



New director – responding to a changing environment

Welcome to the Summer 2011 edition of the Newsletter from the Centre for Effective Services. We have all experienced change in our working lives, change borne largely from progress and growth. The difference with current change is that it is driven by severe economic uncertainty. Never before has the need to place the client at the centre of our work been more important, and to make decisions based on evidence of what works. The core mission of CES is to build capacity for such evidence-informed decision making. Dr Deborah Ghatte, the founding Director of CES has left the Centre and I have stepped into those hard-to-fill shoes. It is a real privilege to be part of the team at the Centre and I look forward to working closely with colleagues in research, policy and practice on the next stage of the CES journey.

• Nuala Doherty, who has succeeded Dr Deborah Ghatte as CES director. She was previously Director of Educational Welfare Services in the National Education Welfare Board, and before that, North East Regional Director of Services for Children and Families.

We have also been joined on the CES team by our librarian, Mairéad Mullaney. CES continues to expand the ways it can support and encourage the work of partners and stakeholders. We are pleased to host Marion O’Dea, the Administrator for the Children’s Research Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland and Winnie Donoghue the Co-ordinator of the Prevention and Early Intervention Network (ROI).

Meanwhile the core work of the Centre continues and this has been a particularly busy and exciting period for CES. Implementation is a strong theme in this Newsletter. Implementation is an issue of global concern with growing acknowledgement that this part of the journey towards better outcomes for clients has not been adequately attended to by researchers, policymakers or practitioners.

Two American leaders in this field brought a strong message to Ireland in their recent visit namely, that the best evidence programmes in

the world will be ineffective if poorly implemented.

The article on The Global Implementation Initiative defines the term Implementation science and describes the Initiative and how CES will promote implementation capacity and the development of a network of implementation champions to support this work.

The Masterclass in May explored the opportunities and implementation challenges in mainstreaming evidence-based initiatives. Finally, the first Policy seminar in Northern Ireland was addressed by Dr Dean Fixsen, a leading international expert in the field of Implementation science. His advice about the length of time it takes to implement an intervention properly set a very realistic note.

Many of you will be aware of the significant investment made by The Atlantic Philanthropies and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in the area of Early Intervention and

Prevention. Thirty-two Prevention and Early Intervention programmes cover issues from early years initiatives, parenting programmes, literacy programmes and the promotion of prosocial behaviours in young people.

These programmes, run by sixteen separate agencies, are each the subject of separate in-depth evaluations. We are synthesising the results and will be summarising the findings from the whole initiative.

This learning will be hugely important for the future development of the Early Intervention approach.

Finally, the provision of Internship programmes is very topical with the recent launch of a significant government initiative in ROI. CES is playing its part with an invitation to apply to our new graduate Intern Programme.

We hope to make a significant contribution to the development of a new generation of evidence-informed professionals.

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The Implementation Initiative –bridging the science to service gap

Every year funding is poured into human services research across the globe. However, observations are being made in isolation and news is slow to travel from one country to another, one discipline to another, one human service to another. Right now there is a need to make sure that findings are actually making a difference in real world settings.

The aim is to close the science to service gap in order to improve human services across disciplines and across the globe. To address this a Global Implementation Initiative has been launched by experts in the field of Implementation science and will begin to support and accelerate this emerging field, focusing particularly on the implementation of evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for people and organisations.

Implementation science has been defined as the study of methods to promote the systematic uptake of research findings and other evidence into

routine practice to improve the quality of health, care and social services. The Implementation Initiative will now bring together policy, research experts and practitioners dedicated to building and sharing expertise and research about turning scientific knowledge of ‘what works’ into effective implementation.

CES has been awarded a grant by The Atlantic Philanthropies to support existing networks to bring to Ireland the benefits of the Implementation Initiative and to advance implementation in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland by developing and promoting implementation capacity and Implementation science.

CES has been actively supporting the first ever Global Implementation Conference (GIC) taking place between 15 and 17 August 2011 in Washington, DC. The conference will provide opportunities for professional connections and interactions, mutual exchanges of

information, and intensive work on common agendas relating to implementation. It will bring together policy makers, practitioners, scientists, media representatives, programme developers, and community leaders for an unprecedented focus on how effective implementation can facilitate the successful use of evidence-based programmes resulting in improved outcomes for people and organisations.

After the conference CES will also support the development of a network of implementation champions in Ireland and Northern Ireland. For further information contact Katie Burke at: kburke@effectiveservices.org

For further details please visit our website’s dedicated pages where you can also access the official conference website: www.effectiveservices.org/ces-projects/po22-the-implementation-initiative

Calling all graduates – apply now for the CES Graduate Intern Programme

CES is inviting applications for our new Graduate Intern Programme (GIP). The Programme will recruit qualified graduates or postgraduates and provide them with a structured training programme. The aim is to develop a new generation of graduates with specialist experience of getting evidence into practice and will be beneficial to a range of work settings.

The interns will come from a wide range of backgrounds but will need a graduate qualification in a relevant area such as social sciences, health sciences, health promotion, and/or have recent practice background. The invitation is also open to those with postgraduate qualifications in these areas, and will combine personal development, academic training and work experience, over a period of 12 months.

Interns will receive a comprehensive introduction to CES and our work, and will be allocated a lead trainer. They will also take part in the CES Professional Development and Training programme to enable them to build on their Implementation science skills, experience and knowledge. The programme combines excellent opportunities for developing skills and knowledge with the opportunity to put these into practice on a range of practical projects. The interns will get the opportunity to work with experienced staff in CES and have the benefits of access to world class thinkers, practitioners, and researchers who are part of CES networks.

The programme will be designed to quickly immerse participants into the work of the organisation across a broad range of fields including practice design

and implementation, research and evidence, knowledge and communications and organisational development. Interns will be based at our Dublin office but are expected to spend time in our Belfast offices.

The training will emphasise the ‘how to’ of implementing evidence-informed services, and the translation of evidence into practice to improve outcomes. The graduates will learn how to identify what works, and go about putting this learning into services being delivered on the ground.

We anticipate that the induction programme will commence by early October 2011.

To download additional details on the Graduate Intern Programme and information on how to apply go to: www.effectiveservices.org

Mainstreaming evidence-based initiatives

'If we don't get the how right, which is implementation, we won't get the what into practice, which is the effective intervention.'

Karen Blase

On 10 May, with support from the What's Working for Children Conference Organising Committee, CES organised a masterclass with Dr Karen Blase and Dr Dean Fixsen, Co-Directors of the National Implementation Research Network, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.



Karen and Dean spoke to an invited group of practitioners, policy makers and educators about the role of implementation science in mainstreaming evidence-based initiatives. The aim was to begin a focused and productive dialogue about Implementation science – putting scientific and technical knowledge into 'real world' policy and practice, and also to consider what facilitates mainstreaming existing programmes .

We need actual measures to know if things have been implemented as intended. We need to know, did we select people according to criteria, did we train them well enough, were coaching routines adhered to, did we coach as often as we said we would, did we give feedback, did we collect fidelity measurements on a regular basis.

Karen explained that effective interventions and implementation will lead to positive outcomes for children and families. She explained three golden rules of effective implementation: firstly, staff must be properly trained and coached; secondly, effective implementation requires a team not just an individual; thirdly, you need to have adequate time and resources to achieve effective implementation.

The Dublin masterclass also offered an overview of the challenges of taking programmes to scale.

CES will continue to support capacity building and develop expertise in the field of implementation science (see page 2). For podcast interviews with Karen and Dean visit: www.effectiveservices.org/knowledge-exchange/ces-podcast-series

Exploring the potential of social impact bonds

In April, Clann Credo, The Social Investment Fund, in association with CES and The Atlantic Philanthropies, hosted a roundtable at our Harcourt Street offices to explore the potential for Social Impact Bonds in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Over 30 participants from government, philanthropy and service providers attended, and while there was a focus on the Republic of Ireland we were pleased to attract significant representation from Northern Ireland.

Participants heard about the 'why', the 'what' and the 'how' of Social Impact Bonds from Toby Eccles and Louise Saville of Social Finance, a not for profit organisation based in England, with a focus on increasing the quantity, effectiveness and reliability of funding for interventions with a social impact. Social Finance has led the development of Social Impact Bonds and has attracted considerable international attention in a very short space of time.

The first Social Impact Bond is being piloted at Peterborough Prison in England. Social Finance has defined a Social Impact Bond as 'a contract with the public sector in which it commits to pay for improved social outcomes. On the back of this contract, investment is raised from socially-motivated investors. This investment is used to pay for a range of interventions to improve social outcomes.

Whether the financial investors receive returns are dependent on the degree to which outcomes improve' – i.e. savings are partly used to reward investors.

In the case of Peterborough, reoffending rates for short sentence prisoners will need to fall by at least 7.5% before investors will receive a return.

A lively discussion ensued, chaired by Gerry Kearney, former Secretary General of the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, with learning flowing in both directions across the Irish Sea. The input clearly sparked interest; not least in the marriage between a focus on outcomes and alternative finance in straitened times.

This was tempered with realism about the considerable challenges of adopting a new and as yet unproven approach in very different governmental and social systems. In this regard there is a clear linkage to implementation (see page 2), and a stress on the importance of the 'exploration stage' – taking time to work out with others if it is feasible to implement a particular intervention or programme.

Clann Credo, The Atlantic Philanthropies and CES are reviewing the messages from this roundtable to see if there is scope for moving further forward with Social Impact Bonds in Ireland.

For more details, check out the Social Finance website at: www.socialfinance.org.uk

• (above) Karen Blase and Dean Fixsen, Co-Directors of the National Implementation Research Network at the University of North Carolina.



The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (now the Department of Children & Youth Affairs), the National Children's Strategy Implementation Group (NCSIG) and the Children's Services Committees have been leading an initiative to develop a planning model for national and local interagency working to improve outcomes for children. This is collectively known as the *Working Together for Children Initiative*. The objective of the *Working Together for Children Initiative* is to secure better developmental outcomes for children through more effective integration of policies and services. The Initiative represents the implementation of policy objectives into practice reality. The event, which will take place on the 27th September at Croke Park, will provide a platform to evidence changes in how children's services are delivered in Ireland, and demonstrate interagency working in action.

In 2010, at the request of OMCYA, and in support of the Initiative, the Centre for Effective Services commissioned the Thomas Coram Research Unit of the Institute of Education London, to complete a literature review of the evidence base for interagency working to improve outcomes for children. This learning & networking event will provide an opportunity to present the findings and implications arising from the review for the future development of Children's Services Committees in Ireland and will also include a small number of presentations from Irish and international speakers who are directly or indirectly involved in the implementation of the *Working Together for Children Initiative* and other interagency collaborative initiatives in other jurisdictions. The expected audience includes senior policy makers including members of the NCSIG, programme and agency managers, Children's Services Committees members (and those considering developing a Children's Services Committee in their area), and practitioners in the field. For details please go to:

www.effectiveservices.org/training-events/2011/09/27/

Round 2 of the CES Practice Development Seminar Series

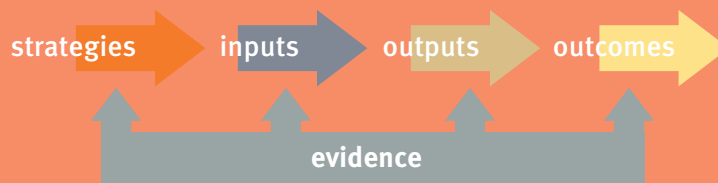
The Centre has been hosting a range of practice development seminars covering the main areas of its work with the overall theme: 'Developing evidence-informed practice for children, young people and families'. The aim is to provide stakeholders with opportunities to engage and learn with world class practitioners, managers and researchers; to network and avail of peer-learning opportunities, and to provide access to training in approaches, skills and techniques that will enhance the effectiveness of services.

A second seminar was held in Cork, Belfast and Dublin in February 2011. It explored how logic modelling can support clear and achievable outcomes in work with children, young people and the communities in which they live. The key speaker was Dr Ellen Taylor-Powell (left), a distinguished Evaluation Specialist at the University of Wisconsin.

A logic model is a graphic representation of a whole service, a particular programme or a specific intervention showing the intended relationships between inputs and results. Logic models try to underpin ideas guiding the intervention, and to make clear understandings of the issue or problem, the goals and strategies to be pursued, and the activities that will lead to desired outcomes. Taken together these ideas are often referred to as the 'theory of change'. The seminar aimed to be as practical as possible and CES staff ran experience appropriate workshops to help participants build a logic model for their own programme or area of activity, to be aware of issues in constructing logic models, as well as to understand the limitations.

The event attracted over 150 participants between the three venues. Since February the Centre has received a constant flow of enquiries about logic modelling, and a smaller version of the workshop has been customised and run with groups.

Slides from the keynote presentation and workbooks for beginners and those more familiar with logic modelling are available at: www.effectiveservices.org/ces-projects/po12-seminar-series-practice-issues. For more information contact John Bamber at: jbamber@effectiveservices.org



Capturing the Learning on 'what works' in prevention and early intervention

The Atlantic Philanthropies and Government are supporting a major initiative to promote prevention and early intervention for children and young people in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Numerous organisations across the island have developed and delivered services based on evidence of what works to encourage best outcomes for children, young people and families. Many have already been independently evaluated and the reports made available; others will be published during the next few years. The key aim of the 'Capturing the Learning' project is to work in partnership with the services and independent research teams to capture, and make sense of the multiple messages from the prevention and early intervention sites, and to distil out key learning and overarching themes. The process is gathering data from a range of sources, for example in relation to:

- the outcomes and wider impact of the initiative
- process and implementation/delivery issues
- issues in commissioning and support for services
- issues relevant to research development strategies.

The CES team working on this project is mapping the variety of approaches used by services and the outcomes that are being measured to identify key points for collation and collective interpretation. Timescales for when the information will become available over the next two years are also being taken into account. Discussions have taken place with grantees, key stakeholders and international experts about how best to approach this task and make the most of the emerging knowledge. For further information contact Dr Helga Sneddon at: hsneddon@effectiveservices.org

Sharing the learning on ‘what works’

CES is involved in a major knowledge transfer project on developing the overarching messages from the Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative, involving The Atlantic Philanthropies, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the 16 agencies and community groups running 32 prevention and early intervention programmes throughout Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Called the Dissemination Initiative on Prevention and Early Intervention (DIPEI), the project findings are starting to emerge and will be available from 2012. The messages, based on evidence about how prevention and early intervention works in Irish and Northern Irish communities, will then be made available as an important evidence-informed resource for policy makers, practitioners and service users and providers alike.

The Initiative is now underway in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland with plans for an All Island Strand. Work to date has focussed on setting up of Sharepoint (an online resource for sharing of reports and events), the development of key messages to explain prevention and early intervention, and some initial engagement with the relevant audiences for the messages. The body of knowledge arising from these programmes will provide us with evidence-based experience and assist Ireland and Northern Ireland in furthering the cultural shift towards early intervention. Equally the programmes have attracted international attention placing both jurisdictions at the forefront of prevention and early intervention practice in Europe. For further information about the initiative, contact Claire MacEvilly at: cmacevilly@effectiveservices.org

Early intervention programmes in Ireland and Northern Ireland

Republic of Ireland

grantee

Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative

Young Ballymun

Northside Partnership

Barnardos Ireland

Foroige

Mayo Children’s Initiative

Rialto Learning Community

Archways

Longford Westmeath Parenting Partnership

services

Early Childhood Care and Education • Doodle Den • Mate Tricks • Healthy Schools Programme • Community Safety Initiative

Ready Steady Grow • 3, 4, 5 Learning Years • Write Minded • Incredible Years • Literacivic • Jigsaw

Preparing for Life

Wizards of Words • Friendship group • Parent Coaching • Tús Maith

Big Brothers Big Sisters Ireland – Community • Big Brothers Big Sisters Ireland – School • Best Practice Unit

Protective Behaviour

Out-of School Time Services

Incredible Years • Functional Family Therapy

Triple P Parenting Programme

Northern Ireland

grantee

Early Years Making it Work

Lifestart

Business in the Community

Together 4 All

Brook

Parent’s Advice Centre

Barnardo’s NI

services

Eager and able to learn • Media Initiative • Respecting Differences

Lifestart Parenting Programme

Time to Read

Behaviour curriculum (PATHS)

Sexual Health Programme

The Parenting Ur Teen Programm

Ready to Learn



First CES Northern Ireland Policy Seminar

CES is committed to hosting a Policy Seminars Series over the period 2010-2011. They are an important part of its contribution to the development of effective policy and services for children and communities. The series is targeted at senior civil servants in government departments in Ireland and Northern Ireland and is designed to be intimate enough to provide an opportunity for open discussion about evidence-informed policy and the challenges associated with it.

The visit of Dean Fixsen to Ireland in May (see page 3) presented the opportunity to run our first Policy Seminar in Northern Ireland. It included a small group of senior participants from government and the statutory and voluntary sectors and involved intensive high quality attendee input and interaction, with access to Dean's expertise in relation to the real world challenges faced by stakeholders.

A number of key messages emerged:

- There is a need to stop generating more new interventions – funding and resources should be redirected to implementation in order to secure outcomes.
- Without a focus on implementation there will be no change, no impact. Even the most effective evidence-based programme will not be effective without robust and properly resourced implementation.
- It takes time to implement new interventions, even the ones that are evidence-based and highly manualised. The intervention will need to be repeated many times before it can be fully understood and implemented in a new setting.
- The need to 'repeat' highlights the fact that we are unlikely to get it right the first time we try to implement a new intervention or programme. Dean offers the helpful maxim – 'anything worth doing is worth doing poorly the first time'.

CES hopes to run similar seminars making use of international experts and those closer to home in Northern Ireland. Feedback from this first seminar will help shape future topics and it was clear from Dean's input that this was only the start of a conversation about implementation. We welcome suggestions for the development of this policy seminar series from other senior policy makers, commissioners, service providers and researchers.

For further information about the series in Northern Ireland please contact Avery Bowser at: abowser@effectiveservices.org

seminars



What Works ProCESs – what next?

Providing support and technical assistance to service providers is one of the Centre's core activities, and this is achieved in various ways including the What Works Process.

The What Works Process and What Works Tool were launched by CES in two events in Belfast and Dublin in January of 2011. The guide and workbook which describe the process have since been very well received in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and internationally.

The Process aims to help services understand how effective they are in relation to the current research and thinking on 'what works'. Overall it helps services make a comprehensive and coherent reflective assessment of where they are doing well in terms of delivering evidence-informed practice as well as areas where they could be stronger. The Process helps them develop an action plan for improvement but also enables good practice to be identified and disseminated to other services.

In May 2011 the Process was introduced to attendees of the What's Working for Children Conference held in Dublin, as a workshop. A presentation on the Process has also been accepted for the forthcoming Global Implementation Conference in Washington D.C, in August 2011.

At present the revised Process is being 'road tested' with a number of services. Consideration is also being given to the most effective ways of 'scaling' up the use of the Process, including a capacity building training programme for potential facilitators, and a discussion paper setting out possible options is currently in preparation. As such it is anticipated that the role of the CES will shift from carrying out the Process directly with clients to a capacity building/consultancy/quality assurance role. For more information contact Sean Denyer at: sdenyer@effectiveservices.org

How to access knowledge to inform your work

CES's new website now includes resources and tools to support the exchange of information and learning in the field of evidence-informed and evidence-based practice and policy. These tools include a CES Podcast Series discussing issues such as using outcomes to develop public policy, the benefits of using logic modeling, and economic evaluation. The site also hosts featured reports from the field, access to search our library catalogue, and information on how you can visit our library. For more information please contact Claire Mac Evilly at: cmacevilly@effectiveservices.org or Kate Morris at: kmorris@effectiveservices.org



New administrator for the Children's Research Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland

CES is hosting the Children's Research Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland at our Dublin Offices on Harcourt Street, Dublin 2. The Network is delighted to announce that they have recently appointed an Administrator, Marion O'Dea. Marion can be contacted at: administrator@childrensresearchnetwork.org

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.

