resource has been developed by CES for sale in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, in collaboration with Penn State University in the US.

The modules aim to be practical, focusing on technical skills and competencies in understanding and using evidence in daily work, rather than attempting to cover theoretical material. The Resource is designed to accommodate senior staff and less experienced colleagues who may be still developing their skills and specialist

interests. The objective is to provide learners with a comprehensive educational tool that gives an overview of the field of prevention and implementation science in child, family and community services. By the end of the modules, participants will have a better understanding of the principles and skills required to understand and apply an evidence-informed analysis when working in practice and policy. Immediate aims are:

- to build staff technical skills, competencies and knowledge in key areas of prevention and implementation science
- to improve the ability of teams to work together within a multi-disciplinary context
- to develop a shared understanding of core principles of effective practice and implementation.

Each of the eight modules includes online digital video seminar presentations delivered by experts in the field of implementation science, prevention and early intervention. It also lists relevant reading materials and includes Powerpoint slides and interactive group tasks.

The training directs participants to access the latest thinking in the field through a flexible learning experience, accessible on participants' terms as an online and printed resource.

The learning modules are designed to meet the needs of people employed in the public, private and voluntary sectors, locally, nationally and internationally.

For more information regarding purchase contact Kate Morris: kmorris@effectiveservices.org

The Global Implementation Initiative – what next?

How can we get better at implementing? is a common cry in many work places, communities and contexts, across many countries. A Global Implementation Conference took place on 15-17 August 2011 in Washington DC with a view to addressing this issue.

Sixty-three participants from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland – policy makers, service providers, practitioners and researchers – attended the conference. The Conference was the first formal event of the Global Implementation Initiative. The purpose of the Global Implementation Initiative is to promote the rapid development of the practice and science of implementation and policies to support organisational change and system transformation in social services.

Supported by The Atlantic Philanthropies, CES aims to bring the benefits of the emerging Global Implementation Initiative to the Republic

of Ireland and Northern Ireland, building and sharing experience and research about effective implementation. The group who attended the conference are forming an Implementation Network and have already met twice. Two more meetings are planned for 2012.

CES has already begun sharing knowledge, expertise and materials about implementation with a wider audience, via a dedicated implementation page on the CES website, which will be updated regularly with podcast recordings, articles and details of events and networks. CES also aims to hold a number of masterclasses on implementation in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, working in collaboration with other organisations. Where possible, masterclasses will be delivered through existing professional associations and networks. See:

www.effectiveservices.org/ces-projects/the-implementation-initiative.



Much of the material presented at the Washington conference is available on the GIC website,

www.implementationconference.org,

If you know of a group that would be interested in learning about implementation, contact bryan@effectiveservices.org

• Pictured in Washington with CES CEO Nuala Doherty: (left) Aidan Cassidy, Deputy Director Northern Ireland Bureau, and Laurence Simms, First Secretary Embassy of Ireland, Washington DC

Researching Outcomes in Youth Work

CES is supporting the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in reviewing the evidence on the contribution of youth work to positive outcomes for young people. The DCYA wishes to enhance the development, participation and support of young people, to provide greater co-ordination and coherence in youth service provision and to ensure that such provision is of high quality and outcomes-focused. In order to achieve these goals youth work practices that support positive outcomes need to be explicit.

On behalf of the Department, CES has commissioned the EPPI-Centre, Institute of Education (London), to complete an international literature review which will identify outcomes for young people involved in youth work. Some of the potential outcome areas are shown to the right. Outcomes in youth work also contribute to broad policy domains including civic engagement, health, education and social care.

This is a timely and important topic. The scope of the review has been broadened to include literature on 'youth development' and 'youth support'. Youth development encompasses all work designed to help young people to develop the knowledge, skills and values needed to meet their personal and social needs, to contribute responsibly and constructively to the communities in which they live, and to become questioning, informed and active citizens.

The five main goals of youth development are commonly referred to as the 'Five Cs' – competence, character, connections, confidence and contribution. For personal reasons or social circumstances, some young people may also require more targeted or intensive support on the journey to becoming active citizens. In these cases, 'youth support' emphasises the safety and well-being of young people that is inherent in youth development. The Review will be launched in spring 2012. For further information please contact John Bamber:

jbamber@effectiveservices.org

Examples of outcomes of youth work

- Physical Development
- Good Health Habits
- Risk Management Skills
- Intellectual Development
 - School Completion & Success
 - Decision-Making Skills
 - Life Skills
- Psychological & Emotional Development
 - Emotional Intelligence
 - Coping & Problem Solving Skills
 - Self-Efficacy & Self-Esteem
 - Mastery Motivation
- Social Development
 - Social Skills & Competencies
- Civic Engagement
- Reduced Anti-Social Behaviour
- Positive Social Connections
 - Sense of Integration

Examples of development and support

- Youth Participation and Engagement
- Dáil Na Naóg
- Comhairle na nÓg
- Gaisce – The President's Award
- Foróige Youth Citizenship Programme
- Staff-Led Service Provision
- Youth Clubs and Information Centres
- Volunteer Club-Based Activities
- National Youth Arts Programme
- Léargas
- Youth Cafés
- Prevention and Intervention
- National Youth Health Programme
- Drugs Projects

Aisling, Amy and Leona – interns join the CES team

We are delighted to welcome three new graduate interns to CES. The Graduate Internship Programme at CES aims to develop a new generation of graduates with specialist experience in getting evidence into practice. The interns come from a range of backgrounds with graduate qualifications in social and health sciences.

- Aisling Sheehan has an undergraduate degree in Applied Psychology and will shortly receive her Doctorate in Health Services Research from the Royal College of Surgeons. She has previously worked with Enable Ireland and the Brothers of Charity where she provided support to children with intellectual and physical

disabilities. She is interested in implementation science and evidence-based practice and evaluation.

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- Amy Power's academic qualifications include a BSocSc and she recently completed an MSSc in Criminology from Queens University, Belfast. She is interested in youth and community development and completed a small research project on young peoples' attitudes towards An Garda Síochána under the guidance and support of the Garda Office for Children and Youth Affairs. She previously worked as a Research Intern with Cosc, Department of Justice and Equality.

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- Leona Mc Garrigle has a background in psychology and recently completed an MSc in Clinical Psychology from Bangor University in Wales. She has volunteered for a number of organisations including Balbriggan Youth Service and Headway where her duties included providing support to the service users and their families. Her areas of interest include early intervention to improve the emotional and psychological well-being and resilience of school children.

lmcgarrigle@effectiveservices.org



Northern Ireland – one year on



November marked the first anniversary of our having a full staff team in place at the Belfast office. Avery Bowser, Senior Fellow at CES, reflects on a busy year.

Evidence-informed approaches to programme and service design

Early this year, CES welcomed Dr Ellen Taylor-Powell from the University of Wisconsin to deliver a Practice Development Seminar in Belfast exploring the use of logic modelling – a method of graphically representing how an organisation can achieve impact through strategy and specific interventions.

This seminar helped our newly established team members to cement contact with key stakeholders, including service providers, commissioners, academics, government, and statutory and voluntary organisations in Northern Ireland. It also reflected the Centre's approach to working at a cross border level, as the seminar was delivered by CES staff from both the Belfast and Dublin offices. For the staff in Belfast it certainly gave us something to work on together and we learnt a tremendous amount from Dr Ellen Taylor-Powell – a real privilege. The logic modelling really struck a chord with service providers and policy makers in Northern Ireland and it has provided a launching pad for work with a range of organisations including government and the voluntary sector.

Andy Scott's *Beacon of Hope* sculpture in Thanksgiving Square, Belfast. The 20 metre high stainless steel figure stands on a bronze globe that symbolises peace, harmony and thanksgiving, and shows the cities to which the people and industries of the city have travelled.

Photo: Leo Murray

Finding the evidence people need

During 2011 we have been actively matching our ‘offer’ to what organisations tell us they need on the ground. What emerged from consultation with organisations was a need for support to source useable evidence, to translate this into services and strategies, and for organisations to capture evidence from their own activities and learning. This prompted the team to develop a workshop entitled *Finding the Evidence You Need* that will be delivered in a range of settings including the British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (BASPCAN) 2012 Congress in Belfast.

Facilitated support

A significant strand of our work in Northern Ireland includes facilitated support to practitioners and organisations delivering evidence-informed programmes. Since summer 2011 the team has been working with the Colin Early Intervention Community (CEIC). CEIC is applying a strategic evidence-informed approach to improving outcomes for children and families in the Colin area of west Belfast. CES has provided assistance in the planning and implementation of this prevention and early intervention initiative. This has brought together a number of strands around evidence and logic modelling and connects with our aim to provide support to community development programmes North and South. Our work with CEIC focuses on a number of development themes which are particularly important in the current economic climate in Northern Ireland – early intervention, prevention, community development, community safety and youth unemployment.

The What Works Process

Northern Ireland played an important role in the development of the *CES What Works Process and Tool*. The *What Works Process* is a set of activities done in partnership with client organisations. It uses a specially developed tool, the *What Works Tool*, to help organisations reflect on how evidence informs what they are doing, in relation to improving outcomes for children and families. We are particularly grateful to our colleagues in Barnardos NI who went on a learning journey with us as we developed *What Works*. Working so closely with projects delivering direct services, North and South, has provided important balance in the work of the Centre, keeping us connected to practice in the lives of real people.

Supporting policy implementation

Connected to CES’s involvement with the Global Implementation Initiative (see page 2), we were delighted to be able to welcome Dr Dean Fixsen, Co-Director of the National Implementation Research Network, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, to Belfast to deliver our first Policy Seminar in Northern Ireland – *Implementing and Scaling-up Evidence-based Programmes*. This event has since prompted us to develop a specific workshop focused on implementing policy. With the continuing squeeze on public spending, some of the key messages on implementation seem to gain greater resonance with each new day. With so little money available, can we really afford new pilots or should the focus be on better implementation of what is already being done?

We are looking forward to the year ahead, particularly emerging work within the criminal justice sector, planned work with colleagues in Mencap and Playboard, and we hope to work with others to bring learning in relation to Social Impact Bonds to a wider Northern Ireland audience. If you would like to get in touch to discuss working with the Belfast team please contact Kathy Brennan: kbrennan@effectiveservices.org

Northern Ireland





In September 2011 Marj Stewart, Implementation Lead on the interagency initiative *Getting it Right for Every Child* (GIRFEC), with the Scottish Government, presented to an audience of practitioners and policy makers at a conference for Children's Services Committees organised by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and CES in Dublin, *Transforming Children's Services – interagency working in action*. In an interview with Kate Morris, Marj describes Scotland's experience of interagency work in action to support better outcomes for children and young people.

Can you describe what *Getting it Right for Every Child* is?

Getting it Right for Every Child is a new, national practice and policy approach to meeting children's needs in Scotland. It's founded upon early intervention – and by early intervention I mean intervening early in the life of a child, and early in the life of a crisis, to prevent escalation or deterioration in a child's circumstances. It's an approach which welcomes values and strengthens the role of universal services – and by that I mean public health nursing services, the role of the midwife and the health visitor – in fact anyone that helps take care of children and young people to improve their wellbeing.

Can you discuss information sharing and the role of the 'Named Person'?

Getting it Right for Every Child is based on good information-sharing at the earliest possible time when a child needs help. As part of *Getting it Right for Every Child* we have introduced the concept of the 'Named Person'. Our vision is that every child in Scotland will have a 'Named Person' who is based in statutory services. This will initially be the midwife, then the health visitor and then someone in a school who will be in a position to take action if a child needs help. This is a very important part of early intervention and we're building on the role of the 'Named Person' as well as the role of the 'Lead Professional' to reinforce why and how information should be shared as part of the drive to improve outcomes. For example, if the police are involved in a fracas in a house on a Saturday night, and there is a child involved, the police can share information with the 'Named Person' who is then able to help the child on a Monday morning. The 'Named Person' is able to put in early support for the child that day, and on an ongoing basis if necessary.

Can you explain the common co-ordinating framework for assessment, planning and action?

One of our core components to GIRFEC is having a co-ordinated and streamlined assessment and planning framework for all children, one that can be used appropriately, proportionately and in a timely manner. The trick is that any agency can use the framework – health visitors, teachers, social workers – depending on the need of the child and the context in which the child's needs most exist. It is based on the concept of well-being. We believe that every child should be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible, and included, and of course we know that not all children can be all of these things all of the time. But we do ask all practitioners if they're concerned about a child to ask themselves five questions and those five questions are:

- 1 What is getting in the way of this child's wellbeing?
- 2 Do I need any more information about this child or do I need to share any information?
- 3 What can I do to help the child?
- 4 What can my agency do to help the child?
- 5 What other services, if any, are required to help this child?

Any practitioner may then use the assessment triangle, the My World Triangle, to gather information to try and understand what is happening in the child's world at home and in the community, and what the impact is on the child, with a view to determining what happens next to build resilience and to improve wellbeing. The results of the analysis will be a plan based on desired improved outcomes with goals, actions and responsibilities for all partners including the child and the family. This whole approach is supported by both the roles of 'Named Person' and 'Lead Professional'. The effectiveness of any actions designed to help the child and the family to improve outcomes are monitored and reviewed regularly.

The Process of Involvement for Families in Family Support Services – A conceptual framework

Dr Stella Owens conducted research while employed in the Daughters of Charity Child and Family Services (DoCCFS), prior to joining CES in January 2009. The following article provides highlights of a brief report Stella produced, based on the findings from her PhD thesis on the process of involvement for families in family support services.

Research aim

Stella was motivated by the apparent shortcomings in research in Ireland of therapeutic intervention with families within family support services. An increasing body of international literature had stressed the failure of services to meet the needs of families. Stella thus focused her research on a particular model and approach to family support, as provided through ten DoCCFS family centres. This study aimed to explore families' experiences of attending the family centres and to examine the factors impacting and affecting the process of a family's involvement. These factors may be responsible for families not benefiting from services aimed at enhancing child well-being and family functioning.

Research questions and findings

The research literature identified that parents are principally responsible for initiating contact with family support providers and ensuring that their family continues to receive such a service. Their levels of motivation and expectations have been highlighted in the literature as key to engagement. Research further asserts that parents play a key role in bringing about change in their families, and developing an understanding of, and addressing factors that impact on their parenting capacity, is crucial to improving outcomes for their children. The primary research participants were thus drawn from parents, as opposed to children and adolescents, attending family centres.

The research questions included:

- What factors impact on the process of involvement for families with family support services?
- What can these factors contribute to our knowledge and understanding of children's services?
- How can this knowledge be used to influence policy formation, and the design and delivery of more effective family support services?

Sixty-five families attending all ten family centres participated in the research. The results produced interesting findings about parents' experiences and perceptions of services provided. Parents had high expectations at the onset of the therapeutic work in the family centres and experienced low barriers to participation and attendance. Only four families dropped out of the Services. There was a significant difference between Family Workers and parents' perceptions, with Family Workers perceiving their clients to have experienced greater barriers to participation and attendance. Findings also indicated that factors such as referral, client/external factors, expectations, engagement and attendance impacted both positively and negatively on families, but did not lead to families dropping out of the service.

Conceptual framework

From the extensive literature review and research findings, Dr Owens developed the following Conceptual Framework of the Process of Involvement for Families in Family Support Services (See Figure 1 over the page). The Conceptual Framework situates the child and his or her family at the centre, as per the ecological framework. Dr Owens contends that when a family becomes involved with a service, this initiates a process whereby a complex web of factors interact and interlink in a dynamic, constantly changing and moving system, as demonstrated by the bi-directional arrows in all parts of the system. The interlinking factors in the second layer of the system – referral, client/external, expectations and motivation, engagement and retention, and barriers



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and obstacles – impact on the family unit as a whole, or individuals within the unit, and can combine to become potential risk factors to families not completing work in a service, or withdrawing early from support.

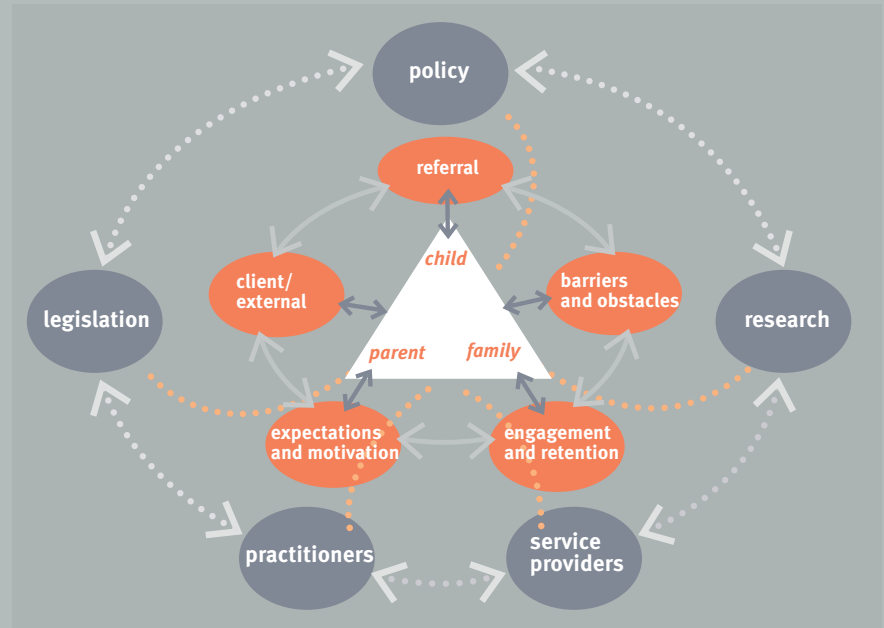
The outer layer of the system (right) includes policy makers, researchers, service providers, legislation and the field of practice and practitioners, and these factors can also impact on the child and family either positively or negatively. It is recognised in the practice and research literature that there is a lack of connection between policy makers, who need to make informed decisions based on the latest research evidence; researchers, who inevitably take and need considerable time to conduct and produce findings from their research endeavours; and front line practitioners whose focus tends to rest solely on direct work with their clients, not on outcomes from policy decisions and/or research findings. This perceived lack of connection between these outer parts of the conceptual framework is demonstrated by a broken line between these parts of the system. However, service providers are tasked with responsibility for implementing policy directives and legislation governing child welfare and protection, often informed by research findings. The inherent, interdependent relationship between service providing organisations and the practitioners they manage is reflected in the proximity of these two constructs to each other in the framework.

The CES Mission

The Centre for Effective Services has been developed by champions of evidence-informed policy and research across Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Centre for Effective Services is part of a new generation of intermediary organisations across the world connecting scientific evidence of what works to policy and practice to improve the lives of children, young people and the families and communities in which they live. The Centre undertakes a wide range of project work ranging from whole-sector strategic development, supporting evidence-informed policy and practice; to focused technical assistance for individual service-providing organisations.

The Centre for Effective Services is an independent, not-for-profit organisation funded jointly by The Atlantic Philanthropies, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and the Department of the Environment, Community, and Local Government. Charity number: CHY number 19438 in Ireland and Company number 451580.

The Conceptual Framework of the process of Involvement for families in Family Support Services



Key recommendations

- Family support services should involve to some extent from the outset, all members of the family in the intervention or programme provided.
- Family support services need to be flexible enough to offer programmes to families based on immediate need, rather than on age or stage of development, and throughout the life stages
- Basic socio-demographic and personal information should be routinely sought from families attending services, to assist in producing a comprehensive profile of the family and to avoid families attending duplicate and multiple services simultaneously.
- Engagement strategies, like outreach services, should be applied across services; and professionals need to review expectations, motivations and progress towards goals regularly throughout a family's attendance at a service.
- Family support services need to consider more flexible approaches to opening hours and to attendance demands they impose upon families.
- To facilitate evaluation of effectiveness, family support services should articulate both broad and specific outcomes to be achieved through their interventions with families.

The report was launched by Gordon Jeyes, National Director, Children and Family Services, Health Service Executive on 7 October 2011 in Dublin. For more information about the research or copies of the report please contact Dr Stella Owens at sowens@effectiveservices.org

STOP PRESS CES and Dublin City University School of Nursing and Human Science are holding a conference – *Evidence into Practice* – on 23 January, 2012 at DCU. This is a one-day meeting for those working in social and health sciences. Further information to follow on our website. To register general interest, contact bryan@effectiveservices.org

